

WRT 105¹

Practices of Academic Writing

Fall 2026 · Studio 1

Instructor

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Email

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Student Hours²

M/W 9–10am on Zoom

Passcode 972140 if needed

A WELCOME

¹ Added colored blocks and shading/lines throughout via a template Claude helped me find and refine, all to make the syllabus more readable. Note that because of the footnotes here, the “A Welcome” section has moved down to the next page, but it will normally be here on page 1.

² Changed “Office Hours” to “Student Hours” to make office hours more student-centric and thus more inviting/approachable.

Dear³ Students,

Before we get into the course, I want to say what I don't think instructors say often enough: writing is hard. I know this not as an abstraction, but from ongoing experience: my own.

The first time I was assigned to write a paragraph in grade school, the image of me sliding my hand and arm up a board the wrong way so that I got splinters everywhere came to my mind immediately. That's what the prospect of writing anything has felt like to me a lot of my life, so much so that even though I knew I was supposed to be a poet for seven years, I wouldn't let myself try writing a poem till I was 25. And when I did finally make some attempts, I'd write four lines, hate them all, cut all but maybe half a line (just because I couldn't face not having anything), try to write four more, hate them, and on the process would go. It was all hell.

I tell you these stories because I want you to know that this course is not a place where I perform expertise while you perform learning. It's a place where we're all, in different ways, still figuring out how to write: how to think on the page, how to say what we mean, how to find out what we mean by saying it. The struggle you'll feel in this course is not a sign that you don't belong here. It's a sign that you're doing the work.

While I may have some innate talent, writing is rewriting. It's constantly reseeing what we're writing about and how we're saying it, and through that struggle we eventually get somewhere: we eventually improve. Every day when I work on poems myself, or writing anything (even this syllabus), I'm learning again, with great humility, how hard the process is and how much work it takes. That's what I want you to take into the course: the struggle is real, but it's the only way I've found to improve.

So: welcome. I'm glad you're here, and I'm looking forward to figuring things out alongside you this semester.

— **Tim**

ABOUT THIS COURSE

You're⁴ already a writer, and you've already been composing all your life — thinking through writing and speaking, through images and sound — and you'll deepen those abilities in this class.

For most of the semester, the subject is romantic love, not just as a feeling, but as a set of cultural

³ Added a welcome section in first person (and first person is carried through just about every other part of this redesign) that is more ingratiating (I hope) because more inviting and growth-mindset-oriented, as I talk about my own struggles as a writer, plus give students a window into writing-as-process and writing-as-thinking, core values I have myself and want to inculcate.

⁴ I completely changed the "About This Course" from the impersonal tone it had before to something much warmer and again more ingratiating. I tried to structure it by beginning where students are (i.e., they're already writers) and then talking about how the class will deepen what they already know via the romantic love subject matter that takes up most of the semester.

stories that have been shaping us since before we had words for it. Films, songs, scripts handed down through culture: what are they actually teaching us, and about whose love?

What you'll also discover is that the tools we develop here — how to read a cultural text the way a rhetorician reads it, how to make an argument to a real audience about something you actually care about — don't just produce better writing. They change how you see. That's how transformation happens.

Writing can make changes in the world, and it will change you, as I know from writing poetry for the last thirty years. I'm a wholly different person than if I hadn't written it. That's what the next fifteen weeks are for.⁵ Come ready to be surprised: by the subject, by the writing, and maybe by yourself. I'm glad you've arrived.⁶

LEARNING GOALS

WRT 105 is built around five core learning outcomes. For each, you'll find the official course language and a plain-English translation.

Writing as Situated Process

Students will practice a range of invention and revision strategies appropriate to various writing situations.

In plain terms:⁷ *You'll practice generating and revising your thinking and writing across a range of situations requiring you to say something to someone for some purpose. Having developed this skill in this class, you'll be able to do the same in just about any future communication situation you find yourself in. This outcome runs through every unit, with particular emphasis in Unit 1.*

Writing with Sources

Students will be introduced to primary and secondary research, utilize various library resources, evaluate sources, and synthesize and apply research in accordance with citation, genre conventions, and ethical standards.

