

# Syllabus

## Hiaasen: Hilarious Farcical Florida

Fall 2017 IDH 3034 RVK 87990

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### General Information

### Professor Information



Photo by Jean-Michele

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### Course Description And Purpose

#### Course Overview:

This Honors upper division 2-semester course (3 credits/semester) examines the works of award winning South Florida author, humorist and *Miami Herald* columnist, Carl Hiaasen. His writing spans 40 years from the time he joined the *Miami Herald* in 1976, post graduation in journalism from the University of Florida in 1974. [Yes, he's a Gator!]. His first employment was with *Cocoa Today* and as a feature writer for *Sunrise*. His newspaper columns for *The Miami Herald* vividly display his passions: politics, corruption, criminality and the environment, particularly The Everglades and the Florida Keys. His novels explore and combine criminal elements with his exceptional research expertise and his fascination with reptiles.

## Biography of Carl Hiaasen (edited, Pfeiffer)



Photo by Quinn Hiaasen

Carl Hiaasen was born and raised in Florida, where he lives with his family. He is a graduate of the University of Florida and joined *The Miami Herald* as a general assignment reporter as age 23. He went on to work for the newspaper's weekly magazine and prize-winning investigations team. Since 1985 Hiaasen has been writing a regular column that appears on most Sundays in *Miami Herald's* opinion-and-editorial section, and may be viewed online at [www.herald.com](http://www.herald.com)

He began writing novels in early 1980s with his good friend and fellow journalist, William D. Montalbano. Together they wrote three mystery thrillers – *Powder Burn*, *Trap Line* and *Death in China*; all incorporated their excellent reporting experiences. *Tourist Season*, published in 1986, was Hiaasen's first solo novel. According to *GQ* it [was] “one of the 10 best destination reads of all time,” though it failed to frighten a single tourist away from Florida.

His next effort, *Double Whammy*, was the first (and possibly only) novel ever written about sex, murder and corruption on the professional bass-fishing tour. Since then, Hiaasen has published *Skin Tight*, *Native Tongue* and nine national bestsellers – *Strip Tease*, *Stormy Weather*, *Lucky You*, *Sick Puppy*, *Basket Case*, *Skinny Dip*, *Nature Girl*, *Star Island* and *Bad Monkey*.

All the novels are set in Florida, for obvious reasons. His most recent novel, *Razor Girl* was released this past year and made the *New York Times* best-seller list. He is the author of several popular novels for young readers: *Hoot*, which won a Newbery Honor, *Flush*, *Scat* and, most recently, *Skink – No Surrender*, introducing one of the wildest characters in his adult books to a teen audience. The film version of *Hoot* came out in 2006. It was directed by Wil Shriner, and produced by Jimmy Buffett and Frank Marshall. Buffett plays a teacher in the movie, while the author himself makes a forgettable cameo.

Hiaasen authored two nonfiction books, *Team Rodent*, “a wry but unsparing rant against the Disney empire and its grip on American culture” and in 2008 *The Downhill Lie*, “which chronicles the author's ill-advised return to the sport of golf after a ‘much-needed’ 32-year hiatus. His books have been published in 34 languages. The London Observer has called him “America's finest satirical novelist,” while Janet Maslin of the New York Times has compared him to Preston Sturges, Woody Allen and S.J. Perelman.”

“To prove he doesn't just make up all the sick stuff in his books, Hiaasen has also published three collections of his newspaper columns, *Kick Ass*, *Paradise Screwed* and *Dance of the Reptiles*,” the volumes edited by Diane Stevenson. Hiaasen has received numerous honors, including the Damon Runyon Award from the Denver Press Club and the Lifetime Achievement Award from the National Society of Newspaper Columnists. “His nonfiction work has appeared in many magazines, including *Sports Illustrated*, *Playboy*, *Time*, *Esquire* and,

most improbably, *Gourmet*. One of Hiaasen's most well-known novels, *Strip Tease*, was turned into a major motion picture starring Demi Moore, and directed by Andrew Bergman. Hiaasen still believes that the Vaseline scene featuring Burt Reynolds is a landmark moment in American cinema. [https://www.mprnews.org/story/2016/09/28/mpr\\_news\\_presents\\_http://gardenandgun.com/article/carl-hiaasen](https://www.mprnews.org/story/2016/09/28/mpr_news_presents_http://gardenandgun.com/article/carl-hiaasen) (see below)

