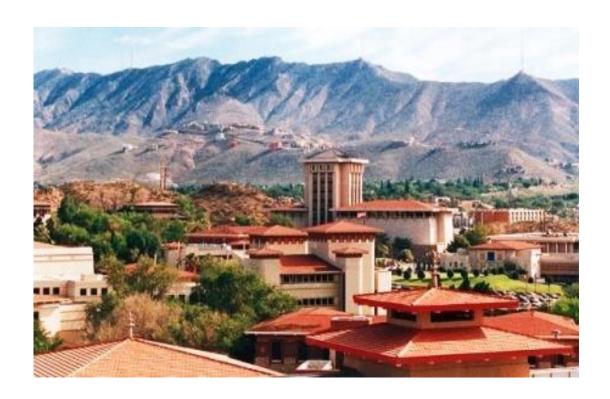# Rhetoric and Writing Studies

RWS 1302

Course Syllabus/Calendar

Spring Term 2020 │ The University of Texas at El Paso │ Department of English

Instructor/Course Information

Instructor:
Veronica Cruz

Office:
Library lobby area (near coffee shop)

Email:
vrcruz@miners.utep.edu

Office hours:
W 8:00 – 10:00 AM and by appointment

Class Time/Days/Location:
W 10:30-11:50 AM; UGLC 234

CRN:
25103

Required Texts & Materials

Comer, D. K. (2015). *Writing in Transit*. Southlake, TX:
     Fountainhead Press. ISBN:978-1-59871-803-4.

(Available through the UTEP Bookstore.)

Bossie, R. & LaPrade, P. (2019). The First-Year
     Composition Handbook.

(E-book is available through the bookstore.)

Additional Readings

Additional readings will be posted on Blackboard or instructions will be provided for accessing them.

In the next section, I provide an overview of the course and what is to be expected of every student. Also, specific assignment guidelines can be found in the Handbook. I'll also post further instructions on our Blackboard course content.

Course Description

The primary goal of RWS 1302 is to develop students' critical thinking skills in order to facilitate effective communication in all educational, professional, and social contexts. This effective communication is based on an awareness of and appreciation for discourse communities as well as knowledge specific to subject matter, genre, rhetorical strategy, and writing process.

The class presents an approach to communication that helps students determine the most effective strategies, arrangements, and media to use in different rhetorical contexts. It teaches students a systematic approach for analyzing rhetorical situations and then producing a variety of documents and presentations while gaining more confidence and fluency in visual, oral, and written communication. In addition, because communication is central to being an active and engaged member of society, the course also provides a space for informed advocacy.

Learning Outcomes

At the end of this course, students will be able to:

- Understand a theory of discourse communities.
- Engage as a community of writers who dialogue across texts, argue, and build on each other's work.
- Draw on existing knowledge bases to create "new" or "transformed" knowledge.
- Develop a knowledge of genres as they are defined and stabilized within discourse communities.
- Address the specific, immediate rhetorical situations of individual communicative acts.
- Develop procedural knowledge of the writing task in its various phases.
- Engage reflection about their own learning.

Students will also have the opportunity to strengthen skills sets in the following areas:
- Think, read, and write critically;
- Formulate research questions and perform primary and secondary research to answer those questions;
- Become familiar with the contents of the UTEP Library, in a variety of forms and areas of professional study (e.g. the arts, humanities, sciences, nursing, social sciences, business, engineering, and education);

- Analyze and synthesize material from outside sources;

- Develop a sensitivity to the significance of data and how it can be rhetorically applied to various genres; and,

- Apply research to various genres;

- Master documentation within a discipline (APA);

- Learn writing strategies for integrating source material into your own prose (quoted, paraphrased, and summarized material); write analytical and argumentative papers appropriate to genres and larger discourse communities.

This course is also designed to promote your overall success, inside and outside the classroom. Our coursework will help you to improve in key areas such as communication, confidence, critical thinking, leadership, problem solving, social responsibility and teamwork. To find out more about the university's plan to improve student engagement and learning, visit the UTEP Edge.

