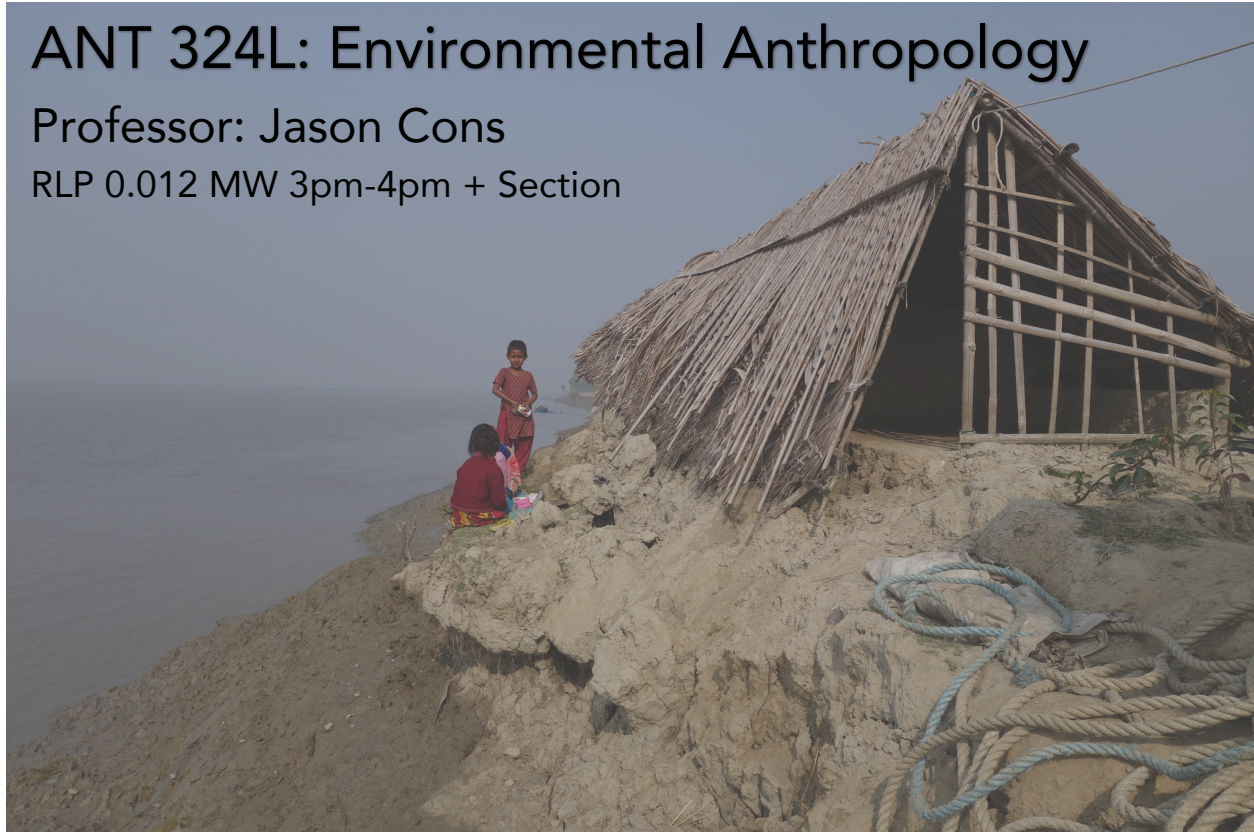


ANT 324L: Environmental Anthropology

Professor: Jason Cons

RLP 0.012 MW 3pm-4pm + Section



Jason Cons: SAC 5.138; jasoncons@utexas.edu; 512.232.3832

Office Hours: Tuesday, 2:00-4:00 pm or by appointment

What is the relationship between culture and ecology? How can environments produce inequalities? Is there such a thing as wilderness? Where is the boundary between the human and the non-human? How is "nature" understood in different communities? And how do people around the world live with toxicity, climate change, and other forms environmental degradation? Environmental Anthropology explores the answers to these questions and more.

The course is designed around a set of key questions and challenges in the anthropological study of the environment. Its purpose is not to provide a survey of the history of the field, but rather to introduce students to a set of questions and analytic tools and invite them to quickly move towards applying them to real-world cases.

Course Teaching Assistant:

- Kenza Yousfi: kenzayousfi@utexas.edu

Learning Objectives/ Goals

Upon completion, students will be able to:

- . Identify key contributions, ideas, and concepts in environmental anthropology
- . Use analytic tools in environmental anthropology to pursue independent inquiry into problems in environment and society
- . Investigate environmental issues using ethnographic methods
- . Understand and explain different cultural perspectives on nature, ecology, and the environment
- . Engage with both local and global environmental politics in informed and inquisitive ways
- . Write, speak, communicate, and think more critically and clearly about the world around you

Assignments and Grades

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.

