

One for the Books: The Pleasures & Politics of Reading

ACM Newberry Library Seminar, Fall 2019



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“Reading has a history,” challenges Robert Darnton, “but how can we recover it?” This seminar explores not just *what* people read but *how*, *where*, and *why* they read it. From Gutenberg to digital media, reading has offered a means of defining the self, encountering others, drawing lines of inclusion and exclusion, and imagining change. What better place for such an exploration than Chicago’s Newberry Library, with its remarkable collections of original source materials. These materials include, but are not limited to, typesets of early printing presses, 19th century storybooks and teaching aids, Native American “ledger art,” political pamphlets, literary magazines, comics, and pornography.

The seminar will consist of two parts: a course with assigned readings, online responses, two short papers (4-5 pages), and in-class discussions; and an individual project, with self-directed archival research that culminates in a major research paper (30-40 pages). During the first part, which will last 8 weeks, we will think deeply about the many aspects of reading and books—from literacy as a physiological process to literacy as a colonial effect; from reading as a potentially perilous enterprise to reading as a revolutionary engine; from the book as theological testimony to the book as mass-market phenomenon and global mover; from the library as bastion of knowledge to digital communities as alternative spaces of reading and discussion. This first part will resemble a typical seminar at a liberal arts college, except that we will be learning about—and actively using—the library’s collections as we conduct our discussions. You will also begin to develop viable research projects that rely on the Newberry’s (or, in rare cases, another Chicago library’s) materials. The very point of the seminar is to learn how to do original research, to not only navigate, but also to feel comfortable in, an archive. Said another way, the very point of the seminar is disciplined *discovery*. While working hunches are fine, pre-determined plans and arguments have little place in this endeavor.

The second part of the course, which will last six weeks, will be fully devoted to your individual projects. Much of this period will consist of meetings with your professors and the Newberry librarians, though we will continue to meet as a group in order to share research findings, make presentations, receive feedback, hone interpretations, work on analytical writing, and drink up the emotional support of your comrades and instructors. This group ethos will be amplified, throughout the semester, by fieldtrips, social occasions, and regular Newberry lectures. We are tremendously excited, and we hope that you are, too.

Grading Rubrics

You will receive 16 credits for your Newberry experience—8 for the class and 8 for your individual project. You will receive a grade for each part of the course. This grade will count twice. So, if you receive an “A” in each part, the transcript at your home institution will record 4 “A”s worth 4 credits each.

Class

Attendance, preparation, and participation:	20%
Two short response papers:	15%

Two 4-5 page papers:	40%
Possible quizzes:	10%
Archival Exercises & Finding a Topic:	15%

Individual Project

Research Prospectus:	15%
Source Synopsis:	10%
Lightning Round Presentations:	5%
Paper Introduction:	10%
Section 1 of Paper:	10%
Section 2 of Paper:	10%
Completed Draft:	10%
Final Edited Paper:	20%
Final Presentation:	10%

Attendance Policy

You may have one excused absence from class or any other mandatory meeting, fieldtrip or event. Not one excused absence for each part of the seminar—one *total*. After your first unexcused absence, you will have 2.5 points deducted from your final grade in whatever part of the seminar the absence occurred; after your second absence, you will have an additional 2.5 points deducted in whatever part of the seminar the absence occurred. After your third absence, an additional 5 points will be deducted in whatever part of the seminar the absence occurred. You may have no more than three absences *total* if you wish to pass both parts of the seminar. A pattern of tardiness will also result in grade deductions.

Late Assignment Policy

Unless negotiated with your professors beforehand, late assignment will be penalized in this fashion: with each day that an assignment is late, your grade for that assignment will drop 3 points. You may not turn in the final edited paper after the due date and time.

Colloquium Attendance

One of the great benefits of being in residence at the Newberry Library is your access to its regular Wednesday colloquium, which features scholars talking about their own works in progress. You are required to attend a minimum of three colloquia throughout the semester, though we encourage you to attend more. They take place in the Newberry at 4:00. At this link you will find a schedule:

<https://www.newberry.org/newberry-colloquium>

Reading Response Paper Procedures

Response papers, which should be one single-space page, are due the night before class at 7:00 p.m. on your assigned days. We ask that you submit these papers in two ways: 1) as a group email

(including your professors) and 2) through an ACM platform that is still in development! (More on that later.) A response paper should focus one or two of the day's readings. It should identify the reading's central claim and wrestle with its implications. It should also make connections to other readings and class discussions.

