



**UGS 302: Landscape and Power:  
Re-Reading the Landscape of Texas and New South Wales**

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**Room:** PAR 203, Monday, 5pm-8pm  
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## Course Information

### Course Description

This course asks students to think critically and differently about the landscapes around them. Often, we think about landscapes as either aesthetic (things to be appreciated or reviled) or as stages upon which social interactions happen. But what if we understood landscapes differently—as things that, in and of themselves, shape and are shaped by the social interactions that unfold within and around them. This course invites students to engage with landscapes using qualitative observations. It is a field-based course that will ask students to enter into and engage with and think through the relationships of power that emerge in and can often be read upon the landscapes around them. In doing so, it will focus on different ways to see, to listen to, to read history and ecology in, to think about inequality through, and to write about landscape. In doing so, it introduces students to both different ways to think about research and new ways to think through the social and ecological worlds in which we live.

This course is a "Global Virtual Exchange" (GVE) course to be taught in conjuncture with a similar course at the University of Newcastle in New South Wales, Australia. Texas and New South Wales share similar climates, similar colonial histories, similar industries, and, thus, similar landscapes. Students in each university will conduct independent and group field research in and on landscapes in their home cities and regions. They will share this work with peers in the opposite institution. Through this, students will engage in a broader dialogue about the differences and similarities between these two remote but historically similar places.

### Course Goals

On successful completion of the course students will be able to:

- Practice the ethnographic study of landscape using field visits, images, and written texts;
- Outline the ways that diverse landscapes work together to produce the regions where we live and study;
- Design independent research inquiry into landscapes;
- Collaborate with diverse (and remote) groups in developing a comparative research agenda for the study of landscapes in distinct regions;
- Identify the politics of place-making in two geographically distant regions with shared pasts of indigenous dispossession, resource extraction, and post-industrial reconfiguration.
- Improve ability to write and communicate in both academic and non-academic environments
- Use and access some of the key resources and gems of the University of Texas system for future research.

### Course Format

Our aim in this course is to get you to begin thinking about and engaging with landscapes in different and creative ways. This course is, at heart, about doing two things: learning to write and think about land and landscape and thinking comparatively about landscape in two locations (Austin, Texas, USA and Newcastle, New South Wales, Australia). Throughout the semester, you will engage in direct dialogue with your peers who are taking a similar course taught by Dr. Duncan McDuié- Ra at the University of Newcastle. More information on how this works will be provided in class.

This course will employ a range of different techniques to explore landscape and power. These will include:

- In-class discussion of readings
- Guest lectures and, occasionally, lectures by the teacher
- Visits (virtual and in person) to institutions on the UT campus such as the Blanton Museum of Art and the PCL Library
- Research observations
- Peer-review and writing workshops where you will share your work and receive feedback from your peers

Attendance at all of these is required.

I expect your full, active, and professional participation in class both class and sections. This means

- Attending all class and section meetings
- Showing up on time (persistently showing up late will negatively affect your participation grade)
- Respectfully engaging with the course instructor and your peers
- Being an active participant in both in-class and out of class activities
- Being responsible for all of the assigned reading and materials: this means that if you miss a class, it is your responsibility to do the reading and get class notes from one of your peers
- Adhering to assignment deadlines

### **How the course will work**

This course is predicated on not just exploring landscape but analyzing it, writing about it, and collaborating on understanding it across vast amounts of geographical space. How this will work will be discussed in class. But to give you a basic sense:

- Our evening course time overlaps with the time of this course in Australia
- We have a three-hour slot of time each week. I thoroughly believe that a three-hour long course on Zoom is taxing beyond the point of usefulness.
  - For that reason, the first hour of class will be composed of *asynchronous* work. This may be comprised of an exercise I ask you to complete, extra time allotted for field-observations, a film or video that I ask you to review, or a recorded lecture. You may complete this work from 5pm-6pm on Mondays or earlier in the week.
  - We will meet *synchronously* (all together) from 6pm-8pm (the time which also overlaps with the course time at the University of Newcastle)
- Some weeks we will meet collectively with the course in Newcastle, some weeks we will meet just amongst ourselves. Most of these meetings, until the situation with COVID-19 improves, will be online.
- This is a field-based course. While there are some readings that we will be doing and discussing and a number of other kinds of texts we will review and analyze, much of what you will be doing in this class will be about going out and doing your own observations.
  - We will discuss protocols for doing this safely (e.g., not exposing yourself or others to coronavirus) in class.
- You will be regularly collaborating with your peers in both the US and Australia. This will involve discussions, sharing media (such as video clips, photos, etc. from your field observations) and planning and executing a collaborative final project.

