

I 310, Fake News and Facts in the Misinformation Age

Spring 2021

Unique # 28070

Class Meets: Monday, Wednesday 12:30 – 2:00 PM

Course Mode: *Internet on Canvas*

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Pronouns: Mr., Professor,

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Course Description

University Catalog Course Description

Facts versus fake news; that is the challenge in today’s digital society. Our world is rife with misinformation. This is a course about "calling b***s*** on" - spotting, dissecting, and publicly refuting false claims by identifying the casual fallacies, statistical traps, visual-misinformation, scientific claims, fake news, and social media and their sources. This course will also explore refutation techniques of Disinformation and Mal-Information. Prior math/stat background unnecessary.

What will I learn?

The power and complexity of information in society, the economy, and our personal lives grows constantly, primarily due to the digital world. This course will explore information from multiple angles, with an emphasis on exploring the role of deception in a variety of areas--politics, international relations, business, advertising, social media, and more.

Increasing information and media literacy skills along with critical thinking related to research and the world at large are a major competent of this course. This is **not** a how-to-use-the-library or computer science course, although both of those areas will be addressed. Efficient research, evaluation of information, being able to identify misinformation or “fake news” and critical analysis are the primary goals.

Main skills and attitudes to be developed

- Critical thinking, collaboration and peer-to-peer problem solving skills
- Understanding the significance of sufficient, documented evidence in research
- Understand the methods of identifying, exposing, and refuting misinformation, fake news, etc.

Learning Outcomes

Students should be able to:

1. Define an information need and how to construct an effective digital search strategy.
2. Identify, evaluate, and select relevant information sources
3. Evaluate the credibility of a source
4. Demonstrate how to identify fake news, memes, propaganda, and other means of deception
5. Demonstrate how to balance conflicting ‘truths’ to ensure objectivity
6. Gain a deeper understanding of the importance of information in a democratic society.
7. Fulfill the university requirements of a writing flagged course.
8. Demonstrate ability to communicate and collaborate on complex issues.

TOPICS

Week 1	Introductions, Course Objectives. History: Guttenberg to Gibson
Week 2	What is Truth? Experts and Expertise: Who decides?
Week 3	Effective Research, Developing a Plan.
Week 4	How to evaluate information. The CRAAP Test
Week 5	Journalism and the Media
Week 6	Media Manipulations and Fake News
Week 7	Psychology of Information Consumption
Week 8	Social Media, Search Engines, Software
Week 9	Social Media, Blogs, and User Publishing
Week 10	Social Media, Responsibility, & Regulation
Week 11	Information Production & Distribution: Education, Sciences, Government
Week 12	Government Surveillance: the good, bad, and ugly
Week 13	Propaganda and Foreign Nefarious Information
Week 14	Free Speech, Censorship, Privacy
Week 15	Ethics, Whistleblowers, and the Law

How will I learn?

The structure of this course is built around Team-Based Learning (TBL) which is a highly participatory method. TBL will increase your understanding of course concepts by using them to solve authentic, real-world problems and help you develop your workplace learning skills.

The primary course goal is to support using course content to solve significant problems; in fact, the bulk of class time will be spent solving problems and making decisions to help you become a critical thinker.

Pre-requisites for the course:

None

How to succeed in this course

Focus on expressing and supporting your views. We will have texts and videos that you have to read carefully in order to participate successfully in the class discussions where you will be using information to understand important concepts, foster engaging ideas and explore ways of thinking.

Be reflective. The assigned readings provide the backdrop for discussing the critical thinking ideas and concepts. Learning in this class is not just memorizing the material and being able to parrot it back. You will have the opportunity to reflect more deeply on your own and others' perspectives and assumptions, and be expected to draw, articulate, and justify conclusions with solid reasons and citations.

Course Requirements

Required Materials

Texts: Media Manipulation and Disinformation Online, by Alice Marwick and Rebecca Lewis. Available online via Canvas.

Weekly readings, videos, and lectures will be linked online through canvas.

All class materials, supplemental resources, grades, and announcements will be posted on the course Canvas site: <https://utexas.instructure.com>.

Classroom Expectations

Your preparation for discussion and participation is extremely important for you and your classmates. Here are some ground rules:

- **Respect for others is vital.** You can expect that as the instructor, I am concerned about the educational experience of each student in the class, respectful of individual differences, encouraging of creativity, reasonably open and accessible to discuss material and assignments, thorough in evaluating assignments, and rigorous yet supportive in maintaining high standards for performance.

