ENGL 3050: Introduction to Rhetoric and Composition

Fall 2025

Class Meetings:	M/Hybrid 9:30-10:45, Classroom South 303
	CRN: 90404
Instructor:	Dr. Alexandra Sladky
	Office: 2245, 25 Park Place
	Drop-In Hours: M 1-3; virtual by appointment
	Email: Asladky1@gsu.edu
Key dates:	Sept. 1 - Labor Day (No Class)
	Oct. 14 – Semester Midpoint & last day to withdraw without academic penalty
	Nov. 24-28 – Thanksgiving Break (no class)
	Dec. 8 - Last day of classes
	Dec. 9-16 – Final exams

Course Goals & Description

Welcome to English 3050: Introduction to Rhetoric and Composition!

This course will survey the history of rhetoric and composition, from Ancient Greece to present-day United States. We will gain understanding of rhetorical theory, approaches to texts (print and digital), persuasive tactics, and audience strategy. As such, the course is well suited for students wishing to work in a variety of capacities as writer in a range of careers or for those who might enter a teaching profession or law.

Given our current moment, it couldn't be a better time to explore the history of rhetoric. From its Greek and Roman roots to contemporary applications, we'll investigate the many different approaches to persuasion and rhetorical deliberation, especially those approaches intended to move people to action.

Course learning outcomes include the following:

- Describe writing instruction and rhetoric in ancient Greece, classical Rome, the European Christian era, Medieval Europe, Modern Europe, and America

- Identify, explain, and apply basic rhetorical concepts (appeals, types of discourse, argument, canons of rhetoric, collaborative writing, evidence, thesis, stasis, topoi, purpose, brainstorming, revision, editing, peer review)

- Apply rhetorical strategies effectively in various writing situations

- Explain the relationship between writing/rhetoric and its socio- politico-cultural contexts

- Identify and explain the contribution to rhetoric of major rhetorical theorists

- Demonstrate knowledge of MLA style for writing and citing sources

Textbook / Readings

- James A. Herrick, *The History and Theory of Rhetoric: An Introduction*, sixth edition. Routledge, 2018.

- Selections from *Available Means: An Anthology of Women's Rhetoric(s)*, available as an ebook from GSU library: https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&AuthType=ip,shib&db=nlebk&AN=829578&site=eds-live&scope=site&custid=gsu1

- Other readings via iCollege

Grading Scale

Superior	Satisfactory	Needs Improvement	Failing
100 to 98 = A+	89 to 88 = B+	79 to 78 = C+	69 to 60 = D
97 to 93 = A	87 to 83 = B	77 to 70 = C	Below 60 = F
92 to 90 = A-	82 to 80 = B-		

Grades represent my best and fairest judgment of the overall quality of your work. Grades in this class will be based on three general criteria: 1. rhetorical skill, 2. control of writing, and 3. reflection. Rhetorical skill may include demonstrating audience awareness and analysis, persuasiveness, author's credibility, and evidence of research. Control of writing addresses grammar and correctness, but also refers to appropriateness of style, tone, and document design. Reflection refers to the ability of

the writer to evaluate their own work and writing process and to communicate ideas and visions to others.

Specific criteria will be discussed in class for each assignment prior to the due date. All three of these concepts will be evaluated by examining a portfolio of work for your major project(s) (including a reflective essay and revisions). Your instructor will discuss assignment criteria before any assignment is due.

Grading and Assignment Breakdown

Assignment	Weight
Weekly Class Participation (including participation in in-class discussion; iCollege discussion boards; reading responses; in-class writing; in-class activities; quotes and questions)	25%
Exploratory Writing Projects (23 projects, 15% each) - Encomium (15%) - Patronage Letter (15% - Available Means Composition (15%)	45%
Rhetorical Multimodal Final Project	25%
Final Course Reflection	5%
Total	**100%**

Description of Assignments

Weekly Class Participation (25%)

Participation and engagement are expected and integral to success in the course. I will post updates and reminders on iCollege throughout the semester. Please keep up with the timeline in the syllabus each week in case you have questions or concerns about completing the assigned tasks. Note the cycle of work and deadlines for each week. Deadlines are vital to maintain a productive rhythm in our class and one assignment often builds on another. ***Weekly participation grades vary. Participation includes some combination of quote and question online discussion board posts, reading responses, in-class assignments and activities, homework, and in-class discussion.**

Your success will rely on logging into iCollege and checking your GSU student email regularly to engage with course materials, other students, and me. Our course will include whole-class interactions, small-group work, and self-paced activities.

