

English 1301: Composition and Rhetoric

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Theme: Evolving Perspectives

Course Description

This is a first-year writing composition course. It is meant to ensure that college freshman understand the basics of writing before they must write higher level research papers in their area of major study. What this means is that you will WRITE WRITE WRITE and REVISE REVISE REVISE. To build the foundation for all this writing and revision, you will READ and REVIEW. You are expected to analyze and wonder why. You are expected to back up your opinions and ideas with examples from life. You are expected to communicate these epiphanies vividly and clearly, uncluttered by poor grammar and punctuation, and in a manner that holds the readers interest. You are expected to dig deep, to reflect, and to draw new connections as your perspective evolves.

The goal of this course is to teach students to write effectively, critically, creatively, and correctly. To achieve this goal, students will participate in individual and group exercises that hone their skills in critical thinking, grammar, style, punctuation, and composition. Students will study a variety of rhetorical patterns that will be used to compose their essays. Students are expected to participate daily in class discussions, group exercises, journal assignments, etc . . .

Required Text

Norton Field Guide to Writing with Readings and Handbook by Richard Bullock

Attendance

According to Sul Ross policy, a student may be dropped with a grade of F once they have accumulated 9 absences.

Please be on time to class. I will shut the door at 10:05. In a 50 minute class, there is no time for backtracking or interruptions.

Cell Phones, etc.

Turn your cell phones off before you enter the classroom. Do not bring iPods to class or any other devices that may be distracting. If you choose to answer your cellphone, leave the class and do not return until the following class period.

Lecture Etiquette

I expect to be graced with your full attention when I lecture. There will be ample opportunities for conversation during class discussions and group work. If you are unable to confine your conversations to the appropriate situations, you will be asked to leave the class. You are expected to respect your instructor as well as your fellow classmates. Rude behavior during lectures or toward other students during group discussions will not be tolerated.

Late Assignments

All essays and assignments may be turned in no later than one day after the due date and will be docked one letter grade.

Exams

There will be one exam in this class, the midterm. It will constitute 10% of the final grade. The midterm will be an in-class essay using classification and division. The revision portfolio, which includes revisions of four of the essays written during the semester, will take the place of a final exam.

Journals

Journal entries must be kept in a composition notebook with folders that is used solely for journal entries. The content of entries will vary and may involve responses to readings, self-reflection, etc . . . Journals will be collected and graded periodically. Students will be notified a week in advance of when journals are due.

Exercises

The exercises will be in-class assignments that are either done individually or as a group. They will cover grammar, punctuation, style, organization, research, or whatever the instructor deems necessary to develop writing and critical thinking skills.

Projects/Presentations

There will be at 1 oral presentation in this class.

Grading

Essays	40% (4 essays)
Journals	10%
Midterm	10%
Revision Portfolio	40%

Objectives

- Apply rhetorical patterns to compositions: descriptive, narrative, definition, cause/effect, compare/contrast, division/classification, illustration, process and analysis, and argument
- Plan, organize, draft, research, and revise essays
- Summarize and paraphrase researched information that will be incorporated in the essay
- Demonstrate effective and articulate use of transitions
- Explain, illustrate, and provide clear detailed examples to reinforce main points
- Analyze, synthesize, and evaluate information presented orally and in written form
- Use figurative language (metaphor, simile, imagery) to develop main points and create interest
- Evaluate the use of logic and rhetoric as well grammar and style in personal compositions
- Demonstrate effective use of grammar, spelling, and punctuation
- Develop unique ideas using critical thinking skills

Evaluation Criteria:

A = Ideas are creative, well developed, well organized, backed with lots of support to back assertions (specific, detailed examples, statistics, relevant facts, thorough explanations, quotes), expressed articulately and concisely, tightly focused, and contain few grammatical or documentation errors and effective transitions. Assignment instructions and formatting specifications have been followed closely.

B = Ideas are clear with adequate support (see list above), well organized, focused, relatively free of grammatical, stylistic (transitions), and formatting errors.

C = Main thesis is clear but is lacking adequate support, and the ideas that explain the thesis are vague and rather disorganized, contain poor transitions and frequent errors in grammar and formatting, and are expressed with underdeveloped, simple sentences.

D = Vague thesis, inadequate development of ideas, inadequate support, inadequate documentation, poor organization, redundant, contains slang and abundant grammar, style, and formatting errors.

F = Paper does not meet minimum page or formatting requirements, lacks explanation of ideas, support, and organization.