ENGL 4320: Rhetoric and Composition Senior Seminar

Spring 2026

Class Meetings:	**Hybrid course: Monday, 11-12:15 (W: virtual/independent work)**
	Classroom South 310
	CRN: 18459
Instructor:	**Dr. Alexandra Sladky**
	Drop-In Hours: M/W 12:30-1:30; virtual by appointment
	Email: Asladky1@gsu.edu
Key dates:	**Jan. 19 – MLK Jr. Day (no class)**
	Mar. 3 – Semester Midpoint & last day to withdraw without academic penalty
	Mar. 16-22 – Spring Break (no class)
	April 27 - Last day of classes
	Apr. 28-May 5 – Final exams

Course Goals & Description

Course catalog description: Prerequisite: English 3050 with a grade of C or higher, and at least twelve hours of upper-division courses in rhetoric and advanced composition and technical and professional writing. Limited to 15 students. For English majors only. Opportunity for advanced research and completion of a capstone project in rhetoric or composition. Topics vary. Serves as one of the two **Critical Thinking Through Writing (CTW) courses** required of all English majors.

My spin:
This course is the culmination of your program study in Rhetoric and Composition at GSU. You are about to graduate from college and you might be thinking: how does reading prepare you for a life beyond college? How do you read now that you've nearly completed a degree in Rhetoric and Composition? How do you read *rhetorically*? In this iteration of the senior seminar, we will go on a journey to answer these questions by reading *You Are Odysseus*, by L. Jenkinson-Brown. We will explore what it means to read the *Odyssey* rhetorically, why it is important to read this text now, and what our own experiences bring to our interpretations of this story. This course provides a chance for you to reconsider and revisit the pivotal moments in your journey through GSU as you reflect on your past work in the program, identify your career options, assemble a portfolio for both assessment and job search purposes, and produce a project that represents the best of your abilities.

Course Learning Outcomes
English 4320, Senior Seminar, is an advanced course in rhetoric and composition that helps you assess and hone your skills as writers and readers and is geared toward helping you to reflect on your career development. It provides a chance for you to encapsulate your knowledge of rhetorical principles and ways to apply that knowledge in real-world communication situations.

In this course, we will critically re-examine, revise, and reflect on your current and past work. You'll create a portfolio that represents the best of your rhetorical skills for assessment as well as job search purposes. In addition, you will create a capstone project that explores a key rhetorical or thematic aspect of your experience reading *You Are Odysseus*.

Upon successful completion of this course, you will be able to demonstrate your ability to

- Engage in critical thinking, writing, and analysis;

- Revise and reflect on your rhetorical work;

- Accurately assess any given rhetorical context with regard to the purposes;

  audiences, genres, platform, and mode of communication;

- Conduct primary and secondary research;

- Foster communication practices that demand a consideration of ethics;

- Use technology effectively to serve the purposes of communication;

- Advocate reader/user needs;

- Create effective contexts for collaboration; and

- Design effective visual as well as verbal communication.

Portfolios: https://english.gsu.edu/senior-portfolios/

Textbooks and Materials

Jenkinson-Brown, L. *You Are Odysseus*. Blackboard Fiction, 2025, ISBN: 978-1068240607.
Additional readings available on iCollege.
Reliable internet access.
Laptop/Computer/Tablet.

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; progress progressions; etc.)	20%
Senior Portfolio (10%) and Critical Reflection (15%)	25%
Personal Odyssey Bio	5%
Career Odyssey Infographic Project	15%
Mapping Your Journey: Reading Log Assignment	5%
Capstone Project (Proposal (5%), Project (15%), Critical Reflection (5%))	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 online discussion board posts, reading responses, in-class assignments and activities, homework, quote and question discussion posts, project progressions, 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.

Discussion Board Post Topics

There are two kinds of discussion board topics for this course, Quote and Questions and Project Progressions. Quote and Questions are reading response posts where you address specific readings from the class. Project Progressions are where you respond to prompts to provide updates about the state of your capstone project.

Quotes and Questions Discussion Posts

This assignment will be due on Wednesdays, 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.

