

J334G (07925), J395 (08150) Advanced Visual Journalism: Video



Professor DeCesare

Lecture: Tuesdays 9:30 am -11:00 am CMA 4.146

Office hours:

Tues. 1:00 pm to 3:00pm BMC 3.336

Office hours by appointment at this [linked electronic sign up](#)

Please use the digital sign up listed on Canvas for an appointment during a time slot in regular office hours.
If you have a class conflict during my office hours please email to arrange a meeting at an alternate time.

Email: donna.decesare@austin.utexas.edu

Phone: 512 471-1980

Lab Instructor Qiling Wang

Lab Class: Thursdays 9:30 am to 11:00 am CMA 4.146

Email: gilingwang@utexas.edu

Independent Inquiry Flag: This course carries the Independent Inquiry flag. Independent Inquiry courses are designed to engage you in the process of inquiry over the course of a semester, providing you with the opportunity for independent investigation of a question, problem, or project related to your major. You should therefore expect a substantial portion of your grade to come from the independent investigation and presentation of your own work.

Ethics and Leadership Flag: This course carries the Ethics and Leadership flag. Ethics and Leadership courses are designed to equip you with skills that are necessary for making ethical decisions in your adult and professional life. You should therefore expect a substantial portion of your grade to come from assignments involving ethical issues and the process of applying ethical reasoning to real-life situations.

Course Description:

Visual reporters must compete with a wide array of visually sophisticated media and entertainment forms for the “eyeballs” of their reader/viewers. While the mission of journalism remains what it has always been—to hold public figures accountable, and to inform the public about the local, national or global issues of social and civic concern— online news sites, NGO’s and documentary activists are increasingly looking for visually compelling forms that go beyond the traditional conceptual frame and tools of legacy print photojournalism. Videojournalism has become vital to the toolkit of all journalists. This class will push you to think like a documentary storyteller combining the language of cinema and the ethics of documentary journalism.

Class lectures and readings will focus on conceptual and practical aspects of constructing visual narratives including some practical direction for camera handling and sound gathering. Lectures will cover narrative structure, interview techniques, awareness of sensory effects and qualities of sound. Students are expected to have basic skills editing with Adobe Premier but will receive some refresher pointers in lab sessions along with other practical exercises or project critiques designed to aid students in fulfilling class assignments.

This class will examine how issues vital to the core values of visual journalists –objectivity/subjectivity, point of view, and ethics—play out in the contemporary multimedia landscape. Students will also explore the historic synergy between documentary film and still photography and the ways that technologic innovations opened new creative frontiers as well as new ethical challenges.

Student mastery of concepts covered in class will be assessed in weekly response papers. Student mastery of effective storytelling skills will be evaluated in screenings and critiques of video projects.

Learning to shoot and edit visually driven news and/or feature stories that defy cliché, are emotionally honest, informative, and memorable will be the gold standard.

Learning Goals:

- Know the National Press Photographers Ethics Code pertinent to practice of photo and videojournalism.

- Examine the history and role of documentary film and photography in society in order to contextualize personal work practices and goals-formula vs. innovation.
- Engage in independent inquiry. Student will employ a range of research and reporting practices to move from topic to a fleshed out idea to a viable protagonist. The pitch should include a formal plan of production and a news hook to sell the story to an editor.
- Conceptualize, storyboard and prepare a production calendar for each project given what you know.
- Learn to practice flexibility. You may need to adjust the initial story hypothesis in response to ongoing discovery as the project develops through the production process.
- Practice clear, concise and appropriate journalistic writing on all project text panels, written critiques and self-assessments.
- Critically assess your own work and that of others in periodic written or oral class and lab critiques,
- Display mastery and understanding of visual story telling technology relevant to effective video journalism. This may include purposeful incorporation of still imagery, data visualization, animation or soundscapes which students may be familiar with from other specialized classes.