- Class and Section Participation: 15%—Active, informed, and respectful participation in section discussions and small group work.
- Section assignments: 20%—For each section there will be a brief, writing assignment.
 - The first 5 of these will be graded on a check +, check , check – basis, roughly corresponding to an A, B, C scale. NOTE—These writing assignments are due by midnight on Thursday (the day before section meetings).
 - The final two section assignments will be final project check ins and will not count towards your section assignment grades, but will count towards your final grade.
- Mid-Term Exam: 30%—There will be a mid-term exam covering core concepts in the course.
- Final Project: 35%—There will be a final group project consisting of a podcast and a written report based on research you conduct in your sections.

I use the following cutoffs for grade assignments:

Grade	Cutoff
A	94%
A-	90%
B+	87%
B	84%
B-	80%
C+	77%
C	74%
C-	70%
D	65%
F	<65%

Course Format

This course combines lectures, small group work, and discussion sections. We will cover a range of different materials in a number of different ways. 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 , TAs, and your peers
- . 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

In any given week, the course will likely take the following structure:

- **Monday:** There will be a lecture that addresses a concept, problem, theory, etc. in environmental anthropology.
- **Wednesday:** We will discuss a specific case. This may involve additional lectures, breakout groups, class discussions, etc.
- **Section:** You will either continue discussion on this concept by bringing particular cases to class or will work on the final project (see below).

Attendance at all of these is required.

Technology

Laptops and tablets are allowed for the purposes of viewing course materials and for taking notes during discussion sections. Lecture slides are typically available on canvas at the end of class. I strongly prefer that you write your notes by hand. Research shows that writing notes by hand improves your understanding of the material and helps you remember it better, since writing it down involves deeper cognitive-processing of the material than typing it.

I recognize that not all students can or wish to use handwritten notes. To this end, if you do use laptops, I ask that you commit to turning off your wi-fi during class time to resist the temptation of email, social media, etc..

Cellphones should be silenced and should not be used during class.

Part 1: An Introduction to Environmental Anthropology

Week 1: What is Environmental Anthropology?

August 28: Course Introduction

August 30: Section meeting

- No section meeting in this first week

Week 2: What is an ecosystem?

September 2: No class, Labor Day

September 4: Rituals and Pigs, Ecology and Homeostasis

- Roy Rapaport. 2008 (1967). "Ritual Regulation of Environmental Relations among a New Guinea People." In *Environmental Anthropology: A Historical Reader*. Blackwell.

September 6: Section meeting

- No additional reading for section this week

Writing Assignment #1 (aprox. 500 words): Describe an ecosystem that you are familiar with.

Drawing on the in-class lecture, what kinds of language might you use to describe this system (open, closed, homeostatic, etc.). Be prepared, in section discussion, to discuss why you have chosen the language that you did.

Week 3: Can ecology also be political?

September 9: Against an apolitical ecology

- Paul Robbins. 2012. "Political versus Apolitical Ecologies." In *Political Ecology*. Blackwell.

September 11: Political Ecologies of Famine

- Mike Davis. 2004. "The Political Ecology of Famine: The Origins of the Third World." In *Liberation Ecologies*. Routledge.

September 13: Section Meeting—Politics and Political Ecology

- Arlie Hochschild. 2016. "One Good Thing." In *Strangers in Their Own Land: Anger and Mourning on the American Right*. The New Press.

Writing Assignment #2 (aprox. 500 words): Identify an environmental issue in the city of Austin. Contrast what looking at that issue from the standpoint of an *apolitical* versus a *political* ecology might show. Be prepared to discuss the contrast in class (in other words, be prepared to explain what a *political ecological* perspective brings to discussions of environmental issues).

Week 4: What's the relationship between "Nature" and "Culture"?

September 16: Against Wilderness?

- William Cronon. 1995. "The Trouble with Wilderness; or, Getting Back to the Wrong Nature." In *Uncommon Ground: Rethinking the Human Place in Nature*. WW Norton.

September 18: Tigers and Conservation in the Sundarbans

- Annu Jalais. 2008. "Unmasking the Cosmopolitan Tiger." *Nature and Culture*. 3(1).

September 20: Section Meeting—The Race of Conservation

- Roderick Neumann. 1995. "Ways of Seeing Africa: Colonial Recasting of African Society and Landscape in Serengeti National Park." *Ecumene*. 2 (2).

Writing Assignment #3: What kinds of politics of conservation take place in your home state? Write a brief (500 word) writing response. Come prepared to discuss specific cases.

Part 2: Learning (from) Landscapes

Week 5: Do we make landscapes or do landscapes make us?