⁵ I added this note too, about how the deepening talked about immediately above will change them, as all writing does. As a student, I always liked to know why I was learning something, what it was all ultimately for, and I think students often just take classes without having any sense of this beyond maybe some practicality, i.e., this class is the next stepping stone towards my degree or something like that. I think the kind of move I made here is inviting and shows them the deep benefits writing can have, especially in a class like WRT 105, which almost none of them would take if given the choice.

⁶ I invite them to expect surprise, too, which always makes a class, or anything else, more interesting. Again, all this added material hopefully will make the class more welcoming and more inclusive.

⁷ For each of the abstract learning outcomes I've been given by the department, I decided to translate them into "plain terms," again to make the syllabus warmer, more welcoming, more approachable, and more inclusive. Also, I focused the plainer terms around engagement, using the language of "practice" and "development" and doing—in terms of action, in other words. .

In plain terms: *You'll practice distinguishing different kinds of sources (primary vs. secondary, popular vs. academic) and develop skill in finding, evaluating, and using them effectively in your writing, always with proper citation and attribution. This outcome will be especially relevant in Units 2 and 3.*

Writing as Rhetorical Action

Students will gain knowledge of rhetorical principles and practice addressing different audiences and situations.

In plain terms: *Rhetorical knowledge is a genuine power: knowing whom you're writing to, for what purpose, and in what situation shapes everything about how you communicate. You'll develop and exercise that power throughout every unit, with particular energy in Unit 1.*

Writing as Academic Practice

Students will build their familiarity with values, strategies, and conventions related to a range of academic contexts and disciplinary conversations.

In plain terms: *Academic communication is its own way of making meaning, one most of us didn't learn growing up. It has its mocked tendencies, but it's also where the most rigorously tested ideas tend to live. You'll start becoming familiar with its conversations and conventions here, most explicitly in Units 2 and 3.*

Writing as Social Practice

Students will analyze, reflect on, and practice the dynamic use of language in diverse contexts and recognize issues of power, difference, and materiality.

In plain terms: *Because thinking and writing are embedded in the social world, we need to develop awareness of power (who has it and why?), difference (what gets lost when we're intolerant of it?), and materiality (how are we embedded in the physical world? how do those elements of our material selves shape what we think and what we say?). You'll practice analyzing and writing about all of this in your own work and in response to course texts, most explicitly in Units 1 and 2.*

WRT 105 also fosters **Communication Skills, Critical and Creative Thinking, Information Literacy, and Technological Agility** — among the [Shared Competencies](#) that Syracuse University has established as university-wide learning goals.

WORK OF THE COURSE

We⁸ will write a lot in the course, much of it through free-writing in response to analytical prompts that will help you transform into the analytical writer you're becoming. We will also read and write in response to many texts about romantic love, texts that will surprise you and push your thinking about love, about who gets to have it, about what we've been taught to want. That invention work becomes the raw material for the unit projects, where we develop our thinking into something more finished and more fully argued.

REQUIRED TEXTS & MATERIALS

I supply you with everything, so you don't have to spend any money for this class!⁹ Everything lives on Blackboard, and you'll want to have your drafts accessible to share with classmates during peer review.

FEEDBACK & GRADING

Feedback shows how what we say lands with real readers. It's therefore valuable as it closes the gap between what you imagine you're saying and what readers actually hear. That's another place where thinking develops, in addition to writing and reading themselves. The three units of the course each build toward a piece of polished writing, and here's how that work adds up.¹⁰

Assignment	About the work ¹¹	Weight
Unit 1 Project	Here's where we'll start questioning the cultural narratives we've inherited about romantic love. It will culminate in a piece of exploratory writing in the form of a letter.	20%
Unit 2 Project	After writing a letter, we'll deepen our questioning of the cultural stories we've been examining about romantic love by analyzing a scene from a romantic comedy, building toward an analytical essay.	25%

⁸ Again, I shifted everything in the subsequent sections, minus the SU boilerplate, to first person to make the syllabus more personal and thus more welcoming.

⁹ Tried to interject a little enthusiasm here, too, letting students know that they don't have to spend any money for the class. Again, I find this welcoming and inclusive, since it shows I understand how expensive it can be as a student, particularly when you don't come from a lot of money, as I myself didn't.

¹⁰ I tried to explain what feedback is for and how it relates back to writing-as-thinking from above. I like the idea of the syllabus as an engagement (teaching) document from the get-go, and I think this kind of linkage makes that happen.