Course Policies

Attendance: According to The University of Texas at El Paso's catalog: "The student is expected to attend all classes and laboratory sessions and attendance is mandatory for all freshman-level courses (1XXX). It is the responsibility of the student to inform each instructor of extended absences." **(For further information regarding excused absences refer to UTEP's Catalog Curriculum and Classroom Policies. You are expected to attend all class meetings and to participate in discussions and workshops. The class discussions will help you learn to improve your writing, often through the discussion of a sample student project (sometimes yours, sometimes one written by a classmate))**.

Since this class meets once a week, you are allowed four (4) absences. If you are absent from more than four classes, you will be at risk of failing this class. Missing a scheduled conference with the instructor constitutes an absence.

Communication: All students are encouraged to make use of my posted office hours, to make arrangements to meet with me during the semester, and to ask questions and raise issues related to the course in person and through email. If you are starting to slip behind or are having problems understanding course material, please contact me so we can work together toward your success. I will post general announcements to the Blackboard, and I may also send updates or let you know of class cancellations, if necessary, via email.

University Writing Center (UWC): 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. Note: To facilitate revision, I encourage you to visit the writing center at least 12 hours before the assignment is due.

Online tutoring is also available at http://academics.utep.edu/writingcenter.

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 Support Services Program (SSSP): UTEP's SSSP is designed to assist and encourage incoming first-generation college students all throughout their academic career up until graduation. If you are a first-generation college student and this is your first semester, I highly recommend visiting the Student Support Services Program and applying to the program. This program offers services and workshops to help you gain a more successful academic experience.

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 are required to report the suspected academic dishonesty to the Office of Student Affairs. Visit the Office of Dean of Students page for more information on Academic integrity.

Copyright and Fair Use: The University requires all members of its community to follow copyright and fair use requirements. You are individually and solely responsible for violations of copyright and fair use laws. The University will neither protect nor defend you nor assume any responsibility for student violations of fair use laws. Violations of copyright laws could subject you to federal and state civil penalties and criminal liability, as well as disciplinary action under University policies.

Group Assignments: Group work is a common practice with academic and workplace projects. Group assignments are valuable because they help students work together for a common goal. Students who are not doing their group work can be voted off of their groups and will have to complete the project on their own.

ADA: The Americans with Disabilities Act requires that reasonable accommodations be provided for students with physical, sensory, cognitive, systemic, learning, and psychiatric disabilities. Your success in this class is important. If there are aspects of this course that prevent

you from learning or exclude you, please let me know as soon as possible. Together we'll develop strategies to meet both your needs and the requirements of the course.

I also encourage you to visit the <u>Center for Accommodations and Support Services</u> (CASS) in room 106, Union East Building or contact them at 747-5148 or cass@utep.edu. If you need official accommodations, you have a right to have these met.

There are also a range of resources on campus, including the Writing Center, Counseling Center, Military Student Success Center, Student Support Services Program, and Academic Advising Center.

Course Delivery

This course is taught as a **hybrid class--**with one face-to-face meeting for lecture and workshop, and the rest of the course utilizing a management system such as Blackboard, a Wiki, or a class website depending on the instructor. It is vital for you to regularly check your UTEP email and course content.

Students should allocate sufficient time for the class projects and work. The general rule for all classes is that students spend two hours working outside of class for each class credit. Because this is a 3-hour class, expect to spend 6 hours doing researching and writing each week, but since the class only meets for 1.5 hours a week, add the additional 1.5 hours to the 6 for a total of 7.5 hours.

This course is technology enhanced, and all of the supplementary material for the class will be delivered via Blackboard. It is strongly recommended that students have access to Internet from home and are comfortable using a computer. If home access is not possible, arrangements can be made to use a computer regularly on campus in order to complete the work. Student computer labs such as ATLAS (http://issweb.utep.edu/) are often available until midnight, but schedules do vary. Students can also borrow laptops from the Technology Support Center located on the third floor of the UTEP Library (note: it is dependent on the availability of laptops). A great deal of work will be done online, and not having access to a computer will affect your ability to turn in assignments on time.