September 23: Learning from Landscapes

- WJT Mitchell. 2002. "Introduction." *Landscape and Power*. University of Chicago Press.
- Keith Basso. 1996. "Wisdom Sits in Places: Notes on a Western Apache Landscape." In *Sense of Place*. SAR Press.

September 25: Entangled Landscapes

- Laura Ogden. 2011. "Landscape Ethnography and the Politics of Nature." In *Swamplife*. University of Minnesota Press.
- Kuntala Lahiri-Dutt. 2014. "Commodified Land, Dangerous Water: Colonial Perceptions of Riverine Bengal." In *Asian Environments: Connections across Borders, Landscapes, and Times*. Rachel Carson Center Perspectives.

September 27: Section Meeting—Lawns and/as Urban Ecology

- Paul Robbins. 2007. "Explaining Lawn People." In *Lawn People: How Grasses, Weeds, and Chemicals Make Us Who We Are*. Temple University Press.

Writing Assignment #4: What are the politics of lawns in Austin's urban ecology? Conduct some basic investigations (internet research is fine, though more hands-on work is welcome). Write a brief (500 word) writing response and come prepared to discuss this topic in section.

Week 6: What's so "natural" about natural resources?

Course Lead: Kenza Yousfi

September 30: Making a Resource

- Nick Cullather. 2004. "Miracles of Modernization: The Green Revolution and the Apotheosis of Technology." *Diplomatic History*. 28(2).

October 2: Natural Resources and Frontiers

- Anna Tsing. 2003. "Natural Resources and Capitalist Frontiers." *Economic and Political Weekly*. 38 (48).

October 3: Section Meeting—Phosphates and Extraction

- Katerina Teaiwa. 2004. "Land from the Sky." In *Consuming Ocean Islands: Stories of People and Phosphate from Banaba*. Indiana University Press.

Part 3: Environmental Inequalities

Week 7: What is toxicity?

October 7: Probing the Toxic

- Michelle Murphy. 2017. "Afterlife and Decolonial Chemical Relations." *Cultural Anthropology*. 32(4).
- Nabil Ahmed. 2014. "The Toxic House." In *Forensis: The Architecture of Public Truth*. Sternberg Press.

October 9: The Toxic and the Body

- Nicholas Shapiro. 2015. "Attuning to the Chemosphere: Domestic Formaldehyde, Bodily Reasoning, and the Chemical Sublime." *Cultural Anthropology*. 30(3).

October 11: Section Meeting—The Toxic Neighborhood

- Podcast: Annabeth Cummins, Amanda Micek, and Hayley Wood. "Govale Park: A History of Environmental Racism and Hazards."
- Javier Auyero and Debora Swistun. 2009. "Toxic Wor(l)ds." In *Flammable: Environmental Suffering in an Argentine Shanty Town*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Final Project Protocols Distributed. Final project groups organized.

Week 8: What is a hazard?

October 14: So-called "natural" disasters

- Michael Watts. 1983. "The Political Economy of Climatic Hazards: A Village Perspective on Drought and Peasant Economy in a Semi-Arid Region of West Africa." *Cahiers d'Etudes Africaines*. 23.

October 16: Climate Vulnerability in Bangladesh

- Kasia Paprocki. 2015. "Anti-Politics of Climate Change." *Himal South Asian*. 28(3).

****Mid-term exam distributed. Due Tuesday, October 22nd at 11:59pm on Canvas****

October 18: Section Meeting—Mid-term working session

Week 9: What is the velocity of environmental catastrophe?

October 21: The Violence of Nile Perch

- In Class Film: *Darwin's Nightmare*

October 23: Slow Violence

- Rob Nixon. 2011. "Introduction." In *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor*. Harvard.
- In Class Film: *Darwin's Nightmare* Concluded

October 25: Section Meeting—Slow Violence and Fish

Writing Assignment #5 (aprox. 500 words): Is *Darwin's Nightmare* an example of slow violence? How? Explore the complex components of the ecological crisis traced by the film.

Week 10: What (and where) is food?

October 28: Cultures of Cultures

- Heather Paxton. 2008. "Post-Pasteurian Cultures: The Microbiopolitics of Raw-Milk Cheese in the United States." *Cultural Anthropology*. 23(1).

October 30: The Cattle Industry

- Timothy Pachirat. "Hidden in Plain Sight" and "The Kill Floor." In *Every Twelve Seconds: Industrialized Slaughter and the Politics of Sight*. Yale University Press.

November 1: Section Meeting:

Final Assignment Prep #1 (aprox. 500 words): You and your group should submit and be ready to discuss an abstract for your final project that outlines what you will be conducting research on, why it is interesting, what its relevance to the class is, and how you plan to go about doing the work.