## Course Grading

The following is a breakdown of how I will evaluate your performance in the class. More in-depth descriptions, rubrics, and prompts will be provided with each assignment.

- 30% of total grade: 1 short (500 word) essay and 3 short field-observations
- 20% of total grade: Mid-term (1000 word) essay
- 30% of total grade: final collaborative project
- 20% of total grade: class participation and engagement (including course work, participation in field activities, and collaboration with peers at the University of Newcastle)

Most of the formal writing assignments in class require a draft be submitted for peer review. Not submitting a draft (i.e., not participating in the peer review) will result in a letter grade penalty on writing assignment.

NOTE: All of the writing you do in this class will be collected in a final portfolio. As such, these essays may be revised up to the end of the semester. More information on how to assemble the portfolio and criteria for revision will be provided in class.

I use the following grade cutoffs for class:

Grade	Cutoff	Grade	Cutoff	Grade	Cutoff
		A	94%	A-	90%
B+	87%	B	84%	B-	80%
C+	77%	C	74%	C-	70%
D+	67%	D	64%	D-	60%
				F:	<60

## University Lecture Series Assignment

Students who take a UGS course are asked to be active participants in the University Lecture Series. To that end, I ask that everyone in class attend *at least one* of the following talks. Students are invited to write a brief, 500-word report on the talks for an extra credit bonus of 3% (or the equivalent of 1/3 of a letter grade) of your total course grade.

These events take place over the course of the Spring 2021 semester and showcase distinguished faculty who are leaders in their fields both on and off campus:

- **How Self-Compassion Can Help Us to Thrive in the Midst of Challenge**  
*Kristin Neff, Ph.D., educational psychology* March 2, 8-9 p.m.
- **Personal Responsibility vs. Public Health During COVID-19**  
*Harold W. (Bill) Kohl III, Ph.D., kinesiology and health education* April 21, 8-9 p.m.

More detailed information about the lectures are available at <https://ugs.utexas.edu/uls>

## Course readings and syllabus

I believe that a course and its instructor should be adaptable. That is particularly true in a course with an experimental design such as this one and in times such as these. This means that readings and course activities may change to suite course developments, forward fruitful discussions, or to address student interests. For this reason, the readings in this syllabus should be regarded as provisional. For any given week, the readings will be available on Canvas.

While readings may, from time-to-time change, the course policies and procedures listed in this syllabus will not. It is your responsibility to know them.

### **Technology**

Because this course is a Global Virtual Exchange course, it has some unique technology needs. First, much of the semester, for reasons of personal safety, we will be meeting via Zoom.

I and Dr. McDuie-Ra will provide course notes that are designed to help you engage with the readings for each week via a website that we will be updating designed specifically for this class:

<https://www.landscapeandpower.com/>

A password to this website will be distributed and shared in class.

We will also use Canvas as a repository for course documents and a place to submit assignments. But because students from the University of Newcastle cannot access our Canvas site, the above website will provide us with a common forum and place for course materials.

You will be working with students at the University of Newcastle on your final projects. You are more than welcome to use Zoom as a platform for working outside of class, or you can use a platform of your choice. But scheduled course meetings will always use Zoom unless they are in-person or otherwise noted.

### **Zoom Etiquette**

Because of the ongoing threat of COVID-19, at least for the first half of the course (and possibly for the bulk of it) course meetings for this class will take place virtually, either synchronously or asynchronously. Similarly, office hours will also take place virtually. This calls for a different set of norms that most of us who are familiar with traditional classroom environments are used to.

