Rhetoric and Composition  
English 1301.003  
Time: MTWR 2:00 – 3:40  
Place: Ferguson 292

Professor: James Couch  
Office: LAN 327  
Office Hours: TW 1:00 - 1:45  
Department: English  
Phone: (936) 468-2430  
Email: Use D2L

COURSE DESCRIPTION of English 131 (Rhetoric and Composition):  
“Study and application of the writing process and the skills of writing with a focus on analytical reading and writing. Essay assignments address rhetorical analysis and evaluation and critical responses to close readings of texts. Required of all students who do not qualify for English 133H or 235H. Prerequisite: Pass or exemption from THEA or a C in English 099. Must earn a grade of C or higher to be admitted to English 132.” – SFA Bulletin

About This Class

You are attempting a daunting task. Along with all of the other facets of your busy lives, you have embarked upon a journey to transform yourselves into better writers – in about six weeks. Successfully navigating the path you have chosen will require certain actions on your part. Your goal may best be accomplished by activities such as examining, in a focused and critical manner, the arguments of others and discussing in a thoughtful manner what we find there; forming ideas that are well-considered; crafting arguments that are logical; and drafting, revising, and editing our work until it communicates coherently what we intend. Therefore, this class will consist of equable amounts of reading, discussion, and writing. This course is not a literature class; however, analyzing the work of others can help us understand why we write and how to do so effectively.

Regarding the aspects of writing that can be taught, I would argue that one-half is science, and the other is art. Although it takes application, the science can be learned from such sources as textbooks and your professor; the art, however, requires the doing, the act. This truth means that the only way to become a good writer is to write, write, and write some more. Writing is an active process. Despite the fact that we are often called upon to submit our best efforts to date, rarely is any piece of writing ever truly “finished.” Most, if not all, written work can be improved upon. The nature of this class, therefore, demands active participation, and you will see results if you put forth effort. When I ask you to create a draft, do it! When I ask you to critique or revise a selection, do it! No excuses. I say again, the art requires the doing. Those who do not accomplish the obvious and expected tasks associated with this process cannot truly claim to care about their writing or this class. Their grades will no doubt reflect this fact.

Occasionally, I ask you to work collaboratively and with minimal supervision. If you do not make good use of these sessions, then you are hurting yourself. I expect you to engage in the class discussions, which means
asking questions and offering thoughtful comments relevant to the issue at hand, and to do so in a courteous manner. The nature of our endeavor makes rudeness or abusive language intolerable. That being said, you will have some (hopefully) interesting and spirited discussions with individuals from a variety of backgrounds, and you may hear something you do not like. If you feel yourself getting offended, remind yourself how fortunate you are to be in a country where people have the right to speak what they believe to be the truth, and then proceed to tell them exactly how they are wrong.

**Texts and Materials**
- The Brief Penguin Handbook 5th Edition (Recommended)
- Notetaking Tools (Required)
- USB Drive (Recommended)

**Course Requirements**
In this class, you will be tasked to produce logical, thoughtful, well-composed essays. These assignments are based on various topics that will emerge from the assigned readings and our in-class discussions.

These papers will include, but are not necessarily limited to, an **expressive essay**, wherein you analyze and relate a dramatic, meaningful event from your life; a **rhetorical analysis**, wherein you analyze a visual argument; a **persuasive essay**, wherein you take a position and seek to persuade your audience; a **film analysis**, wherein you argue your analytical assessment of a work of motion picture art; and a **final exam** in the form of an in-class, timed essay wherein you analyze and explain a short piece of poetry.

**All papers must be typed and require MLA format** (including an MLA heading, 12 pt type, 1” margins, double-spacing, Times New Roman font, indented paragraphs, etc.). Work not in MLA format will be docked a letter grade. Late work will be docked a letter grade for each day it is late. No work more than three days late will be accepted. Students are also required to submit electronic copies through D2L to the **Turnitin comprehensive plagiarism detector**. Failure to turn in an assignment will result in a failing grade (0 points) on the paper in question.

**Course Calendar**
The class will be divided into four sections based on the four major paper assignments. Each assignment will take approximately one week to complete. The expressive essay may take slightly less time; the rhetorical analysis may take slightly longer. The general schedule, however, will be one major paper due each week, along with the relevant daily work such as pre-writing, thesis submissions, rough drafts, peer critiques, et cetera.

**Grading Policy**
Semester grades will be the sum of the major paper grades, the corrections and revisions of the major papers, the daily grades, and the final exam. Each major paper will constitute one grade, with grammar, content, and style contributing equally to each grade. Each major paper is worth a maximum of twenty (20) points; the final exam is worth a maximum of ten (10)
points, and each daily exercise is worth a maximum of one (1) point. Feel free to call, email, or visit me during office hours about your writing, your grade, or any other questions you may have.

**Attendance Policy**

Punctual attendance (physical and mental) is required. Those with perfect attendance will receive two bonus points applied to their final average. Those students who miss more than four days will receive a failing grade.

**Acceptable Student Behavior**

Classroom behavior should not interfere with the instructor’s ability to conduct the class or the ability of other students to learn from the instructional program (see the Student Conduct Code, policy D-34.1). Unacceptable or disruptive behavior will not be tolerated. Students who disrupt the learning environment will be asked to leave class and may be subject to judicial, academic, or other penalties. This prohibition applies to all instructional forums, including electronic, classroom, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc. The instructor shall have full discretion over what behavior is appropriate/inappropriate in the classroom. Students who do not attend class regularly or who perform poorly on class projects/exams may be referred to the Early Alert Program. This program provides students with recommendations for resources or other assistance that is available to help SFA students succeed.