If you ever have questions about my expectations, collaborating with others, what you need to hand in, what I have received in iCollege, or your course grades, please feel free to email your questions, come to my drop-in hours, or schedule a virtual meeting.

Quotes and Questions Discussion Posts

This assignment will be due at the beginning of each class period based on the schedule (at the end of this document), **you will submit one overarching question and a quote from each of the assigned texts for that days' reading**. Your question can address a specific text or a theme running through several texts. Quotes may be anything from the texts that resonate with you. Along with each quote, you will discuss why you find the quote significant. Personal reflections connected with the texts/ discussions are perfectly appropriate for this assignment and are expected. See handout for further guidelines.

Available Means Composition (15%)

This assignment will ask you to present to your peers and professor about one primary source rhetorical piece of writing, and the author and context that created it. We will be drawing from the anthology *Available Means: An Anthology of Women's Rhetoric(s).* You will only need to access the table of contents, introduction, and your chosen piece, which you can download/view via the GSU library's ebook copy. This "composition" can take the form of a written document, or a visual presentation offered in multimodal form. The final product will need to be accessible to your peers on iCollege and in class. We will learn from each other throughout the semester, with 1-2 compositions each week. You will sign up for your preferred date to submit/present, so this will have a rolling deadline throughout the semester. Rubric and instructions to come.

Exploratory Writing Projects (30%)

Encomium (15%)
Invent, organize, and write a classical encomium on a figure important to rhetorical history and from the course so far. You will prepare a paper of praise or blame (insult) of a rhetorical figure. This is an opportunity to think about who we study already and who we should study *more*.

Patronage Letter (15%)
Write a letter where you ask a member of nobility or another prominent person for support for a rhetorical venture of your choice, such as a new scientific society to a journey of discovery. Consider the genre, what conventions have we noticed about letters and the style of writing associated with them and the rhetorical moves? Consider your means of persuasion as you construct your letter. You will need to conduct research mostly based in your textbook to help you find a viable project and consider types of arguments that were likely to be effective given your audience.

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Rhetorical Multimodal Final Project (25%)

Multimodal Resource delivered electronically in draft and final form: e.g. flyer, pamphlet, movie poster and synopsis, wiki, updates to a Wikipedia page, blog, prezi, powerpoint, recording, web link, etc. Consider a specific rhetorical figure or concept or the history of rhetoric in general. (You might use this as an opportunity to explain why we should study a figure, concept, or subject in general.) Project reflection 1-2 pages.

Final Course Reflection (5%)

Notes on Community

Community

We are part of a learning community dedicated to supporting a positive environment for all participants. We should treat one another with respect at all times. Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important relating to individuals and topics dealing with differences of race, culture, religion, politics, sexual orientation, gender, and nationalities. In our online spaces, special care must be taken to pay attention to communicate in a positive and supportive way. Disruptive behavior, such as posting derogatory comments or consistently missing scheduled collaborative work time, does not support community building. Keep in mind that our community extends beyond our iCollege and classroom spaces to course emails and all environments used for our course interactions. Please see the Code of Conduct for information regarding GSU's Disruptive Student Behavior Policy.

Community of Care & Mental Health Resources

Being a student can be stressful; you often have a lot to manage between classes, personal life, family, and work. In addition, writing and composing are vulnerable acts. As part of our effort to form a supportive community in this class, we should strive to look out for one another. A kind word, an enthusiastic comment about a peer's writing, or simply offering to listen can go a long way toward this goal. If stresses emerge regarding your course work, please speak with me. I will strive to support each of you in your academic life.