Instructions for Accessing Your Course Online: Students must have a UTEP email ID and password before they can access Blackboard. UTEP automatically generates an e-mail ID for students when they are entered into the system. Any questions or problems can be directed to the **Helpdesk at 747-5257.**

All the course content will be delivered via Blackboard (F2F). Students can access Blackboard by the steps outlined below:

- Go to http://my.utep.edu
- Login is e-mail ID. Password is e-mail password.

- Click on the link to Blackboard
- Once logged into Blackboard, all the courses a student is registered for are listed under the appropriate semester.

UTEP Library: Because RWS 1302 is more research-oriented, this course will be partnered with Librarian Instructor, Jacob Galindo. Jacob will conduct five 20-minute sessions throughout the semester in our class. The sessions will regard your semester topics, how to search for sources across various databases, and how to utilize RefWorks, among others. Should you need extra assistance with collecting sources and/or how to conduct research, feel free to email Jacob at jrgalindo@utep.edu.

Classroom/Online Etiquette

- Electronic devices can be very helpful in the classroom whether a smartphone, tablet, or computer. However, if their use does not contribute to the conversation or tasks in the classroom then I have the right to ask you to put it away or turn it off, even if it is a personal device.
- 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, and to surface through our social media activity. You are expected to demonstrate the utmost respect and courtesy for your peers with differing arguments, viewpoints, and/or experiences. Sexist, racist, homophobic, or other hateful speech will not be tolerated.
- As a general rule: always consider audience in class and online. Remember that members of the class and the instructor will be reading any postings. When reacting to someone else's message (verbal or written), address the ideas, not the person and post only what anyone would comfortably state in a f2f 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. If students wish to do so, they have the ethical obligation to first request the permission of the writer(s).

Submitting Work

All assignments will be due on **Wednesdays by 10:29 am**. Assignments include major assignments, outline assignments, and discussion posts. All work must be submitted to pass this class – **no exceptions!**

All work will be submitted through our Blackboard (BB) course shell. Since BB comment and grade function works best with Microsoft Word, please submit all assignments in Microsoft Word following APA format unless directed otherwise. Microsoft Word is available to students at all campus computers and through the Cloud.

I recommend you bring an external drive or use either Office 365, Google Docs, or Dropbox to save work.

Be sure to name each submitted assignment with your first initial, last name, underscore, and an abbreviation of the assignment.

Examples:

JMartinez_GA

JMartinez_LR

JMartinez_FD

JMartinez_AW

Students will receive an automatic zero for an assignment if it is not submitted correctly or to the correct assignment space in Blackboard. Simply, if you want your paper graded, be sure to save it accordingly.

Late Work

- Major assignments will be due on **Wednesdays at/by 10:29 a.m.**
- Major assignments submitted before deadlines will receive full credit and feedback.
- Major assignments submitted at or after the start of class (Wednesdays at 10:30 am) will be considered late. Late assignments will not receive feedback and will automatically receive one letter grade deduction.
- You do have a 24-hour window to submit your late assignments (starting from 10:30 am Wednesdays – 10:29 am Thursdays); again, submitting your assignments late will result in one letter grade deduction and no feedback.

- Late work submitted after the 24-hour window (Thursdays at/after 10:30 am) ***will not*** be accepted. Students who submit late once the 24-hour window closes will automatically receive a zero on the assignment.
- If you are dealing with a technological issue, please make sure to visit any computer lab on campus: LACIT Lab (Liberal Arts 4th Floor); Cyber Café (Union East, rm 204); and UTEP Library.
- However, if there is an extenuating circumstance that is preventing you from submitting work on time, please notify me in person or via email well ***before*** the due date. I will work with you. Otherwise, any assignment submitted late without notifying me of any extenuating circumstance will be subjected to one letter grade deduction and no feedback (within the 24-hour window), or will not be accepted at all (after the 24-hour window).
- Again, be sure to submit all major assignments ***on time*** in order to pass this class.
- Failure to submit more than one assignment on time may result in failure for this section.

