



# Calumet College of St. Joseph Your University of Choice

## The History and Study of the English Language

Term: Fall 2016

Course Number: Engl 320

Instructor: Kirk Robinson

Office#: 176

Office Hours: TBA

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Course Time: M/W, 12:00 - 1:30

### Course Description (from the CCSJ Course Catalog):

This course traces the evolution and development of the English language from its Indo-European roots to today's regional and cultural vernaculars. It includes a close study of English etymology, of the interactions between language and technology (the invention of paper, the printing press, mass-market publishing, and the Internet), the evolution of our grammar and punctuation, and the controversies over the structural canons of the English language.

Prerequisites: EWPC 103

**Textbooks:** *MANY readings will be provided in class, or will be available on our Blackboard Site under "course documents".*

**Instructor Background:** I'm entering my 17th year of teaching at the university level. I worked at University of Illinois at Chicago (seven years) and The Ohio State University (four years), and I'm entering my seventh year at Cal College. My background is in 19th and 20th C. composition, creative writing, and American literature. I've worked as a freelance writer, a medical writer, and for a time I was a card-carrying member of

the UAW. My poems have been published in a number of nationally distributed magazines. I'm married, with four small children.

### Course Overview:

Our goal in this course is to enrich your appreciation and knowledge of the language, and to understand the roots of something you use every moment of your waking life so you can use it better. Along the way, your skills with standard, written, edited, academic English will improve in measurable and concrete ways.

The English Language is what allows us to have anything to do with each other. Our study of the language will move from the roots of the language to today, including all of the Englishes that we use here in late 2016. Those roots go back over 1500 years of the **evolution of English**, and when we trace where the roots *come from*, when we trace how they *got planted*, we'll end up, literally, back in the stone age.

Re-read the course description above. **Indo-European? Vernaculars?** A study of language is going to require intense and patient attention to vocabulary. You are going to look-up and practice and study a lot of new words in this course. You'll also practice a number of word-roots from **Latin** and **Greek**. We'll focus on meanings and origins. As is noted elsewhere in this syllabus, you'll need a good **dictionary**. At the end of the second week we'll have a quiz over the bolded terms in this syllabus, so we've already started. And you'll get a big sack of similar quizzes over everything we read this term. Early on, the quizzes are worth less, as you adjust. Later on, they are worth more.

If words are the content of a language, they do very little until arranged into units of meaning. A great deal of our work requires a study of the *structure* of language. Our main work, in terms of structure, will be through old-school **sentence diagramming**. As a practice, diagramming is both mechanical and visual, and that will help you recognize how words act as **parts of speech** that come together into **phrases, clauses, and different types of sentences**. Diagramming slows language down, for the purpose of study. If you work at it, you'll eventually like it.

As the course title suggests, we'll examine how the language has been studied. Our approach to this dimension of the course will usually be **historical** and **cultural**, with close attention to **dictionaries** and **usage guides**. We'll move quickly through surface introductions to **linguistics** and **philology**, and take a deeper look at English **etymology**, of the interactions between language and technology (the invention of paper, the printing press, mass-market publishing, and the internet), the evolution of our **grammar** and **punctuation**, and the controversies over the structural canons of the English language. Our reading will always be about language, but we'll look closely at two major sources of common phrases: the **King James Bible** and the works of **William Shakespeare**. Along the way, you'll be introduced to several other important -ologies, including **graphology** (the study of writing systems), **orthology** (spelling), **semantics** (how words make meaning), **phonology** (the study of how sounds make words), and **syntax** (how words are put together to make meaning.) Well, *syntax* is NOT actually an ology, but you get what I mean. We'll also learn to examine whether or not made-up things like "ology" are words at all, and who gets to decide, and why it matters.

Finally, we'll address issues of **authority** and **language**, in terms of American **dialects**, including (most importantly) "**standard English**." We'll look at standard English through the lenses of **prescriptivity** or **descriptivity** in the instruction, study, and maintenance of the language.

