

# I hate writing

## 10 things

a writers boot camp

- ❶ I'd rather be Facebooking, or, why I hate reading.
- ❷ I sort of remember Schoolhouse Rock, or, why I hate grammar.
- ❸ I burned my SAT vocab lists, or, why I hate words.
- ❹ It's hard to be specific AND concrete, or, why I hate details.
- ❺ Shakespeare is, like, Ye Olde English, or, why I hate poetry.
- ❻ I'm right because I say so, or, why I hate rhetoric.
- ❼ Google knows everything already, or, why I hate research.
- ❽ I don't play well with others, or, why I hate workshopping.
- ❾ I hit spellcheck already, or, why I hate revising.
- ❿ Just tell me what to put down, or, why I hate thinking.

ENGL 281  
Section D  
TuTh  
2:30-4:20 PM  
MGH 082A  
Autumn 2009  
Edmond Chang  
University of  
Washington



"I am going to be rather hard-nosed and say that if you have to find devices to coax yourself to stay focused on writing, perhaps you should not be writing what you're writing.

And if this lack of motivation is a constant problem, perhaps writing is not your forte. I mean, what is the problem? If writing bores you, that is pretty fatal. If that is not the case, but you find that it is hard going and it just doesn't flow, well, what did you expect? It is work; art is work."  
—Ursula K. Le Guin

"Writing is an exploration. You start from nothing and learn as you go."  
—E.L. Doctorow

JOHN MCPHEE, Pulitzer Prize winner and grandmaster of literary nonfiction, said about writing, "The first draft [is] an unreadable thing. And you would not want to show it to anybody because it's just full of entrails hanging out with loose ends...You belch it all out on paper. When you've got something on paper, you then have something to work with...and turn into a piece of writing." Writing is all about guts, gas, gross anatomy, and getting down to business. Writing isn't a check mark, a destination vacation, a graduation requirement. Rather, it's a practice, a process, an extreme sport. This course will take up McPhee's writer's heroic journey—from unreadable thing to piece of writing—by engaging what it means to be a good writer, reader, and researcher, how to recognize and develop the skills and strategies to write, read, and research, and why good writing, reading, and researching are central to everything you do. Be prepared for a quarter of high-impact, low-stake, high-risk, creativity-freeing, genre-tripping, word-playing, workshop-intensive writing, reading, and thinking. This will be hard, but it will be fun. You will hate it, but you will grow to love it. We will trek, tromp, jump, crunch, sweat, and swear through academic, expository, persuasive, and creative writing challenges. We will set high goals and meet tough benchmarks. We will hone the tools and muscles you already have and push, stretch, and dream till you're one lean, mean writing machine. Are you ready? Let's do this.

OUR ENGLISH 281 PROMISES a quarter of writing, reading, discussion, library research, asking questions, more writing, revision, more reading, more discussion, critical thinking, analysis, fun, and even more writing and revision. It is a writing boot camp after all. We will engage texts and writing tasks small and large, everyday and academic. This particular incarnation of 281 also promises a healthy inclusion of popular culture, cultural studies, politics, everyday activism, media old and new, and experiential learning. You must have a well-developed curiosity about the world. Through all of these things, you will further practice the principles behind exposition, arguments, evidence, and analysis; you will hone strategies and skills for genre, style, revision, workshopping, and research. Texts may include in whole or in excerpt: John McPhee, Amy Tan, Sherman Alexie, Shelley Jackson, Shirley Jackson, Annie Proulx, Ray Bradbury, Langston Hughes, Patricia Smith, William Shakespeare, Anthony Bourdain, Gael Greene, Michael Pollan, Michael Olmert, David Bartholomae, Geoffrey Sirc, *Keywords for American Cultural Studies*, and others.

THIS COURSE ASSUMES that you have previous experiences in college-level writing (such as ENGL 109/110, 111, 121, or 131 or equivalent), as we will be building on those skills and techniques begun in your introductory courses. With that in mind, this class also takes as a basic assumption that writing is a skill and that, like any skill, it can always be furthered and improved through guided practice and experimentation. We will work to develop, challenge, and enhance the writing skills you already possess into the skills and intuitions necessary for academic, professional, and creative "readable things."