Grades

Grades reflect my best and fairest judgment of the overall quality of your work; taking into account how well it fulfills the assignment and its purpose, how focused and organized it is, how well it uses evidence and cites sources, how well it communicates with an audience, and to what extend it engages the reader's intellect, imagination, and understanding. Aspects such as tone and style will contribute to the success of a text, as well as its readability, which includes grammatical correctness and formatting.

The grading scale is based on a 1000-point scale:

Points	Letter Grade
1000-900	A
899-800	B
799-700	C
699-600	D
<599	F

Assignments

Advocacy Website	200
Genre Analysis Outline	20
Genre Analysis	100
Research Proposal Outline	40
Literature Review	160
Advance Visual Argument Outline	30
Advance Visual Argument	250
Participation	100
Extra Credit	100

TOTAL=   **1000 pts.**

(This syllabus only provides an overview of assignments for the class – specific assignment sheets will be discussed in class and posted on Blackboard.)

Assignment #1: Advocacy Website (200 points)
Students will create, design, and maintain an advocacy website suited for advocating for a position on a student-chosen semester topic. With this assignment, students are also expected to compose a op-ed where they will argue for a policy change.

Assignment #2: Genre Analysis Outline (20 points)
Students will complete the following activity to prepare them for the Genre Analysis essay assignment.

Assignment #3: Genre Analysis (100 points)
Students will identify two texts on the same subject, but in different genres, to write a comparative analysis.

Assignment #4: Research Proposal Outline (40 points)
Students must generate 3-4 research questions and begin to find sources for the Literature Review/Research Report.

Assignment #5: Literature Review/Primary Research Report (160 points)
Students will conduct primary and secondary research on a social, political, or ethical issue to become well-informed experts on the issue. Students will then write a literature review of these sources to summarize and synthesize the arguments and ideas of the research sources.

Assignment # 6: Advance Visual Argument Outline (30 points)
Students will submit an outline to show the persuasive purpose and argumentative structure for the project.

Assignment #7: Advance Visual Argument (250 points)
Students will plan, write, film, and edit a film documentary that advocates a position on a current issue. Students can use any film editing software (i.e., iMovie, Movie Maker, etc.) for this

project. The video can be uploaded to YouTube or Vimeo, and the link copied and pasted on a Word Document to be submitted on BB. Or, students can submit the video file on BB. Students are also expected to present their video to the class.

Participation (100 points)

Participation in this class will include Semester Topic Proposal DP, reading-related DPs, and workshops. This is how the points will be distributed:

- **Semester Topic Proposal Discussion Post (55 points)**
  Students must choose a semester topic and write about what their topic is and why they chose it. The topic must be a current social, political, or ethical issue.

- **Discussion Posts (30 points (5 points per DP))**
  Discussion posts must be completed by start of class on Wednesday morning.

- **Workshops (15 points)**
  The workshops in this class are assignment-related workshops.

Extra Credit (100 points)

Students can accumulate no more than 100 points of extra credit. To earn extra credit, students would need to complete any of the following:

- Pass the RWS 1301 Syllabus Quiz with a 95 or above. The quiz is only available for the first two weeks of the semester. (10 points)

- Assignments can be proofread by a consultant at the University Writing Center, or the Miner Athlete Academic Center (MAAC), or by the Student Support Services Program (SSSP). **Be sure to ask for proof of visit!** (5 points per proof will be added to an assignment)

- Participate in the RWS Debate, which is an activity that is held once per semester. In the RWS Debate, students will compete with one another in debates about current societal issues. Winners will receive 25 extra credit points to be added to assignment of choice.

- Assessments on Blackboard. There are three assessments, and each assessment is worth 10 points if students get a grade of 90 or above (again, on each assessment). Grades between 80-89 will be worth 5 points each. Extra credit will not be given for grades 79 and below. (30 points)