¹¹ Going along with the above, I added this section to explain to students how the major assignments fit what we're trying to accomplish: writing-as-thinking towards personal change. I also wanted to show how each assignment, including attendance, builds into a whole and isn't simply arbitrary.

Unit 3 Project	After spending most of the semester thinking together about romantic love, you'll choose a current controversy that genuinely matters to you, analyze it and the arguments surrounding it, and build your own case. You bring the subject; we'll supply the tools.	30%
Invention work	This informal work will thread throughout the course. It's the day-to-day homework, in-class practice, peer review, you name it. It's this messy practice work where the on-the-ground learning most happens. ¹²	20%
Attendance	We need you in the classroom. Your unique perspective — in discussions, in peer review, in all of it — is something no one else can bring. ¹³	5%

COURSE POLICIES¹⁴

The Syllabus

I may occasionally need to adjust or amend the syllabus as the semester unfolds. It won't happen often, but I wanted you to know.

Technology in the Classroom

We can't get away from technology's mediation of the classroom (and of our lives), but we can try to harness it as best we can. So: bring your laptop or tablet because we do a lot of writing in class. However: please try to refrain from distracting yourself as much as possible, not only for your own sake, but also for your peers, who might be distracted themselves by whatever's pulling at you online.¹⁵

Communication

I'll get back to you usually within a couple of hours of you emailing me during the work week, but do allow at least 24 hours for a response (and 48+ on the weekend).

¹² I particularly thought of Jessamyn's "basketball" story here! Practice, practice, practice: so important in writing.

¹³ Again, saying why attendance is so important as welcoming and warm and inclusive a manner as I can: each individual student is important to the class because of what they can bring.

¹⁴ I shifted my own course policies section before the SU stuff for clarity's sake.

¹⁵ Here's my informal tech note. As I say, I encourage tech in the classroom, but I did want to inclusively highlight that using it distractedly might end up being a problem for classmates as well as themselves.

Late Work¹⁶

Because I was a student once and know that life happens, I will accept late day-to-day homework up to 7 days past the due date and late unit projects up to 5 days past the due date. However, on the latter, I don't give feedback once it's past the due date, though there will be no penalty otherwise up to the end of the 5-day window. If you need an extension on any unit project, just let me know ahead of time, and I'll grant it.

Artificial Intelligence Policy

AI tools are permitted on **invention work** toward final versions of the three course projects. Each assignment sheet specifies what is permitted and to what extent, and any citation requirements. If no instructions are given for a specific assignment, AI use is not permitted — except on invention work as noted above.

Any AI use beyond what is detailed in assignment instructions is explicitly prohibited except when documented permission is granted. See the full "Detailed AI Policy" on Blackboard.

A Note on My Own AI Use¹⁷

I will definitely be using generative AI tools in developing course materials, and I take full responsibility for reviewing and verifying the content for accuracy, appropriateness, and alignment with our learning objectives. As such, all final course materials represent my professional judgment.

Your Writing in This Course¹⁸

I may use any of your pieces of writing during the course for peer review or discussion. Just know that doing so is not singling you out: it's simply to help us all learn. Your work may also occasionally be used for program assessment, always anonymously.

If you do exceptional work on any unit project, I may ask you if I can use it anonymously in other semesters. You are completely free to grant or decline my request. I hope you'll accept it, however: others will want to see the great work you've done.

Your work may be used for educational purposes during the current semester — for peer review, class discussion, and program assessment. Your registration and continued enrollment constitute your permission.

I may also use work you complete this semester in subsequent semesters for educational purposes. Before doing so, I will either obtain your written permission or render the work anonymous by removing identifying material.

¹⁶ I tried to be inclusive, clear, and up-front about my late work policy. I've not been as clear about this in the past, but the policy itself isn't new. However, I tried to warm it up by noting that I myself was a student once and know that stuff comes up during a semester.

¹⁷ I also wanted to be up-front with my own AI use, since I require them to be. I'll be talking about this in class as well.

¹⁸ Likewise, I warmed the language thoroughly here.

PARTICIPATION & EXPECTATIONS¹⁹

You belong in this room — and the room needs you in it. This is a course built around conversation, peer review, and collective inquiry, and what you bring to those exchanges can't be replicated by anyone else. The smaller assignments and readings you do in preparation are what make those conversations possible; they're not busywork, they're the actual work.