From *Gun and Garden*: “Hiaasen’s novels are not dense literary tomes. They are fun, fast reads filled with hilarious one-liners and biting satire (the *Los Angeles Times* once called him the heir to Mark Twain). But what’s most emphatic in the writings of Hiaasen is the outrage—over our rampant moral and political corruption and senseless destruction of the environment, mostly in his beloved home state of Florida, the setting for nearly everything he writes. This outrage, though veiled in the humor and fun, is not heedless. It is comforting, even emboldening, to read his work and realize that we are not alone, that it is perfectly okay to be mad and exasperated about these dark forces that seem to have left us defenseless. Hiaasen gives us a voice, and for this reason he is one of the most important writers of the last half century. He is our howler, Southern in focus but American—even global—in reach.” Hiaasen’s personal biography can be viewed at <http://www.carlhiaasen.com/bio.shtml#linkPoint>

**Required reading (fall and spring):** Hiaasen’s works will be cross-referenced throughout both semesters)

*Team Rodent*; electronic readings from *Dance of the Reptiles*; *Tourist Season*; *Stormy Weather*; *Bad Monkey*; *Razor Girl*; *Skin Tight*, *Strip Tease*, *Star Island*, electronic readings noted from *Kick Ass*, *Paradise Screwed*- (by permission from the author); “The Florida Keys: Something Precious is Falling Apart”, electronic readings of current columns from *The Miami Herald*; 1 youth novel (each team division will review 1 of the 5 youth books [like *Hoot*] to present to the class); and excerpts from Diane Stevenson, editor of Hiaasen’s collected works.

### **Global Learning Initiatives and Objectives**

Hiaasen’s works display his outstanding proficiency and competency in research skills and a distinctive lexicon. He says of his work as a reporter and columnist: “You just cover a lot of territory and you do it aggressively and you do it fairly and you don’t play favorites and you don’t take any prisoners. It’s the old school of slash-and-burn metropolitan column writing. You just kick ass. That’s what you do and that’s what they pay you to do.” (*Kick Ass*)

And he has done just that, as noted in his compilations of columns and articles as displayed in *Kick Ass*, *Paradise Screwed* and *Dance of the Reptiles* and the *Miami Herald*.

**Global Awareness-** Students will demonstrate knowledge of the interrelated global dynamics (social-cultural, political, economic, etc.) that shape aesthetics, values, and authority in diverse cultural contexts.

**Global Perspective-** Students will be able to analyze the multiple global forces that shape their understanding of aesthetics, values, and authority — economic, political, sociological, technological, and cultural. Global

**Engagement Global Engagement-** Students will be able to develop solutions to local, global, international, and/or intercultural problems and be able to articulate the causes and contributions to these problems through the paradigm of aesthetics, values and authority.

## Course Objectives

1. Generalize central themes that emerge from Hiaasen's novels and his columns such as politics, corruption, criminality, the environment, reptiles, and Florida's fresh water
2. Conceptualize and apply Hiaasen's environmental policies regarding preservation of South Florida, the Everglades, the Florida Keys, and fresh water
3. Compare and contrast the author's views on race and gender equality
4. Analyze and evaluate tourism from Hiaasen's viewpoint
5. Describe the problem with reptiles that exist in South Florida (notably the Everglades)
6. Characterize the vices that operate and permeate levels of South Florida society and politics according to Hiaasen
7. Recognize patterns that can improve life in South Florida by avoiding greed, hypocrisy and corruption
8. Interpret Hiaasen's thesis regarding *Team Rodent* and evaluate its validity
9. Express the author's knowledge of journalistic reporting through his columns and literary works
10. Identify some of the problems that affect South Florida regarding hurricanes
11. Define and draw conclusions regarding problems that exist with off-shore drilling for oil in the Gulf of Mexico, using the example of the BP oil spill
12. Discuss Hiaasen's ability to integrate humor with serious issues that affect life in South Florida
13. Illustrate the effectiveness of Hiaasen's satire to assuage unsavory behavior in South Florida

## Require reading fall

Fall: required reading: *Team Rodent*, selected works from *Dance of the Reptiles*, (electronic readings), recent Hiaasen columns from *The Miami Herald* (posted electronically), *Tourist Season*, *Strip Tease*, *Razor Girl*, youth novels [*Flush*; *Scat*; *Chomp*; *Hoot*; *Skink*, *No Surrender*

## FIU and Honors Policies

Please review the [FIU's Policies](#) webpage. The policies webpage contains essential information regarding guidelines relevant to all courses at FIU, as well as additional information about acceptable netiquette for online courses.