4-5 Page Papers

These papers will also be submitted by group email and ACM platform. They should be titled, double-spaced, and include a works cited page. A 4-5 page paper does more than simply respond to particular readings; it crafts an argument; it has an original interpretive thesis. Detailed assignments will be handed out in the second week of the course.

Archival Exercises and Research Topic Identification

These short writing assignments (about 1 page, single-spaced) will require you to reflect on the materials you have encountered in the collections workshops through the lens of the corresponding class readings. What questions do these materials raise that you might pursue further? How would you expect the author of one of the related secondary sources to respond to a particular primary text? How might you test the argument of a secondary author against the primary sources? These exercises will be due 1 week after your chosen workshop. It is our hope that these exercises will help guide you toward your research topic, sources, and/or methodologies. You will need to do at least one exercise during the first 3-4 weeks of class; if that translates into a research paper topic, you don't need to do a second exercise.

Research Paper Guidelines

Please see the schedule below for a detailed progression of paper scaffolding.

Course Readings

The vast majority of the seminar readings will be accessed through Dropbox (with exceptions noted on the syllabus). This link will take you to the course folder:

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/lyqfitgqfjmwc88/AADl3bc9WHEPXo5UW-6oGXfNa?dl=0>

Academic Integrity

All of the work submitted for this course must be your own and it must not have been submitted, in any form, to a previous course. Any material--words, ideas, data, images, etc.--that is not your own must be appropriately cited. Any cases of suspected dishonesty will be forwarded to your home institution. Confirmed cases of dishonesty will result in a significant grade deduction or course failure.

Schedule

NOTE: A course of this nature that is rooted in discovery must necessarily allow some flexibility. Although it won't happen often, we reserve the right to revise readings and site-based outings as the semester evolves.

Orientation Week

(see also separate schedule)

Tues, Aug 27

4:00, Guided tour of Chicago History Museum with Peter Alter

Wed, Aug 28

Seminar, 9:30-11:45 am

Reading due: First half of Orlean, *The Library Book*

Evening water taxi to Chinatown

Thurs, Aug 29

Seminar, 9:30-11:45 am

Reading due:

- Second half of Orlean, *The Library Book*
- Melville, "Bartleby, the Scrivener" – online: <http://moglen.law.columbia.edu/LCS/bartleby.pdf>

1:30, Tour of Harold Washington Library

Fri, Aug 30

Seminar, 9:30-11:45 am

Reading due: Jack, *Reading: A Very Short Introduction*

Week 1: Sight Words

Mon, Sept 2: Labor Day (no class or library access)

Tues, Sept 3: Orality & literacy

Seminar, 9:30-11:45

Reading due:

- "History of the Newberry Library" and "Building the Collections," from Humanities' Mirror: Reading at the Newberry, 1887-1987" (Chicago: Newberry Library, 1987), 17-36 – Dropbox
- Ong, *Orality and Literacy* – online: https://archive.org/stream/OngWalterOralityAndLiteracy/Ong%20Walter%20%2C%20orality%20and%20literacy_djvu.txt
- Reflections on *Orality and Literacy* – online:

http://cscsc.scu.edu/trends/v26/v26_n4.pdf
<http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.520.596&rep=rep1&type=pdf>
<http://www3.brandonu.ca/cjns/14.2/Dickinson.pdf>

Wed, Sept 4: Literacy & the self

Seminar, 9:30-11:45 am

Reading due:

- Raven, *What Is the History of the Book*, ch. 1 – Dropbox
- *The Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*, preface & ch. 1-7– online:
https://www.ibiblio.org/ebooks/Douglass/Narrative/Douglass_Narrative.pdf
- DuBois, *The Souls of Black Folk*, Forethought & ch. 1, 2, 14 – online:
<http://www.gutenberg.org/files/408/408-h/408-h.htm>
- *Africa's Hidden Histories*, ch. 2 – Dropbox
- Round, *Removable Type*, ch. 2 – Dropbox

Collections Workshop, 2:00-3:30pm, in 2-West:

ABCs, Primers, Word Book Wall Roll, with Graham Greer, Reference Librarian

Colloquium, 4:00: Wing Collection, with Jill Gage

Friday, Sept 6: What's in a book?