Instructor Policies

- Disruptive behavior is NOT ALLOWED.
- Do not submit your assignments via email; they will NOT be graded. If you absolutely need to email me your assignments, please get my permission first.
- All assignments will be submitted through Blackboard on **Wednesdays by 10:29 a.m.**
- Any major assignment will be considered late if submitted within the 24-hour window after the required due date. Any major assignment that is late will not receive feedback, and will receive one letter grade deduction.
- **Late work submitted after the 24-hour window will not be accepted.**
- If there are technological issues with Blackboard, WAIT until Blackboard is up before submitting your assignment. Your assignment will not be counted as late if it is a system-wide problem.
- All readings and DPs must be completed **before** the start of class. Readings will be discussed and all students must post a summary and synthesis of the readings (DP) prior to coming to class.
- All assignments, unless otherwise noted, are to be submitted as a Word document – **NOT** as a PDF or *.pages* format.
- On average, assignments will be graded within two-three weeks of the due date.
- I will send out an announcement via Blackboard if there are any changes to the calendar or class.
- I recommend checking Blackboard and your UTEP email (or preferred email) account daily.
- Lack of submitting assignments and participation could result in receiving a failing grade in this course. Please contact me immediately if you are having issues submitting required assignments and blogs and/or participating.

Important Dates for This Semester

January 20	Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday – University Closed
January 21	Spring classes begin
January 24	Spring Census Day
March 16-20	Spring Break
March 27	Spring Drop/Withdrawal Deadline
March 27	Cesar Chavez Holiday – no classes
April 10	Spring Study Day – no classes
May 7	Last day of classes
May 8	Dead Day
May 11-15	Final Exams

Please make note of office hours and email, and reach out to me if you need to. I look forward to helping you become better writers this semester!

WEEKLY CLASS CALENDAR

***Note: This calendar is subject to change. BB=Blackboard; DP=Discussion Post; WIT=Writing in Transit (**pg. #**=green cover; **pg. #**=brown cover); HB=The First-Year Composition Handbook.

***Note: All Assignments are DUE on/by: **Wednesdays** at **10:29 AM**.
All BB Assignments are DUE on/by: **Wednesdays at 10:29 AM**.

WEEK/TOPIC	IN-CLASS ACTIVITIES	BB ASSIGNMENTS (ALL DUE BEFORE CLASS)	DUE
WEEK 1: **CLASS INTRODUCTIONS**	<u>JAN. 22:</u> • Class Introductions • Review of Syllabus • Introduce E-Portfolio Assignment • Introduce Semester Topic Proposal Memo	<u>On BB:</u> • READ: RWS 1302 Course Syllabus • READ: WIT Chapter 1 (p. 1-11) • READ: "Something Like a Reading Ethics" • WATCH: "Why is Writing Important?" • DP: WIT • QUIZ: RWS 1302 Course Syllabus (optional for extra credit)	
WEEK 2: **GENRE ANALYSIS**	<u>JAN. 29:</u> • Library-Assist Session: Narrow Your Topic • Discuss Genres • Review Genre Analysis Assignment • Genre Analysis Outline Workshop	<u>On BB:</u> • READ: Genre Analysis Assignment Guidelines • READ: Drafting Your Genre Analysis • WATCH: "The Census: Last Week Tonight with John Oliver" • WATCH: "The NRA's Global Impact | Patriot Act with Hasan Minhaj" • DP: Genres • DP: Analysis of either Oliver's or Minhaj's videos	**SEMESTER TOPIC PROPOSAL DP** **DUE: 01/31/20** --- **RWS 1302 SYLLABUS QUIZ** **DUE: 02/02/20**

WEEK 3: **GENRE ANALYSIS**	<u>FEB. 5:</u> • Library-Assist Session: Research Question Breakdown • Review Rhetoric and Rhetorical Appeals • Genre Analysis Workshop	<u>On BB:</u> • READ: WIT Chapter 7: Analysis (**p. 160–193**; **p. 276–309**) (skim excerpts) • DP: Analyzing Texts	**GENRE ANALYSIS OUTLINE** **DUE: 02/05/20**
WEEK 4: **GENRE ANALYSIS**	<u>FEB. 12:</u> • E-Portfolio Workshop	<u>On BB:</u> • Nothing!	**GENRE ANALYSIS FIRST DRAFT** **DUE: 02/12/20**

WEEK 5:
 	
GENRE ANALYSIS CONFERENCE
	<u>FEB. 19:</u>
	
	• No Class
	• Conference Dates:
	  ○ Tuesday, Feb. 18
	  ○ Wednesday, Feb. 19
	  ○ Thursday, Feb. 20
		<u>On BB:</u>
		
		• Nothing!	

