

RHETORIC AND WRITING STUDIES (RWS) 1301

CRN: 22584

Instructor Information

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Office Hours: *11.30 a.m.–1.00 p.m. (Fridays)*

Location: *University Writing Center, Second Floor of the University Library*

[The office hours are subject to change after you all let me know what times work best for you.]

Office hours are dedicated times each week where you can drop in to meet with a professor. Office hours for this class will be held face-to-face mostly, but I am also open for online meetings via Zoom or Blackboard Collaborate based on your convenience. I am also available on other days and at times by appointment only. Don't hesitate to reach out!

UTEP e-mail is the best way to contact me. I will make every attempt to respond to your email within 24-48 hours of receipt. While e-mailing me, be sure to email from your UTEP student account, and please put the course number in the subject line. In the body of your e-mail, clearly state your question. At the end of your e-mail, be sure to include your first and last name, and your university identification number (UTEP ID).

Program Overview

At UTEP, the **First-Year Composition (FYC) program** in the English department offers two first-year courses that are typically taken as a sequence, RWS 1301—Rhetoric and Composition I and RWS 1302—Rhetoric and Composition II. These courses are intended to help students develop and reflect upon their rhetorical and writing knowledge including awareness of social and racial justice, and the implications of their language choices when they write, based on the understanding that language is never neutral. Therefore, we teach writing as a complex activity through which students are given guidance and often collaborate. Drawing on the rich scholarship of Rhetoric and Writing Studies, we have designed our courses to help students address the challenges of 21st century composing. In these courses, students are empowered to determine the most effective strategies, arrangements, and media to use in different rhetorical contexts.

The FYC program reminds students that the primary purpose of these classes is the learning and practice of writing. The Conference on College Composition and Communication together with the Council of Writing Program Administrators state:

Writing classes teach writing: Principally, writing classes foreground writing itself as a complex, distributed activity premised upon sociality and community formation, processes and materials, flexibility, and ethical communication. Writing classes may involve participants in purposeful interpersonal interactions (discussions and conversations), writing-related activities (peer review, studying features in model texts), and interpreting texts (making meaning individually or together with others); however, the activity of writing itself continues to be central to what a writing class sponsors.

(CCCC and CWPA Joint Statement in Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic)

And We Are...

The First-Year Composition Program is geographically and discursively situated in the US-Mexico borderland and offers a binational and transnational experience through culture, language, and knowledge. We are committed both to learning from students and to building our program in a way that honors what they bring with them into the classroom and encourages them to make their voices heard in the university and beyond. Our vision is to collectively journey toward the practice of self-reflexivity, listening carefully and empathically to the ideas and experiences that challenge our thinking, and to engage various rhetorical practices and genres of traditional and non-traditional writing. The program's curriculum design encourages students to imagine the possibilities of speaking, listening, and being heard through different literacies and compositions. We invite students to explore topics from local, global, and disciplinary contexts that matter to them while learning effective writing skills and being mindful of their own situations and audiences.

RWS 1301 & 1302 Learning Outcomes

- 1) Students will reflect on and critically analyze their own language experiences.
- 2) Students will synthesize information about racial and ethnic biases and other social justice issues and confront these issues in their writing.
- 3) Students will demonstrate engagement with multiple media sources through their projects, including, but not limited to, digital resources.
- 4) Students will identify relevant research sources and opportunities from their lived experiences, their campus interactions, and their engagement within their communities.
- 5) Students will apply knowledge from local communities to research broader social issues demonstrating their critical awareness.

At the end of these FYC courses, students will be able to:

Critical thinking and reading

- Think, read, and write analytically and reflectively.
- Address specific, immediate rhetorical situations and their effects on individuals and communities.
- Read a diverse range of texts and apply these texts to different audiences, contexts, and situations.

Composing practices

- Read and compose in several genres to understand how genre conversations shape and are shaped by readers' and writers' practices and purposes.
- Develop composing processes appropriate to writing style, audience, and assignment.
- Use composing processes and tools as a means to discover and reconsider ideas, generate writing, and make meaning.
- Engage with a community of writers who dialogue across texts, argue, and build on each other's work.
- Develop writing projects through multiple drafts by learning flexible strategies for reading, drafting, reviewing, collaborating, revising, rewriting, rereading, and editing.