As a student, you are expected to work individually and with others, to create an atmosphere that is safe, valuing of one another, and open to diverse perspectives. Everyone is expected to show courtesy, civility, and respect for one another. Comments or postings that degrade or ridicule another, whether based on individual or cultural differences, are unacceptable.

- **Participation/Engagement.** Thinking is not a spectator sport. You need to participate

in class by communicating your understanding and testing others' understanding with questions and dialogue. This course requires active participation, which is crucial to your success in becoming a critical thinker. The more you put into it, the more you will get out of it. Active participation includes being prepared to discuss readings, assignments, and concepts, engaging yourself in classroom activities and discussion, and putting your best effort in both formal and informal assignments. Regardless of the format we use to conduct class sessions, consider your participation to be the equivalent to a face-to-face class session and be prepared to engage actively and thoughtfully with me and your peers.

- **Have fun!** This course is an adventure in exploring your thought processes, empowering yourself with the ability to evaluate information, and reasoning through arguments that you encounter. Some of what we do may be personally and intellectually uncomfortable. It is OK to express your discomfort as long as you are open to safely exploring beyond those comfort zones. Make the most of it and have fun! Most importantly, you don't even have to agree with me! Just back up facts.

Assignments

1. **Essay 1 Annotated Bibliography** (Outcomes 1, 2)
Description parts 1 (5%) & part 2 (5% of grade)
2. **Essay 2 Media Creation/Manipulation essay** (Outcomes 3, 4, & 5)
Description (20% of grade)
3. **Essay 3 Social Media & Refutation** Research (outcomes 1, 2, 3, 4, & 5)
Description (20% of grade)
4. **Essay 4 Final Project** (Outcomes 1, 2, 3, 6, and 7)
Description (30% of grade)
4. **In-Class or Canvas Discussions, Participation** (Outcomes 7, 8)
Description (20% of grade)

Grading for this Course

The following table represents how you will demonstrate your learning and how we will assess the degree to which you have done so.

Assignments	Points possible	Percent of Total Grade
1. 12 Discussion weeks	48	20
2. Peer Review (Essays 2, 3)	12	4
3. Essay 1 - Annotated Bibliography		
•Part 1 (first draft)	10	4
•Part 2 (final plus research paper topic)	10	4
4. Essay 2 - Media Creation	35	14
5. Essay 3 – Social Media	35	14
6. Research Paper (topic of your choice)	75	30
6. Quizzes (5 random * 5 pts)	25	10
TOTAL	250	100%

Course Outline

All instructions, assignments, readings, rubrics, and essential information will be on the Canvas website at <https://utexas.instructure.com>. Check this site regularly and use it to ask questions about the course schedule.

Changes to the schedule may be made at my discretion and if circumstances require. It is your responsibility to note these changes when announced (although I will do my best to ensure that you receive the changes with as much advanced notice as possible).

ASSIGNMENTS

Essay Topics

The essay topics are selected to encourage you to synthesize the materials in the modules. My hope is you will reflect on what you learned in each group of modules and build on those ideas to develop an essay that addresses the prompt. The prompt is designed to get you thinking about the topic, but I hope you will take your own personal experiences, undergraduate major, and future career goals to decide how to take the information in the modules and make it more interesting to you (and me!)

First Assignment/Essay: Annotated Bibliography. With the plethora of information available from hundreds of digital sources, the challenge for a researcher is how to develop a research plan before writing a single line. In this first essay, develop an annotated bibliography of at least five potential sources you might use for a research topic or an information topic of your choice.

- a. The main goal of this assignment is to develop an annotated bibliography to support a research plan.
- b. Student selects a variety of sources covering both sides of an issue. Select a topic to research and follow-up with at least **four** sources that support your objective and at least **one** that counters or supports a differing opinion and document/cite them as an annotated bibliography.

Suggested Information Topics (but you may choose your own)

1. Medical Information
 2. Digital Library Creation
 3. Accuracy or Protection of Information
 4. Information and Privacy
- c. The student will articulate how their sources relate to their topic, and why they selected each source using evaluative criteria to critically analyze and support their selected sources.
 - d. The Reference module shows you how to cite outside sources in APA format as well as the how to cite the material both in-text and on your reference page, so make sure you pay attention to APA formatting.