Seminar, 9:30-11:45 am

Reading due:

- *What Is the History of the Book*, ch. 2-6 – Dropbox
- Darnton, “First Steps Toward a History of Reading” – Dropbox
- Darnton, *The Case for Books* (selections) – Dropbox

Collections workshop, 2-3:30pm, in 2-West:

Commonplace books & reader diaries, with Jill Gage, Wing Collection Custodian (aka Curator) and British Literature Bibliographer

Week 2 & 3: Printing Problems

Mon, Sept 9: A print revolution?

Seminar, 9:30-11:45 am (including visit with Adrian Johns, U of Chicago)

Reading due:

- Johns, Intro to *Nature of the Book* – Dropbox
- AHR debate – Dropbox
- Blair, “Reading Strategies” – Dropbox
- Ezell, “Multimodal Literacies” – Dropbox

Tues, Sept 10:

Fellows Reception, 3:00 pm, TFL

Wed, Sept 11: Reading reformations

Seminar, 9:30-11:45 am (including Skype discussion with Philip Round, Univ of Iowa)

Reading due:

- Simpson, *Burning to Read*, intro, ch. 1 & 2 – Dropbox
- Round, *Removable Type*, ch. 1 – Dropbox

Collections workshop, 2-3:30pm, in ITW Seminar Room:

Censorship and religion, with Chris Fletcher, Program Manager in the Center for Renaissance Studies

Friday, Sept 13: Problem Reading

Seminar, 9:30-11:45

Reading due:

- Darnton, *Forbidden Bestsellers*, ch. 1-3, 6-10 – Dropbox
- Secord, *Victorian Sensation* (selections) – reserve
- Heath, “Obscenity, Censorship, & Modernity” – Dropbox
- Shinder, “Howl” 50 Years Later, intro – Dropbox
- Reflections on “Howl” – online:
http://www.foundsf.org/index.php?title=The_Howl_Obscenity_Trial
<https://pdxscholar.library.pdx.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1065&context=younghistorians>
<https://howlandbeyond.weebly.com/the-obscenity-trial.html>
https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/The_People_of_the_State_of_California_vs._Lawrence_Ferlinghetti
<https://www.tabletmag.com/scroll/113218/howl-and-the-obscenity-trial>
<https://www.amazon.com/Howl-Trial-Battle-Free-Expression/dp/0872864790>

Collections workshop, 2-3:30pm, in ITW Seminar Room:

Obscenity and free speech, with Suzanne Karr Schmidt, Curator of Rare Books and Manuscripts

Mon, Sept 16: Problem readers

Seminar, 9:30-11:45 am

Reading due:

- Fehrman, “The Secret Writing of American Slaves,” *Boston Globe*, 10 Feb 2013 – online:
<https://www.bostonglobe.com/ideas/2013/02/10/the-secret-writing-american-slaves/Lbem3fQ8viu8FmwXr2UcKO/story.html>
- Round, *Removable Type*, ch. 8 – Dropbox
- Rose, *Intellectual Life of the British Working Classes*, intro + ch. 3 & 11 – Dropbox
- Jack, *The Woman Reader*, ch. 7 & 8 – Dropbox

Tuesday, Sept 17: Problem readers

Collections workshop, 10-11:30am, in 2-West:

African-American and Native American reading, with Analú López, Ayer Librarian, and Will Hansen, Curator of Americana

Wednesday, Sept 18: Empathetic readers

Seminar, 9:30-11:45 am

Reading due:

- Hunt, *Inventing Human Rights*, ch. 1 – Dropbox
- One of the following (to be assigned) on H. B. Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*:
 - Goldner, "Arguing with Pictures" – Dropbox
 - Cutter, *The Illustrated Slave*, intro & ch. 5 – Dropbox
 - De Rosa, *Domestic Abolitionism & Juvenile Literature*, ch. 4 – Dropbox
- One of the following (to be assigned) on Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle*:
 - Overland, "From Lithuanian Peasant to American Socialist" – Dropbox
 - Young, "The Pig that Fell unto the Privy" – Dropbox
 - Fuhlhage et al, "Blowing Embers" – Dropbox
 - Tichi, "Exposé and Excess" – Dropbox
 - "Aiming for the stomach and hitting the heart" – online: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4050063/>
- BBC "Does Reading Fiction Make Us Better People?" – online: http://www.bbc.com/future/story/20190523-does-reading-fiction-make-us-better-people?fbclid=IwAR0wgUsiyBgZ209lZhnPiR_awZagFPOS8pxVe2ILDskeUfHK1MAzvdkpGi4

Collections workshop, 2-3:30pm, in 2-West:

Novels, with Jill Gage

Fri, Sept 20: Word wars

Seminar, 9:30-11:45 am

Reading due:

- Ogborn, "A War of Words" – Dropbox
- Comaroffs, "Colonization of Consciousness" – Dropbox
- *Africa's Hidden Histories*, ch. 11 – Dropbox

Collections workshop, 2-3:30pm, in 2-West:

Maps, with Jim Akerman, Curator of Maps

Sat, Sept 21: Paper 1 due by noon

Weeks 4 & 5: Bindings & Holdings

Mon, Sept 23: Reading & nation building

Seminar, 9:30-11:45 am

Reading due:

- Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, ch. 2&3 – Dropbox
- *Before the Public Library*, ch. 6 – Dropbox
- Round, *Removable Type*, ch. 3 & 5 – Dropbox
- *Africa's Hidden Histories* ch. 10 – Dropbox
- Jack, *Woman Reader*, ch. 9 – Dropbox

Tues, Sept 24: Reading & nation building

Collections workshop, 10-11:30am, in 2-West:

Ayer Collection of Native American Studies overview, with Analú López and Will Hansen

Newberry public forum, 6:00-7:30 pm: “The Language of Bronzeville: Literature and Race in Chicago”

Wed, Sept 25: Reading & social formation

Seminar, 9:30-11:45 am

Reading due:

- Radway, “The Scandal of the Middlebrow” – Dropbox
- McHenry, *Forgotten Readers*, intro, ch. 1, 4, epilogue – Dropbox
- Farr, *Reading Oprah* – Dropbox
- Gwendolyn Brooks poetry – Dropbox
- St. Felix, “Chicago’s Particular Cultural Scene and the Radical Legacy of Gwendolyn Brooks,” *New Yorker* – online: <https://www.newyorker.com/culture/culture-desk/chicagos-particular-cultural-scene-and-the-radical-legacy-of-gwendolyn-brooks>

Collections workshop, 2-3:30pm, in 2-West:

Proletarian and labor lit, with Alison Hinderliter, Curator of Modern Manuscripts

Dinner at Brad Hunt’s apartment!

Thurs, Sept 26: Field trip to Bronzeville (morning)

Friday, Sept 27: Genre & fandom

Seminar, 9:30-11:45 am

Reading due:

- Blake, “When Readers Become Fans” – Dropbox
- Saler, “Clap if You Believe in Sherlock Holmes” – Dropbox
- Jenkins, “Textual Poachers,” in *Fan Fiction Studies Reader* – Dropbox
- Rzepka, “What is Detective Fiction?” – Dropbox

Collections workshop, 2-3:30pm, in 2-West:

Genre fiction & poetry, with Samantha Smith, Project Archivist, and Will Hansen

Mon, Sept 30: Finding oneself in a book

Seminar, 9:30-11:45 am (including skype discussion with Rayyon Robinson, founder of Edith Renfrow Smith Library, Grinnell)

Reading due:

- Nafisi, *Reading Lolita in Tebran*, Pt 1 (Lolita)
- Edim, *Well-Read Black Girl* (selections) – Dropbox
- Chimamanda Adichie, “The Danger of a Single Story” (TedTalk) – online:
https://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda_adichie_the_danger_of_a_single_story

Wed, Oct 2: Finding oneself in a book

Seminar, 9:30-11:45

Reading due:

- Mead, “Middlemarch and Me,” *New Yorker* – online:
<https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2011/02/14/middlemarch-and-me>
- Nafisi, Pt II (Gatsby)
- Hayes, “Railway Reading” – Dropbox
- [Optional:
Before the Public Library, ch. 2 & 14 – Dropbox
Willes, *Reading Matters*, ch. 4 – Dropbox]