"Read in order to live."  
—Gustave Flaubert

"To write is to write is to write is to write is to write is to write is to write."  
—Gertrude Stein



### Required Course Texts & Materials

- ENGL 281D Course Reader (available at Ave Copy, 4141 Univ. Way NE @ 42nd)
- John McPhee. *Giving Good Weight.*
- John McPhee. *A Sense of Where You Are.*
- Michael Olmert. *Milton's Teeth & Ovid's Umbrella.* (recommended)
- Lunsford, Andrea A. *The Everyday Writer.* (recommended)
- Approximately \$30 for making copies/printing.
- Some readings are also available via e-reserve.
- A sturdy two-pocket folder.
- Web access and an active UW email account

## English 281 Course Outcomes

### 1. To produce complex written, oral and/or multimedia work that responds to the contexts and conventions of specific genres.

- The work demonstrates a sense of purpose within the selected genre; the author understands how his or her work functions in a particular generic context.
- The work adopts a distinct stance vis-à-vis a well-defined audience, and various aspects of the work (mode of inquiry, content, structure, appeals, tone, sentences, and word choice) are strategically pitched to that audience.
- The author comprehends the purpose of the selected genre (the social action it accomplishes and the reasons the genre is produced).
- The format, content, design, and style of the work are appropriate to the selected genre, effectively employing headings, charts/diagrams, images, hyperlinks or media.
- To author can evaluate the strategies used in various generic contexts and can employ a style, tone, and conventions appropriate to the demands of a particular genre and situation.
- The author articulates and assesses the effects of his or her rhetorical choices.

### 2. To read, analyze, and synthesize sources from various genres and purposefully incorporate appropriate evidence to generate and support work and communication.

- The work demonstrates an understanding of the course texts as necessary for the purpose at hand.
- Course texts are used in strategic, focused ways (e.g. summarized, cited, applied, challenged, re-contextualized) to support the goals of the author's work.
- The work is in conversation with common knowledge in a specific field or discipline.
- The author understands the types of sources he or she needs to examine and respond to in order to produce effective work within in chosen genre.
- The work demonstrates an appropriate method of integrating and documenting sources.

### 3. To develop flexible strategies for revising, editing, and proofreading writing.

- The author understands that soliciting, offering, and responding to feedback is essential to the process of making substantial and successful revision.
- The work demonstrates substantial and successful revision.
- The work responds to substantive issues raised by the instructor and peers.
- Errors of grammar, punctuation, and mechanics are proofread and edited so as not to interfere with reading and understanding the work.

## Requirements & Grading

Your grade should not be the sole exigence or motivation for this class. It is the hope of the course that you walk away from English 281 with something more. Find some pleasure and some edification and some knowledge from this class (or any class really) and success is usually not far behind. With that in mind, your grade will be a reflection of engagement, effort, close reading, critical thinking, writing, revision, and participation.

### Weekly Writing Challenges/Short Papers (40%)

The majority of the writing you will do for this class is in the form of short, critical, and well-conceived papers. Each week you will be given a "writing

"The world I create in writing compensates for what the real world does not give me."  
—Gloria Anzaldua

"Imagination is more important than knowledge."  
—Albert Einstein

"An idea that is not dangerous is unworthy of being called an idea at all."  
—Oscar Wilde



### Course Requirements

- Writing Challenges/ Short Papers (40%)
- Major Paper (20%)
- Final Portfolio (10%)
- Class Participation (30%)



### Late Assignments

All assignments must be done completely and turned in on time. Lateness will subtract from your assignment's final grade and work must be turned in as soon as possible. Note that I will not comment on late work. However, you still need to complete late work for a complete portfolio. If you miss class on the due date of a paper, you must notify me and make arrangements to get the paper to me as soon as possible. **Unless previously arranged, I do not accept assignments via email.** Remember that a paper has not been officially handed in until it is in my hands. Never turning anything in late is always the best policy.

challenge,” a particular writing task to accomplish in 1 to 4 pages. Writing challenges focus on specific skills, forms, genres, and ideas to work out particular writing muscles and habits. From personal narrative to close reading to poetry to interview to research proposal, these short papers will be graded on clarity, coherence, analysis, concision, and how well they satisfy the assignment. Writing Challenges are due weekly, but you need only complete a minimum of 7; some challenges are required. See the Writing Challenge/Short Paper prompt for more details.

