

I379C: Capstone (28280)

UTC 1.104

Spring 2025

Room and schedule: Weekly every Friday 12pm - 1pm at UTC 1.104

Instructors: Dr. Ayse Gursoy & Dr. Dave Yeats

Office Hours: Virtual or in-person by appointment

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Course Description

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The capstone course is a required one-semester course for all undergraduate students completing the BSI/BA in Informatics degree. The goal of this course is for students to apply the knowledge and skills gained throughout their undergraduate years in a supervised project that addresses an informatics-related problem. Topics for the project will leverage the insights that students have gained by completing one of the UT iSchool's Informatics concentrations (i.e., Human-Centered Data Science, User Experience Design, Social Justice Informatics, Health Informatics, Cultural Heritage Informatics, and Social Informatics). During the first three weeks of the semester, students will be guided through the process of identifying a capstone project and supervisor. Students will be assisted throughout the rest of the semester by their Capstone instructor (me) and the project supervisor. Before the end of the semester, students will individually submit a written report and present their project at a poster presentation session. This course carries the Independent Inquiry flag.

PRE-REQUISITES FOR THE COURSE

Upper-division standing and 105 hours of coursework.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

- By the end of the course, students will be able to:
- Identify and conduct a supervised project that addresses an informatics-related problem.
- Apply concepts from UT iSchool Informatics concentrations to address an informatics-related problem.
- Demonstrate organizational, project management, and professional presentation skills.
- Share project updates through writing and oral presentations.
- Provide constructive feedback of others' output.
- Revise their output based on constructive feedback.

How Will You Learn?

STATEMENT OF LEARNING SUCCESS

Your success in this class is important to me. We all learn differently, and everyone struggles sometimes. You are not, ever, the only one having difficulty! If there are aspects of this course that prevent you from learning or exclude you, please let me know as soon as possible. Together we 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 and I am happy to connect you with a person or Center if you would like.

TEACHING MODALITY INFORMATION

Although much of the time will be dedicated for you to work on your project, we will have a one hour in-person class for this course. Class time is 12:00-1:00PM every FRI at UTC 1.104. The composition of individual class meetings will differ somewhat throughout the semester; hence, any changes in the timings and topics are normal. Aside from class meetings, you are expected to meet your supervisor based on an agreed upon schedule.

COMMUNICATION

The course Canvas site can be found at utexas.instructure.com. Please email me through Canvas. You are responsible for ensuring that the primary email address you have recorded with the university is the one you will check for course communications because that is the email address that Canvas uses.

ASKING FOR HELP

For any questions about the course, please refer to the syllabus first. Other than that, you can message me via Canvas. You can also set up an appointment with us via Zoom if you need a consultation.

DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION

It is my intent that students from all diverse backgrounds and perspectives be well served by this course, that students' learning needs be addressed, and that the diversity that students bring to this class can be comfortably expressed and be viewed as a resource, strength, and benefit to all students. Please come to me at any time with any concerns.

DISABILITY AND ACCESS (D&A)

The university is committed to creating an accessible and inclusive learning environment consistent with university policy and federal and state law. Please let me know if you experience any barriers to learning so I can work with you to ensure you have an equal opportunity to participate fully in this course. If you are a student with a disability, or think you may have a disability, and need accommodations, please contact D&A. Please refer to D&A's website for contact and more information: <http://diversity.utexas.edu/disability/>. If you are already registered with D&A, please deliver your Accommodation Letter to me as early as possible in the semester so we can discuss your approved accommodations and needs in this course.

Course Requirements and Grading

CAPSTONE PROJECT

Capstone students are expected to work on their project for a total of 60 hours over 10 weeks (6 hours per week starting Week 4). They will leverage the insights that they have gained by completing one of the UT iSchool's Informatics concentrations (Human-Centered Data Science, User Experience Design, Social Justice Informatics, Health Informatics, Cultural Heritage Informatics, or Social Informatics) as well as other Informatics coursework.

During the second week of class, we will invite potential supervisors who are open to hosting an Informatics-oriented capstone project that align with their interests. This will provide students with options for potential capstone projects. Students are also welcome to select an Informatics-oriented capstone project and host prior to or during the first two weeks of the class, particularly if they already have an internship or other opportunity lined up, but there is no need to reach out to individual faculty members, as faculty who will be potential supervisors for capstone projects will attend the capstone event at the second week of class.