Second Essay: Media Creation Essay. Five to seven pages, plus a title page and reference pages. Any media can be accurate, inaccurate, or manipulated to serve an author's purpose. This essay should focus on a form of media and the several ways in which media can be manipulated.

- a. Beginning with the two articles on Electronic Medical Records, consider how information is gathered, developed, and managed in the course of its creation and use. Discuss the process of gathering information, how it is processed and the benefits and/or risks of aggregating such information.

- b. Students may wish to evaluate the periodical sources used to support the arguments made. How do they align with the CRAAP test? Which article (pro/con) is more credible, if any.
- c. Identify any methods of media manipulation, distortion, or misinformation in the articles with sufficient examples to support your case.
- d. A student may wish to elaborate on the pros/cons of digitizing medical records or how the concept applies to other industries such as finance, government, private industry.
- e. Essay 2 will include a peer review component.

Third Essay: Social Media: Commercialization or Weaponization of User Information.

Five to seven pages, plus a title page and reference pages. Consider how personal information is gathered, aggregated, and used by applications, search engines, and/or social media for commercial gain or how such information may be weaponized to support or perpetuate a specific agenda.

From a user's browser, through their ISP, to a search engine or social media site; what information can be discovered about a user? What are the potential benefits or liabilities for the user? For the gatherer? For the purchaser or the redistributor?

This essay helps you focus on the structure of an argument. The use of introductory and concluding paragraphs, with sound paragraph construction leading a reader to your conclusion.

- a. The readings cover several potential topics to consider and should give you plenty of material to discuss in five pages, so there are a lot of possible directions for this essay.
- b. Feel free to use current events or other ideas to make this essay your own. For example, are these information sources necessary in our digital society; do they make our life (or work) better? What are the risks?
- c. Essay 3 will include a peer review component.

Fourth Essay Qualitative Research Project: Ten Pages minimum. (10-15 pages expected).

Information in the digital age is like a tsunami of disparate and often conflicting data threatening to drown us in the confusion and turmoil of misinformation, disinformation, fake news, and 'alternative facts.' Information comes to use through mobile devices, laptops, the Internet and everything the Internet makes possible from social media to self-driving cars. Why is such information important now and into the future? What are the dangers? Or what about emerging technologies such as, IOT, blockchain/cryptocurrency, AI, biometrics, robotics, etc.?

- a. The main goal of the qualitative research paper is for you to demonstrate your skill in developing a unique research topic and gather appropriate evidence to support your argument.
- b. The essay should be research intensive, objective, and demonstrate to your reader that something is true, rather than "tell" your reader it is true.
- c. A qualitative research paper is designed to incorporate methodological strategies to ensure the 'trustworthiness' of the findings. Such strategies include:
 - i. Accounting for personal biases which may have influenced findings;
 - ii. Demonstrating critical thinking and reflection of methods used to ensure sufficient depth and relevance of data collection and analysis;
 - iii. Demonstrate rigor in your research. Without rigor, research is worthless, becomes fiction, and loses its utility. Hence, a great deal of attention must be applied to reliability and validity of one's research methods.
 - iv. Establishing a comparison case/seeking out similarities and differences across accounts to ensure different perspectives are represented.

- v. Student will use a reliable research process to search for new information and confirm the validity of sources when considering its use and adoption.
- vi. Will your paper and its sources pass the CRAAP test?
- vii. This paper will focus on grammar, proper use of citations, and professional writing style such as seen in an APA style guide. [See Owl.Purdue.Edu](http://owl.purdue.edu).

I often see student essays that talk about "the explosion of the Internet" or how we can learn anything at "the touch of a button" (avoid both of these expressions!). What these students really mean to do is to discuss the reliability of information one can find from a specific source, such as Wikipedia, social media, library databases, corporate, or government sources and both the positive and negative aspects of that source.

Essays – General Guidelines

Students will complete three essays and one optional essay revision. Each essay will be evaluated using the traditional undergraduate letter grade scale listed above (A – F). Writing your essay at the last minute usually results in a poor grade. Each essay is intended to help you focus on a different writing skill while reviewing the course material. The first essay will focus on documenting evidence to support your argument, the second on structuring your paper, and the third on your research and grammar and general writing skills.

