English 1302.007: Research and Argument

Stephen F. Austin State University
Department of English and Creative Writing
Spring 2024

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Office Hours: Tuesday 9:00 – 11:00; Wednesday 9:00 – 12:00

Visit the SFA Academic Assistance and Resource Center (AARC)
The AARC provides a variety of free academic support programs for students at SFA. Our services include 1:1 appointments, walk-in tables, online tutoring (through Zoom), learning teams, and SI. We also provide academic skills workshops upon request.

Course Description from the SFA Catalog
Continued study and application of the writing process and the skills of writing with a focus on the forms of argumentative writing and on research methods, such as gathering, evaluating, summarizing, synthesizing and citing source information. Prerequisite: C in English 131. Must earn a C or higher to be admitted to any English 200-level course.

English 132 Student Learning Outcomes
Upon successful completion of this course, students will:

1. Demonstrate knowledge of individual and collaborative research processes.
2. Develop ideas and synthesize primary and secondary sources within focused academic arguments, including one or more research-based essays.
3. Analyze, interpret, and evaluate a variety of texts for the ethical and logical uses of evidence.
4. Write in a style that clearly communicates meaning, builds credibility, and inspires belief or action.
5. Apply the conventions of style manuals for specific academic disciplines (e.g., APA, CMS, MLA, etc.)

General Education Core Curriculum
The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board has identified six core learning objectives: Critical Thinking Skills, Communication Skills, Empirical and Quantitative Skills, Teamwork, Personal Responsibility, and Social Responsibility. SFA is committed to the improvement of its general education core curriculum by regular assessment of student performance on these six objectives.

By enrolling in ENGL 1301 you are also enrolling in a Core Curriculum Course that fulfills the Communications requirement. The chart below indicates: (a) The core objectives that are required to be taught in this course per the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB), (b) How the required core objectives will be addressed.
Critical Thinking Skills
To include creative thinking, innovation, inquiry, and analysis, evaluation and synthesis of information.
Active reading assignments
Writing assignments that teach process, analysis, reflection, and working with sources

Communication Skills
To include effective development, interpretation and expression of ideas through written, oral, and visual communication.
Writing and reading assignments that teach rhetorical awareness, including writing for different purposes, audiences, and contexts
Small-group discussion activities

Teamwork
To include the ability to consider different points of view and to work effectively with others to support a shared purpose or goal.
Research writing groups
Small-group work

Personal Responsibility
To include the ability to connect choices, actions and consequences to ethical decision-making.
Readings and discussion activities that teach the ethics of rhetoric and research

Credit Hour Justification
Research and Argumentation” (3 credits) meets three times each week in fifty-minute segments or twice each week in seventy-five-minute segments for fifteen weeks, and meets during finals week according to the final exam schedule. Students complete weekly topical readings as well as writing and discussion activities related to those readings. Students write a minimum of four essays with a total page count of at least eighteen pages of finished writing. Emphasis is placed on writing and research processes, including multiple drafts and short assignments that require generating, revising and editing writing. Students conduct more library and online research than what is required in ENG 131. Final exams typically include presentations of student writing and research. These activities average six hours of work outside of classroom hours.

Assignments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Major Assignments</th>
<th>Due Dates</th>
<th>Grade Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Portfolio 1: I-Search Essay</td>
<td>Final Draft: 2/3</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portfolio 2: Annotated Bibliography</td>
<td>Final Draft: 2/24</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portfolio 3: Researched Argument</td>
<td>Final Draft: 3/31</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
I-Search
The I-Search assignment is a research project where you investigate a question that personally interests you, narrating your exploration process and discoveries. This approach allows you to actively engage in research, fostering a deeper connection with your topic, which will then inform your annotated bibliography and researched argument. It’s a unique blend of personal narrative and academic inquiry, emphasizing your role as both the researcher and the storyteller.

Annotated Bibliography
Following the I-Search assignment, the next step is to compile an annotated bibliography. This involves curating a selection of scholarly sources related to your I-Search topic, providing a summary and critical analysis of each source. This process deepens your understanding of the subject and lays a strong foundation for the development of your researched argument.

Researched Argument
The Researched Argument is the culmination of your inquiry and exploration. Building on your I-Search and annotated bibliography, you’ll construct a well-reasoned argument on your chosen topic, supported by evidence from your research. This assignment challenges you to synthesize information, evaluate differing viewpoints, and present a compelling, academically sound argument, demonstrating your understanding and critical analysis of the subject.