- If you are concerned about the technology requirements for this course, you are strongly encouraged to contact me.
- You are strongly encouraged to have your video turned on during course sessions
  - If there are reasons, such as bandwidth, that you are unable to do so, you are strongly encouraged to communicate with me directly
- You must be fully clothed for all course meetings.
- 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.
- During office hours, I will use the Zoom waiting room feature so that students do not intrude on private conversations. As such you are encouraged to schedule meetings in advance using the following links:
  - [Dr. Cons's Office Hours](#)

### **Student Accommodations**

Students with a documented disability may request appropriate academic accommodations from the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement, Services for Students with Disabilities, 512-471-6259 (voice) or 1-866-329-3986 (video phone). <http://ddce.utexas.edu/disability/about/> ([Links to an external](#)

[site.](#))

- Please request a meeting as soon as possible to discuss any accommodations
  - Please notify me as soon as possible if the material being presented in class is not accessible
  - Please notify me if any of the physical space is difficult for you
- I wish to emphasize the above. If you have an accommodations letter, you should schedule a meeting with me to discuss the ways that I can best support you and make required changes to the course/assignments to make the course as accessible as possible. If you do not schedule this meeting, I cannot guarantee that I can meet your accommodation needs. Scheduling a meeting is a requirement that is also specified in letters issued from and required by SSD.

### **Land Acknowledgement**

We would like to acknowledge that we are meeting on Indigenous land. Moreover, 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.

## **Course Outline**

### **What is a Landscape**

#### **January 25, Week 1: Course Introduction**

##### **Asynchronous**

- **Read:** WJT Mitchell. 2002 (1994). "Introduction". *Landscape and Power*.

##### **Synchronous**

- Course Introduction. We will cover the syllabus, policies, and procedures. We will also discuss the question of "What is a landscape" and the brief WJT Mitchell reading.

### **Reading the Landscape**

#### **February 1, Week 2: Reading a Landscape**

##### **Assignment:**

- Select a photograph of a landscape that you think relates (in, more or less, any way) to Edward Burtynsky's work. It can be of any landscape and does not have to be one that you took (i.e., you can use something you find online).
- Be prepared to share it in class (e.g., using screen share in a discussion, so have it handy) and be prepared to discuss why you chose it and what you think it demonstrates about the pictured landscape, the framing of that landscape, and our study of landscape in general.
- NOTE—you don't need to do any formal writing around this. But you may want to have some notes ready.

##### **Read:**

- Jacob Cresswell. 2014. "Defining Place." In *Place: An Introduction*. Wiley Blackwell.

##### **Asynchronous:**

- Class notes on [landscapeandpower.com](http://landscapeandpower.com)

- Watch: J. Baichwal. 2006. *Manufactured Landscapes: The Art of Edward Burtynsky*. Zeitgeist Films. <https://utexas.kanopy.com/video/manufactured-landscapes-1>

**Synchronous:**

- We will discuss Cresswell's reading and what it adds to our understanding of landscape.
- We will discuss the images you selected.
- We will discuss *Manufactured Landscapes* and do an exercise analyzing Burtynsky's work.
- We will discuss the Blanton Museum assignment (for next week)

**February 8, Week 3: Landscape and Vision (a Virtual Field-Visit to the Blanton Museum of Art)**

**Assignment:**

- Select a single piece of work covered in the in the Blanton's online exhibit "Race and Justice in Art"
- Write a 500-word analysis of the painting. Your analysis should make an argument about this painting. To do so it should address:
  - What the painting shows (briefly, do not dwell overly long on unnecessary detail)
  - How it links to the broader theme of the exhibit
  - How the artist uses landscape (what choices have they made about what to represent and how, how do they frame the landscape, etc.)
  - How these choices allow the artist to make meaning with and through the work of art
  - If possible, include a screen shot of the art you chose in your essay
- NOTE— Submit a draft of your piece to the DRAFT assignment on canvas before class. Bring a virtual copy of this essay to class. We will be peer reviewing and workshopping these essays in class.
- You will revise this essay based on peer feedback and submit a final version (with a brief note on how you revised based on peer reviewer feedback) on Canvas by Thursday, February 11<sup>th</sup> at 11:59pm.