For the first essay, for example, 80% of your grade will be based on whether you include well formatted APA quotations and well formatted citations that use paraphrasing. The other 20% I will determine by the quality of your writing according to these criteria:

1. Grammar and spelling
2. The clarity of thought demonstrated in your essay
3. Your use of resources (including citations)
4. The structure of the essay and how well you followed writing conventions
5. The overall quality of the essay

The first two essays will include a research/preparatory step, the submission of your draft as an annotated bibliography, and a rewrite option. You will also note your semester research project for approval.

The second and third essays submitted once including citations in APA writing style and will include at least one peer review.

The fourth writing assignment is your final research paper, in APA style with appropriate citations, illustrations, etc. as necessary.

Essay Format:

Remember to include a title page and bibliography/reference page with each essay. These pages do NOT count toward the page minimum. The title page should include your name, the title of your essay, your school, the course number and section, and the date in long format.

Your essay must be submitted to canvas as a WORD document (.DOC or .DOCX) and the filename needs to start with your last name. For example, my first essay might be named Loudon1.doc. Without this title page and this naming convention, your essay may not be graded!

A PDF file will not be graded; you will receive zero on that assignment.

You must cite all sources within the essay and provide a complete citation listing in the references page. Including any module readings or lecture material. All citations should use the

APA Style format. For more information on APA, please see the Purdue University OWL guide: <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/>

All essays will be submitted to Canvas and will be passed through Turnitin or another plagiarism check software. The results of this software analysis are not the only method I use to determine whether something is plagiarized. As I said earlier, plagiarism is my least favorite thing to deal with in this course. Avoid it!

The essay requirements include a page minimum, which means exactly that; if your essay is 75% of minimum pages, you don't receive credit. If you expand the margins and increase the point size from the word defaults and more than double spaced in order to take up more space, you won't receive credit. Don't leave it up to me, write the full amount and make us both happy!

Correct APA formatting is Times Roman font, 12-point type, double spaced, with 1-inch margins. (I will accept Calibri font, 12 point, but it is a difficult font to read.)

Essay Submission

Submit all assignments using Canvas. Assignments submitted via email will not be counted (I lose track of them – I get hundreds of emails a day, so I ask that you use Canvas both for communicating with me and submitting your assignments so we both have a record).

A tutorial for submitting documents is located here: <http://edutech.ctl.utexas.edu/submitting-assignments/>

All essays must be in Microsoft word format, saved as .doc or .docx. 11-point font (whatever the default is for Word, usually Cambria), double spaced with one-inch margins. I personally prefer open source software, but Canvas and Turnitin work best with Microsoft.

In addition to these steps, your essays will be sent through Turnitin. I STRONGLY encourage you to review the Turnitin score and address any issues before the submission is due. I use the Turnitin score as an indicator of potential problems; Turnitin will highlight what it thinks are problematic areas, and I typically take a closer look and decide if I agree. If you choose not to review these highlighted areas and either leave a note explaining why it isn't a problem or to make a change and address the issue, you run the risk of failing the assignment and receiving a referral to Student Conduct and Academic Integrity. Most people never have a problem with this but use the tool to your advantage to help you avoid plagiarism!

Discussions (12 weeks)

This semester will include weekly discussions on the essays or posted topics, depending on what the class might be struggling with. Discussions are graded on a 4-point scale; two points for your original submission and one point for each response to two other students. You must complete all three parts of the discussion (original post and two responses) and meet the minimum requirements for credit. If you submit a great original post and only respond to one peer, you can only earn three points.

2 Points: For most original discussions, your submission should be at least 200 words long and make it clear to the instructor or TA that you have read the assigned reading for that week. Detailed instructions are listed on each discussion assignment.

2 Points: In addition, students must respond to the submissions of two other students. These responses should be at least two sentences long and should move the conversation forward. Responses of "I agree. This happened to me once." or similar short responses will not receive

credit. Maximum effort!

Remember that these word limits are articulated in order to help you understand the minimum amount of effort required to avoid failing. They don't represent the minimum effort required to get an A.