As a student, you may experience a range of challenges that can interfere with learning, such as strained relationships, increased anxiety, substance use, feeling down, difficulty concentrating and/or lack of motivation. These mental health concerns or stressful events may impact your ability to attend class, concentrate, complete work, take an exam, or participate in daily activities. Problems with relationships, family worries, loss, housing or food insecurity, or a personal struggle or crisis can also contribute to decreased academic performance. In these cases, please consider taking advantage of the resources the university provides through the Dean of Students' Office or the Counseling and Testing Center. You can reach Counseling at https://counselingcenter.gsu.edu/ and 404-413-1640 and the Dean of Students Student Advocacy team at https://deanofstudents.gsu.edu/ and 404-413-1515. Emergency assistance may also be available; you can access information at https://deanofstudents.gsu.edu/student-assistance/.

Course Help & Resources

Your Instructor

Your professor for this course is here to help you engage with the content, stretch your knowledge, and support your learning. Please talk with her if you have questions throughout the semester. She welcomes conversation after class, use of office hours, and questions and engaged discussion during class. She won't always know the answers and doesn't have it all figured out, either. Isn't that a relief?

Student Accommodations

Students who wish to request accommodation may do so by contacting the Access and Accommodations Center. Information specific to matters related to Covid can be found on their homepage. Georgia State University complies with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Students may only be accommodated upon issuance of a formal Accommodation Plan and are responsible for providing a copy of that plan to instructors of all classes in which an accommodation is sought. The starting point for getting a plan in place is the Eligibility Verification Form. Contact the Access and Accommodations staff for more information.

Please schedule an individual appointment with me so that we may discuss any accommodations you need in our class and together come up with a plan for your success. To respect your privacy, we will not discuss these accommodations in class discussions or in collaborative group settings.

Writing Studio

The Writing Studio's mission is to support you in your writing for our course and beyond, as noted below, "...to enhance undergraduate and graduate student writing by encouraging all writers to participate in regular conversation about the writing process and their academic work. We believe that talking about ideas and the art of writing with knowledgeable readers creates the ideal learning environment for practicing personal expression, persuasion, and critical thinking, all of which are vital to succeeding in the arts of academic and professional writing and communication. We support a community where writers, readers, and teachers all learn from each other, by responding to each others' texts with engaged conversation."

This service is free and a valuable resource for all writers, and I strongly encourage you to take advantage of this space. Please note, that you will need to make an appointment for tutoring at www.writingstudio.gsu.edu.

Course Policies

Student Illness

If a student develops a fever, cough, or any symptoms of concern, they should not go to class or work. If a student becomes ill or is required to quarantine/isolate during the semester, they should notify their instructor as soon as possible. I will be flexible with attendance policies and assist students with making up assignments when possible.

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Students who want to do well in this course will attend class each Thursday and be active on iCollege throughout the week as noted in the weekly checklist. If you need excused absences due to illness or other life event, please use the link below through the Dean of Students Office. Please submit documentation to https://deanofstudents.gsu.edu/student-assistance/#professor. I will then be notified by the Dean of Students of your request.

Missed and Late Work

All major assignments and tests must be completed to pass the course. Generally, late major projects and tests are not accepted. It is vital, therefore, that you plan to meet all scheduled work deadlines. Reading responses and weekly work are time sensitive. As noted above, this work assists you with weekly learning, is often scaffolding into a project in a specific way, and may be collaborative. It is especially important that you complete this work on time.
I do understand that emergencies can arise and that accommodations may needed for students who find that, during the term, they are not able to attend class or participate fully in courses (see Student Illness policy above). Please email me as soon as possible to discuss allowances that I can make in the case of a necessary absence.

Communication

All assignment material and course announcements will be posted on our class iCollege site. I may also use my GSU faculty email address to send information to your GSU student email address. You will need to check both our class iCollege site and your campus email several times each week. Remember, you are responsible for all information posted for class.

If you would like to contact me directly, please do so via email (asladky1@gsu.edu). You may have questions or just want to chat about class—I encourage both! I typically check my email throughout the day on weekdays. This means I may not receive an email you send on Friday night until Monday—plan accordingly. Additionally, while you may have a personal email account that you prefer to use, I will only send and respond to emails in your GSU student email account, per university policy. All correspondence, therefore, will come to yourcampusid@student.gsu.edu. Please check this account regularly as communication may be sent to this address.