Learning Assignments:

- Each student will produce an engaging character-driven 90 second to 2 minute video story. The key skills evaluated will be successful blending of NAT sound, Voice Over, and Sound on Tape and a well paced interplay of audio and visual imagery that complement or counterpoint one another to move the story forward. Lighting, framing, and selective focus should draw us to connect with the protagonist. Most of the visual material will be “talking head,” but strive for footage that uses not only what is said but also body language, gesture and some action revealing the protagonist’s character to build narrative sequences that intercut with the on camera interview. Strive for a “moment of reflection” or aha moment rather than information best suited to text. Content must be of public interest to the local Austin or Texas community whether it is a news focused or feature story.
- Each student will shoot and edit a 2 to 3 minute sequence-driven

video narrative. This story will include a protagonist but this time we will keep the “talking head” image and voice over narration to a minimum. The focus of your approach should be the “anecdote” or unfolding plot shown through a sequence of actions. Think narrative arc and the numerous active scenes required to set scenes and compress time. Stories that involve a contest, with stakes or struggle of some kind are most effective. The key skills evaluated will be the shooting and editing dynamic sequences of action and reaction that move the story forward visually. Content must be of public interest to the local Austin or Texas community whether it is a news focused or feature story.

- For the final project each student will shoot and edit a 3-5-minute video story about a newsworthy issue of social concern. The story must be humanized through focus on a specific individual or group of individuals. The most effective stories will focus on an experience of struggle or a challenge of some kind. The story may make judicious use of animated stills or can be shot exclusively on video. The key here is to use what you have learned about character development, visual sequences and dramatic arc to create an authentic narrative story that will keep your audience engaged emotionally and illuminate the larger social issue. Think about the way one of the films we saw in class personalized the impact of immigration policy on a family. Remember the key reason people watch video stories is because they bring us closer to the experience of others. Stories about people facing struggles that the viewer will feel some empathy or emotional investment in are more effective than stories which feature experts discussing facts or opinion, though such character may play a role in your story. They are best as contextual or background figures with impacted people living the story foregrounded as protagonists. The larger social concern is the reason we should care, but the focus on a person helps the viewer to connect and stay engaged.
- This project requires solid pre-production research, reporting and planning.. Although you will want to have a storyboard plan when you begin, you also want to be present frequently and observing closely. Elements such as an emotional revelation, a surprising turn of events or something that creates just the right touch of comic relief in an otherwise serious situation are only found with a subject who you can closely observe repeatedly over time. Finding such moments

requires patience, keen observation and attention to detail as well as thoughtful interviewing and sharp editing.

Successful completion of the course will provide students with short video or multimedia stories to round out their visual journalism portfolio.

This course is intended for students in the photojournalism, multimedia or broadcast areas who have already taken introductory and intermediate visual production and reporting skills courses. The goal is to integrate specialized skills in a process of reporting designed to guide students in the individual creation of non-formulaic news or feature visual projects. Students are strongly encouraged to treat each project as a real-world web publishable work of news or feature documentary journalism. Projects from the class are expected to be of the caliber of works published by Journalism School's special online reporting product: Reporting Texas or by local student or community media or non-profits. Students are encouraged to consider their projects a portfolio calling card to potential clients to secure freelance video journalism and multimedia assignments.

Class Equipment and Websites:

You will have access to labs and equipment checkout for this class. You must follow all Lab guidelines and rules for use of UT equipment. See the Class Canvas site for information and links to the USHER equipment checkout.

Canvas is a Web-based course management system with password-protected access at <http://canvas.utexas.edu/>

SPECIAL NOTE TO GRAD STUDENTS:

Knowledge, critical thinking, originality and/or creative sophistication will be assessed to a higher standard for Graduate project work.

Graduate Students are required to read additional readings as on the canvas weekly module pages. Students should be prepared to discuss these readings in class or to reference in written responses to the weekly screening. The readings will emphasize and amplify core concepts relevant to production work-flow aesthetic choice and ability to unpack how the architecture of a piece influences viewer experience.