Thurs, Oct 3 & Fri, Oct 4

Research time

Weeks 6 & 7: Circulations

Mon, Oct 7: Mobile lives of texts & readers

Seminar, 9:30-11:45 am

Reading due:

- Hofmeyr, *The Portable Bunyon*, prologue & intro, ch. 5, 10, conclusion – Dropbox
- *10 Books that Shaped the British Empire*, intro & one of the following: ch. 2, 6, 9 – Dropbox

Thurs, Oct 10: Mobile lives of texts & readers

John Bryant lecture & discussion, 10:00-12:00, ITW seminar room

Reading due:

Melville, *Billy Budd* – online: <http://xroads.virginia.edu/~HYPER/bb/BillyBudd.html>

Online articles at Melville Electronic Library Site:

- “What is a Fluid Text?” <https://mel.hofstra.edu/what-is-a-fluid-text.html>
- “Melville Versions” <https://mel.hofstra.edu/versions-of-melville.html>
- “Versions of Billy Budd” <https://mel.hofstra.edu/versions-of-billy-budd.html>
Play around with this last resource. Choose a couple of passages from the version of *Billy Budd* that you read and try to see what difference a fluid version of the novel makes.
- [Optional: MEL: <https://www.press.jhu.edu/news/blog/melville-billy-budd-and-digital-death>]

Note: By 11:00 p.m. Wednesday night each student must submit, to both instructors, a specific question for John Bryant about the “fluid text” of *Billy Budd*.

Friday, Oct 11: Revisiting empathy

Seminar, 9:30-11:45 am

Reading due:

- Keen, “Theory of Narrative Empathy” (Dropbox) and update (online: <https://literary-universals.uconn.edu/2017/10/07/narrative-empathy-a-universal-response-to-fiction/#>)
- Nafisi, *Reading Lolita in Tebran*, pt 4 (Austen)
- Park & Rajan, eds, *The Postcolonial Jane Austen*, ch. 10 – Dropbox
- [Optional: Cutter, *The Illustrated Slave*, epilogue]

Collections workshop, 2-3:30pm, in 2-West:

Melville Collection, with Will Hansen

Sun Oct 13: Paper 2 due by 10:00 a.m.Mon Oct 14: Neurodiversity and reading

Seminar, 9:30-11:45 am (including visit with Steve Kuusisto, Univ of Rochester)

Reading due:

- Wolf, *Proust & the Squid* (first half, through p.133)
- Gilian Silverman, “Neurodiversity and the Revision of Book History” – Dropbox
- Stephen Kuusisto, "Teaching by Ear" https://blindinacademe.wordpress.com/2019/10/02/teaching-by-ear/?fbclid=IwAR0jD9ngoKp_gYmwjts-8aBspH6ITf7BlZudlNNom8dAGbxf0YRuiGK8Uck
- Stephen Kuusisto, "What Does Your Online Journal Smell Like?" <https://stephenkuusisto.com/2017/06/27/what-does-your-online-journal-smell-like/>

Reception with Steve Kuusisto, 4:30 pm

Tues, Oct 15: Neurodiversity and reading

Collections workshop, 10-11:30am, in 2-West:

Visually impaired reading, Helen Keller, and mendicant lit, with Will Hansen

Wed, Oct 16: The new “book”?

Seminar, 9:30-11:45 am

Reading due:

- Wolf, *Proust & the Squid* (remainder)
- Jabr, “The Reading Brain in the Digital Age” – online: <https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/reading-paper-screens/>
- Birkerts, *Gutenberg Elegies* (intro & ch. 1 + one the following chapters: 3, 5, 6, 8) – Dropbox

Fri, Oct 18: The new “reader”?

Seminar, 9:30-11:45 am

- Jacobs, *Pleasures of Reading in an Age of Distraction* (focus on pp 1-63) – Dropbox

Weeks 8 & 9: Research

Tues, Oct 22

Research prospectus (incl bibliography) due by 12 noon

Assignment: Write a prospectus identifying a) your topic and research question, b) the main primary/ archival source base you will use to address the question, c) a bibliography of the most relevant secondary/ critical sources you will use to frame the question. The prospectus must demonstrate your access to the chosen primary sources. Please email your proposal as a Word document to instructors and the rest of the class.