Assignment Submission

All coursework must be submitted electronically to our class iCollege site. Emailed work will not be accepted for grading. Our default for citation and paper formatting is MLA. Specific requirements for individual assignments will be posted in the handouts for each one. While it is your responsibility to know proper format and to submit your essays based on class expectations, I am happy to answer questions in advance of any due date.

AI Writing Tools Policy

Throughout this semester, we will actively engage with AI writing tools as part of our course activities. These tools will serve as:

- **Conversation Partners:** To support brainstorming and idea generation.
- **Proofreaders:** To provide feedback on grammar, clarity, and style.

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- **Writing Coaches:** To assist in developing and refining your written work.

While we will regularly use AI, you are expected to engage with it thoughtfully, critically, and responsibly. This course will not only incorporate AI into writing tasks but also encourage you to critically reflect on the role and impact of AI on digital communication and world interactions. Proper citation of any AI assistance is mandatory, and Georgia State University (GSU) has established best practices for using AI in academic settings. While AI-powered language models (LLMs) can assist with generating text and producing human-like language, they should only be used to support your writing and learning.

Guidelines for AI Use
1. **Cite AI Use According to MLA Style:**
   - Whenever you use AI tools, such as ChatGPT, for any assignment in this course (formal or informal), you must include an acknowledgment statement, such as: **"The writing of this paper was informed by Co-Pilot."**
   - Include a screenshot of the prompt you used and the AI-generated output you consulted.
2. **Respect Privacy:**
   - Do not share personal, private, or confidential information with any AI tool.
   - This includes your own or others' names, birthdays, email addresses, phone numbers, home addresses, student information, and any GSU faculty, staff, or course details.
3. **Use Approved Platforms:**
   - For AI research or assignments related to GSU courses, use GSU's approved and contracted AI platform, **Co-Pilot** (Logging in with your GSU credentials is required.)
   - Learn more about accessing your GSU Co-Pilot AI platform here: [GSU AI with Intention Guide](#).
4. **Maintain Academic Integrity:**
   Do not simply copy/paste AI-generated content and present it as your own work.
   - Do not submit AI-revised text as your own without significant and original modification. Submitting unoriginal AI-generated text is considered plagiarism and will result in academic consequences.
   Engage in honest discussions about your use of AI and cite it properly in your work.

Course AI Policy
Generative AI tools, such as ChatGPT, are designed to <u>assist</u> in creating and analyzing text, code, video, audio, and other multimedia. Use of these resources in your coursework comes with benefits and risks. In this course, we will use AI in some specified ways. You are permitted to use AI in the following ways, but you MUST attribute your use of AI using MLA style citations, and you MUST turn in the prompts you use with AI:

- **Never** simply copy and paste an AI's response and try to pass it off as your own. Using generative AI in this way may be considered a breach of academic honesty.

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- Use generative AI for early idea and draft development. You are required to turn in the prompt(s) you use, the AI's responses, and all the subsequent drafts so that I can see your work.
- Include citations for any generative AI toils that you use to help with assignments for this course. Cite using MLA style and include an explanation of how AI tool was used and which prompts were given. Include screen shots of prompts that you use with AI.
- When we do assigned activities that use AI, you should indicate which parts of the work are yours and which parts were generated or informed by AI.
- If you aren't sure how to use AI, or aren't sure if the ways that you are using it are appropriate, please don't hesitate to ask. This is new territory and we are all still trying to figure it out. I'm interested in having conversations about these tools to figure out what is the best way to use them in our classroom. While exercising responsible and ethical engagement with AI is a skill you may hone over time, your unique human insights, critical thinking, and creative contributions remain pivotal to your learning experiences.

*Use of Co-Pilot through the university credential login is encouraged.

*Turnitin AI detection will also be enabled for violating academic honesty references.

Plagiarism and Academic Honesty

You should familiarize yourself with [Georgia State's Policy on Academic Honesty](). This policy refers to every piece of writing you do for class, including drafts, reading responses, discussion posts, and finished essays. If you are ever unsure what may or may not be plagiarism, please do not hesitate to ask me. In fact, I welcome your questions. Any work that is turned in to this class that is plagiarized or violates the university academic honesty policy will receive an automatic 0 for the assignment grade and must be referred to the College of Arts and Sciences for further review and potential disciplinary action. TurnItIn will be enabled for all assignments.