I 310 Accuracy in the Age of Deception									
WEEK	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday		
READINGS									
WEEK 1	18-Jan	19-Jan	20-Jan	21-Jan	22-Jan	23-Jan	24-Jan	Discussions	Quizzes
Introduction Gutenberg to Gibson: A History	MLK Day		1st Class Day			SURVEY DUE		Discussion: Getting started (practice)	Survey
WEEK 2	25-Jan	26-Jan	27-Jan	28-Jan	29-Jan	30-Jan	31-Jan		
What is Truth? Defining Expertise								Discussion: Experts: who decides	Home Page pop-up
WEEK 3	1-Feb	2-Feb	3-Feb	4-Feb	5-Feb	6-Feb	7-Feb		
Effective Research Developing a Research Plan						ESSAY 1 BIBLIOGRAPHY Part 1		Discussion: Why no one trusts...	
WEEK 4	8-Feb	9-Feb	10-Feb	11-Feb	12-Feb	13-Feb	14-Feb		
How to evaluate Information The CRAAP Test								Discussion: Forming an Argument	Quiz: CRAAP Test
WEEK 5	15-Feb	16-Feb	17-Feb	18-Feb	19-Feb	20-Feb	21-Feb		
Journalism and the Media Power of Standards			Last day to have Research Plan approved			ESSAY 1 BIBLIOGRAPHY Part 2		Discussion: Reasearch Projects Discussion: Why facts...	
WEEK 6	22-Feb	23-Feb	24-Feb	25-Feb	26-Feb	27-Feb	28-Feb		
Media Manipulation , Fake News, and the Web								Discussion: Media & Manipulation	Quiz: Journalism and Media Manipulation
WEEK 7	1-Mar	2-Mar	3-Mar	4-Mar	5-Mar	6-Mar	7-Mar		
Psychology of Information Consumption								Discussion: Psychology of Cyberspace	
WEEK 8	8-Mar	9-Mar	10-Mar	11-Mar	12-Mar	13-Mar	14-Mar		
Social Media, Search Engines, Software						ESSAY 2		Discussion: Social Media, promise vs reality	Quiz: Tools & Trolls
	15-Mar	16-Mar	17-Mar	18-Mar	19-Mar	20-Mar	21-Mar		
	Spring Break								
WEEK 9	22-Mar	23-Mar	24-Mar	25-Mar	26-Mar	27-Mar	28-Mar		
Social Media & User Publishing		TBD						Discussion: Free Expression or Propaganda	
WEEK 10	29-Mar	30-Mar	31-Mar	1-Apr	2-Apr	3-Apr	4-Apr		
Social Media, Responsibility and Regulation								Discussion: Social Media, Free at what price?	Quiz: Social Media
WEEK 11	5-Apr	6-Apr	7-Apr	8-Apr	9-Apr	10-Apr	11-Apr		
Information Production: Education, Schiences, Government, Commercial						ESSAY 3		Discussion: Government Roles in production, distribution	
WEEK 12	12-Apr	13-Apr	14-Apr	15-Apr	16-Apr	17-Apr	18-Apr		
Government Surveillance								Discussion: Privacy: at what price?	
WEEK 13	19-Apr	20-Apr	21-Apr	22-Apr	23-Apr	24-Apr	25-Apr		
Propaganda Techniques Foreign Govt Interference								NO DISCUSSION THIS WEEK	Quiz: Gov't Surveillance, Propaganda
WEEK 14	26-Apr	27-Apr	28-Apr	29-Apr	30-Apr	1-May	2-May		
Free Speech, Censorship, Privacy						RESEARCH PROJECT DUE		NO DISCUSSION THIS WEEK	
WEEK 15	3-May	4-May	5-May	6-May	7-May	8-May	9-May		
Ethics, Whistleblowers, & the Law			LAST CLASS DAY						
	10-May	11-May	12-May	13-May	14-May	15-May	16-May		
	NO CLASS DAYS								

Policies

Statement on Learning Success

Your success in this class is important to me. We will all need accommodations because we all learn differently. If there are aspects of this course that prevent you from learning or exclude you, please let me know as soon as possible. Together we'll develop strategies to meet both your needs and the requirements of the course. I also encourage you to reach out to the student resources available through UT.

Grading Policies

As I hope you can see, flexibility is built into the assignments to support your success in this course. If you miss a smaller assignment or don't do as well on your earlier entries, your grade will not be impacted significantly. Consequently, the final grades are firm, and no additional curve is available.