### Major Paper (20%)

All of your hard work during the quarter will culminate in a 6 to 8 page extended exposition or research paper. In other words, you will select a topic, problem, or question to write about in an extended, evidenced piece. In fact, one of the quarter’s writing challenges, about mid term, will be a research proposal identifying and outlining your major paper’s topic, argument, and evidence. The major paper asks you to think critically about the goals of the class, to research and make connections, and to put all of the quarter’s skills into actual practice. See the Major Paper prompt for more details.

### Final Portfolio (10%)

The capstone of your writing boot camp will be your final portfolio, your honed and toned body of work. The final portfolio will include: all of your revised Writing Challenges, your Major Paper, and a cover letter that explains how the portfolio demonstrates the goals and outcomes for the course. The cover letter, in fact, is the final week’s Writing Challenge. Your portfolio will be graded on completeness, organization, revision, and presentation. **A portfolio that does not include all the above will be considered incomplete.**

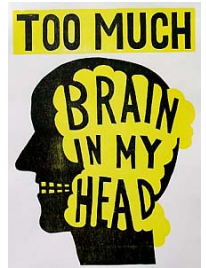
### Participation and Preparedness (30%)

Preparedness and participation forms a large component of your final grade. It is essential that you prepare for class, attend class, and participate. Missing class may seriously compromise your ability to do well in this class. Again, negative participation will hurt your participation grade. Participation is determined by 1) your **respectful** presence in class, 2) your **willingness** to discuss, comment, and ask questions, 3) your **preparation** for class, which includes bringing required materials to class and doing all of the assigned reading for class, 4) your **engagement** in workshopping and group work, 5) your use of the class blog, 6) and your interactions with me and other students.

Beyond the written assignments, you will participate in the class web log. Please bookmark the blog address, check the site regularly, and feel free to comment and post regularly. The class blog will be used for announcements, assignment reminders, updates to the syllabus, as well as questions, inquiries, provocations, and an extension of in-class discussion. Blog commenting and posting will be taken into account in evaluating class participation.

Finally, at least once during the quarter, you are required to sign-up for workshopping your writing. Each week, select students will share their work with the class, and the class as a whole will respectfully comment, critique, and make suggestions about each workshop draft. For your chosen week, you will be responsible for completing a draft of the assignment early, for making copies for the class, and for actively participating in your workshop. Missing your workshop will significantly affect your overall participation grade.

“Learn as much by writing as by reading.”  
—Lord Acton



“I entered the classroom with the conviction that it was crucial for me and every other student to be an active participant, not a passive consumer...[a conception of] education as the practice of freedom.... education that connects the will to know with the will to become. Learning is a place where paradise can be created.”  
—bell hooks

“I hate writing; I love having written.”  
—Dorothy Parker



“I always advise children who ask me for tips on being a writer to read as much as they possibly can. Jane Austen gave a young friend the same advice, so I’m in good company there.”  
—J.K. Rowling

“For me to do a story, something has to happen to someone. It’s a story in the way you learn what a story is in third grade, where there is a person and things happen to them and then something big happens and they realize something new.”  
—Ira Glass

## Attendance

**Attendance is strongly recommended.** If you are absent, you miss the explanation of an assignment, an in-class exercise or workshop, the discussion of a reading, and overall, the class as a community of learning. It is in your best interests to come to class. Also, you are expected to be in class on time. Class will start immediately at the appointed time. In the first minutes of class I may make important announcements, establish the agenda for the class meeting, field questions, or begin immediately with an important lesson. If you come in after I start class, even by only a few minutes, you are late and I will mark you as such.

Chronic or conspicuous attendance problems will negatively affect your class participation grade. If you know you are going to miss class, please let me know ahead of time (via email or IM), provide any pertinent documentation, and we will make any necessary arrangements. And when you do miss class, always find another student to get class notes and see me in order to make up missed work in a timely manner. If you miss a great deal of the quarter, you are recommended strongly to take the course during a quarter in which you can more easily attend class.

## Assignment Format

All papers must be typed or produced on a word processor. Word processing is preferable because it makes the mechanics of revision—rearranging, adding, and deleting—easy. If you do not have your own computer with word processing capability, computer labs are available on campus with a variety of software that is easy to learn. All documents should be saved in Microsoft Word format, **preferably in Word format**; if you do not have access to Word, then save your documents in RTF or Rich Text Format.