- Give, receive, and act on productive feedback from peers and instructors to work in progress.

Research

- Learn to formulate research questions, methods for research, and analyze and synthesize material.
- Develop 21st century technological literacies and modalities needed for researching and composing.
- Locate and evaluate primary and secondary materials, such as: surveys, interviews, observations, case studies, journal articles and essays, books, scholarly and professionally established and maintained databases and archives, and informal electronic networks and internet sources.
- Learn writing strategies for integrating source material into your own prose (quoted, paraphrased, and summarized material).
- Apply research to various genres and cite sources in American Psychological Association Style (APA) or Modern Language Association Style (MLA).

Assessment

- Use reflective learning strategies to self-assess and understand one's processes and products.
- Collaborate
- Integrate and act on critical feedback from peers and instructors.
- Understand and examine critically the reasons behind writing conventions in fields and disciplines.

Rhetoric & Composition I (RWS 1301) Course Description

Rhetoric & Composition 1 (RWS 1301) is designed to help you in all disciplines reach your academic and professional goals as writers. Course assignments invite you to explore civic, cultural, political, linguistic, racial, and social issues through topics that appeal to your interests and sense of civic responsibility as members of various academic and non-academic communities.

The curriculum consists of these five modules:

MODULE 1 – Taking Inventory

- Exploring texts
- Experimenting with multimedia
- Collaborative project on studying texts, authorship, and the idea of composition.

MODULE 2 – Autoethnographic Study of Self and Language Experiences

- Language and literacy – relationship to home and language
- Looking back on your linguistic identities
- How do linguistic and cultural experiences affect your ideas about what it means to write in college?

MODULE 3 – Remixing the Self Study

- Adapting to another audience—audience analysis
- Examining an alternative genre –genre analysis
- Composing in a new medium
- Rhetorical analysis

MODULE 4 – Social Issue Investigation

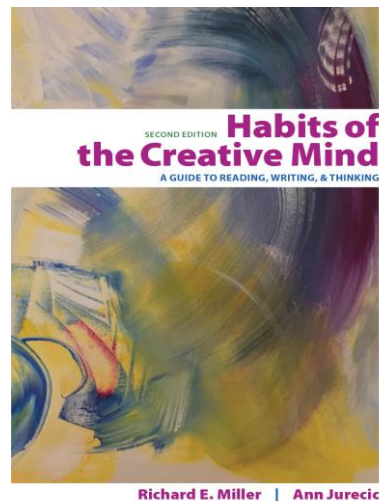
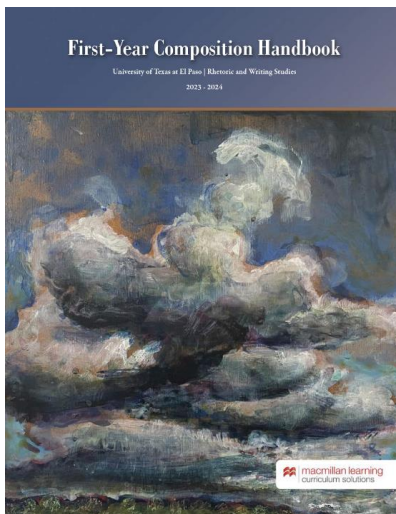
- Identifying an issue of personal and social concern
- Interrogating assumptions, biases, and representations through topic research
- Report with annotated bibliography for future study

MODULE 5 – Visual argument

- Creating infographic, PSA, or alternative visual project
- Presentation of infographics and PSAs

Required Texts & Materials

- **UTEP First-Year Composition Handbook, 2023-2024 edition** (an e-book available through the UTEP Bookstore.
- **Miller, R. E., & Jurecic, A. (2020). Habits of the Creative Mind: A Guide to Reading, Writing, & Thinking (2nd ed.)** (Available at the UTEP Bookstore)



(Link to bookstore: [University Book Store](#))

Other additional required readings will also be posted on Blackboard as pdf files, or a URL to access them will be provided. If you have difficulties accessing one of these texts, contact me as soon as possible.