**Academic Integrity (A-9.1)**

Academic integrity is a responsibility of all university faculty and students. Faculty members promote academic integrity in multiple ways including instruction on the components of academic honesty, as well as abiding by university policy on penalties for cheating and plagiarism.

“Academic dishonesty” includes both cheating and plagiarism. Cheating includes but is not limited to (1) using or attempting to use unauthorized materials to aid in achieving a better grade on a component of a class; (2) the falsification or invention of any information, including citations, on an assigned exercise; and/or (3) helping or attempting to help another in an act of cheating or plagiarism. Plagiarism is presenting the words or ideas of another person as if they were your own. Examples of plagiarism are (1) submitting an assignment as if it were one’s own work when, in fact, it is at least partly the work of another; (2) submitting a work that has been purchased or otherwise obtained from an Internet source or another source; and (3) incorporating the words or ideas of an author into one’s paper without giving the author due credit. (Please read the complete policy at http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/academic_integrity.asp)

Academic dishonesty carries a very heavy penalty: a definite F (in the form of zero (0) points), on the paper in question, a probable F in the class, and possible expulsion from the university.

**Withheld Grades Semester Grades Policy (A-54)**

Ordinarily, at the discretion of the instructor of record and with the
approval of the academic chair/director, a grade of WH will be assigned only if the student cannot complete the course work because of unavoidable circumstances. Students must complete the work within one calendar year from the end of the semester in which they receive a WH, or the grade automatically becomes an F. If students register for the same course in future terms the WH will automatically become an F and will be counted as a repeated course for the purpose of computing the grade point average.

**Students with Disabilities**

To obtain disability-related accommodations, alternate formats and/or auxiliary aids, students with disabilities must contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS), Human Services Building, and Room 325, 468-3004 / 468-1004 (TDD) as early as possible in the semester. Once verified, ODS will notify the course instructor and outline the accommodation and/or auxiliary aids to be provided. Failure to request services in a timely manner may delay your accommodations. For additional information, go to http://www.sfasu.edu/disabilityservices/

SFASU values students’ mental health and the role it plays in academic and overall student success. SFA provides a variety of resources to support students mental health and wellness. Many of these resources are free, and all of them are confidential.

On-campus Resources:
SFASU Counseling Services
www.sfasu.edu/counselingservices
3rd Floor Rusk Building
936-468-2401

SFASU Human Services Counseling Clinic
www.sfasu.edu/humanservices/139.asp
Human Services Room 202
936-468-1041

Crisis Resources:
Burke 24-hour crisis line 1(800) 392-8343
Suicide Prevention Lifeline 1(800) 273-TALK (8255)
Crisis Text Line: Text HELLO to 741-741

**English 131 Student Learning Outcomes**

ENG 131 learning outcomes are the goals that students must meet in the first semester of the two-semester Freshman Composition core curriculum requirement. The learning outcomes for ENG 131 are as follows:

1. Ability to show appropriate acquisition of CORE objective 1 skills. Students in compositions courses make application of these skills in the writing of personal, expository, and persuasive essays, which require students to make inquiries into and explorations of topics in creative, innovative, or
analytical ways. Students are expected to complete readings, to engage in
course and group discussions, and to analyze, interpret and synthesize their
findings resultant from these critical engagements into well-developed essays.
Written assignments will evidence the students’ command of these
considerations: effective engagement of audience (pathos), logical development
of ideas (logos), and effective use of examples, expertise, or insight (ethos).
2. Ability to show appropriate acquisition of CORE objective 2 skills. These
skills include effective development, interpretation, and expression of ideas
through written, oral, and visual communication. Following instruction about
group interaction, students will engage in oral communication through class
discussions and group work (orally in face-to-face courses, electronically in
online courses). Students will have occasion to respond to visual medium, as
found in assigned readings, lectures, power-point presentations, or other media
dependent upon course materials. Students learn processes for writing that
help them to form coherent, well-developed, well-organized, and unified
discussions through a variety of writing methodologies, including personal,
expository, and persuasive methodologies. Students will write at least four
essays in composition courses, and rubrics will assess such concerns as
development and exploration, mechanical clarity, and interpretation or
expression of ideas.
3. Ability to show appropriate acquisition of CORE objective 4 skills. These
skills include the ability to consider different points of view and to work
effectively with others to support a shared purpose or goal. Following
instruction about peer review processes and small group work, students will
perform peer mentorship on essay assignments and work together on group
projects, which may include collaborative writing occasions, group
presentations, or panel discussions. As peer review is the common teamwork
experience, students will be required to share potentially diverse ideas with one
another, to address those views in appropriate ways, and to help one another
to finalize essays for submission.
4. Ability to show appropriate acquisition of CORE objective 5 skills. These
skills include the ability to connect choices, actions, and consequences to
ethical decision-making. Students will have opportunity to examine numerous
readings, including essays written by classmates, to examine the credibility
and value of those readings, and to understand how expository methodologies
bear responsibility and consequence.

ENGL 1301 “Rhetoric and Composition” (3 credits) typically meets three times
each week in 50-minute segments or twice each week in 75-minute segments
for 15 weeks, and also meets for a 2-hour final examination. Students have
weekly topical, non-fiction reading assignments of 25 pages or more and are
expected to write/provide response to these readings; in addition, student will
write five essays in various genres (for a total of 25 or more written pages per
semester) which engage the topics of the readings. They will also present to the
class a final project which includes a written paper and a visual component;
this project integrates at least five of the readings of the semester and three
more sources which they will have gathered through research. These activities
average at a minimum 6 hours of work each week to prepare outside of classroom hours.