The calendar is a projection, not a contract. I may adjust things as the semester unfolds — to follow a thread that opens up, to give something more time, or just because a better idea presents itself. Day-to-day, the Homework section on Blackboard is where you'll find what's actually due and any updates I've made.

One more thing: if something comes up that's making it hard to keep up — in this course or otherwise — please reach out before it becomes a crisis. That's not weakness; it's exactly the kind of self-awareness good writers develop.

UNIVERSITY POLICIES & RESOURCES²⁰

Accommodations

Syracuse University values diversity and inclusion; we are committed to a climate of mutual respect and full participation. There may be aspects of the instruction or design of this course that result in barriers to your inclusion and full participation. I invite any student to meet with me to discuss strategies and/or accommodations that may be essential to your success, and to collaborate with the Center for Disability Resources (CDR) in this process.

To discuss accommodations or register with CDR, visit disabilityresources.syr.edu, call (315) 443-4498, or email disabilityservices@syr.edu. Since academic accommodations are generally not provided retroactively, please contact CDR as soon as possible.

Religious Observance

Syracuse University's Religious Observances Policy recognizes the diversity of faiths in the campus community and protects the rights of students, faculty, and staff to observe religious holy days. Students may make up any examination, study, or work requirements missed due to a religious observance, provided they notify their instructors by the academic drop deadline. Students may enter their observances in MySlice under Student Services / Enrollment / My Religious Observances.

¹⁹ I tried to be as inclusive as possible in this section, to make students feel valuable and thus welcome in the room. I also wanted to note, in the last paragraph there, that when difficulties come up and a student starts falling behind, they just need to reach out, to again be as welcoming as I can be.

²⁰ Everything else on here before the calendar is SU boilerplate. I considered including something more personal about The Writing Center, but I think I'm just going to offer some extra credit or the like if students go—something to talk about in class.

Academic Integrity

Syracuse University considers academic integrity a core value. Students are required to uphold both course-specific and university-wide academic integrity expectations, including crediting sources, doing your own work, and communicating honestly. For the full policy, visit [the SU Academic Integrity Policy](#).

Students should not upload, distribute, or share course materials without permission. Using paid websites (e.g., Chegg, Course Hero) to obtain solutions or assignments completed by others violates these expectations and may be classified as a Level 3 violation. All academic integrity expectations apply to both in-person and online work.

The Writing Center

Experienced writing consultants at the Writing Center (101 HB Crouse Hall, on the Quad) can work with you one-on-one at any stage of your writing process — brainstorming, drafting, revising, editing. Online appointments (25 or 50 minutes) are available up to seven days in advance via WOnline. This is a **free resource**, and it is strongly recommended for every major assignment in this course. Visit wc.syr.edu for hours, location, and scheduling.

Orange SUccess

This course participates in Orange SUccess, which promotes student success through coordination among students, instructors, advisors, and campus support services. If I observe that you are experiencing difficulties (attendance concerns, low participation, risk of failing), I may send a message through the system to your syr.edu account with concerns and next steps. I may also send kudos when you are doing well. Please check your syr.edu email regularly and respond promptly to any Orange SUccess messages.

WK ²¹	DAY / DATE	TOPIC & READINGS	DUE
UNIT 1 · WEEKS 1–4 Exploratory Substack Newsletter (or Open Letter) on Romantic Love			
1	Tue Aug 25	Welcome²² to the course! Love! Love! Love! <i>Welcome document; icebreaker as we co-create a participation contract²³; free-writing; you as reader and writer</i>	

²¹ Color-coded and tabled the calendar to make it both more eye-catching and clearer for students to read. I also added a “Due” column to help students see, at a glance, what they’ll need to turn in/do after each class, which will correspond to my Blackboard daily homework postings.

²² Warmed the language.

²³ Co-create this one course policy, which is the classroom element I have the most trouble with. Hopefully if we can create a contract and discuss what participation means while at the same time breaking the social ice, I can improve the classroom experience for both students and myself.