Low-Stakes Daily Assignments
You will engage in a series of low-stakes assignments aimed at supporting your learning process and development as a writer. These tasks will include completing assigned readings, engaging in process writing activities, and participating in reflections and self-assessments to evaluate your progress. Additionally, you will be expected to regularly draft and revise your work and bring copies to workshop with your peer writing group. These assignments will be graded based on effort.

Multi-modal Presentation
As the capstone of your research in this course, you will create and deliver to our class a multi-modal presentation that showcases your research findings. This presentation will be a creative and engaging synthesis of your work, incorporating various forms of media — such as PowerPoint slides, videos, infographics, or audio elements. The goal is to effectively communicate the essence and insights of your research, demonstrating not only your understanding of the topic but also your ability to present complex ideas in an accessible and compelling manner.
Final Grade Breakdown

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Letter Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>90% - 100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>80% - 89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>70% - 79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>60% - 69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>0% - 59%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Course Calendar

Class meetings will follow a regular schedule of activities:

**Tuesdays:** Active-learning activities and assignments.

**Thursdays:** Writing groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Weeks</th>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 – 4</td>
<td>I-Search</td>
<td>2/16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 – 9</td>
<td>Annotated Bibliography</td>
<td>3/22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 – 14</td>
<td>Researched Argument</td>
<td>4/26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 – 16</td>
<td>Multi-modal Presentations</td>
<td>TBD</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Revision After the Grade

Major assignment grades are based on my evaluation of the quality of your writing. I base these evaluations on my experience teaching college writing, the expectations for each assignment (rubric), and the writing process work we do in class. I recognize that my evaluations are ultimately subjective. A different teacher will likely give your essay a different grade. Therefore, I provide two options for revising major assignments graded lower than an "A":

**Revise with feedback:** You will receive feedback with every graded major assignment. You may use this feedback to revise the assignment and try for a higher grade.

**Revision contracts:** This option allows you to revise without worrying about my evaluation of the quality of your writing. You and I will negotiate a revision plan that might include activities like major rewrites (more than previous drafts), workshopping drafts with me or a writing center tutor, writing strategies not practiced in class, etc.. Completing the activities outlined in the contract guarantees that the assignment grade will improve by at least one letter.

Class Materials

- Writer’s journal (spiral notebook, etc.)
- Folder for current drafts
- Course readings posted on Brightspace (*Writing Spaces* and *Rhetoric and Composition: A Guide for the College Writer*)
- Money for printing articles and drafts.
Writing Groups
You will workshop your research and writing with a group of your peers every Thursday. The activities we do on Tuesdays supports this weekly research and writing, but you will have to do much of it at home. Watch the weekly newsfeed for reminders of what to bring to your group meeting (e.g. a rough draft, research notes, brainstorming).

Conferences
We will schedule one conference during the semester. Conferences are a chance for us to talk one-on-one about your writing and progress in the course. All conferences will be held in my office or via ZOOM.

Participation and Attendance
Our class meetings focus on active learning. The attendance grade includes attending class when your group is scheduled to meet and coming to those meetings prepared to write and workshop. It also includes a commitment to substantive writing, revising, and editing.

You have two unexcused absences over the course of the semester. Three -- five unexcused absences will negatively affect your attendance grade. You will fail the class at six or more unexcused absences.

Excused absences: All university-sponsored events are excused absences. I do not require doctor's notes when you are sick. You can contact the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities (OSRR) to request an absence notification be sent to your instructors.

Essay Format
- Major assignments will follow the MLA Style Guide as describe on the Purdue OWL MLA page.
- Rough drafts must be typed, but research notes, brainstorming, outlines, etc. can be handwritten.

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.

Definition of Academic Dishonesty
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
Generative Artificial Intelligence

This class adopts a transparent approach to the use of AI in all aspects of the course—from how you use it with your assignments to how I use it to assist my teaching. You will document and reflect on your use of generative AI in your major assignment portfolios. This work with generative AI will be but one part your writing processes this semester, which will also include in-class writing activities, journaling, and collaborating with peers and other resource people and technologies. I expect you to come to me if you have questions or concerns about your use of generative AI in this class, and I will likewise come to you with questions or concerns. I will not use generative AI to grade your writing. The written feedback you get from me will be from me, although I may use generative AI for feedback in two cases: 1) if I know of a writing strategy that would be helpful to you but don't already have a handout or resource to give you; and 2) if I feel like parts of my written feedback aren't as clearly worded as they need to be.