**Learning Outcomes:** Upon completing this class students will:

- Demonstrate a basic understanding of graphology, morphology, orthology, semantics, phonology and syntax,
- Understand the historical, cultural, and technological contexts that have driven the evolution of the language,
- Understand the basic historical evolution of English grammar conventions and punctuation marks, as well as the correct usage of both today,
- Understand and identify elements of traditional English grammar, including the parts of speech, parts of a sentence, and dependent and independent clauses,
- Broadly understand and appreciate characteristics of English versus other languages and cultures,
- Appreciate the importance of the evolution of the English Language in relation to cultural power and in relation to correct, vigorous English usage today.

**Assessment:**

- Reading Quizzes and Diagramming Quizzes: 30%
- Blackboard Projects: 15%
- Presentations: 10% (two presentations, 5% each)
- Midterm Exam: 15%
- Language and Literacy Essay: 10%
- Final Exam (and Take Home Portion): 20%

**Grading Scale:**

Grade	Points
A	100-92
A-	91-90
B+	89-88
B	87-82
B-	81-80
C+	79-78
C	77-72
C-	71-70
D+	69-68
D	67-62
D-	61-60
F	59 and below

*Subjective grading will follow these general guidelines:*

**A (90 – 100%) = Excellent;** all expectations met or exceeded, including deadlines met; explicitly demonstrates thorough understanding of project; no substantive shortcomings or only minor shortcomings; presentations are well organized, helps other students learn course content, and adds value above existing course content; writing is well organized and adheres to rules of grammar, spelling, and syntax with no or very few exceptions

**B (80 – 89%) = Good;** most or all expectations are met; explicitly or implicitly demonstrates thorough and accurate understanding; only minor substantive shortcomings; presentations are well organized and help other students learn course content; writing is generally well organized and appropriate to the task, and mostly adheres to rules of grammar, spelling, and syntax

**C (70 – 79%) = Satisfactory;** directions are followed, most expectations are met but with at least one significant shortcoming; despite any shortcomings, demonstrates accurate and basic level of understanding; presentations demonstrate understanding of the content but do little to help other students learn the content; writing is organized well enough and with enough technical accuracy to be appropriate and understandable

**D (60 – 69%) = Passing, but less than satisfactory;** directions only partially followed; more than one significant shortcoming; deficiencies indicate only the most rudimentary level of understanding; presentations demonstrate poor preparation and do not contribute to other students' learning; and/or writing is difficult to understand

**F (0 – 59%) = Failing;** not completed or directions not followed; deficiencies indicate lack of understanding; presentations waste others' time; and/or incoherent writing

**Learning Strategies:** This class is taught in a process-based, participatory workshop environment, with frequent discussion sessions. Students will be asked to read, reflect, write and research in a recursive set of course assignments and activities. Students will be evaluated on their *questions* and upon their answers, on their process as well as their product. Students will view and listen to several multi-media texts.

**Class Policy on Attendance:**

This section of Engl 320 is a process-based class. As such, actual and literal attendance is required. An etymology of the word "attendance" reveals it comes from the Old French word *attendre*, which requires both physical presence (attend) mental presence (attention). Etymology is fun! When you are attending to other things (your cell phone, your hovercraft), you are not attending the class, even if your body is in the room.

In accordance with English program policy, any student missing more than NINE (9) hours of class will receive an F. These nine hours include both excused and unexcused absences. Please be aware that these hours include any and all time taken off for illness, work, sports events, and personal / family celebrations. If a problem arises with your absences, please come and talk to me immediately.

#### **Class Policies on Technology and Courtesy:**

The classroom is a community. Please silence all cell phones and doohickeys for the full duration of each class so as not to disrupt the community. (See "Attendance," above.)

If you will need to communicate with the world outside our classroom, (e.g. illness at home, work situation, the bowling team is at nationals again), and you must use electronic devices during class, please speak to me about it before the class meets, and set your device to vibrate. I recognize that we live in a digital age, and I will sometimes provide a "text-break" or a "facebook" break in the middle of class. Also, technology is a medium for language, our field of study, and we'll sometimes use your phones in class to assist our study. But, if your attention to whatzits distracts *my* attention, I will count you absent for that particular class and discredit you for the work of the day.