**Listen:**

- Outside/In Podcast. 2019. "Chasing the Light." <http://outsideinradio.org/shows/yearofwonders-7dn>

**Asynchronous:**

- Class notes on [landscapeandpower.com](http://landscapeandpower.com)
- Briefly explore the Blanton Museum's virtual gallery tours: <https://blantonmuseum.org/welcome-to-the-blanton-museum-of-art/360virtualtours/>
- Explore the Blanton Museum's Special online exhibit: Race and Justice in Art: <https://blantonmuseum.org/chapter/introduction-14/>
  - Listen to one of the discussions in "Chapter 2: Facing Racism: Art and Action": <https://blantonmuseum.org/chapter/facing-racism-art-and-action/>
  - Spend some time exploring the exhibits contained in this online exhibition (chapter 3 and chapters 5-11). Take note of how the artist uses and represents landscape.

**Synchronous**

- We will discuss your virtual visit to the Blanton and your findings and thoughts on the Special Exhibit on Race and Justice.
- We will break into smaller groups to conduct a peer review of your Blanton Assignment.

## Writing the Landscape

### February 15, Week 4: Landscape from Below the Knee

#### Read:

- Duncan McDuie-Ra. 2021. "The Ludic Lives of Memoryscapes: Skateboarding Post-Soviet Peripheries." *Memory Studies*.

#### Asynchronous:

- Class Notes on [landscapeandpower.com](http://landscapeandpower.com)
- Watch the following skate videos. As you are watching, take note of how skaters use and/or subvert notions of space, "appropriate" use, and landscape.
  - Camarillo, Kyle, Alan Hannon and Tommy Zhao. 2015. *12 Days in China*. Plan B Skateboards. <https://www.thrasher magazine.com/articles/videos/chris-joslins-12-days-in-china-part/>
  - Lanceplaine, Charles. 2012. *Ordos*. Independent. <https://vimeo.com/51333291>
  - Lindevall, Vante. 2017. *Abkhazia*. Danish Bear Productions. <https://vimeo.com/213044664> [password provided in class]
  - Kononov, Dmitr. 2020. Lenin Plaza. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jgrUsqF6YrE>
  - Wallner, Patrik. 2020. *Hotel Uzbekistan*. Red Bull Skateboarding. <https://vimeo.com/387740579>

#### Synchronous

- Guest lecture and conversation with Dr. Duncan McDuie-Ra

### February 22, Week 5: Landscape of the Bengal Delta

#### Read:

- Dilip Da Chuna. 2019. "Introduction: River Literacy." In *The Invention of Rivers: Alexander's Eye and Ganga's Descent*. Penn Press.
- Kuntala Lahiri-Dutt. 2014. "Commodified Land, Dangerous Water: Colonial Perceptions of Riverine Bengal." *Rachel Carson Center Perspectives—Asian Environments: Connections Across Borders, Landscapes, and Times*. (2014/3).

#### Asynchronous:

- Class notes on [landscapeandpower.com](http://landscapeandpower.com)

#### Synchronous

- I will give a lecture on and we will have a conversation about my own work on landscape and climate change in the Bengal delta
- Towards the end of the session, we will have a brief synchronous meeting with University of Newcastle students
- We will discuss the fixed observation assignment (for next week)

### March 1, Week 6: Observing the Living Landscape (fixed)

#### Assignment

- Identify a location to conduct a 30-minute (minimum) field observation. Identify a fixed location from which to conduct that observation



- Collect fieldnotes as you do your observation, and write these up as a 500-word description of the landscape
- Take a photo or video of the site (for sharing with others as you discuss your work.
- At the end, include an additional paragraph (not included in the word count) that outlines the choices you made about what to include and what not to include in your piece. How did you make those choices and why?
- You will take notes on your conversation about this piece (in class) and include the assignment along with those notes in your writing portfolio

#### **Read**

- Emerson, et al. 1995. "In the Field: Participating, Observing, and Jotting Notes." In *Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes*. University of Chicago Press.