### Honors Policies

In The Honors College, the term "honor" refers both to academic accomplishment and character. Students in Honors should therefore adhere to and be held to the highest standards of personal academic accountability.

- Policy on religious holidays, accommodations for disabilities, and academic misconduct.

[Academic Standing](#)

[Misconduct](#)

[Improvement](#)

**Religious Observances** Every effort will be made, where feasible and practical, to accommodate students whose religious practices coincide with class requirements or scheduling. Please make sure to notify your instructor at the beginning of the semester of which dates you will be absent or any anticipated problems with completing course work.

**Physical, Mental and Sensory Challenges** Every effort will be made, where feasible and practical, to accommodate students who are so challenged. Should you require accommodations, contact the Disability Resource Center, if you have not done so already

## NEW CITIZENSHIP POINT SYSTEM

**New Citizenship Requirements:** Honors College students are required to accumulate at least **20 citizenship points** each academic year (Fall and Spring) by attending Honors College activities (listed below). Students attending only one semester (Fall or Spring) are required to accumulate **10 citizenship points**. Each activity has a point value. Students may select which events and activities they want to attend. The new system is designed to be more flexible for students, offering events at various days and times (including some weekend events) and allowing for a variety of ways to meet the requirements. Please plan accordingly. The **point value** of an event **will be noted on emails and fliers** when it is promoted. For a general breakdown, see the value table below.

Activity	Point Value
Colloquium	3
Club Meeting	1 (max of 3)
Honors Hour	2
HEARTS Event (all types)	1
Honors College Event – Honors Place	1
Honors College Night – Athletics	1
Other (Specific HC Sponsored Event)	1
Library Study Room (GL 310A) Visits	10 visits = 1

\*\* There will be a few online events to choose from as well. **Because of the added flexibility of the new system, all students must fulfill the annual requirement-no exceptions.** Students must arrive at the activities on time. After 10 minutes, they will be turned away at the door. Students will track their points at [My Honors](#). We encourage students to earn as many points as they can. At the end of each academic year, the top ten point earners will be recognized by appointment to the **Dean's Citizenship**

### **List Volunteer Hours:**

As always, Honors College students must also complete **20 volunteer service hours**. These hours *DO NOT* count toward the 20 citizenship points discussed above. **Honors Hours** Honors Hours provide seminars, lectures, informational sessions, and workshops to expand your undergraduate experience. If you have ideas for Honors Hours workshops you would like to see, email us at [honors@fiu.edu](mailto:honors@fiu.edu). Each Honors Hour session has a 2 point value. For a full list of Honors Hours for the current semester, go to [Honors Hours Colloquia](#). Every semester we invite Honors College faculty fellow to give a presentation on a topic of interest. Each Colloquium has a 3 point value. For a full list of Colloquia for the current semester, go to [Events](#). **Community Service**. 20-hours of Community Service per Academic Year (Fall/Spring). Being an Honors College student is more than just seeking academically challenging experiences, it's also about giving back. The Honors College volunteering requirement is meant to get you outside of the classroom, giving back to your community. We ask that you commit at least 20 hours.

### **Honors College**

*Sections on student portfolios, Honors College citizenship requirements, academic misconduct and plagiarism.*

### **Student Portfolios**

The Honors College will be using a portfolio method to assess students' learning outcomes. The portfolio allows for maximum flexibility in gauging student learning. Students decide (with instructor consultation) what "artifacts" or assignments to include for consideration in their portfolios to demonstrate successful achievement of each of five key student learning outcomes over the 4-year Honors experience. Portfolios provide a rich context for students to show what they have learned and to explain their learning process. The purpose of the portfolio is to assess how successfully our curriculum fulfills its goals, and is not graded. Because the Honors curriculum is meant to be thought-provoking and reflective, student self- assessment through portfolios will facilitate learning and provide in-depth assessment. Each

course will include at least one assignment that could potentially fit portfolio requirements. For more information on the student learning outcomes and constructing a portfolio for your senior year, see Portfolios.