The point of all of the above is not to find ways to dock you points. The devices and behaviors listed here distract *me*, which costs us class time, and in turn costs other students who are paying lots of money *and* attention for opportunities to learn. And of course ANY behaviors (distracting chatter, frequently leaving the room, setting small fires in the corner, etc.) that distract other students from the business at hand can't be tolerated in this setting. So, anyone doing that kind of thing might be asked to leave, possibly without warning.

#### **Class Policy on Late Work:**

All formal writing projects completed on paper are due at the beginning of class on the assigned date, when a *hard copy of the assignment will be collected*. Any writing projects collected after that (again, hard copy only) will be assessed a penalty of 25% per day. I will only make exceptions to this policy in cases of documented emergencies. Blackboard assignments have digitally posted dates and deadlines, and it's quite easy to see what is early, what is on time and what is late. Late work for Blackboard will receive zero credit.

It's an unfortunate fact of life that pencils break, computers crash, and flash drives malfunction -- it happens to all of us! -- but these are not emergency reasons for late work. They just happen. Save and backup often.

#### **Class Policy on Quizzes:**

Here's the deal on quizzes and daily assignments; when you miss them, you miss them. They can't be "made up" later. They are meant to be real time assessments and reinforcements of what we are doing in class at the time, and it makes no sense to administer them at other times, in other ways. So, you get a lot of them, and each is a low-stakes assessment, centered around diagramming and course material, with the intention of preparing you for exams and reinforcing your knowledge. Missing one or two won't hurt your grade at all, if you are up to speed on everything else.

Three more notes on quizzes: 1) they are worth more as the semester goes on, so if you have trouble early on, you aren't punished for it. Later, as you get better and work harder, you are rewarded with quizzes that are worth more. 2) At any time, you can get over 100% on a quiz by going beyond the subjective expectations listed elsewhere in the syllabus. These will be marked "commendable," and can help you make up for poor scores elsewhere. 3) Also, I drop the two lowest quiz scores at the end of the term when I figure out your semester grade. By "lowest," I mean the two that hurt your overall quiz grade the most.

#### **What to do if you unexpectedly miss class:**

First off, here's what you don't do; don't write me a note asking "Did I miss anything?," because of course you did. And while you might want to know "what did I miss?," and I will certainly want to tell you, it's impossible. It took an hour and a half for that course session to happen, in class. I won't be able to capture it in an e-mail. So, come in to talk with me during my scheduled office hours (see above), and we'll go over it. Or, schedule an appointment at a time other than my office hours. I'll find some availability, because I'm seemingly always on campus. I'll enjoy the conversation, and you probably will, too.

#### **What to do when you know *at least 36 hours in advance* that you will miss class:**

If you've got a collegiate game, or a court date, or a wedding or funeral, you'll know well in advance. If you let me know in advance, we usually can arrange an alternative assignment or due-date for you. I'm happy to try to

accommodate these situations, but I can only do it with at least 36 hours of notice, and any alternative will be on terms I designate. It will require dialog. Remember, there are no "make-up" quizzes, but there can be some alternatives ... IF they are arranged 36 hours in advance.

**Reaching me Online or Outside of Class:**

I'm in my office a lot, and -- while I won't usually take your work via e-mail -- I'll be very happy to *discuss it with you via e-mail*. In fact, I'll answer any questions about the course (or anything else, really) via e-mail, usually within 10 to 15 hours. *When you write me, make sure you include your name, and specifics about the course you are in. It's a very small school, but I still have at least 100 students each term.* I also strongly recommend that you stop by my office hours as well. Office hours are a great place to talk through questions or problems. If you are coming in during scheduled office hours ... just come in. You don't need an appointment.

**Student Success Center:**

The Student Success Center is dedicated to supporting Calumet College of St. Joseph students. Students work with tutors to develop course competencies and study skills such as time management, test preparation, and note taking. In addition, students are provided with tutoring support to help pass courses, to improve grade point average, and to promote continuing education and career advancement. Tutors have a specific charge: to help students learn how to master specific subject matter and to develop effective learning skills. Tutoring is open to all students at Calumet College of St. Joseph at no charge and is available to support most introductory courses. Tutoring in support of some other courses is available as well. The Tutoring Center is located in the library. The telephone number is 219.473.4287 or 800.700.9100 ext. 287.