In the spirit of transparency, it is important for you to understand what I consider to be the unauthorized use of generative AI in this class. Unauthorized use of generative AI includes failing to document and reflect on your use of it, using it in ways that undermine your learning, and presenting AI-generated content as your own original writing and thinking.

Examples of what I define as ethical use of AI in this class:

- **Exploring and Refining Topics**: Using AI to explore potential topics and gain an overview of subject areas at the start of your research.

- **Creative Brainstorming**: Employing AI for brainstorming ideas, thesis statements, or potential arguments when seeking inspiration.

- **Structural Aid in Writing**: Asking AI to help draft an initial outline, which you then enrich with your own analysis and writing.

- **Language and Grammar Enhancement**: Utilizing AI for suggestions on grammar, sentence structure, and word choice in your drafts.

- **Assisting with Research Sources**: Leveraging AI to identify potential sources, data, or studies for your critical evaluation and use.

- **Initial Feedback on Drafts**: Using AI for preliminary feedback on structure, clarity, or coherence before peer or instructor review.

- **Citation and Reference Management**: Utilizing AI for help in formatting citations and managing references in your work.

Examples of what I define as unethical use of AI in this class:

- **Outsourcing Essay Writing**: Allowing AI to write sections of essays, papers, or reflections and submitting them as your own work.

- **Completing Assignments with AI**: Using AI to complete assignments intended for your personal effort.

- **AI-Generated Discussion Contributions**: Relying on AI to create posts or responses in discussions, instead of contributing your own ideas.

- **Plagiarizing AI Content**: Submitting AI-generated work without proper attribution or as your own original creation.

- **Substituting Personal Analysis**: Depending on AI for tasks involving critical thinking, analysis, and synthesis that are key to your learning.
- **Uncredited AI Collaboration**: Using AI to significantly contribute to group projects without disclosing its use to group members and instructors.
- **AI Assistance in Assessments**: Employing AI tools during quizzes, tests, or exams for answers or solutions.

**Cell Phone Use**

Cell phones are useful tools for certain activities in this class, yet they can also be significant sources of distraction. To foster an environment conducive to learning and engagement, the following guidelines will be in place:

1. **Designated Use Times**: I will explicitly indicate when cell phones are required for class activities. During these times, feel free to use your phone as instructed.
2. **Upside-Down Phone Protocol**: When not in designated use, if you choose to have your phone on your desk, it must be placed face-down. This practice, common in professional settings, helps minimize distractions while keeping your device accessible if needed.
3. **Group Work Protocol**: During full-class or small-group activities, please refrain from using your phone or other devices. This ensures your full participation and respect for others’ contributions.
4. **Individual Work and Music**: When working independently, you are welcome to listen to music using earbuds. However, watching screens is not permitted as it can distract both you and others.
5. **Headphones Policy**: Earbuds or headphones may be used during individual work times only. They should be removed during full-class discussions, lectures, and group activities.

The rationale behind this policy is grounded in research about learning and distraction. For effective learning, focused attention on the task at hand is essential. Unregulated use of phones and devices can significantly hamper this focus. By adhering to these guidelines, we aim to create a learning environment that balances the utility of technology with the necessity of undivided attention and engagement in the learning process.

**Late Work**

Weekly assignments must be completed on time. Your participation grade will be negatively affected if you are regularly late with work or are not prepared for class.

**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/.

**Statement as a Responsible Employee / Lumberjacks Care**

SFA strives to provide an educational and work environment that affirms the rights and dignity of each individual. It is the policy of the university, in accordance with federal and state law, to prohibit unlawful gender or sex-based discrimination or harassment, including sexual assault, sexual harassment, intimate partner and dating violence, and stalking. Please be aware that all SFA employees (other than those designated as confidential resources, such as advocates, counselors and health care providers employed in these capacities by the university and as listed in section 4.5 of Policy 2.13) are required to report information about such discrimination and harassment to the university. This means that if you tell a faculty member about a situation of gender-based discrimination, sexual harassment, and/or sexual violence or other related misconduct as outlined in Policy 2.13, the faculty member must share that information with the university’s Title IX coordinator. If you would like to speak to a confidential resource who does not have this reporting responsibility, you can find a list of resources at www.sfasu.edu/Lumberjacks-care.

**Mental Health and Wellness**

SFA 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:**

SFA Counseling Services  
www.sfasu.edu/counselingservices  
Rusk Building, 3rd Floor  
936.468.2401

**SFA 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