REQUIRED READINGS:

Kobre, Ken, Videojournalism: Multimedia Storytelling, Focal Point Press
THIS IS ELECTRONICALLY AVAILABLE AND WE WILL USE IN CLASS. ALL STUDENTS MUST DO CANVAS READING ASSIGNMENTS

Bernard Curran, Sheila, Documentary Storytelling: Making Stronger and More Dramatic Nonfiction Films, Focal Point Press **THIS IS ELECTRONICALLY AVAILABLE. GRAD STUDENT MUST DO CANVAS READING ASSIGNMENTS**

Rabinger, Michael, Directing the Documentary, Focal Point Press
THIS IS ELECTRONICALLY AVAILABLE AND WE WILL USE IN CLASS. GRAD STUDENTS MUST DO CANVAS READINGS ASSIGNMENTS

Additional Reading for Serious Documentarians:

Murch, Walter, In the Blink of an Eye, Silman-James Press
Barnow, Eric, A History of Non-Fiction Film
Lancaster, Kurt, Video Journalism for the Web: A Practical Introduction to Documentary Storytelling, Routledge
Kern, Jonathan, Sound Reporting: The NPR Guide to Audio Journalism and Production, University of Chicago Press

Assignment Guidelines

The requirements and format for submitting all assignments are covered on **Canvas in the Assignments tab**. Please follow these guidelines. The assignment due dates for projects are posted on Canvas and are also in the Course calendar attached to this syllabus on Canvas.

Your lab instructor will cover proper camera settings, editing and media compression for the movie files we will view in class and which you will upload via link to an external webhost such as you tube or vimeo.

NOTE: Save all your media files and your final project files in Premier to YOUR OWN HARDRIVE every time you edit. The lab computers are

not secure. They are wiped regularly and won't save your media. Do this on your own computer as well. Computer crashes are not an excuse for late work. If you back up to more than one external drive your original source material and routinely back up your latest edit you will always be able to reconstruct your project.

I expect your weekly reaction papers to file to Canvas by deadline on the day after we viewed the film. Canvas will automatically flag your work as late if you miss the deadline.

All story pitches or storyboards are due on Monday evening by 6pm before the Tuesday seminar in which they will be discussed. I require this so that I have time to see everyone's work in advance of our class meeting..

You will have benchmark Lab assignments which I will announce in class. These assemblage and rough cut deadlines will help you stay on track and will enable your TA Qiling Wang and myself to monitor your work in progress and offer suggestions while you still have time to revise and reshoot. They will not be graded. However missing them will result in lost participation points.

Student Evaluation:

Grades using plus and minus points will be assigned. (**See the attached course schedule for assignment due dates.**) Student grades will be based upon completion of all class assignments and participation in discussion and critiques. The class assignments fall into three categories:

Final Project: (40%)

This will be a documentary story which you researched, scripted, shot and edited in our labs, with the expectation that it is of quality sufficient for broadcast on campus media, or be publishable at Reporting Texas or in THE DAILY TEXAN, or some other media venue (other than your own website) including websites of non-profit foundations.

All work must be original and produced exclusively for this course by you. Recycled projects done for other classes are not acceptable. In addition, the instructor must be alerted well in- advance if you intend to secure rights of any video not shot by you. Consent is a critical part of documentary

process and you must get permission for any archival footage or copyrighted images or music. You must also produce release forms for all characters appearing in your project. I will not accept any projects for grading that do not have the required release forms.

You will be graded on 5 basic elements: a compelling character and a socially relevant or newsworthy researched story line, strength of visual sequences and camera technique, quality of Nat sound to anchor our sense of place, relevant interviews—both informative and emotionally revealing--judicious editing for impact and story flow, story pacing and a clear reveal moment. Your piece must implicitly answer the question “why should we care?”

Your lab instructor will also evaluate your progress as you edit the piece in your lab sessions. We must see regular progress or the project will not receive a grade. Your process and progress are as important to your grade as the final product.