**Statement of Plagiarism:**

If an instructor or other Calumet College of St. Joseph personnel find that a student has plagiarized or been involved in another form of academic dishonesty, the instructor or other personnel may elect to bring the matter up for judicial review. The maximum penalty for any form of academic dishonesty is dismissal from the College. The procedures for judicial review are listed under the section of CCSJ handbook that addresses student grievances.

**Citation Guidelines:**

Calumet College of St. Joseph adheres to citation guidelines as prescribed by the particular discipline (i.e., MLA, APA, and Chicago Manual of Style or Turabian.). In our course, all citations will adhere to the current standards of the MLA. All of these guidelines are available in the Calumet College of St. Joseph library or bookstore, and in many online sources as well. These texts outline how to cite references from a variety of sources, including electronic media.

**Withdrawal from Classes Policy:**

After the last day for class changes has passed (see College calendar), students may withdraw from a course in which they are registered with permission from the faculty member conducting the course. A written request detailing the reason(s) for the withdrawal must be filed with the Registrar. The Registrar must receive written request for withdrawal by the last day of classes prior to the final examination dates specified in the catalogue. Written requests may be mailed to the Registrar or faxed to the College fax number 219-473-4259. Students are to make note of the refund schedule when withdrawing from courses. The request is forwarded to the faculty member, who makes the final determination to accept or deny the request. If the request is honored, the student will receive notification of official withdrawal; if denied, the notification will indicate why the withdrawal is disallowed. An official withdrawal is recorded as a "W" grade on the student's transcript. Dropping a course without written permission automatically incurs an "F" grade for the course (see Refund Schedule).<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> **Crucial Note on All of the above:** These policies apply to you, even if you haven't read them. These are the policies of the course.



"Goodbye" and "TTYL"

*In Class:* "From Scroll to Screen," and "The Jargon of the Novel" (New York Times)

View: "Medieval Help Desk"

*Apology, revisited:* A brief look at graphology, morphology, orthology, semantics, phonology and syntax.

Musical Interludes Include:

"I'm Sorry," Bo Diddley

"A Little Less Conversation," Elvis Presley

"Too Marvelous for Words," Frank Sinatra

*For Next Class:*

*Perform and Write:* First, perform an NGRAM study of two different sets of words, then write a brief analysis of your findings

**Wednesday 9/21**

Understanding NGRAMs

Using NGRAMS as a way to "read culture's mind"

Reviewing Semantics

Musical Interludes Include:

"Is That a Letter," They Might Be Giants

"ABC," The Jackson 5

*For Next Class:*

*Perform and Write:*

*Read: "Survival of the Fittest" and "Notes on Punctuation"*

*(be sure to look up all words you don't understand)*

**Week Four**

***What is the (\*&^%@\_ DEAL with Spelling and Punctuation?***

**Monday 9/26**

*In Class:* NGRAM Presentations

Quiz? Quiz! #Quiz Quiz :-(

*My Dear Pat*

Ancient Punctuation and The Interrobang

View: Doubt and Onion

Musical Interludes Include:

"Reality Used to be a Friend of Mine," PM Dawn

"Oxford Comma," Vampire Weekend

*For Next Class:*

*Read, Review and Practice:* Sentence Diagramming p. 11 to 15

*Read, View and Research:* Where did the Alphabet Come From?

*IXL: Punctuation (11. H. 1-5, I. 1-2)*

**Wednesday 9/28**

*In Class:*

Quiz: Alpha and Beta and Diagramming Quiz

Lecture: Understanding Grammar; Elements of the "Parts of Speech"

Video and Musical Interludes Include:

"Life Sentence," The Dead Kennedys

"The Tale of Mr. Morton," Schoolhouse Rock

*For Next Class:*

*Read: How English Works, Ch. 2 (p. 33-51)*

*Write: Discuss how your spoken or written English has been "corrected" throughout your life. Then respond to two classmates. (Blackboard)*  
*IXL: Punctuation (J. 1-4, K.1-2, M. 1-2 )*