The format of these responses will be to respond to peers' posts. Each discussion post will respond to the one most recent post, creating a single discussion. The aim of this is to build a conversation on the discussion boards and respond to peers' posts.

Project Progression Discussion Posts

This assignment will be due on Wednesdays, based on the schedule (at the end of this document). English 4320 contains many projects that you have large amounts of time over the course of the semester to complete. These discussion posts serve as checkpoints throughout the life of the project and intend to help keep you on track. I'll ask you to check in with me and your peers throughout the project and post your updates within these discussion posts.

Career Odyssey Infographic Project

When people ask what can you do with an English Major? Usually, the answer is an enthusiastic "Anything!" Identify a possible career goal, the skills that you have that are evidence of your competency toward that goal, and the skills that you still need to gain. This assignment helps you figure out what kinds of positions you can/should apply for when you graduate from this program, what is required for the position, and what strengths/weaknesses you possess. Unlike Odysseus, you will give you a clear path forward on your journey. Deliver this project as an infographic. Bring a copy of the infographic to class. Present this project briefly to the class in the form of a gallery walk.

Personal Odyssey: Bio Project

Write your personal bio that reflects your own odyssey through college. Explore your academic, personal, and intellectual development as a rhetorical journey – complete with trials, transformations, mentors, monsters, and revelations.

Senior Portfolio and Critical Reflection

As one of the requirements for your graduation, you must create a portfolio either directly in iCollege or upload your url into iCollege if your portfolio is hosted on another platform. Your portfolio serves two major purposes: assessment and job search. The Critical Reflection is an essay component of the Senior Exit Portfolio. It allows you to reflect not only on the works you have selected in your portfolio but also on your path of growth as a rhetorician.

Capstone Project

Create a final project that explores a key rhetorical or thematic aspect of your experience reading *You Are Odysseus*. This choose-your-own adventure text invites readers to engage with myth through agency, perspective, and interpretation. Your project should analyze, reflect on, or creatively respond to this experience in a way that demonstrates your growth as a scholar of rhetoric and composition. This is a multimodal project. Deliver the project in the form of a website, video essay, photo essay, podcast episode, blog, playlist, graph, or powerpoint. It includes a presentation and a critical reflection.

Final Course Reflection

Reflect on your experience in the course.

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.

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.
- **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.
- 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 is enabled for each assignment.

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.

Incompletes

To receive an incomplete, a student must inform the instructor, either in person or in writing, of his/her inability to complete the requirements of the course. A grade of incomplete will only be considered for students who meet the following three conditions:
- passing the course with a C or better
- present a legitimate, non-academic reason to the instructor (documentation is required)
- have only one major assignment left to finish.

Assignment of incompletes and the terms for removal of the "I" will be set at the instructor's discretion in accordance with university policies.

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 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. Melissa McLeod, 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.

English 4320 Course Schedule: Spring 2026
Dr. Sladky

Note about Plan: Assignments due for Mondays are for the in-class discussions. Assignments for Wednesdays are for the online discussion board posts. We will do our best to address all readings in class.

Semester Week	Topic	Reading	Assignments Due (Check iCollege Weekly!)
Week 1 Mon. Jan. 12	Course introduction Contextualizing ourselves as English majors and rhetoricians.	Course syllabus overview; Course schedule; Introduce Career Odyssey	What is an "odyssey?" Do some research to understand the history of the word. How/why has it become culturally significant to us?
Wed. Jan. 14	What is your odyssey through GSU's rhet/comp program?	Career Odyssey Proposal	Career Odyssey discussion post.
Week 2 Mon. Jan. 19 *MLK Jr. Day: No*	What is your odyssey through GSU's rhet/comp program?	Homer's *Odyssey* Book 1, Trans. Emily Wilson	*No class meeting*