All papers must follow the manuscript format outlined by the assignment. **All papers must use MLA citation and documentation conventions.** All papers must be neatly printed (in black), stapled in the top, left-hand corner if necessary, and not be three-hole punched. Papers that do not follow these format guidelines will not be accepted. They will be returned unread to you. Papers will be regarded as late until they are resubmitted in the proper format.

**Always make a backup copy of every paper you turn in,** lest you be one of the unhappy people whose paper is eaten by the computer. You may even want to take the precaution of e-mailing your paper to yourself as an attachment at least a couple of times during the drafting process and certainly BEFORE you exit the document for the last time and leave the computer lab, your friend's computer, or even your own computer. This way, even if you lose your drive or disk or your paper gets mysteriously erased, you still have a copy in your e-mail files.

## Evaluation Rubric

Over the course of the quarter, your assignments will receive feedback and comments that will identify what you are doing well and what still needs improvement. Your grades assess your fulfillment of the assignment, the quality of work, detail, analysis, and argumentation, overall effort, and finally, style, polish, and risk taking. Consider the following evaluation rubric as signposts or a kind of legend to your progress and evaluation:

- **Outstanding (3.7-4.0):** Offers a very highly proficient, even memorable demonstration of the trait(s) associated with the course or assignment goal(s), including some appropriate risk-taking and/or creativity.



### Paper Formatting

- 1) 1" margins top, bottom, left, and right on each page.
- 2) Double-spaced block header with your name, date, course, my name. Some specific assignments may be single-spaced.
- 3) Appropriate title.
- 4) Standard Times Roman Font, 12 point only.
- 5) Number all pages except for the first page in the top right-hand corner.
- 6) Correct MLA citation and bibliographic format. Bibliography if necessary.
- 7) Stapled once at the top left corner.

"Suit the action to the word, the word to the action."  
—William Shakespeare

"You can't wait for inspiration. You have to go after it with a club."  
—Jack London



### "12 Steps for Making Art:

1. Seek instruction
  2. Make a schedule
  3. Set goals — chart development
  4. Focus while practicing
  5. Relax, practice slowly, you can't be in a hurry if you're gonna get better
  6. Practice the things you can't do — don't rehearse your instincts
  7. Always give maximum expression — invest
  8. Don't be too hard on yourself
  9. Don't show off
  10. Think for yourself
  11. Be optimistic
  12. Look for connections to other things"
- Wynton Marsalis





### Contact Ed

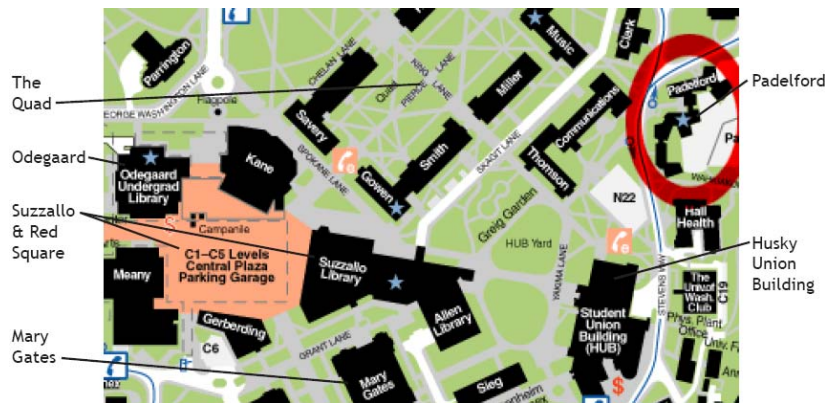
Office:  
B33 Padelford  
Office Hours:  
TuTh  
1 to 2 PM  
E-mail:  
[changed@u.washington.edu](mailto:changed@u.washington.edu)  
AIM & Google Talk:  
EDagogy

“It is the supreme art of the teacher to awaken joy in creative expression and knowledge.”  
—Albert Einstein

- **Strong (3.1-3.6):** Offers a proficient demonstration of the trait(s) associated with the course or assignment goal(s), which could be further enhanced with revision, additional support, and creativity.
- **Good (2.5-3.0):** Effectively demonstrates the trait(s) associate with the course or assignment goal(s), but less proficiently; could use revision to demonstrate more skillful and nuanced command of trait(s).
- **Acceptable (2.0-2.4):** Minimally meets the basic course or assignment requirement, but the demonstrated trait(s) are not fully realized or well-controlled and would benefit from significant revision.
- **Inadequate (1.0-1.9):** Does not meet the course or assignment requirement; the trait(s) are not adequately demonstrated and require substantial revision on multiple levels.