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**Week Five** *Language and Authority* -

**Monday 10/3** *In Class: Asking a Question: Authority, Education, and Grammar*  
*Spelling and Punctuation combined; Understanding Common English*  
*Contractions*

Musical Interludes Include:

"Fight the Power," Public Enemy  
"The Authority Song," John Cougar Mellencamp

*For Next Class:*

*Read: How English Works, Ch. 2 (p. 52-63)*

*Read and Practice: Diagramming Prepositional Phrases*

**Wednesday 10/5** *In Class: Language and Power; Register and "Discourse Community"*  
*Quiz: Diagramming*

Musical Interludes Include:

"Moment of Clarity," Danger Mouse  
"What I'm Trying to Say," Stars

*For Next Class:*

*Read: Noab's Mark*

*IXL: Sentences, Fragments, and Run-Ons and commonly misused words (10: I.1-3, J.1-4, U. 1-8.)*

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**Week Six** *What is an American dictionary of the English Language?* -

**Monday 10/10** *In Class: Noah Webster's Work*  
*Quiz*  
*Lecture: Dictionaries and Nationalism*  
*Listen: Trade Lingo*

Musical Interludes Include:

"Jive: The Hipster's Dictionary," Cab Calloway  
"You Say Potato," Louis Armstrong and Ella Fitzgerald

*For Next Class:*

*Read: When a Dictionary Could Outrage*

*Review: Diagramming prepositional phrases*

*IXL: Greek and Latin Roots and Foreign Phrases (10. BB 1-5, W. 1-3)*

**Wednesday 10/12** *In Class: Webster's Third and Controversy*

*Quiz*

*"In the Digital Era, Our Dictionaries Read Us."*

*View: Erin McKean and "Undictionaryed"*

Musical Interludes include:

"Revolution Rock," The Clash  
"Inside Out," The Mighty Lemondrops

*For Next Class:*

*Read: Ch. 3 of How English Works (p.435 - p.449 )*

Read and Practice: Diagramming Participles, Gerunds and Infinitives

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**Week Seven** *Ye Olde English and Middle English, Too* -

**Monday 10/17** *In class:* Old English  
The Prodigal Son, then and now.  
The impact of Chaucer  
Quiz: Key Dates, Invasions, and Grammar, Concord and Inflection.  
Quiz: Diagramming Participles, Gerunds and Infinitives  
Lecture: Elements of "the Parts of Speech"

Musical Interludes include:

"Rewrite," Paul Simon

*For Next Class:*

Read: *Ch. 3 of How English Works (p.449 -p.465 )*

**Wednesday 10/19**

*In class:* Middle English  
The Norman Conquest, the Law, and the Barn and Table Issue  
*Quiz*

Musical Interludes include:

"Quelqu'un m'a dit," Carla Bruni

"The Word," Beatles

*For Next Class:*

Read: 400 Years of The King James Bible

Read: Finish *Ch. 3* and read 1st part of *Ch. 4 (p. 477 - p. 497)*

Write: A Comparison of Barn/Table to Contemporary American Issues  
of Social Class in Language (Blackboard)

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**Week Eight** *Early Modern and Modern English* -

**Monday 10/24** *In class:* The impact of the King James Bible and of Shakespeare  
Reviewing Early Modern and Modern  
Quiz

Musical Interludes include:

"Jubilee," The Harry James Orchestra

"Almighty God," Lula Collins

*For Next Class:*

Read: Finish *Ch. 14 (p. 498 - p. 508)*

*Begin Review for Midterm*

Read and Practice: Diagramming Predicate nominatives, Predicate  
Adjectives

**Wednesday 10/26**

*In class:* Midterm Review  
(focus on Ch. 13)

*For Next Class:*

*Review for Midterm*

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**Week Eight** *Midterm Exam* -

**Monday 10/31** \*\*\* Midterm Examination\*\*\*

*For Next Class:*

Take a deep breath. We are more than halfway there. (Or, get started on "Tense Present," because it's awfully tough.)