A	94 – 100
A -	90 - 93
B +	87 - 89
B	83 - 86
B -	80 - 82
C +	77 - 79
C	73 - 76

C -	70 - 72
D+	67 – 69
D	63 - 66
D-	60 - 62 (minimum for pass/fail students to pass)
F	Below 60

GRACE POLICY: Time-bank options

Sometimes we have bad days, bad weeks, and bad semesters. In an effort to accommodate any unexpected, unfortunate personal crisis, I have built “time banks” into our course. You do not have to utilize this policy, but if you find yourself struggling with unexpected personal events, I encourage you to e-mail me as soon as possible (in advance of due date) to notify me that you are using our grace policy. You may use this policy one of two ways (please choose, and let me know):

You may have a two-day grace period for one assignment, OR

You may have 2 one-day extensions for two different assignments.

Absences

If you are absent or unable to participate on the day that your team meets, you are responsible for providing your team with the necessary information to compensate for your absence. *It is crucial to keep in communication with your team members; you are responsible for letting both us and your team know if you cannot make it to a class.*

Excused Absence: The only absences that will be considered excused are for religious holidays or extenuating circumstances due to an emergency. If you plan to miss class due to observance of a religious holiday, please let us know at least two weeks in advance. You will not be penalized for this absence, although you will still be responsible for any work you will miss on that day if applicable. Check with us for details or arrangements.

If you have to be absent, use your resources wisely. Ask your team and other classmates to get a run-down and notes on any lessons you miss. If you find there are topics that we covered while

you were gone that raise questions, you may come by during office hours or schedule a meeting to discuss. Email specific questions you have in advance so that we can make the most of our time. “What did I miss?” is not specific enough.

Student Rights & Responsibilities

- You have a right to a learning environment that supports mental and physical wellness.
- You have a right to respect.
- You have a right to be assessed and graded fairly.
- You have a right to freedom of opinion and expression.
- You have a right to privacy and confidentiality.
- You have a right to meaningful and equal participation, to self-organize groups to improve your learning environment.
- You have a right to learn in an environment that is welcoming to all people. No student shall be isolated, excluded or diminished in any way.

With these rights come responsibilities:

- You are responsible for taking care of yourself, managing your time, and communicating with the teaching team and with others if things start to feel out of control or overwhelming.
- You are responsible for acting in a way that is worthy of respect and respectful of others.
- Your experience with this course is directly related to the quality of the energy that you bring to it, and your energy shapes the quality of your peers’ experiences.
- You are responsible for creating an inclusive environment and for speaking up when someone is excluded.
- You are responsible for holding yourself accountable to these standards, holding each other to these standards, and holding the teaching team accountable as well.

Personal Pronoun Use (She / He / They / Ze / Etc)

Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to individuals and topics dealing with differences of race, culture, religion, politics, sexual orientation, gender, gender variance, and nationalities. Class rosters are provided to the instructor with the student’s legal name, unless they have added a “preferred name” with the Gender and Sexuality Center (<http://diversity.utexas.edu/genderandsexuality/publications-and-resources/>). I will gladly honor your request to address you by a name that is different from what appears on the official roster, and by the gender pronouns you use (she/he/they/ze, etc). Please advise me of any changes early in the semester so that I may make appropriate updates to my records.

University Resources for Students

COVID-19 Update: “Keep Learning” Resources

This course may be offered in a format to which you are unaccustomed. If you are looking for ideas and strategies to help you feel more comfortable participating in our class, please explore the resources available here: <https://onestop.utexas.edu/keep-learning/>

Services for Students with Disabilities

This class respects and welcomes students of all backgrounds, identities, and abilities. If there are circumstances that make our learning environment and activities difficult, if you have medical

information that you need to share with me, or if you need specific arrangements in case the building needs to be evacuated, please let me know. I am committed to creating an effective learning environment for all students, but I can only do so if you discuss your needs with me as early as possible. I promise to maintain the confidentiality of these discussions. Any student with a documented disability who requires academic accommodations should contact Services for Students with Disabilities at 471-6259 (voice) or 512-410-6644 (Video Phone) as soon as possible to request an official letter outlining authorized accommodations. For more information, visit <http://ddce.utexas.edu/disability/about/>.

Counseling and Mental Health Center

Do your best to maintain a healthy lifestyle this semester by eating well, exercising, avoiding drugs and alcohol, getting enough sleep and taking some time to relax.

All of us benefit from support during times of struggle. You are not alone. There are many helpful resources available on campus and an important part of the college experience is learning how to ask for help. Asking for support sooner rather than later is often helpful. If you or anyone you know experiences any academic stress, difficult life events, or feelings like anxiety or depression, we strongly encourage you to seek support.