#### **Asynchronous:**

- Class Notes on [landscapeandpower.com](http://landscapeandpower.com)

#### **Synchronous:**

- NOTE—This will be a synchronous class with University of Newcastle
- We will discuss your experience with landscape ethnography
- You will exchange and discuss your fixed landscape observation (be prepared to share your writing and any media you capture during your observation)
- We will discuss the landscape in motion assignment (for next week)

### **March 8, Week 7: Observing the Living Landscape in Motion**

#### **Assignment**

- Identify a location to conduct a 30-minute (minimum) field observation.
- Conduct an observation similar to the one you conducted last week, but this time, base your observation on your own and others' movement through space. Take fieldnotes as you work.
- As with before, if possible, take a photo or video of the landscape.
- Condense your fieldnotes into a 500-word piece that describes the landscape that you chose and the movement through it (yours and others).
- At the end, include an additional paragraph (not included in the word count) that outlines how you moved through the landscape and what that helped you see that you might not have seen otherwise.
- You will take notes on your conversation about this piece (in class) and include the assignment along with those notes in your writing portfolio

#### **Read:**

- Michel De Certeau. 1984. "Walking in the City" and "Spatial Stories." In *The Practice of Everyday Life*. University of California Press.

#### **Asynchronous:**

- Class Notes on [landscapeandpower.com](http://landscapeandpower.com)

#### **Synchronous:**

- NOTE—This will be a synchronous class with University of Newcastle
- We will discuss your experience conducting this observation

- You will exchange and discuss your landscape in motion observation (be prepared to share your writing and any media you capture during your observation)

### March 15, Spring Break: No Class

### March 22, Week 8: Listening to the Living Landscape

#### Assignment

- Identify a point-to-point walk that will take no less than 10 minutes.
- Walk there and back. As you walk, listen. Take fieldnotes of the kinds of sounds you hear on your walk and the way those sounds shape the experience of place.
- You may wish to record some of these sounds (if you are able) to share with your peers
- Condense and write up your notes into a 500-word observation
- You will take notes on your conversation about this piece (in class) and include the assignment along with those notes in your writing portfolio

#### Read

- R. Murray Schafer. 2017. "The Music of the Environment." In *Audio Culture: Readings in Modern Music*. Bloomsbury.
- Steven Feld. 1994. "From Ethnomusicology to Echo-Muse-Ecology: Reading R. Murray Schafer in the Papua New Guinea Rainforest." *The Soundscape Newsletter*. 8.
- Andrew Eisenberg. 2015. "Space." In *Keywords in Sound*. Duke.

#### Asynchronous

- Class Notes on [landscapeandpower.com](http://landscapeandpower.com)

#### Synchronous

- NOTE—This will be a synchronous class with University of Newcastle
- We will discuss soundscapes and the way that they shape experiences of place
- You will exchange and peer-review/discussion of your soundwalk observation (be prepared to share your writing and any media you capture during your observation)
- We will discuss your first long essay

## Landscapes of Power

### March 29, Week 9: Pandemic Landscapes

#### Assignment:

- Choose a landscape that you think has been fundamentally altered by the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Conduct an observation of that landscape and write field notes while or immediately after you do.
  - The observation should last at minimum one hour (but you can observe as long as you wish beyond this. You can also visit the place that you are observing more than once.)
  - You may be moving or stationary as you do so
  - You may draw on all of your senses in your fieldnotes and writing
  - You should take at least 2 photos of your observed landscape while you are working. These photos can be of any nature you choose.
- Write a 1000-word piece that analyzes the landscape you are observing. What is happening in it? What kinds of story can you tell about it? What are the key pieces of information you have gathered to tell this story? What do we learn about the landscape from your observation?

- Make sure that in your essay you (briefly) outline how you conducted the observation
- Include 2 photos that you took while conducting your observation
  - Write descriptive captions for each
- You will share these images with the Newcastle team and discuss the landscape you are observing in class.
- Your paper should be submitted on Canvas by Thursday, April 1<sup>st</sup> at 11:59pm.