Class Meeting			
Wed. Jan. 21	What is your odyssey through GSU's rhet/comp program?	Homer's *Odyssey* Book 1, Trans. Emily Wilson	**Career Odyssey proposal due!**
Week 3 Mon. Jan. 26	What is your odyssey through GSU's rhet/comp program?	Homer's *Odyssey* Book 1, Trans. Emily Wilson	Who is Odysseus?
Wed. Jan. 28	What is your odyssey through GSU's rhet/comp program?	Work on Career Odyssey Project	Work on Career Odyssey Project
Week 4 Mon. Feb. 2	What is your odyssey through GSU's rhet/comp program?	**Presentations: Career Odyssey Projects** Portfolio Review, incl. Personal Odyssey Bio Project!	**Career Odyssey Project due! Gallery Walk**
Wed. Feb. 4	What is your odyssey through GSU's rhet/comp program? How do you read *You Are Odysseus*?	Blankenship "A Brief History of Empathy"	Portfolio Artifact Mapping discussion post
Week 5 Mon. Feb. 9	What is your odyssey through GSU's rhet/comp program? How do you read *You Are Odysseus*?	Calvino "The Odysseys within the Odyssey"; Hauser "Intro" to *Penelope's Bones*	Revision Plan Workshop; Personal Odyssey Bio creation
Wed. Feb. 11	What is your odyssey through GSU's rhet/comp	Read "The AI Question, or What If Homer Had	Rhetorical Significance and Challenges

	program? How do you read *You Are Odysseus*?	ChatGPT?"	discussion post.
Week 6 Mon. Feb. 16	How do you read *You Are Odysseus*?	Read *You Are Odysseus*	Critical Reflection Mapping
Wed. Feb. 18	What is your odyssey through GSU's rhet/comp program? How do you read *You Are Odysseus*?	Read *You Are Odysseus*	Quote and question reading response discussion post.
Week 7 Mon. Feb. 23	What is your odyssey through GSU's rhet/comp program? How do you read *You Are Odysseus*?	Read *You Are Odysseus*	Work on Portfolio
Wed. Feb. 25	What is your odyssey through GSU's rhet/comp program? How do you read *You Are Odysseus*?	Read *You Are Odysseus*	Work on Portfolio
Week 8 Mon. Mar. 2 *Semester Midpoint: March 3*	How do you read *You Are Odysseus*?	**In-Class Portfolio Reflection and Discussion; Capstone Project Intro**	**Portfolio Due Mar. 3!** Includes Portfolio, Critical Reflection and Personal Odyssey: Bio
Wed. Mar. 4	How do you read *You Are Odysseus*?	Read *You Are Odysseus*	Quote and question reading response discussion post.

Week 9 Mon. Mar. 9	How do you read *You Are Odysseus*?	Read *You Are Odysseus*	**Capstone Project Proposals Due**
Wed. Mar. 11	How do you read *You Are Odysseus*?	Read *You Are Odysseus*	Quote and question reading response discussion post.
Week 10 Mon. Mar. 16-Mar. 22 *Spring Break: No Class*	How do you read *You Are Odysseus*?	**Complete your readings of *You Are Odysseus*; Complete reading logs.**	
Week 11 Mon. Mar. 23	How do you read *You Are Odysseus*?	**Share Reading Logs**	**Reading Logs Due**
Wed. Mar. 25	Capstone Projects	Work on Capstone Projects	Project Progressions
Week 12 Mon. Mar. 30	Capstone Projects	Work on Capstone Projects	Work on Capstone Projects
Wed. Apr. 1	Capstone Projects	Work on Capstone Projects	Project Progressions
Week 13 Mon. Apr. 6	Capstone Projects	Work on Capstone Projects	Work on Capstone Projects
Wed. Apr. 8	Capstone Projects; Presentation Prep	Work on Capstone Projects	Project Progressions
Week 14 Mon. Apr. 13	Presentations	Present Capstone Projects	Present Capstone Projects
Wed. Apr. 15	Presentation Prep	Prepare Capstone Project Presentations	Prepare Capstone Project Presentations
Week 15 Mon.	Presentations	Present Capstone Projects	Present Capstone Projects

Apr. 20			
Wed. Apr. 22	Presentation Prep	Prepare Capstone Project Presentations	Prepare Capstone Project Presentations
Week 16 Mon. Apr. 27 *Last Day of Classes*	Presentations	Present Capstone Projects	Present Capstone Projects **Turn in all components of capstone projects today!**
Final Exams **April 28-May 5** *No Class Meetings*			