<http://www.cmhc.utexas.edu/individualcounseling.html>

The Sanger Learning Center

Did you know that more than one-third of UT undergraduate students use the Sanger Learning Center each year to improve their academic performance? All students are welcome to take advantage of Sanger Center's classes and workshops, private learning specialist appointments, peer academic coaching, and tutoring for more than 70 courses in 15 different subject areas. For more information, please visit <http://www.utexas.edu/ugs/slc> or call 512-471-3614 (JES A332).

Undergraduate Writing Center: <http://uwc.utexas.edu/>

Libraries: <http://www.lib.utexas.edu/>

ITS: <http://www.utexas.edu/its/>

Student Emergency Services: <http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/emergency/>

BeVocal

BeVocal is a university-wide initiative to promote the idea that individual Longhorns have the power to prevent high-risk behavior and harm. At UT Austin all Longhorns have the power to intervene and reduce harm. To learn more about BeVocal and how you can help to build a culture of care on campus, go to: <https://wellnessnetwork.utexas.edu/BeVocal>.

Important Safety Information:

COVID-19 Update: While we will post information related to the contemporary situation on campus, you are encouraged to stay up-to-date on the latest news as related to the student experience. <https://coronavirus.utexas.edu/students>

If you have concerns about the safety or behavior of fellow students, TAs or Professors, call BCAL (the Behavior Concerns Advice Line): 512-232-5050. Your call can be anonymous. If something doesn't feel right – it probably isn't. Trust your instincts and share your concerns.

The following recommendations regarding emergency evacuation from the Office of Campus Safety and Security, 512-471-5767, <http://www.utexas.edu/safety/>

Occupants of buildings on The University of Texas at Austin campus are required to evacuate buildings when a fire alarm is activated. Alarm activation or announcement requires exiting and assembling outside.

- Familiarize yourself with all exit doors of each classroom and building you may occupy. Remember that the nearest exit door may not be the one you used when entering the building.
- Students requiring assistance in evacuation shall inform their instructor in writing during the first week of class.
- In the event of an evacuation, follow the instruction of faculty or class instructors. Do not re-enter a building unless given instructions by the following: Austin Fire Department, The University of Texas at Austin Police Department, or Fire Prevention Services office.
- Link to information regarding emergency evacuation routes and emergency procedures can be found at: www.utexas.edu/emergency

Title IX Reporting

Title IX is a federal law that protects against sex and gender-based discrimination, sexual harassment, sexual assault, sexual misconduct, dating/domestic violence and stalking at federally funded educational institutions. UT Austin is committed to fostering a learning and working environment free from discrimination in all its forms. When sexual misconduct occurs in our community, the university can:

1. Intervene to prevent harmful behavior from continuing or escalating.
2. Provide support and remedies to students and employees who have experienced harm or have become involved in a Title IX investigation.
3. Investigate and discipline violations of the university's [relevant policies](https://titleix.utexas.edu/relevant-policies/) (<https://titleix.utexas.edu/relevant-policies/>).

Beginning January 1, 2020, Texas Senate Bill 212 requires all employees of Texas universities, including faculty, report any information to the Title IX Office regarding sexual harassment, sexual assault, dating violence and stalking that is disclosed to them. Texas law requires that all employees who witness or receive any information of this type (including, but not limited to, writing assignments, class discussions, or one-on-one conversations) must be reported. **I am a Responsible Employee and must report any Title IX related incidents** that are disclosed in writing, discussion, or one-on-one. Before talking with me, or with any faculty or staff member about a Title IX related incident, be sure to ask whether they are a responsible employee. If you would like to speak with someone who can provide support or remedies without making an official report to the university, please email advocate@austin.utexas.edu. For more information about reporting options and resources, visit <http://www.titleix.utexas.edu/>, contact the Title IX Office via email at titleix@austin.utexas.edu, or call 512-471-0419.

Although graduate teaching and research assistants are not subject to Texas Senate Bill 212, they are still mandatory reporters under Federal Title IX laws and are required to report a wide range of behaviors we refer to as sexual misconduct, including the types of sexual misconduct covered under Texas Senate Bill 212. The Title IX office has developed supportive ways to respond to a survivor and compiled campus resources to support survivors.