Georgia State University defines plagiarism as . . .
" . . . any paraphrasing or summarizing of the works of another person without acknowledgment, including the submitting of another student's work as one's own . . . [It] frequently involves a failure to acknowledge in the text . . . the quotation of paragraphs, sentences, or even phrases written by someone else." At GSU, "the student is responsible for understanding the legitimate use of sources . . . and the consequences of violating this responsibility."

In addition, students are required to be honest in their academic work by writing their own papers. Handing in papers you receive from someone else or allowing someone else to heavily edit or write work for you constitutes an academic honesty violation. In addition, using work from previous courses or other current courses (from any course at any school whether high school or college) is also a violation of the academic honesty code.

Other Policies

Online Evaluation of Instructors

Your constructive assessment of this course plays an indispensable role in shaping education at Georgia State. Upon completing the course, please take time to fill out the online course

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evaluation. Our student evaluation form also offers the opportunity for you to reflect on your own course performance and educational goals.

English Majors and the Graduation Portfolio

The English department at GSU requires an exit portfolio of all students graduating with a degree in English. Ideally, students should work on this every semester, selecting 1-2 papers from each course in the major and revising them, with direction from faculty members. The portfolio includes revised work and a reflective essay about what you've learned. Each concentration (literature, creative writing, rhetoric/composition, and secondary education) within the major has specific items to place in the portfolio, so be sure to download the packet from the English department website.

The Senior Portfolio is due at the midpoint of the semester you intend to graduate. Please check the university's academic calendar for that date. Please direct questions about your portfolio to the instructor of your senior seminar or to Dr. Mark Noble, Director of Undergraduate Studies.

Note on organic nature of the course:

This syllabus reflects a plan for the course. Changes to this plan may become necessary as the semester progresses.
Major updates will be provided in writing by your instructor.
Students are responsible for taking note of any changes that may occur.

WEEKLY:
3 hours in class
3 hours reading/researching/writing for homework and assignment completion.

Please talk to your instructor and your advisor before withdrawing from this course. We care about your success and are here to discuss your options with you.

Weekly Schedule Spring 2025: English 3050

Semester Week	Topic	Readings	Deadlines (Check i-College Weekly!)
Week 1 Mon. Aug. 25	Course introduction; Introduction to Available Means Contextualizing rhetoric and ourselves	Course syllabus overview; Course schedule	
Wed. Aug. 27	Overview of rhetorical theory and origins	Booth, "How many rhetorics?"	**Post:** What is Rhetoric? **Syllabus Quiz.**
Week 2: Mon. Sept. 1 *Labor Day:* *No Class Meeting*	*No class meeting*	Selections from *Papyrus* by Irene Vallejo, p. 68-92	
Wed. Sept. 3	Origins of Rhetoric	Selections from *Papyrus* by Irene Vallejo, p. 68-92	**Post:** Quote & Question
Week 3: Mon. Sept. 8	Origins of Rhetoric	Selection from Homer's *The Iliad*	

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Wed. Sept. 10	Language and Power	Herrick, chapter 1: An Overview of Rhetoric; Ritchie & Ronald, "Introduction"	**Post:** Quote & Question
Week 4: Mon. Sept. 15	Language and Power	Aspasia; Pericles' Funeral Oration "On Dying for Your Country" (trans. Johanna Hanink); spend 10 minutes researching "encomium."	Share knowledge about encomium.
Wed. Sept. 17	Greek Rhetoric: Sophists and Plato	*Papyrus*, p. 144-158; Herrick Ch. 2	**Post:** Quote & Question
Week 5: Mon. Sept. 22	Greek Rhetoric	Glenn, Mapping the Silences, or Remapping Rhetorical Territory; Sappho selections; Listen to Natalie Haynes Stands Up for the Classics episode "Sappho."	
Wed. Sept. 24	Greek Rhetoric: Aristotle Knowledge and truth: dialectic v rhetoric	Herrick Ch. 3; Encomium on Helen (read or listen)	**Post:** Quote & Question