**Readings:**

- Barbra Rodriguez. 2020. "Navigating the COVID-19 Waters: Global Pandemic brings Systemic Inequities to the Forefront." *Access: Magazine of the University of Texas at Austin Division of Diversity and Community Engagement*
- Nayanika Mathur. 2020. "Telling the Story of the Pandemic." *Somatosphere*. <http://somatosphere.net/forumpost/covid19-storytelling-pandemic/>
- Alan Taylor. 2020. "The Visual Landscape of a World Shaped by Pandemic." *The Atlantic*. March 26. <https://www.theatlantic.com/photo/2020/03/visual-landscape-world-shaped-pandemic/608824/>

**Asynchronous:**

- Class Notes on landscapeandpower.com
- Research observation

**Synchronous:**

- We will have a brief (no more than 1 hour) meeting where you will share images or other media you collect for this assignment with students at Newcastle.

**April 5, Week 10: Segregated Landscape: Race and Inequality in Austin**

**Final Assignment:**

- For your final project you will work in groups of 4 (2 from Austin and 2 from Newcastle)
- You will all work in a similar landscape
  - You must collectively choose what that landscape is and how you wish to frame it
  - How you define your landscape is up to you
- You will collectively produce a collection of writings on this landscape. These writings will include:
  - A collectively authored 500-word introduction that outlines the landscape, how you collectively define it, and shows what kind of narrative you are collectively producing about it.
  - Individually, each member will also include a 1000 word essay on some aspect of this landscape
  - Each team will also compile 6 captioned pieces of media from your landscape ethnography (photos, video, sound, etc.)
- Your essays and your introductions must draw on course material and ideas we have covered over the course of the semester
- Dr. McDuire-Ra and Dr. Cons will collect these final projects on landscapeandpower.com. When students at Newcastle complete their reciprocal assignments, these will also be posted.
- More details about how to do this final assignment will be provided in class.
- Drafts of collectively authored introductions will be due by class on Monday, May 3
- Finals of collectively authored introductions will be due Thursday, May 6 at 11:59pm
- Drafts of individual essays will be due for peer review by Wednesday, May 5th at 11:59pm (the other member of your UT team will peer review your contribution)

- Finals will be included in the portfolio due on May 10 at 11:59pm.

**Read:**

- **Skim:** Elliot Tredder. 2012. "Austin Restricted: Progressivism, Zoning, Private Racial Covenants, and the Making of a Segregated City." Institute for Urban Policy Research.

**Asynchronous:**

- Class Notes on [landscapeandpower.com](http://landscapeandpower.com)
- Explore the UT Austin Racial Geography Tour: <https://racialgeographytour.org/>
- Explore the East Avenue site: [www.segregatedaustin.org](http://www.segregatedaustin.org)
- Watch: "Pursuing Racial Justice Amid Gentrification in Austin wit Dr. Eric Tang." Center for the Study of Race and Democracy. <https://csrd.lbj.utexas.edu/>

**Synchronous:**

- We will discuss the impact of historical segregation on Austin's contemporary landscape
- We will have a brainstorming session on final project

**April 12, Week 11: Landscapes: Sexed and Gendered**

**Read:**

- Sarah Luna. 2018. "Affective atmospheres of Terror on the Mexico-US Border: Rumors of Violence in Reynosa's Prostitution Zone." *Cultural Anthropology*. 33 (1)

**Asynchronous:**

- Class notes on [landscapeandpower.com](http://landscapeandpower.com)

**Synchronous**

- PCL Library Session (virtual) with Annah Hackett, Teaching and Learning Services, UT Austin
- We will discuss Sarah Luna's article and the gendered politics of landscape and space.

**April 19, Week 12: Imperial Landscapes and Decolonial Resistance**

**Read:**

- Iokepa Casumbal-Salazar. 2017. "A Fictive Kinship: Making 'Modernity,' 'Ancient Hawaiians,' and the Telescopes on Muana Kea." *Native American and Indigenous Studies*. Vol. 4, No. 2.