1	Thu Aug 27	Rhetoric: Who, Where, How, To Whom, Why? <i>Unit 1 assignment write-up reconnaissance. Practice ²⁴activity with rhetorical terms; Practice with rhetorical analysis via Substack newsletter and open letter</i>	Read “What is Literacy?” and sample substack newsletter and open letter (the first and third are on Blackboard under “Misc.Resources\ Unit 1” and in “For 8/28”). Turn in pre- and post-reading writing.
2	Tue Sep 1	How the hell²⁵ do we <i>deal</i> with texts in a college classroom? What the hell <i>do</i> we do with them, all while talkin’ ‘bout love. <i>Practice with Passage-Based Focused Free-writing as a means of discussing and using it to push our thinking in new directions.</i>	Read “Love: Sweet Romance” and “Love: A Lens to See the World Through.” Turn in pre-and post-reading writing.
2	Thu Sep 3	More dealing and doing with texts in the college classroom while still talkin’ ‘bout love. <i>Practice with Machado’s text pushing our thinking in new directions. Practice putting the texts into conversation with each other via a group role-play activity.</i>	Read “The Trash Heap Has Spoken.” Turn in pre- and post-reading writing. ²⁶
3	Tue Sep 8	OK, we’ve dealt with texts, we’re recalled and delved into our experience, we’re thinking . . . now what? <i>Practice with “What it Means to Have an Idea” and “Shitty First Drafts.”</i>	Read “What it Means to Have and Idea” and “Shitty First Drafts” Turn in pre-and post-writing and Trialogue Write-Ups.

²⁴ Flipped classroom practice time to give students hands-on learning opportunities with rhetorical analysis in this case, though this practice time will continue throughout the semester. I’m emphasizing it with the word “practice” throughout.

²⁵ Maybe I’m warming the language too much here (literally), but I think humor goes a long way to make the learning more fun and thus make it less dry. The hyperlinked songs, by Van Halen and a cover of same by The Bird and the Bee also show students the cultural ubiquity of narratives about love in its sundry forms.

²⁶ I see I’m repeating this pre-and post-reading wrapper a lot. I like doing this kind of thing (via prompted free-writing) to help students start thinking about issues raised in a text via their own experience and observations so that they can personally connect with said text and then reflect on any convergences and divergences in what they wrote versus what they read/saw. I’d like to think of some more innovative ways to do this besides just writing, to create multiple ways of engaging with the materials, so this will be an ongoing trial-and-error thing for me to play with.

3	Thu Sep 10	OK, we've got shitty first drafts . . . now what? And: the scintillations! the ecstasies! of MLA formatting. <i>Practicing taking the shitty and making it un- (or at least less) shitty. Practice with (ugh!) MLA formatting and maybe how AI can help us here.</i>	Watch scintillating MLA formatting videos. Turn in pre-writing for MLA videos and shitty first draft.
4	Tue Sep 15	Conferences, or us talking about your writing.	Turn in the Unit 1 Project by 11:59 P.M.²⁷
4	Thu Sep 17	Conferences, or us talking about your writing.	

UNIT 2 · WEEKS 5–9

Analysis of a Scene from a Romantic Comedy

5	Tue Sep 22	We've talked about love. How do we like it in our movies? <i>Unit 2 assignment write-up reconnaissance. Sharing posts in groups and practicing writing in response to each other's different perspectives on films and scenes while reading such preferences and differences rhetorically.</i>	Read Zemliansky's "Literacy is Not Just Words Anymore." Post on the Romantic Comedy discussion board your 2-3 favorites and why they're your favorites + a favorite scene from one of these movies.
5	Thu Sep 24	Capitalism and patriarchy, oh my! or what is that rom-com I love selling me? <i>Practice looking at our favorite scenes and/or films through Harrison's lens.</i>	Read " What Rom-Coms Teach Us about Love ." Turn in pre- and post-writing. Comment on at least two of your classmates' discussion board posts.
6	Tue Sep 29	And: is romantic comedy all white and thus all wrong? <i>Practice looking at our favorite scenes and/or films through Jefferson, Roberts, and Quality Culture's lenses.</i>	Read " A New Wave of Socially Aware Romantic Comedies Shake Up the Genre " and " Romcon: Our Failure to See Black Romantic Comedies " and watch " The

²⁷ Red font for a better alert when unit projects are due.