Course Assignments and Grading

Grade Distribution—Students can earn a total of 1000 points for the course:

1000-900 = A 899-800 = B 799 -700 = C 699-600 = D 599 and below = F

Points Division

100 Points (10%): MODULE 1 – Taking Inventory

100 Points (10%): MODULE 2 – Autoethnographic Study of Self and Language Experience

100 Points (10%): MODULE 3 – Remixing the Self Study

200 Points (20%): MODULE 4 – Social Issue Investigation

200 Points (20%): MODULE 5 – Visual argument

100 Points (10%): Reading Responses/Discussion Board (DB) Posts

100 Points (10%): Participation and Peer Response

100 Points (10%): Attendance

Grading

There will be five major assignments in this class, each associated with a module. You can review the points for all activities in the course calendar document. This class is focused on your composing practices. To that end, I want us to practice revising our work as a part of the course, both through Module 3's Remixing theme, but also more broadly through requests for you to take in feedback from your peers and myself and change your writing. You will be rewriting and revising some of your work this semester because it is a crucial writing skill.

Modules [70%]

During the course you will complete five major assignment projects, each of which will go through multiple drafts before it is considered complete. As you go through the writing process, your drafts will be reviewed continually by your peers and me. You will receive copious feedback on the drafts you submit. These comments are aimed at redirecting your work for revision. One of the primary goals of the course is to learn how to rethink and rework your writing. The point is that an early draft is composed of first thoughts, and that a truly sophisticated piece of writing usually involves a great deal of reflection, analysis, and craft. This course is about experimenting with a process, and discovering whether that process can help deepen your sense of your writing and of yourself as a writer. Each completed project will be evaluated for its adherence to this multiple drafting process. I will be looking for ways in which you work through your assignments, how willing you are to take risks, and how much effort goes into each assignment. If you write with sincerity and take a serious approach, you will probably do well in the course.

Reading Responses/Discussion Board (DB) Posts [10%]

You will be responsible for writing three discussion posts each week throughout the course. These responses should be no less than 150 words and provide a thoughtful response to the prompts/readings. You should analyze the topics addressed, draw connections among the various readings and between the readings and your experiences.

Participation and Peer Response [10%]

This is a workshop-style class in which each person's participation is essential. I encourage you to be a lively participant in our discussions. What you offer to the whole group in discussions can help stimulate all of us. As your instructor, I expect you all to raise your hands and share

what you think about the topic. Do not worry if your input is brief or if you're concerned that it won't contribute to the conversation. What matters for participation is that we hear your thoughts and what you need to say. Please do not hesitate to ask when you have questions about your writing or about other aspects of the course.

Throughout the semester, you will be engaged in frequent peer response sessions. I am interested in what you contribute to your peers' community and how you use their feedback to guide your revision. The written feedback you give to your peers will go into their portfolios for each unit and will become part of your grade for that unit. You must also engage in conversation with your classmates by replying to other's post. You must write at least two responses to different posts for each week. Replies to other's posts must offer an insightful and detailed response; simple responses like "I agree" are **NOT** sufficient. Replies should be approximately 50 words.

Attendance [10%]

Attendance and Lateness: As undergraduate students, you are expected to attend and participate fully in every class session. Students who anticipate being absent need to notify me ahead of time, although this does not excuse the absence. More than two absences (equivalent to one week of class) may jeopardize your ability to pass the course. I urge you to be in communication with me, and your classmates, if there is a reason why you must be absent. If you are going to be late for class for any reason, please join the class rather than missing it and getting marked absent. If you are late, it is still possible to benefit from the lesson.

Course Delivery

Classes will be held face-to-face. The course is designed to engage students through discussions with your classmates and instructor through Blackboard (Bb), UTEP's Learning Management System (LMS). The course will rely extensively on Blackboard, though your individual instructor may supplement it by incorporating other platforms and various media. In order to succeed in the course, you will need to have regular use of the internet and a stable connection. Although you can use the Blackboard App on your phone, it is highly recommended that you compose your work for class, and perform class activities, via a computer. If you don't have a computer or reliable internet at home, the university can help you with resources: [UTEP Technology Support](#) Please speak with your instructor immediately if you will need assistance. We want you to succeed in class without concern about access. There are also computers available for you to use in the library on campus.