Emergency Evacuation Procedures

The following recommendations regarding emergency evacuation from the Office of Campus Safety and Security, 512-471-5767, <http://www.utexas.edu/safety/>

University Policies

Academic Integrity

Each student in the course is expected to abide by the University of Texas Honor Code: “As a student of The University of Texas at Austin, I shall abide by the core values of the University and uphold academic integrity.” **Plagiarism is taken very seriously at UT.** Therefore, if you use words or ideas that are not your own (or that you have used in previous class), you must cite your sources. Otherwise you will be guilty of plagiarism and subject to academic disciplinary action, including failure of the course. You are responsible for understanding UT’s Academic Honesty and the University Honor Code which can be found at the following web address:

<https://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/conduct/standardsofconduct.php>

Q Drop Policy

If you want to drop a class after the 12th class day, you’ll need to execute a Q drop before the Q-drop deadline, which typically occurs near the middle of the semester. Under Texas law, you are only allowed six Q drops while you are in college at any public Texas institution. For more information, see: <http://www.utexas.edu/ugs/csacc/academic/adddrop/qdrop>

COVID-19 Updates: Fall 2020 Semester

Safety and Class Participation/Masks:

For every face-to-face class experience, we will all need to make some adjustments in order to benefit from in-person classroom interactions in a safe and healthy manner. Our best protections against spreading COVID-19 on campus are masks (defined as cloth face coverings) and staying home if you are showing symptoms. Therefore, for the benefit of everyone, this means that all students are required to follow two important rules.

Every student must wear a cloth face covering properly in class and in all campus buildings at all times.

- **Every student must engage in documented daily symptom screening.** This means that each class day in which on campus activities occur, students must upload certification from the symptom tracking app and confirm that they completed their symptom screening for that day to Canvas. Students should not upload the results of that screening, just the certificate that they completed it. If the symptom tracking app recommends that the student isolate rather than coming to class, then students must not return to class until cleared by a medical professional.
- If a student is not wearing a cloth face covering properly in the classroom (or any UT building), that student must leave the classroom (and building). If the student refuses to wear a cloth face covering, class will be dismissed for the remainder of the period, and the student will be subject to disciplinary action as set forth in the university’s Institutional Rules/General Conduct 11-404(a)(3). Students who have a condition that precludes the wearing of a cloth face covering must follow the procedures for [obtaining an accommodation \(https://orientation.utexas.edu/students-with-disabilities\)](https://orientation.utexas.edu/students-with-disabilities)

Sharing of Course Materials is Prohibited:

No materials used in this class, including, but not limited to, lecture hand-outs, videos,

assessments (quizzes, exams, papers, projects, homework assignments), in-class materials, review sheets, and additional problem sets, may be shared online or with anyone outside of the class unless you have my explicit, written permission. Unauthorized sharing of materials promotes cheating. It is a violation of the University's Student Honor Code and an act of academic dishonesty. I am well aware of the sites used for sharing materials, and any materials found online that are associated with you, or any suspected unauthorized sharing of materials, will be reported to Student Conduct and Academic Integrity in the Office of the Dean of Students. These reports can result in sanctions, including failure in the course.

Class Recordings:

Class recordings are reserved only for students in this class for educational purposes and are protected under FERPA. The recordings should not be shared outside the class in any form. Violation of this restriction by a student could lead to Student Misconduct proceedings.

Land Acknowledgment

(I) We would like to acknowledge that we are meeting on Indigenous land. Moreover, (I) We would like to acknowledge and pay our respects to the Carrizo & Comecrudo, Coahuiltecan, Caddo, Tonkawa, Comanche, Lipan Apache, Alabama-Coushatta, Kickapoo, Tigua Pueblo, and all the American Indian and Indigenous Peoples and communities who have been or have become a part of these lands and territories in Texas, here on Turtle Island.

Land Engagements and/or Commitments

In recognition of the ongoing and cumulative challenges faced by Indigenous Peoples in Central Texas and globally, we call upon The University of Texas at Austin:

To repatriate the ancestral remains held by the Texas Archeological Research Laboratory to their Indigenous descendant communities and Native lands.

To commit to the active recruitment and material support of Native American and Indigenous students, who currently comprise fewer than 0.2% of UT Austin's student body.

To support the transition of the Program in Native American and Indigenous Studies into a Center.

To establish a protocol of research and study on Tribal or Native lands, and to foster an ethics and practice of engaged scholarship, with and for Indigenous peoples and communities, locally and internationally.