**Asynchronous:**

- Class notes on [landscapeandpower.com](http://landscapeandpower.com)

**Synchronous:**

- Guest lecture and discussion with Dr. Iokepa Casumbal-Salazar.
- Research check-in with team

**Ethnographies of Landscape and Power**

**April 26, Week 13: Final Project Development, Week 1**

**Asynchronous:**

- Class notes on [landscapeandpower.net](http://landscapeandpower.net)

- Research check-in/planning session with team

**Synchronous:**

- No synchronous session. Research hours.

**May 3, Week 14: Final Research Project Development, Week 2**

**Asynchronous:**

- Meet with group to finalize group introductions

**Synchronous**

- Course wrap up
- Final Peer Review session

Final Project and Writing Portfolios Due Monday, May 10 at 11:59PM

## Course Policies and Procedures

### Reading Policy

All of the course readings for this class can be found on Canvas.

In some classes, we will spend significant time discussing particular readings. In others, we will treat them as background. In all cases, if there is something you don't understand in the material, it is your responsibility to make sure that you gain an understanding of it by asking questions and raising issues. You are expected to arrive at class ready to discuss any and all of the required course readings.

### Email and Office Hours Policy

Please, feel free to contact me via email. Please do not contact me through Canvas. Send an email directly to [jasoncons@utexas.edu](mailto:jasoncons@utexas.edu). Please also keep in mind that your faculty are as busy as you. Make sure you consult the course syllabus, other handouts, your peers and the course Canvas site before sending an e-mail. Note that e-mail should not be seen as an alternative to meeting with me during office hours. Nor should e-mail be used as a mechanism to receive private tutorials or to explain material that was covered in classes you missed (those are your responsibility to obtain from your peers). I will endeavor to respond within 24 hours, though I do not respond to email on the weekends or after 5pm, so plan ahead. Contacting us the night before an assignment is due is, by definition, too late.

My office hours are your time and are every week from 11:30am-1pm on Tuesdays. As long as we are in a virtual environment, you will have to sign up for these ahead of time here: [Dr. Cons's Office Hours](#).

If you have a regular class conflict during my office hours, I am more than happy to set up an appointment with you at another time. However, I ask that you do not just drop by my office outside of office hours without checking first. I may be there, but I will be working on other things with pressing deadlines.

### Late Policy

This course requires coordination across two continents and multiple time-zones. For that reason, for assignments where we are sharing materials, you need to have something to share, even if it's not up to the standard you would like.

For assignments that you will be turning in on Canvas, I can be more flexible. Given the current situation with COVID-19, I am completely willing to provide extensions provided: a) you have a reason for needing one (i.e., not because you just didn't get around to starting until too late) and b) you contact me before the assignments are due.

### **Writing Flag Information**

This is a writing intensive course which carries a Writing Flag. Writing Flag courses are designed to give students experience with writing in an academic discipline. In this class, you can expect to write regularly during the semester, complete substantial writing projects, and receive feedback from your instructor to help you improve your writing. You will also have the opportunity to revise all of your assignments, and you will be asked to read and discuss your peers' work (and share your own work). You should therefore expect a substantial portion of your grade to come from your written work. Writing Flag classes meet the Core Communications objectives of Critical Thinking, Communication, Teamwork, and Personal Responsibility, established by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board.

There are many different approaches to writing. I have adopted and teach a style of writing designed to facilitate clear communication in Social Science writing. I also believe that this approach to writing is relevant to clear and effective written communication beyond academic work. In order to help you better understand my writing expectations, I have provided the following resources:

- I have extensively detailed my policy on citation and bibliography on my website: <http://www.jasoncons.net/formatting-and-referencing-papers.html>
- I have also provided advice for student writers that is applicable not just in my courses, but in any course you are likely to take as an undergraduate: <http://www.jasoncons.net/advice-on-writing.html>

### **Plagiarism and Academic Integrity**

I strongly believe that learning is a collaborative venture. Indeed, many of the assignments in this course will require collaboration. I encourage you to study with your peers, meet to discuss readings with them, and, on particular assignments, to work together with them. That said, the work that you produce for this course must be your own. There are no exceptions to this rule and no legitimate excuses for violating it.