### Finding Help

My office and office hours are to the left. I am available during that time and by appointment to help you. I encourage you to come see early in the quarter even if it is just to talk about the class, about the assignments, or about school in general. I may ask you to meet with me when I think a conference would be useful. My office is located in the ground floor of Padelford Hall (northeast of the HUB), Room B-33. See <<http://www.washington.edu/home/maps/northcentral.html?pd>>.



I am also available electronically by email and the course blog: <https://catalysttools.washington.edu/gopost/board/changed/12201/>. Email and the blog are the best means of contacting me. I will do my best to answer your emails and blog posts, usually **within twenty-four hours**. If there is an emergency and you need to reach me, please contact the Undergraduate English office in A-2H&G Padelford.

Furthermore, when time permits, I will supplement my office hours with virtual hours via instant messenger (**AIM or Google Talk nickname: EDagogy**); if I am logged in, during reasonable hours, you are more than welcome to discuss the class or ask questions. Please, when you initiate an IM conversation for the first time, please identify yourself to me; also, be **patient** because my responses may not be immediate.

You can find additional writing help at the Odgaard Writing and Research Center (**OWRC**), which is a good resource for this class and other classes. OWRC is located on the third floor of Odgaard Library and offers a variety of services including help with papers, brainstorming ideas, help with reading, and research. See <<http://depts.washington.edu/owrc/>> for more information.

P: Come, come, you wasp, i'faith you are too angry.  
K: If I be washpish, best beware my sting.  
P: My remedy is then to pluck it out.  
K: Ay, if the fool could find where it lies.  
P: Who knows not where a wasp does wear his sting? In his tail.  
K: In his tongue.  
P: Whose tongue?  
K: Yours, if you talk of tales, and so farewell.  
P: What, with my tongue in your tail?  
—*Taming of the Shrew* (II.i.207-214)



“Wake the happy words.”  
—Theodore Roethke

“I believe more in the scissors than I do in the pencil.”  
—Truman Capote

“I’m a rewriter. That’s the part I like best...once I have a pile of paper to work with, it’s like having the pieces of a puzzle. I just have to put the pieces together to make a picture.”  
—by Judy Blume

Moreover, the Center for Learning and Undergraduate Enrichment (CLUE) is also a good resource. CLUE is located in Mary Gates Hall Commons and offers tutorial sessions for most freshman lecture courses, skills courses, access to computer labs, and drop-in centers for math, science and writing. See <<http://depts.washington.edu/clue/>> for more information.

Further resources, both on- and off-campus can be found on the Links page of the course website:

<<http://staff.washington.edu/changed/281/links.html>>.

## Academic Dishonesty

Plagiarism, or academic dishonesty, is presenting someone else's ideas or writing as your own. In your writing for this class, you are encouraged to refer to other people's thoughts and writing – as long as you cite them. Many students do not have a clear understanding of what constitutes plagiarism, so feel free to ask questions about these matters at any time. Plagiarism includes:

- a student failing to cite sources of ideas
- a student failing to cite sources of paraphrased material
- a student failing to site sources of specific language and/or passages
- a student submitting someone else's work as his or her own
- a student submitting his or her own work produced for another class

If you have any doubt about how to cite or acknowledge another's writing, please talk to me. It is always better to be safe than sorry. As a matter of policy, any student found to have plagiarized any piece of writing in this class will be immediately reported to the College of Arts and Sciences for review. For further information, please refer to UW's Student Conduct Code at <<http://www.washington.edu/students/handbook/conduct.html>>. **Play it smart, don't plagiarize!**

## Accommodations

If you have a registered disability that will require accommodation, please see me immediately. If you have a disability and have not yet registered it with Disability Resources for Students in 448 Schmitz Hall, you should do so immediately. Please contact DRS at 206-543-8924 (Voice) or 206-543-8925 (V/TTY) or 206-616-8379 (FAX) or via their website at <<http://www.washington.edu/admin/ada/dss.htm>>. I will gladly do my best to provide appropriate accommodation you require.