Ensure your UTEP e-mail account is working and that you have access to the Web and a stable web browser. Mozilla Firefox and Google Chrome are the most supported browsers for Blackboard; other browsers may cause complications with the LMS. When having technical difficulties, update your browser, clear your cache, or try switching to another browser. If you encounter technical difficulties beyond your scope of troubleshooting, please contact the [Help Desk](#) as they are trained specifically to assisting with technological needs of students.

Submitting Work

Most works will be submitted through the Bb course shell for this class, or directly to your professor via email. Since Bb comment and grade function works best with Microsoft Word, please submit all assignments in Microsoft Word following APA or MLA format unless directed otherwise. Be sure to name each submitted assignment with your name and the title of the assignment (**For example:** spaudel, Module-1, Draft; spaudel, Module- 1 Final).

Late Work

It is important to submit work on time for full credit and feedback. I understand how the best-laid plans go awry sometimes (and especially as we live through this pandemic), and I want to work with you on succeeding in our work in this class. If you anticipate being unable to complete something on time, please contact me at least three hours before with:

1. your in-progress work (if you have nothing just tell me),
2. a proposal for how you will complete the work, and
3. when you will complete it by.

If you do not send these three items to me at least three hours prior (everything in this class is due at 11.59 p.m., so 8.59 p.m.) then you and I will have to make a plan together that may involve a grade penalty or other consequences. My standard late work grade penalty will be at least 20% of the possible points. Please refer to the program attendance policy below for more information about completing work.

One-on-One Conferencing

One of the requirements throughout the semester is a one-time One-on-One conference with me (instructor). One-on-One conferencing gives each of you a personal face time with me in a designated space in the classroom or any place in the University Writing Center. Conferencing is one way that might help us to promote and develop relationships and gather important and specific data. It also will play a role in addressing any issues in relation to the overall course. This will be the personal time and space where not only you but also, I will get to know any improvements/changes I may have to make for the course delivery. You will be helping me to get to know you and your expectations better and at the same time you will be helped with anything that you might need for the successful completion of the course.

Note:

The use of Microsoft Word to submit documents is mandatory. Please, do not submit any word documents made in Pages or any other word-processor software. Again, Microsoft Word is free for any UTEP student. Any document submitted in the wrong format will not be accepted.

Classroom Etiquette/Netiquette

Debate, critical inquiry, and intellectual diversity are essential elements to higher education and a process of learning. There is the potential during this course for controversial and sensitive topics to be discussed during small group or whole class interaction (whether face-to-face or online), and to surface through discussion board postings. You are expected to demonstrate respect and courtesy for your peers and instructor when they express differing arguments,

viewpoints, and/or experiences. Sexist, racist, homophobic, or other hateful speech will not be permitted. Angry displays, whether in writing, online postings, or in class discussions will be handled as disruptions to the wellbeing of the class and responded to as negative participation.

- Always consider the audience. This is a college-level course; therefore, all communication should reflect polite consideration of other's ideas.
- Respect and courtesy must be provided to classmates and the instructor. No harassment or inappropriate postings will be tolerated.
- When reacting to someone else's message, address the ideas, not the person. Post only what anyone would comfortably state in a face-to-face situation.
- Blackboard is not a public internet venue; all postings to it should be considered private and confidential. Whatever is posted on in these online spaces is intended for classmates and professor only. Please do not copy documents and paste them to a publicly accessible website, blog, or other space.

As we know, sometimes communication online can be challenging. It's possible to miscommunicate what we mean or to misunderstand what our classmates mean given the lack of body language and immediate feedback. Therefore, please keep these netiquette (network etiquette) guidelines in mind. Failure to observe them may result in disciplinary action.

University and Program Policies

FYC Class Attendance Policy

According to UTEP's [Curriculum and Classroom Policies](#):

The student is expected to attend all classes and laboratory sessions. The student is responsible for informing each instructor of extended absences. When, in the judgment of the instructor, a student has been absent to such a degree as to impair his or her status relative to credit for the course, the instructor can drop the student from the class with a grade of W before the course-drop deadline or with a grade of F after the course-drop deadline. Please consult UTEP's [Curriculum and Classroom Policies](#) for more information regarding Excused Absences for University-Recognized Activities, Absence for Religious Holy Days, and Military Leave.