6	Thu Oct 1	And yet, if romantic comedies are all wrong, why are they so right? <i>Practice putting all these perspectives into some kind of relationship: will it create a happy ending?</i>	Complicated Discussion Surrounding Crazy Rich Asians. Turn in pre- and post-reading writing. Read “Rom-Coms were Corny and Retrograde. Why Do I Miss Them So Much?”
7	Tue Oct 6	OK, I’m thinking about all this cultural stuff about romantic comedies, but how the hell do I actually analyze a scene? <i>Practice analyzing a romantic comedy scene using Ebert, Notice and Focus, and The Method.</i>	Read “How to Read a Movie” and about “Notice and Focus” and “The Method.” Turn in pre- and post-writing.
7	Thu Oct 8	OK, I can kind of analyze a scene now, or at least I know how to go about it. How can I look again and see it fresh? <i>Practice analyzing our scene again using “seems to be about X.” Practice the hard, yes, but incredibly valuable, yes again, intellectual machinations that get you to an evolving thesis.²⁸</i>	Read about “Seems to be about X” and the evolving thesis. Turn in the initial analysis of the rom-com scene.
8	Tue Oct 13	Fall Break: let some glorious central New York leaves fall for your love. <i>Practice not having class.</i>	
8	Thu Oct 15	What do my classmates think about what I’m thinking about love in this scene? <i>Practice receiving and integrating feedback from peer review.²⁹</i>	Turn in your initial draft of the Unit 2 Project.
9	Tue Oct 20	Conferences, or us again talking about your writing.	
9	Thu Oct 22	Conferences, or us again talking about your writing.	Turn in the Unit 2 Project by 11:59 P.M..
UNIT 3 · WEEKS 10–15 Argument & Research			

²⁸ Here, in this week, and as in the prior and subsequent units, I’m scaffolding the larger task. Really, everything in every unit incrementally helps them build towards whatever the unit project for that unit requires of them.

²⁹ Bringing in peer review to give students feedback from their peers, though I also intend to help them integrate said feedback as well, so they know what to do with it (or what to keep and what to let go), as feedback from non-experts can be tricky to deal with.

10	Tue Oct 27	We've explored and we've analyzed. Now we're going to . . . argue? <i>Unit 3 assignment write-up reconnaissance. Practice evaluating arguments with the stakeholders' activity.</i>	Read "Evaluating Arguments," and "Argument vs. Analysis." Turn in pre- and post writing.
10	Thu Oct 29	OK, we kind of know what academic argument is, but what the hell am I interested in arguing academically about? <i>Practice brainstorming and narrowing initial topics.</i>	Read short texts on kairos and exigence and "Bad Ideas about Writing: Research Starts with a Thesis Statement." Turn in topic free-writes/brainstorms.
11	Tue Nov 3	Let's fly to Bird Library! <i>Library session where the arcana of the Bird are revealed.</i>	Turn in preliminary topic proposals and initial research question(s).
11	Thu Nov 5	Let's find more stakeholders and their claims that push our thinking in wild new directions! <i>Practice finding where we can locate more stakeholders and their claims/arguments.</i>	
12	Tue Nov 10	Let's continue to find more stakeholders and their claims that push our thinking even further in wild new directions! <i>Practice finding where we can locate more stakeholders and their claims/arguments.</i>	Read "Six Strategies for Analyzing Sources" and "Rhetorical Sourcing." Turn in the pre- and post-reading writing.
12	Thu Nov 12	We've got some stakeholders and their claims. What the hell do we do with them in our essays? <i>Practice employing rhetorical sourcing and analysis.</i>	
13	Tue Nov 17	OK, let's 10 on 1 these stakeholders and their claims/arguments! <i>Practice employing the 10 on 1 tool on our sources.</i>	Read "10 on 1." Turn in the source activity and pre- and post-reading activity.
13	Thu Nov 19	Let's Zero Draft! <i>Write shitty first (zero) drafts in class.</i>	Read about "Zero Drafts."

14	Tue Nov 24	Thanksgiving Break! <i>Practice being wherever we go on Thanksgiving break.</i>	
14	Thu Nov 26	Thanksgiving Break! <i>Practice stuffing ourselves and manifesting a Cowboys win.</i>	
15	Tue Dec 1	Conferences, or us yet again talking about your writing.	
15	Thu Dec 3	Conferences, or us yet again talking about your writing.	
16	Tue Dec 8	Let's evaluate the course! And say goodbye with love in our hearts	Unit 3 Project due by 11:59 P.M.