### **Honors Citizenship Requirements**

All members of the Honors College are expected to be active citizens of the College, the University, and the community at large. To be a committed Honors College student is to take advantage of enhanced learning opportunities and to assume a leadership role in the world. Attendance will be taken at events where appropriate and practical. All College members are expected to participate in the community-building activities listed below:

- Attend one Honors Excellence Lecture per academic year and one Honors Colloquium per semester (fall and spring).
- Attend at least three Honors Hour sessions per semester or enrichment events specified by the Honors College as satisfying this requirement.
- Perform at least twenty hours of community service per academic year (summer excluded) either through the Honors College service partnerships (Sweetwater, Overtown Youth Center, etc.) or through other community service projects and/or events. If you want to apply this service to your graduation portfolio, be sure to document your hours. Please contact an Honors College Academic Advisor if you have any questions.
- For more information on Honors citizenship requirements, see the Honors College Student Handbook.

### **Academic Honesty, Plagiarism, FIU Academic Misconduct Statement**

Florida International University is a community dedicated to generating and imparting knowledge through excellence in teaching and research, the rigorous and respectful exchange of ideas, and Community service. All students should respect the right of others to have an equitable opportunity to learn and honestly to demonstrate the quality of their learning. Therefore, all students are expected to adhere to a standard of academic conduct that demonstrates respect for themselves, their fellow students, and the educational mission of the University. All students are deemed by the University to understand that if they are found responsible for academic misconduct, they will be subject to the Academic Misconduct procedures and sanctions, as outlined in the Honors College Student Handbook.

Academic misconduct includes:

**Cheating** – The unauthorized use of books, notes, aids, electronic sources, or assistance from another person with respect to examinations, course assignments, field service reports, class recitations or other work; or the unauthorized possession of examination papers or course materials, whether originally authorized or not. Cheating violates both University and College codes.

**Plagiarism** – The use and appropriation of another's work without any indication of the source, and the representation of such work as the student's own is plagiarism. Anyone who fails to give credit for ideas, expressions or materials taken from another source, including Internet sources, commits plagiarism. Plagiarism violates both University and College codes.

**Unacceptable behavior** – Students who show repeated or egregious disrespect for classmates or instructors, are disruptive, or consistently violate course rules are subject to the sanctions of the Honors College.

Registration in this course implies an acceptance of and compliance with the Honors College policies for students and the FIU Code of Academic Integrity. Please refer to the following documents for additional information:

FIU Code of Academic Integrity – <http://www.fiu.edu/~dwyere/academicintegrity.html>

FIU Honors College Policy – <http://honors.fiu.edu/students/policies/>

### **Procedures**

An Honors faculty member may bring charges of Academic Misconduct against an Honors student. If the faculty member suspects plagiarism or other forms of academic misconduct, within one week of the discovery of the suspected act the faculty member will hold an informal meeting with the student in order to inform him/her of the allegation(s), provide any evidence available, and allow the student to respond. The faculty member will decide whether to pursue informal resolution, file formal resolution charges, or take no further action, and will follow the procedures outlined in the Academic Misconduct Procedures, available at Academic Misconduct.

The student will have the right to appeal the outcome of the meeting with the instructor within one week of the faculty member's decision, when the decision is to pursue informal resolution or file formal resolution charges. The appeal will take the form of a letter to the Dean outlining the circumstances of the case and the reason for the objection to the professor's recommendation. The Dean or his designee will examine the case and make a final determination about the pursuit of Informal Resolution or the filing of formal resolution charges.

**Penalties**

An Honors College student found responsible for plagiarism or other academic misconduct by informal resolution or formal resolution will receive an F in the relevant Honors course, and will be dismissed from the Honors College by the Dean, effective from the end of the semester in which the infraction occurs. Dismissal will be in writing and will entail the loss of all privileges and benefits of being in The Honors College, and the student will not be readmitted to The Honors College. The decision of the Dean will be final. This decision relates solely to the student's status in The Honors College and does not affect the student's right to appeal the original faculty decision. The penalty of dismissal from The Honors College may apply to academic misconduct in any course within Florida International University and not only to courses offered by The Honors College. In the case of courses outside The Honors College, the Dean of The Honors College will rely on the Office of the Provost for notification about the infraction(s). More stringent penalties, such as dismissal from the university, may be pursued through the university's established academic misconduct process.