**Wednesday 11/02**

*In Class:* Lecture: Descriptive and Prescriptive work in Higher Education.  
Reviewing Language and Authority  
Reviewing Sentence Diagramming  
Begin: "Tense Present"

Musical Interludes include:

"Semantics," The Mynabirds

*For Next Class:*

Read "Tense Present," David Foster Wallace

Write: Respond to in-class lecture on Blackboard

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**Week Nine** *David Foster Wallace and The Usage Wars* -

**Monday 11/07** *In Class:* Tense Present I

Musical Interludes include:

"When I Write the Book," Nick Lowe

"Jive Talkin'," Bee Gees

**Wednesday 11/09**

*In Class:* Tense Present II

Musical Interludes include:

"Ghetto Dictionary", Bounty Killer

"Black and White," Greyhounds

*For Next Class:* Read "Politics and the English Language," George Orwell

Write: Post several contemporary examples for matters discussed in the Orwell essay, and respond to two other threads. (Blackboard)

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**Week Ten** *Orwell and Politics* -

**Monday 11/14** *In Class:* Tense Present III AND Politics and The English Language

Musical Interludes include:

"Ain't Nothing Like the Real Thing, Marvin Gaye

*For Next Class:*

Read and Practice: Diagramming Compound Sentences

**Wednesday 11/16**

*In Class:* Diagramming Review  
Diagramming (in relation to Orwell and Foster Wallace)

*For Next Class:*

Read: Walt Whitman, "Slang in America" and excerpts from H.L. Mencken, "The American Language"

Write: What about Mencken and Whitman surprises you? Why? (Blackboard)

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**Week Eleven*****Walt Whitman and H.L. Mencken***

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**Monday 11/21**

*In Class:* Whitman and Mencken  
What exactly *is* slang? What exactly *is* proper English?  
Quiz

Musical Interludes include:

"New Slang," The Shins  
"Jive: The Hipster's Dictionary," Cab Calloway

*For Next WEEK (11/18):*  
Write: Language and History "Literacy Narrative"

**Wednesday 11/23****Reading and Writing Day: NO CLASS SESSION**

*For Next Class:*  
Read and Practice: Diagramming Appositives  
Read: "Words on Trial", Jack Hitt  
Write: Was there ever a time when your words were "on trial"? Did you ever examine words from anyone else in a way that could be called "forensic?" (Blackboard)

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**Week Twelve*****Forensic Linguistics***

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**Monday 11/28**

*In Class:* Quiz  
View: Forensic Linguistics  
Listen: Little Words Make a Big Difference: The Secret History of Pronouns

Musical Interludes include:

"I Would Die 4 U," Prince  
"Graffiti Worth Reading," Mighty Mighty Bosstones

*For Next Class:*  
*Final Revisions to Language and History "Literacy Narrative"*

**Wednesday 11/30**

*In Class:* Revision and The Paramedic Method  
The Writer's Diet

Musical Interludes include:

"Hush Your Mouth," Howlin Wolf  
"Grammar," The Paper Scissors

*For Next Class:*  
Read and Practice: Diagramming Subjects, Predicates, Adjectives, Adverbs and Appositives  
Read: "The Mother Tongue," Ursula Leguin

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**Week Thirteen**                      *Sticks and Stones*                      -

**Monday 12/05**                                      *In Class:* Leguin, The Mother Tongue, and the Father Tongue

Musical Interludes include:

"Trouble Me," 10,000 Maniacs

*For Next Class:*

Read: "The Sentence is a Lonely Place," Gary Lutz

Read: "From Outside, In," Barbara Mellix

Write: What common ground can you find between Leguin and Lutz?  
(Blackboard)

**Wednesday 12/07**                                      Review for Final

"One is the Loneliest Number," Harry Nilsson

"The Ancient Common Sense of Things," Bishop Allen

*For Next Class:*

Read and Practice: Diagramming Sentences

Write: Take Home Portion of Final Exam

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**Week Fourteen**                      *Final Preparations*                      -

**Monday 12/12**                                      *Final Examination (Consult Examination Schedule, Printed by Week 12)*

Musical Interludes Include:

"Didn't We Have a Nice Time?," The Jam

"Here's Where the Story Ends," Cranberries

*Take Home Portion due at end of Exam Session*