Attendance is mandatory for all freshman-level courses. Students are expected to attend all class meetings and to participate in discussions and workshops. In addition, the First-Year Composition Program has developed the following policies that should be adhered to strictly by all instructors.

For Face-to-Face Classes:

Students are entitled to a single week of unexplained absences without penalty (for example, 3 classes missed in a three-times-a-week class, 2 classes missed in twice-a-week class, 1 class missed in a once-a-week class).

After 2 total weeks of absence (not necessarily consecutive classes) the student's grade is lowered by a full letter (A becomes B, etc.).

After 3 total weeks of absence (not necessarily consecutive), the student is automatically dropped from class. Missing a scheduled conference with the instructor constitutes an absence.

For Hybrid Classes

The attendance policy for hybrid courses aligns with the structure for face-to-face courses with each missed weekly class meeting constituting absence from a week of class. The program recommends that the student contact the instructor to discuss the attendance policy and how it applies in cases in which it is not possible to attend a weekly class meeting, while continuing to maintain robust participation in class activities.

For Online Classes

In an online class, attendance is measured by participation in class activities. The attendance policy for online courses aligns with the structure for face-to-face courses, with each missed week of class activities constituting absence from a week of class.

The instructor can measure participation through various pathways, such as completion of scaffolder activities and discussion posts, and responding to other students' posts and feedback. We also recommend measuring course activity by using the Course Reports feature on Blackboard, particularly the Course Activity Overview.

When it becomes evident that it is not possible to participate in class, the program recommends that the student contact the instructor to discuss the attendance policy and how it applies, before resuming robust participation in class activities.

Drop Policy

If you cannot complete this course for whatever reason, please contact your instructor. Your instructor can help you with the drop process and you can contact the [Registration and Records Office](#). If you do not drop, you are at risk of being dropped by the instructor and possibly receiving an "F" for the course.

Academic Integrity

The University of Texas at El Paso prides itself on its standards of academic excellence. In the classroom and in all other academic activities, students are expected to uphold the highest standards of academic integrity. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, collusion, the submission for credit of any work or materials that are attributable in whole or in part to another person, taking an examination for another person, and any act designed to give unfair advantage to a student or the attempt to commit such acts. Instructors must report the suspected academic dishonesty to the Office of Student Affairs. Visit the [Office of Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution](#) (OSCCR) page for more information on Academic integrity.

The First-Year Composition Program fundamentally trusts its students and strives to create dynamic classroom experiences and writing opportunities rooted in the values of inquiry and critical thinking. We agree deeply with Anna R. Mills' (2023) claim in the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, that "writing practice continues to be intensely rewarding for students and central to intellectual growth in college."

Because of the rapid pace of change represented by ChatGPT and other Artificial Intelligence (AI) programs, it is necessary to set clear program standards regarding their use in our classes. Specifically, the FYC Program recognizes that Large Language Models (LLMs) are part of our contemporary culture and hold educational value that can be explored in the classroom, such as narrowing down a topic idea or critically analyzing the quality of an AI-generated text. However, our program maintains an expectation that all assignment submissions must constitute original pieces of writing composed by the student-author only.

By this standard, an **appropriate use** of ChatGPT (or any AI-powered program) could take the form of

- writing an introduction paragraph that openly describes how this AI tool offered possible approaches to researching a particular topic, with any direct quotes placed in quotation marks and cited in-text and in a final references page.

By contrast, an **inappropriate use** of ChatGPT (or any AI-powered program) could take the form of

- copying any amount of text from an AI tool and claiming it as your original composition without acknowledging its source. This includes failure to cite and place quotation marks around any directly quoted language.

FYC faculty are required to submit any assignment submissions that appear to include unacceptable uses of AI programs (or that are marked for further review) to the Office of Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution (OSCCR).

Accommodations

UTEP is committed to providing reasonable accommodations and auxiliary services to students, staff, faculty, job applicants, applicants for admissions, and other beneficiaries of University programs, services and activities with documented disabilities in order to provide them with equal opportunities to participate in programs, services, and activities in compliance with sections 503 and 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 and the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act (ADAAA) of 2008. Reasonable accommodation will be provided unless it is determined that doing so would cause undue hardship for the University. Students requesting an accommodation based on a disability must register with the [UTEP Center for Accommodations and Support Services](#) (CASS). Students are encouraged to visit CASS in room 106, Union East Building or contact them on 747-5148 or cass@utep.edu.