Assignments (2 assignments) (25%)

There are two building block assignments designed to prepare you for the final project. One is a 2 -3 minute character driven video story. The other is a 2 to 3 minute sequence-driven video narrative (almost no talking heads please). Each of these stories should have legs. However the skills you learn from each will aid you in developing the skills with which you execute your final project. Examples of top-level professional published work and outstanding student work will be shown in class as a guide.

Response papers (10 in total) (20%)

Wherever you see the word **Screening** followed by the names of films or web projects apart from your work, you must prepare a short 500-800 word reaction paper. These must be uploaded to Canvas the day after the class when you saw the films or web projects or were assigned them as homework. These papers should not be plot synopses or reworking of the ideas of critical reviews that you may find online. You may consult online to inform your understanding but I do not want you to lift phrases or ideas from other sources. I want your own personal response to the work. I want you to think about how the piece impacted you and why and to explore ways in which it enhanced your understanding not only of the story being told but of the videomaking concepts or topics covered in class that same week. I especially am looking for you to note specific details from the content or

architecture—the way it is crafted—that produced an emotional response or was memorable. I want you to analyze why.

Participation in Class/Critiques/Labs (15%) (14 labs plus 4 class critiques in addition to class attention and participation each week)

This part of your grade will be also be determined by class and lab attendance—you lose points for absence and lateness--and a demonstrated knowledge of the required readings, and active participation in our weekly class discussions. Participation on critique days is crucial. You will lose points for non-participation in critique even if you are physically present. Your TA will evaluate your progress on skills each week and you will be uploading assignments each week in lab. The lab benchmark assignments will not be graded however you lose points if you fail to complete them by end of lab period each week.

Grading:

A (94 to 100): Excellent work that shows creativity, control and understanding of the course assignment objectives. You have sought out subjects you didn't previously know on almost all assignments.

A- (90 to < 94): Very strong work that exceeds the requirements and shows creativity and understanding of assignment objectives. Original and fresh subject matter or creative approach.

B+ (87 to < 90) Good work which meets the requirements of the assignment occasionally going beyond the requirements and which demonstrates effort and technical and aesthetic skill.

B (84 to < 87) Work meets the requirements of the assignment and demonstrates effort and some technical and aesthetic skill.

B- (80 to < 84) Work meets the requirements of the assignment and demonstrates limited effort or limited technical and aesthetic skill.

C + (77 to < 80): Work is of average quality; meets minimal requirements but technical skill is inconsistent. Creativity is seldom apparent.

C (74 to < 77): Work is of average quality; meets minimal requirements but technical skill is inconsistent. Creativity is not apparent.

C - (70 to < 74): Work is below average quality; meets some minimal requirements but technical skill is inconsistent. Creativity is not apparent.

D (60 to < 70): Work shows lack of effort or does not display adequate understanding of technical and/or design elements. Work is incomplete or does not follow requirements.

F (< 60): Unacceptable work that displays a lack of understanding of assignment objectives and/or is not complete.

Class Policies, Courtesy and Attendance:

All cell phones must be turned off during class. No multitasking in lecture class. We need your complete focused attention on the class discussion and materials.

Meeting a deadline is sacrosanct in journalism. This class operates on the principle of real world consequences for performance. You cannot earn full credit with late work and will lose points rapidly if you miss deadlines repeatedly no matter how “good” the late work is.

You must also come to class on time and prepared for discussion of the weekly reading assignments or film clips. I will begin promptly and lateness just as absence will impact the participation portion of your grade. The same applies to early departure from class unless after consultation you have been granted permission in advance.

Contacting me as soon as you know of a conflict with a class but at least 48 hours before the time of the class that will be missed is the only possible way to negotiate an absence for reason other than sudden bereavement or medical emergencies (at class time) allowable under UT policy. (In addition you must supply timely documentary evidence supporting any medical or bereavement absence as well as any other absence for which you ask permission in advance. Please ask if you have questions. See the Appendix for the prior notification guidelines for classes missed for religious observance.