Wed, Oct 23

Seminar meeting, 9:30-11:45

Assignment: Read and reflect on all the other proposals, and be prepared to offer constructive comments and questions. Note: Research groups will be assigned today.

Thurs, Oct 24

Individual adviser meetings

Tues, Oct 29

Source synopsis due by 12 noon

Assignment: Your synopsis (roughly 2-3 pages) should address the following:

- 1) *What have others said about your research question in the secondary literature?*
- 2) *What is your preliminary sense of what your primary sources say about your research question? How does that compare to extant explanations?*

Wed, Oct 30

Research groups meet to review source synopses. Does each synopsis lay out a clear relationship between “They Say” and “I Say”?

Prevost & Savarese colloquium, 4:00 pm

Thurs, Oct 31

Practice presentations with advisers

Assignment: Your presentation must, in 2 minutes or less, convey your a) research question, b) source base, and c) preliminary findings.

Fri, Nov 1

Lightning round **presentations** to ACM faculty advisers

Weeks 10-12: Drafting

Tues, Nov 5

Draft of paper **introduction** due by 12 noon

Assignment: Your introduction should, in clear and artful prose, frame the argument by addressing the following:

- 1) *What is the paper's research question and interpretive problem?*
- 2) *Thesis: How do your primary/archival sources and method of reading them address and resolve this question?*
- 3) *How do you situate your investigation within the relevant secondary literature? Who/what are you responding to, adding to, arguing against? What is the complicating factor or counterargument?*
- 4) *"Who cares?": i.e., What is the larger significance of this investigation? How will your focused study help tell a larger story?*
- 5) *What is the road map for the body of your paper? (Your paper should have 2-4 subsections, each of which accomplishes something on its own and uses evidence from the primary sources to answer the larger question.)*

Note: Although you will likely find you need to revise the introduction as you write the rest of the paper, you should use these opening paragraphs to take a stab at laying out the interpretive and organizational framework of the project.

Wed, Nov 6

Research groups meet to review introductions. Can you identify the thesis and other framing components in each draft?

Thurs, Nov 7

Individual adviser meetings

Tues, Nov 12

Draft of **section 1** due by 12 noon

*Assignment: Email **one complete section of the body of your paper** to instructors and your group members in an MS Word Doc. Make sure it has an introductory paragraph to frame the section and a concluding one that encapsulates it and transitions to the next section.*

Wed, Nov 13

Research groups meet to review section 1. How effectively does the section draft develop a piece of the paper's central argument?

Thurs, Nov 14

Individual adviser meetings

Tues, Nov 19

Draft of **section 2** due by 12 noon

*Assignment: Email **the next complete section of the body of your paper** to instructors and your group members in an MS Word Doc. Make sure it has an introductory paragraph to frame the section and a concluding one that encapsulates it and transitions to the next section.*

Wed, Nov 20

Research groups meet to review section 2. How effectively does the section draft develop a piece of the paper's central argument?

Thurs, Nov 21

Individual adviser meetings

Tues, Nov 26

Complete drafts, including all sections and conclusion, due by 5:00 pm.

Week 14: Editing & presenting

Mon, Dec 2

Meet individually with advisers to review drafts.

We will be evaluating your draft on the following criteria:

- 1) *Argument: Do you articulate your thesis clearly and persuasively?*
- 2) *Framework: Does your introduction situate this argument effectively via a compelling interpretive question, historical or literary context, scholarly dialogue, primary source base, and "road map" of the body of the paper?*
- 3) *Organization and prose: Do you develop the argument clearly and cohesively throughout the paper, through a logical progression of ideas, effective transitions, and a clear and error-free use of language?*
- 4) *Evidence: Are the different components of the argument substantively borne out by your mobilization of the sources, properly quoted, paraphrased, and cited?*
- 5) *Broader significance: Is it clear why the reader should care about your study? What does your individual angle reveal about some broader aspect of reading?*

Tues, Dec 3 & Wed, Dec 4

Presentations, 9-12

Fri, Dec 5

Final draft due by 12 noon!!