In The Honors College, the term "honor" refers both to academic accomplishment and character. Students in Honors should therefore adhere to and be held to the highest standards of personal academic accountability. Academic dishonesty in any form, including plagiarism, is antithetical to the very definition of being an Honors student at FIU. Consequently, an Honors College student found responsible for academic misconduct will be dismissed from the College. Academic misconduct is a violation of the University Code of Standards, the Code of Academic Integrity, the ethical relationship between the student and the academic community, and especially between the student and the instructor. It is the responsibility and prerogative of the instructor to ensure adherence to these policies

Assignments- Essays, PPT's, Prezi presentations	8	20%
Final presentation and grade scoring	2	25%
Assessments- quizzes	4	20%
Discussions	4	20%
Live chats	3	15%
Totals	21	100%

**Course Calendar Fall 2017**

**Week 1**

*Aug 21-27*

Introduction to the course

Reading and viewing:

Course material-Expectations for the course, Course Objectives, Grades, Grading Rubric, Discussion Rubric, Grammar Rules, Academic Writing, Abstract example, 24-hour clock, Avoiding Errors, University Policies, Honors Requirements- review Honors Policies

**Week 2**

*Aug 28- Sept 3*

Reading:

*Tourist Season*

Assignment:

Assignment #1 Essay- research “Shriner’s International,” as a discovery of this organization and information about its work, 300 word- minimum, (follow “Academic Papers...” guidelines and include references, **due at Sept 3 at 23:59**)

Assessment:

Quiz #1- covers all course material from Week 1, **opens Aug 31 at 08:00, closes Sept 3 at 23:59**, (multiple choice, true/false, matching), 10 questions (randomized), 20 minutes, 1 attempt

### Week 3

*Sept 4-10 (Labor Day holiday Monday, University closed)*

Reading and viewing assignments:  
Complete *Tourist Season*

Assignments

Assignment #2 Essay- Discuss your perceptions of Hiaasen’s views on tourism as presented *Tourist Season*, 350 word-minimum essay [use any information relevant from his columns posted in electronic readings; list all references], **due Sept 10 at 23:59; GLI**

### Week 4

*Sept 11- 17*

Reading and viewing assignments  
Selections from *Dance of the Reptiles*, notes from Diane Stevenson

Assignments

Discussion #1-comment on the columns from “ “posted electronically in week 4 regarding Hiaasen’s theme and its relevance to South Florida today; initial post **due Thurs Sept 14 at 23:59**; respond to at least 3 others posts by **Sun Sept 17 at 23:59**; GLI

### Week 5

*Sept 18-24*

Reading and viewing assignments  
*Team Rodent*

Assignments:

Assignment #3 Essay (350-word minimum): Discuss Disney’s developments: i.e. methodology in obtaining land; include acquisitions after the book publication date, e.g. the Disney organization today v Hiaasen’s publication of the book; note the recent connections to EuroDisney Hotels and Disney Paris; essay, 300-350 words **due Sept 24 at 23:59; GLI**

Live chat

Live chat #1 online through Adobe connect, **Sept. 21, 20:00-21:00 (8-9 PM)**, Discuss Disney today, information posted to course email and in the live chat notes, GLI

## **Week 6**

**Sept 25- Oct 1**

Reading and viewing assignments

*Razor Girl*

Electronic reading of pertinent columns pertaining to *Razor Girl*:

[https://www.mprnews.org/story/2016/09/28/mpr\\_news\\_presents](https://www.mprnews.org/story/2016/09/28/mpr_news_presents)

Assignment:

Discussion #2- Only in South Florida and Key West, scams like the razor girl one and those in *Tourist Season*, believable or not; initial post **due Sept 28 at 23:59**; responses to 3 others **due Oct 1 at 23:59**; GLI

## **Week 7**

**Oct 2-8**

Reading assignment

Complete *Razor Girl*

Assignment:

Assignment #4 Essay, PPT or Prezi presentation: compare and contrast Hiassen's *Tourist Season* with his most recent publication, *Razor Girl*, **due Oct 8 at 23:59**; GLI

Assessment:

Quiz #2- covers all course material from Week 3-6, **opens Oct 5 at 08:00, closes Oct 8 at 23:59**, (multiple choice, true/false, matching), 10 questions (randomized), 20 minutes, 1 attempt, GLI

## **Week 8**

**Oct 9-15**

Reading

Columns from *Dance of the Reptiles* posted electronically for week 8

Assignments

Live chat #2: newspaper reporting from Hiassen's quote: quote "...no good could ever come from a newspaper interview, and that only idiots spoke to newspaper reporters." [Information posted in course email and live chat notes; this may be used for your essay], **Oct 12, 20:00-21:00**

Assignment #5 Essay from the following quote and live chat: "...no good could ever come from a newspaper interview, and that only idiots spoke to newspaper reporters." Compare and contrast the quote to the current US Administration's view regarding 'the media.' **Due Oct 15 at 23:59; GLI**

## **Week 9**

**Oct 16-22**

Reading/viewing

*Strip Tease* (the book) and DVD *Striptease* starring Demi Moore

Assignments

Assignment #6

Essay, select you 'favorite' column/s from *Dance of the Reptiles*; write an essay on your choice or choices, including Stevenson's comments, **due Oct 22 at 23:59; GLI**

Assessment

Quiz #3, covers information from weeks 7-8, 10 questions- multiple choice, true/false, matching, 1 attempt, **opens Oct 19 at 08:00, closes Oct 22 at 23:59**

## **Week10**

**Oct 23- 29 (Homecoming week)**

Reading and viewing

*Strip Tease*, DVD *Striptease* starring Demi Moore

Assignment #7

Construct a PPT or Prezi presentation comparing the book, *Strip Tease* and the movie *Striptease*, indicate the differences, similarities and conclude with your preference, the book or the movie; **due Oct 29 at 23:59; GLI**

Discussion #3

Compare the book to the movie; initial post due **Oct 19 at 23:59**; respond to at least 3 others, **due Oct 22 at 23:59; GLI**

## **Week 11**

**Oct 30- Nov 5**

Reading

Columns from *The Miami Herald* on the environment and the Everglades

Assignments

Assignment #8 Essay, “Are ‘The Everglades’ and South Florida’s fresh water supply on the verge of ruination?” **Due Nov 5 at 23:59**; GLI

## **Week 12**

*Nov 6- 12 Friday, (Nov 10 Veteran’s Day, University closed)*

### Reading

Columns from *The Miami Herald* on the environment and the Everglades with a concentration on reptiles

<http://gardenandgun.com/article/carl-hiaasen> or

<http://gardenandgun.com/feature/carl-hiaasen-the-last-great-howler>

### Assignments

Discussion #4, talk about the lack of understanding regarding reptiles (according to Hiaasen), propose solutions for the Everglades; initial post **due Nov 9 at 23:59**; respond to at least 3 other by **Nov 12 at 23:59**

Assignment # Essay 9, “the reptiles in South Florida: the good, the bad, the ugly,” **due Nov 12 at 23:59**

Group discussion for the assigned youth novels *Flush*; *Scat*; *Chomp*;

## **Week 13**

*Nov 13- 19*

### Assignment

Live chat #3- youth novels and novels [*Flush*; *Scat*; *Chomp*] **Nov 16 20:00-21:00**

## **Week 14**

*Nov 20- 26 Thanksgiving Holidays 23-26 Happy Thanksgiving!*

### Reading

Youth Novels novels [*Flush*; *Scat*; *Chomp*]

### Assignment

Group discussion; read ALL the assigned youth novels; begin posting group information on your assigned novel posting in the discussion groups from week 12; begin the design for final presentation

## **Week 15**

*Nov 27- Dec 3*

### Assignment

Continue to work in your group groups via discussion tool on youth novel presentation, either PPT or Prezi presentation

Assessment

Quiz #4, covers material from weeks 11-14, **opens Nov30 at 23:59, closes Dec 3 at 23:59**; 10 questions, multiple choice, true/false, matching, GLI

**Week 16**

*Dec 4- 9 Finals week*

**Assignment #10- Final**; post group PPT or Prezi, **due Dec 4 at 23:59**; grade the presentations, **due Dec 9 at 23:59** GLI

**Course Grades due in Panthersoft Dec 13 @ 23:59**

Winter Break Dec 26- Jan 2