Your professor:

Donna De Cesare is a 2013 Recipient of the Maria Moors Cabot Award for Journalism Enhancing InterAmerican Understanding. This award is the oldest award for foreign correspondence and like the Pulitzer is one of the awards given by the Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism. Professor De Cesare joined the UT Faculty following a 20 year career as a freelance visual journalist. She continues to report on Latin America. Her photographic work is frequently exhibited in museums and in spaces hosting art that fosters public education on issues of social concern. Ms De Cesare's bi-lingual documentary book: *Unsettled / Desasosiego: Children in a World of Gangs* published in 2013 by the University of Texas Press, has been favorably reviewed and featured in the New York Times, The New Yorker, Mother Jones, PRI's The World, and on numerous NPR programs including Latino USA with Maria Hinojosa. Ms De Cesare is a Master Teacher with the Gabriel Garcia Marquez Foundation for Latin American Journalism.

Regard this syllabus as a guide. I reserve the right to make adjustments for guest speakers and the like. The Assignment deadlines will remain unless otherwise posted on Canvas. Check Canvas regularly for all class required reading, film links, assignment updates. Submissions. Canvas modules are your pathway through the class...

Appendix A Class and Assignment Schedule:

Your weekly readings and a wealth of additional online multimedia resources are available at the class Canvas site. It is your pathway through the course and to your learning. Learning by doing is a crucial component of the course. *“What is made with time, time respects.”* --Rodin.

08/31 Lab—The professor and Lab instructor will introduce the course. Student introductions. Discussion of the critique process, equipment checkout and assignment requirements explained. We will watch Sin Pais and students will write a reaction paper due by Sept 1 at 11:59 pm. Upload to canvas. All future papers are due on Wed night, the day after our lecture class.

Readings: Canvas Readings Week 0 for next class

Week One:

09/05 Lecture/Discussion: What is a documentary? Finding an Idea, Objectivity, Point of View, Authorship. Sin Pais as a case study. Getting started, discussion of ideas, ways to go about getting access, consent forms.

Screening: Cinema Verite

Paper Due: Reaction paper

Readings: Canvas-Links Module #1 by next lecture class

09/07 Lab View module before class . Reserve cameras and tripods in advance to bring to lab, pair up in teams, basic camera functions covered. Bring your back up drive as you will start capturing and logging and editing. First field exercise Portrait of a classmate. Do vox pop interviewing and formal interview available light of your classmate. Focus on basic visual and audio quality—aim for interesting content. **Upload 30-second clip to web host and place the link in the comments section of the Lab Assignments tab.**

Week Two:

09/12 Lecture: Sound—Nat sound, sound on Tape, voiceover, room tone, recording music, NPR **sound assignments**

Writing Proposal Assignment Due day before class

See all Proposal deadlines on Canvas they come in succession.

Screening: Portraits and Dreams, (see Canvas)

Sound Ecology, Radiotopia: Ways of Hearing

Paper Due: Reaction paper

Readings: Canvas-Links # 2 by next class

09/14 Lab Reserve cameras in advance and bring to lab, pair up in teams, Focus on filming sequences with your partner. Make sure to have a variety of shots—wide, medium, close, forward and backward tracking shots of your classmate. Do the tracking shots while the person is walking, running, etc. Do some with the person silent. Get the person to talk to you using wireless mic while in action. “on the fly” interview. Get the person to interact with someone or something else. Pay attention to audio quality. Practice listening to

hear differences that distance, direction and type of microphone make for sound. Be able to identify: Nat sound, sound on tape. **Upload 30-second clip to web host and place the link in the comments section of the Lab Assignments tab. Upload rough cut of your Character piece if you want feedback in time to revise your final for the grade submission and critique next week.**

Week Three:

09/19 Lecture/Discussion: Screen Project One for class critique.