Part 3: Elements in/of a Damaged World

Week 11: What is land (Inscription)?

November 4: Inscribing Land

- Tania Murray Li. 2014. "What is Land? Assembling a Resource for Global Investment." *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*. 39 (4).

November 6: Land, Religion, and Identity in the Oregon Desert

- In-Class Film: *Wild Wild Country*, Episode 2.

November 8: Section Meeting—Land and Rajneeshpuram

- Come prepared to discuss the relationship between Li and the episode of *Wild Wild Country* shown in class.

Final Assignment Prep #2: Turn in a detailed research plan and schedule that includes information on: What you will do, how you will do it, when you will do it, and who will do it.

Week 12: What is water (Infrastructure)?

November 11: Water and/as Political Infrastructure

- Stephen Lansing. 1991. "Balinese 'Water Temples' and the Management of Irrigation." *American Ethnologist*. 89(2).

November 13: Water and/as Social Infrastructure

- Nikhil Anand. 2011. "Pressure: The PoliTechnics of Water Supply in Mumbai." *Cultural Anthropology*. 26 (4).

November 15: Section Meeting: Research session

Week 13: What is fire (Risk)?

November 18: Science of Wildfires

- Adriana Petryna. 2018. "Wildfires at the Edge of Science: Horizioning Work and Runaway Change." *Cultural Anthropology*. 33(4).

November 20: Cultures of Fire Management

- McKenzie Funk. 2014. "Too Big to Burn: Public Fires, Private Firefighters." In *Windfall: The Booming Business of Global Warming*. Penguin.
- 99% Invisible. "Built to Burn." Episode 317. <https://99percentinvisible.org/episode/built-to-burn/>.

November 22: Section Meeting: Research session

Week 14: Thanksgiving and Preparing for the Final

November 25: Research Session

- Meet with your group to conduct research for your final project

November 27: No Class, Thanksgiving

Week 15: What is climate (atmosphere)?

December 2: Rethinking Crisis

- Joe Masco. 2009. "Bad Weather: On Planetary Crisis." *Social Studies of Science*. 40(1).

December 4: Is the climate cultural?

- Mike Hulme. 2015. "Climate and Its Changes: A Cultural Appraisal." *Geo*. 2.

December 6: Section Meeting—Preparing the Final

- Working session: developing your final reports and podcasts

Course Conclusion

Week 16: So what (or, what does an ethnographic perspective on the environment allow us to see differently)?

December 9: Course Conclusion

- Kim Fortun. 2012. "Ethnography in Late Industrialism." *Cultural Anthropology*. 27 (3).

FINAL PROJECTS DUE DECEMBER 13 at 11:59am

Course Policies and Procedures

Course readings and syllabus

I believe that a course and its instructor should be adaptable. 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.

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.

On Wednesdays, we will typically discuss a case in depth. For each case, a dossier of supplementary materials will be provided on Canvas in addition to the assigned, required reading. These materials are optional unless your TA tells you otherwise. They provide additional material to help you better understand the case and its context.

Policy on Plagiarism

I strongly believe that learning is a collaborative venture. 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. See below (following course readings) for links to the University Policy on Academic integrity

Email and Office Hours policy

Please, feel free to contact me and/or your TA via email. I prefer that you contact me directly rather than through Canvas. Please also keep in mind that we 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 or your TA 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). We will endeavor to respond within 24 hours, though we 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 you are welcome to drop by at any time during them. Because, at particular times in the semester, many of you will want to see me, I do recommend setting up an appointment ahead of time. Also, 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 or your TA's office outside of office hours without checking first. We may be there, but we will be working on other things with pressing deadlines.

Late Policy

I adhere to the following late policy on assignments:

- . Section assignments are before class the day of your section meeting. Late assignments are not accepted
- . Assignments turned in up to 12 hours late will be penalized by 1/3 of a letter grade.
- . Assignments turned in between 12 and 24 hours late will be penalized a full letter grade.
- . Assignments turned in between 24 and 48 hours late will be penalized two full letter grades.
- . Assignments more than 48 hours late will not be accepted.

Writing Policy

While this is not a writing flag course, there are assignments that will require that you write and communicate clearly.

- 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>

Global Cultures Flag

This course carries the Global Cultures flag. Global Cultures courses are designed to increase your familiarity with cultural groups outside the United States. You should therefore expect a substantial portion of your grade to come from assignments covering the practices, beliefs, and histories of at least one non-U.S. cultural group, past or present.

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.

Attendance Policy

Attendance at all course and section meetings is required. There will be an attendance sheet available when you come into class.

You are permitted two unexplained course absences and one section absence 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 and your TA know by email before class.

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. 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.

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 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 & RESOURCES

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>

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/>

- 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

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

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/student-tutorials>

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 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