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Week 6: Mon. Sept. 29	Aristotle	Herrick Ch. 4	**1-page Proposals for Multimodal Project**
Wed. Oct. 1	Aristotle	Read Ch. 1-3 of Aristotle's "On Rhetoric" (PDF)	**Post:** Quote & Question
Week 7: Mon. Oct. 6	Roman rhetoric and Cicero	Herrick Ch. 5; Cicero selection; Listen to Natalie Haynes Stands Up for the Classics episode "Cicero"	
Wed. Oct. 8	**Exploratory Writing Project 1: Encomium & Critical Reflection**	**Exploratory Writing Project 1: Encomium & Critical Reflection**	**Exploratory Writing Project 1: Encomium & Critical Reflection**
Week 8: Mon. Oct. 13 *Semester midpoint; last Day to withdrawal: Oct. 14*	Roman rhetoric	*Progymnasmata* selections; Roman letters; Ovid's *Metamorphoses* selections	
Wed. Oct. 15	Rhetoric in Christian Europe	Herrick Ch. 6; Read Augustine Book 1.12-14	**Post:** Quote & Question

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Week 9: Mon. Oct. 20	Arabic Rhetoric in the Middle Ages	*Copia* of Erasmus; "Alfarabi's Book of Rhetoric: An Arabic-English Translation of Alfarabi's Commentary on Aristotle's *Rhetoric*," Ezzaher	
Wed. Oct. 22	Rhetoric in the Renaissance	Herrick Ch. 7	**Post:** Quote & Question
Week 10: Mon. Oct. 27	Enlightenment Rhetoric	Herrick Ch. 8	
Wed. Oct. 29	**Exploratory Writing Project 2: Patronage Letter & Critical Reflection**	**Exploratory Writing Project 2: Patronage Letter & Critical Reflection**	**Exploratory Writing Project 2: Patronage Letter & Critical Reflection**
Week 11: Mon. Nov. 3	Enlightenment Rhetoric	Campbell & Austin;n Infographic Design Resources Module	**Post:** Quote & Question
Wed. Nov. 5	Intro to contemporary rhetoric The Rhetorical Situation	Bitzer, "The Rhetorical Situation"; Vatz, "Myth of the Rhetorical Situation"	***Post:*** *Draft a list of Pros/Cons for Bitzer's angle v. Vatz's angle - bring to class!*

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Week 12: Mon. Nov. 10	Identification and audience	Herrick pp. 230-239; Burke reading on Identification; Herrick pp.268-276	*Available Means Presentation (2) **Conferences for multimodal projects - now through end of term**
Wed. Nov. 12	Text, Power, and Alternatives **Available Means Composition and Critical Reflection Due**	Flores, "Between abundance and marginalization: the imperative of racial rhetorical criticism"; Royster, "When the First Voice You Hear Is Not Your Own"	**Post:** Quote & Question **Available Means Composition and Critical Reflection Due**
Week 13: Mon. Nov. 17	Rhetorical Empathy	Blankenship, *Changing the Subject,* "Introduction," pp. 1-25	
Wed. Nov. 19	Multimodal Composing	Gagich: "Introduction to and Strategies for Multimodal Composing"	**Post:** Quote & Question

Week 14: Nov. 24-28 ***Thanksgiving Break: No Class Meeting***		Readings!	Work on final projects!
Week 15: Mon. Dec. 1	Rhetoric in our lives: professional, personal, power systems; Work on Multimodal Projects	*Not All Dead White Men*, Donna Zuckerberg; "Is Donald Trump a Modern-Day Catiline?" Gonzalez-Ocaña; "Frederick Douglass: the (In)Credible Orator," Spiers	Final Project presentations
Wed. Dec. 3	Final Projects	Final Projects	Final project presentations
Week 16: Mon. Dec. 8 *Last Day of Classes*	Final Projects	Final Projects	Final Project Presentations; **Projects due 12/8 by 11:59 PM**
Exam Week: Dec. 9-16	Exam Week No Class Meetings		

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