## UW SafeCampus

Preventing violence is everyone's responsibility. If you're concerned, tell someone. For more information visit the SafeCampus website at <<http://www.washington.edu/safecampus>> and keep the following in mind:

- Always call 911 if you or others may be in danger.
- Call 206-685-SAFE (7233) to report non-urgent threats of violence and for referrals to UW counseling and/or safety resources. TTY or VP callers, please call through your preferred relay service.
- Don't walk alone. Campus safety guards can walk with you on campus after dark. Call Husky NightWalk 206-685-WALK (9255).
- Stay connected in an emergency with UW Alert. Register your mobile number to receive instant notification of campus emergencies via text and voice messaging. Sign up online at <<http://www.washington.edu/alert>>.

"If you do all that work of figuring out exactly how writing is done, then it's available to you at anytime, and you can build on it. It's like the difference between shooting one hoop and having it go in by accident and saying later, 'I shot a basket,'—and practicing so much you can do it whenever you want."  
—by Mark Salzman



"You will have to write and put away or burn a lot of material before you are comfortable in this medium. You might as well start now and get the work done. For I believe that eventually quantity will make for quality."  
—Ray Bradbury

"I'm a great believer in luck, and I find the harder I work the more I have of it."  
—Thomas Jefferson



"When I was young, I observed that nine out of ten things I did were failures. So I did ten times more work."  
—George Bernard Shaw

"Don't ever dare to take your college as a matter of course – because, like democracy and freedom, many people you'll never know have broken their hearts to get it for you."  
—Alice Miller

**syl-la-bus: n 1: a summary outline of a discourse, treatise, or course of study or of examination requirements  
2: subject to change**

Chang / ENGL 281 D / Autumn Quarter 2009-10 / University of Washington

Wed 9/30  
First Day of Classes

September 2009						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

November 2009						
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1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

Week 11 Writing  
Challenge is  
required.

**Week 1:** September 28-October 2: Ed's Rules of Writing  
Introduction to the Course  
Amy Tan, Sherman Alexie, Shelley Jackson  
Writing Challenge: Personal Essay/Literacy Narrative

**Week 2:** October 5-9: Workshopping, Exigence, Telling Details  
John McPhee  
Writing Challenge: Exposition

**Week 3:** October 12-16: Playing With Language, Rhythm, Vocabulary  
Langston Hughes, Patricia Smith, William Shakespeare  
Writing Challenge: Poetry

**Week 4:** October 19-23: Precision, Concision, Decisions  
Shirley Jackson, Annie Proulx, Ray Bradbury, "iYou"  
Writing Challenge: Short-Short Story

**Week 5:** October 26-30: Claim, Research, Prospection  
Michael Olmert, John McPhee  
Writing Challenge: Research Proposal/Annotated Bibliography

**Week 6:** November 2-6: Evidence, Extra Sensory Communication  
Anthony Bourdain, Gael Greene, Michael Pollan  
Writing Challenge: Food Writing/Restaurant Review

**Week 7:** November 9-13: Sentence Length, Pace, Action  
John McPhee  
Writing Challenge: Sports Writing

**Week 8:** November 16-20: Asking Questions, Getting Answers  
John McPhee  
Writing Challenge: Interview

**Week 9:** November 23-27: Argument  
David Bartholomae, Geoffrey Sirc, *Keywords*  
Writing Challenge: Definition

**Week 10:** November 30-December 4: Opinion  
Writing Challenge: Editorial

**Week 11:** December 7-11: Revision, Assessment  
Major Paper, Final Portfolio  
Writing Challenge: Cover Letter

**Week 12:**  
12/14 - Finals Begin, Final Paper & Portfolio Due

**Week 13:**  
12/21 - Grades Due

Week 1 Writing  
Challenge is required

October 2009						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

Week 5 Writing  
Challenge is required

Wed 11/11  
Veteran's Day  
Holiday

Thur & Fri  
11/26-11/27  
Thanksgiving Holiday

December 2009						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		