In event that you fail to acknowledge others' work or that you are caught overtly plagiarizing from online or written sources, you will receive a zero on the assignment and may be subject to disciplinary procedures.

Using someone else's work in your own writing without giving proper credit is considered plagiarism, a serious form of academic dishonesty that can result in severe penalties. Copying someone else's work, buying a paper and submitting it as your own, copying and pasting text (even with changes), or borrowing images from an online source, are some examples of plagiarism. Even if you plagiarize accidentally, you can be held responsible and penalized.

Learning to cite sources appropriately is an important part of becoming a professional. When you are unsure about citation, you are encouraged to ask your instructor (who is already an expert in the discipline) what is appropriate in the context of your assignment. Consultants at The University Writing Center (<http://uwc.utexas.edu>) can also help you determine whether you are citing sources correctly—and they have helpful guides online for using direct quotations (<http://uwc.utexas.edu/handouts/direct-quotations-using-and-framing/>) and paraphrasing (<http://uwc.utexas.edu/handouts/paraphrasing/>).

Reviewing those skills will help you feel confident that you are handling sources professionally in your writing.

You can read the University's definition of plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty in Sec. 11–402 of the Student Conduct Code (<https://catalog.utexas.edu/general-information/appendices/appendix-c/student-discipline-and-conduct/>). For more information, visit the Dean of Students' site (<https://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/conduct/>).

### **Attendance Policy**

Attendance at all course meetings is required. You are permitted one unexplained course absences per semester. After that, each absence will reduce your overall participation grade by 3.33% (i.e., by 1/3 of a letter grade). If you have a legitimate reason to miss class, it is your responsibility to let me know by email before class.

### **Student Success, Rights, & Responsibilities**

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. We will 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. Many are listed on this syllabus, but I am happy to connect you with a person or Center if you would like.

As a student in this course (and at UT in general) you have a set of rights:

- 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 always 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 Preference**

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. I will gladly

honor your request to address you by a name different than what appears on the roster, and by the gender pronouns you use. Please advise me of this preference early in the semester so that I may make appropriate changes to my records.

## University Policies

### Religious Holy Days

By UT Austin policy, you must notify me 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, I will give you an opportunity to complete the missed work within a reasonable time after the absence.

### 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>

### 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.”

This means that work you produce on assignments, tests and exams is all your own work, unless it is assigned as group work. I will make it clear for each test, exam or assignment whether collaboration is encouraged or not. Always cite your sources. If you use words or ideas that are not your own (or that you have used in previous class), you must make that clear 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 Policy which can be found at the following web address: [http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs/acint\\_student.php](http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs/acint_student.php)

## University Resources for Students

The university has numerous resources for students to provide assistance and support for your learning, use these to help you succeed in your classes

### 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).

### The University Writing Center

The University Writing Center offers free, individualized, expert help with writing for any UT student, by appointment or on a drop-in basis. Consultants help students develop strategies to improve their writing.



The assistance we provide is intended to foster students' resourcefulness and self-reliance.

<http://uwc.utexas.edu/>

### **Counseling and Mental Health Center**

The Counseling and Mental Health Center (CMHC) provides counseling, psychiatric, consultation, and prevention services that facilitate students' academic and life goals and enhance their personal growth and well-being. <http://cmhc.utexas.edu/>

### **Student Emergency Services**

<http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/emergency/>

### **ITS**

Need help with technology? <http://www.utexas.edu/its/>

### **Libraries**

Need help searching for information? <http://www.lib.utexas.edu/>

### **Canvas**

Canvas help is available 24/7 at <https://utexas.instructure.com/courses/633028/pages/studenttutorials>

## **Important Safety Information**

### **BCAL**

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.

### **Evacuation Information**

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 an alarm or alert is activated. Alarm activation or announcement requires exiting and assembling outside, unless told otherwise by an official representative.

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 reenter 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](http://www.utexas.edu/emergency)