University Writing Center

UTEP's University Writing Center (UWC) offers free writing tutoring assistance for all UTEP students. The tutors are undergraduate and graduate students who can help with all parts of a writing assignment, including prewriting, organizing, revising, and editing. They can also help to understand any writing assignment and help work on comprehending difficult textbook

material. Go to [University Writing Center - UTEP](#) to make an appointment with a writing center consultant.

Military Students

If you are a military student (veteran, dependent, active) please visit the [Military Student Success Center](#). I also recognize the complexities of being a student veteran. If you are a student veteran, please inform me if you need special accommodations. Drill schedules, calls to active duty, complications with GI Bill disbursement, and other unforeseen military and veteran-related developments can complicate your academic life. If you make me aware of a complication, I will do everything I can to assist you or put you in contact with university staff who are trained to assist you.

Student Pregnancy and Parenting Nondiscrimination Policy

The University is committed to providing reasonable accommodations and auxiliary services to students, staff, faculty, job applicants, applicants for admissions, and other beneficiaries of University programs, services, and activities with documented disabilities in order to provide them with equal opportunities to participate in programs, services, and activities in compliance with sections 503 and 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 and the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act (ADAAA) of 2008. Students who become pregnant or have parenting responsibilities may also request reasonable accommodation. Reasonable accommodation will be made unless it is determined that doing so would cause undue hardship for the University. The UTEP Center for Accommodations and Support Services (CASS) will process requests for accommodation based on a disability, pregnancy, or parenting. Contact the Center for Accommodations and Support Services at 915-747-5148, email them at cass@utep.edu, or apply for accommodation online via the CASS portal.

Course Support Resources

Table 1: Course Support Resources and Contacts

Title IX	915-747-8358	Institutional Compliance
Dean of Students	915-747-5648	Dean of Students
UTEP Health & Wellness Center	915-747-5624	https://www.utep.edu/chs/shc/studenthealth@utep.edu
UTEP Police Department	915-747-5611	https://www.utep.edu/police/police@utep.edu
Counseling and Psychological Services	915-747-5302	https://www.utep.edu/student-affairs/counsel/caps@utep.edu

Academic Calendar Spring 2024

Table 2: Spring Academic Calendar with Important Dates

Jan 16th	Spring Classes Begin
Jan 16th-19th	Late Registration (Fees are incurred)
Jan 31st	Spring Census Day Note: This is the last day to register for classes. Payments are due by 5.00 PM.
Mar 11th-15th	Spring Break
Mar 20th	Freshman Midterm Grades are Due
Mar 28th	Fall Drop/Withdrawal Deadline Note: Student-initiated drops are permitted after this date, but the student is not guaranteed a grade of W. The faculty member of record will issue a grade of either W or F.
Mar 29th	Cesar Chavez Holiday – No classes
May 2nd	Spring– Last day of classes

UTEP Land Acknowledgement Statement

As members of the University of Texas at El Paso community, we acknowledge that we are meeting on unceded Indigenous land. We would like to recognize and pay our respects to the Indigenous people with long ties to the immediate region: Lipan Apache, Mescalero Apache, Piro, Manso, Suma, Jumano, Ysleta del Sur Pueblo, Piro/Manso/Tiwa IndianTribeof the Pueblo of San Juan de Guadalupe, and Tortugas Pueblo. We also acknowledge the nations whose territories include present day Texas: the Carrizo & Comecrudo, Coahuiltecan, Caddo, Tonkawa, Comanche, Alabama-Coushatta, Kickapoo, and the peoples of Chihuahua and northern Mexico from whom most/many of our students descend, such as the Rarámuri, Tepehuan, Wixarrika and Nahuatlaca peoples. Finally, we recognize all the American Indian and Indigenous Peoples and communities who have been or have become a part of these lands and territories here in Paso del Norte, on Turtle Island. The University of Texas at El Paso honors your history and cultures, and we seek greater awareness of the myriad ways in which your legacy can guide us in fruitful partnerships and mutually fulfilling relationships.

Course Schedule

The Weekly Calendar will be uploaded to the Blackboard at the start of every week.