Interview techniques, Moment of Reflection, some basic camera handling sequence shooting and editing action.

Screening: Mr. Debt

Paper Due: Reaction paper

Readings: Canvas-Links # 3 for next week.

09/21 Lab: Assignment One: Critique of projects

Week Four:

09/26 Lecture: Final Project ideas reviewed. Pre-production planning, choosing characters, looking for a story, deciding on a genre, narration or verite, the power of music, Narrative Structure

Screening: Spellbound

Paper Due: Reaction paper

Readings: Canvas-Links #4 for next week.

09/28 Lab Editing techniques.... Logging and Capturing Storyboard editing exercises can use own footage

Week Five:

10/03 Lecture: Guest Lecturer TBD

Screening: Fear and Learning at Hoover Elementary

Paper Due: Reaction paper see Canvas

Readings: Canvas-Links #5 for next week.

**10/05 Lab Editing sequences What you need to shoot to be able to edit.
Transitions Tech issues, trouble-shooting issues.**

Week Six:

10/10 Lecture: Screening Critique of Assignment Project Two
Point of view in documentary....

Screening: I am Not Your Negro

Paper Due: Reaction paper

Readings: Canvas-Links #6 for next week.

10/12 Lab: Continued screening of Project Two

Week Seven:

10/17 Lecture: Issue driven filmmaking
Discussion of progress on Final project

Screening: Everything Water Touches

Paper Due: Reaction paper

Reading: Canvas-Links #7 for next week.

10/19 Lab Editing and work in progress.

Week Eight:

**10/24 Lecture: Law Journalists rights and responsibilities (possible live
or skyped guest) Parallel Storytelling Hoop Dreams**

Screening: The Island

Paper Due: Reaction paper

Readings: Canvas-Links # 8 for next week.

10/26 Lab--- continued work on final project.

Week Nine:

**10/31 Discussion: Social Statements, Ethics in News and
Personal documentary'**

Screening: Brother's Keeper

Written Assignment Due Story board or script treatment

By this point nearly 80 % of interviews and pictures should be shot for your final piece, and you should be editing

Paper Due: Reaction paper

Readings: Canvas-Links # 9 for next week.

11/02 Lab rough assembly of final project or storyboards

Week Ten:

11/07 Discussion: Journalist Safety and Witness

Progress reports: Upload 1 minute of assemblage of final projects and story boards questions and concerns on Monday 11/06 for review in class / lab

Screening: The Dart Center Witness

Paper Due: Reaction paper

Readings: Canvas Link # 10

11/09 Lab intensive editing session everyone must be working on the Rough-cut of the final project

Week Eleven:

11/14 Screening upload rough cuts on Monday 11/13 we will show and discuss in class and be ready to do additional reporting this week if necessary

Screening: student docs to inspire and critique....

Readings Canvas Link # 11

11/16 Lab intensive editing pre final critique

Week Twelve:

11/21 Discussion: Freelancer's survival guide Safety and resilience professional networking, funding options, business plan.

Screening: Dart Center for Journalism and Trauma.

All final projects due 11/20 no exceptions

Readings: Canvas Link # 12

NO Lab Thanksgiving holiday

Week Thirteen:

11/28 Final Screening: half the class

Readings: Link # 13

11/30 Lab: Final Screening half the class

Week Fourteen:

12/05 Guest speaker TBD

12/07 Guest Speaker TBD

**Assignment One: Character profile shot on video due on Screening
Sept 19**

**Assignment Two: Documenting an action event shot on video Class
October 10**

**Final Project is due November 20th but all shooting must be nearly
done by November 7th**

Screening of your rough cut on November 16th

**Critique of your final project begins November 28th and continues to
November 30th**

APPENDIX B

Required University Notices and Policies

University of Texas Honor Code

The core values of The University of Texas at Austin are learning, discovery, freedom, leadership, individual opportunity, and responsibility. Each member of the university is expected to uphold these values through integrity, honesty, trust, fairness, and respect toward peers and community.
<http://registrar.utexas.edu/catalogs/gi09-10/ch01/index.html>