WEEK 6: **LITERATURE REVIEW**	<u>FEB. 26:</u> • Library-Assist Session: Advance Searching • Review Literature Review Assignment • Discuss Research Process • Review Research Proposal Outline	<u>On BB:</u> • READ: Literature Review Assignment Guidelines • READ: WIT Chapter 2 (**p. 15–41**; **p. 39 – 68**) • READ: WIT Chapter 3 (**p. 45–61**; **p. 83–99**) (skim excerpts)	**GENRE ANALYSIS – FINAL DRAFT** **DUE: 02/26/20**
WEEK 7: **LITERATURE REVIEW**	<u>MAR. 4:</u> • Library-Assist Session: Ref Works • RWS Debate	<u>On BB:</u> • READ: WIT Chapter 4 (**p. 65–90**; **p. 127–152**) (skim excerpts) • DP: WIT	**RESEARCH PROPOSAL OUTLINE** **DUE: 03/04/20**

WEEK 8: **LITERATURE REVIEW**	<u>MAR. 11:</u> • Library-Assist Session: Discipline-Specific Databases • E-Portfolio Workshop	<u>On BB:</u> • READ: WIT Chapter 5 (**p. 96–122**; **p. 180–206**) (skim excerpts)	
WEEK 9: **SPRING BREAK**	<u>MAR. 18:</u> • No Class!	<u>On BB:</u> • READ: WIT Chapter 6 (**p.128–155**; **p. 224-251**) (skim excerpts) • READ: Synthesizing Your Research Findings	
WEEK 10: **LITERATURE REVIEW**	<u>MAR. 25:</u> • Literature Review Workshop	<u>On BB:</u> • READ: WIT Chapter 8 (**p. 197–218**; **p. 337–358**) (skim excerpts) • READ: WIT Chapter 9 (**p. 224–246**; **p. 402–424**) (skim excerpts) • DP: WIT Chapters 8 & 9	**(MARCH 27 – COURSE DROP DEADLINE)**
WEEK 11: **LITERATURE REVIEW**	<u>APR. 1:</u> • Literature Review Workshop	<u>On BB:</u> • READ: WIT Chapter 10 (**p. 252–264**; **p. 440–454**) • READ: WIT Chapter 11 (**p. 270–301**; **p. 464–495**) • READ: WIT Chapter 12 (**p. 306–340**; **p. 516–550**)	
WEEK 12: **ADVANCE VISUAL ARGUMENT**	<u>APR. 8:</u> • Review Advance Visual Argument Assignment • Review Advance Visual Argument Outline	<u>On BB:</u> • READ: Visual Argument Film Documentary Assignment Guidelines	**LITERATURE REVIEW – FINAL DRAFT** **DUE: 04/08/20**

WEEK 13: **ADVANCE VISUAL ARGUMENT**	<u>APR. 15:</u> • Advance Visual Argument Workshop	<u>On BB:</u> • Nothing!	**ADVANCE VISUAL ARGUMENT OUTLINE** **DUE: 04/15/20**
WEEK 14: **ADVANCE VISUAL ARGUMENT**	<u>APR. 22:</u> • Independent Study Day	<u>On BB:</u> • Nothing!	
WEEK 15: **ADVANCE VISUAL ARGUMENT**	<u>APR. 29:</u> • Presentations	<u>On BB:</u> • Nothing!	
WEEK 16: **E-PORTFOLIO**	<u>MAY 6:</u> • Presentations **LAST DAY OF CLASS**	<u>On BB:</u> • Nothing!	**ADVANCED VISUAL ARGUMENT – FINAL DRAFT** **DUE: 05/06/20**
WEEK 17: **FINALS** **MAY 11 – 15**			**ADVOCACY WEBSITE (via Blackboard)** **DUE: WEDNESDAY, 05/13/20** --- **RE-DO ASSIGNMENTS:** **DUE: FRIDAY, 05/15/20**