Documented Disability Statement

The University of Texas at Austin provides upon request appropriate academic accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. For more information, contact Services for Students with Disabilities at 471-6259 (voice) or 232-2937 (video phone),
<http://www.utexas.edu/diversity/ddce/ssd/>

Ethics, Plagiarism and the Consequences of Plagiarizing

All work done in this class must be original work done by the student for this class alone. The goal is creation of images that are respectful, ethical and publishable. Work produced for this class must meet these criteria. Professor DeCesare and Lab Instructors will not view work unless it meets these criteria and is work that both subject and author are willing to have shown publically. Do not hand in work failing to meet these standards.

For information on academic integrity and plagiarism, see

http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs/acint_student.php.

<http://www.lib.utexas.edu/services/instruction/learningmodules/plagiarism/>

Resources for Learning & Life at UT Austin

The University of Texas has numerous resources for students to provide assistance and support for your learning.

The UT Learning Center: <http://www.utexas.edu/ugs/slc>

Undergraduate Writing Center: <http://www.utexas.edu/ugs/slc/study/writing>

Counseling & Mental Health Center: <http://cmhc.utexas.edu/>

Career Exploration Center: <http://www.utexas.edu/ugs/csacc>

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

Use of Canvas in Class

This course will use Canvas—a Web-based course management system with password-protected access to distribute course materials, to communicate and collaborate online, to post grades, to submit assignments, and to give you online quizzes and surveys. You can find support in using Canvas at the ITS Help Desk at 475-9400, or using the Canvas helpline 24/7.

Use of E-Mail for Official Correspondence to Students

Email is recognized as an official mode of university correspondence; therefore, you are responsible for reading your email for university and course-related information and announcements. You are responsible to keep the university informed about changes to your e-mail address. You should check your e-mail regularly and frequently to stay current with university-related communications, some of which may be time-critical. You can find UT Austin's policies and instructions for updating your e-mail address at <http://www.utexas.edu/cio/policies/>

Religious Holy Days

By UT Austin policy, you must notify the instructor of your pending absence at least fourteen days prior to the date of observance of a religious holy day. If you must miss a class, an examination, a work assignment, or a project in order to observe a religious holy day, the instructor will give you an opportunity to complete the missed work within a reasonable time after the absence.

Behavior Concerns Advice Line (BCAL)

If you are worried about someone who is acting differently, you may use the Behavior Concerns Advice Line to discuss by phone your concerns about another individual's behavior. This service is provided through a partnership among the Office of the Dean of Students, the Counseling and Mental Health Center (CMHC), the Employee Assistance Program (EAP), and The University of Texas Police Department (UTPD). Call 512-232-5050 or visit <http://www.utexas.edu/safety/bcal/>

Emergency Evacuation Policy

<http://www.utexas.edu/safety/>

Occupants of buildings on the UT Austin campus are required to evacuate

and assemble outside when a fire alarm is activated or an announcement is made. Please be aware of the following policies regarding evacuation:

- Familiarize yourself with all exit doors of the classroom and the building. Remember that the nearest exit door may not be the one you used when you entered the building.
- If you require assistance to evacuate, inform me in writing during the first week of class.
- In the event of an evacuation, follow my instructions or those of class instructors. Do not re-enter a building unless you're given instructions by the Austin Fire Department, the UT Austin Police Department, or the Fire Prevention Services office

Q drop Policy

<http://www.utexas.edu/ce/uex/classroom/policy/dropping-courses/>

The State of Texas has enacted a law that limits the number of course drops for academic reasons to six (6). As stated in Senate Bill 1231:

“Beginning with the fall 2007 academic term, an institution of higher education may not permit an undergraduate student a total of more than six dropped courses, including any course a transfer student has dropped at another institution of higher education, unless the student shows good cause for dropping more than that number.”