Your capstone can be either a research project or an applied project:

1. **Research project:** Under the guidance of a UT faculty supervisor with an active research program who is interested in providing an opportunity to participate in a research project, you will submit a deliverable reflecting on your experiences in participating in that research project.
2. **Applied project:** In a single semester, you will complete an applied project under the guidance of a supervisor from the organization hosting your project. Although organizations can recruit a group of capstone students to work on a single project, each student will submit a deliverable that reflects their own unique contributions to that project.

The process of planning and getting approval for your capstone takes considerable time, effort, planning, coordination, and securing of signatures. Thus, it is important that you work with your supervisor to complete and submit the capstone project proposal form and letter of agreement (see Appendix 1).

CAPSTONE SUPERVISOR

Each capstone student must find a supervisor to guide them throughout the semester. This supervisor can be a UT faculty (within our outside UT iSchool) for research projects or a representative of an organization for applied projects. You must meet with your supervisor regularly and the schedule of your meeting will be reflected in the letter of agreement.

REQUIRED MATERIALS

There is no required textbook for this course. All pertinent materials will be uploaded in Canvas.

REQUIRED DEVICES

You will need a computer capable of accessing the Internet, opening PDF files, and creating documents and presentation slides.

DROPPING AND Q-DROPS

If you realize you want to drop this course after the twelfth class day (Jan 29), you'll need to execute a Q-drop before April 28. More information about Q-drops: <https://ugs.utexas.edu/vick/academic/adddrop/qdrop>

GRADING POLICY

This class uses the traditional UT Austin undergraduate grading scale:

Grade	Range
A	94-100%
A-	90-93%

B+	87-89%
B	83-86%
B-	80-82%
C+	77-79%
C	73-76%
C-	70-72% (minimum grade for Informatics majors)
D+	67-69%
D	63-66%
D-	60-62%
F	<60%

Note: Final grading does not happen just by computer calculation. I consider many factors, and so your “Canvas points/%” is only a rough indication of the final grade. Please ask when in doubt.

CLASSROOM EXPECTATIONS

Class attendance Ideally, you will be able to attend class every week. However, I understand that there may be unforeseen circumstances that may arise during the semester. **Therefore, you are allowed two missed classes without deductions for your attendance and class participation grade.**

Class participation Active participation in the class is strongly encouraged. Attendance and participation go hand in hand since it is not enough to just be physically present.

Behavior expectations The University of Texas at Austin is committed to the formation and development of an academic community guided fundamentally by the University’s core values: Learning, Discovery, Freedom, Leadership, Individual Opportunity, and Responsibility. These core values are central to the University’s expectations for student conduct, and community members shall uphold these values through Integrity, Honesty, Trust, Fairness, and Respect toward our Longhorn community. As a member of The University of Texas at Austin community, students accept not only the rights and privileges of membership but also the responsibility to uphold a long and steadfast tradition of excellence. In abiding by the core values of the University and adhering to the tenets of academic integrity, students choose to uphold an Honor Code reflective of a scholarly community devoted to academic and personal success.

The conduct of our student body shall be governed by the University Code of Conduct to promote safety, academic success, and citizenship, with the Student Honor Code reinforcing the aspirational standards of the community as a whole. Read more [here](#) about student discipline and conduct.

Course Outline

All essential information will be on the Canvas website at utexas.instructure.com. Check Canvas regularly. Changes to the schedule may be made at my discretion if circumstances require. I will announce any such changes in class and will also communicate them via a Canvas announcement. It is your responsibility to note these changes when announced, and I will do my best to ensure that you are notified of the changes with as much advance notice as possible.

Week	Date	Topic	Assignments	Assignments Due Date
1	1/17	Course orientation and syllabus review		
2	1/24	Capstone event	Proposal form and letter of agreement	1/24
3	1/31	Project update and consultation	Week 3 project updates	1/31
4	2/7	Conducting investigations	Week 4 project updates	2/7
5	2/14	Updates and alignments	Week 5 project updates	2/14
6	2/21	Prepare lightning talk presentations	Week 6 project updates	2/21
7	2/28	Class lightning talk presentations	Week 7 project updates	2/28
8	3/7	Class lightning talk presentations	Submit slides (before class)	3/6
9	3/14	Discuss feedback and revision	Week 9 project updates	3/14
Spring Break				
10	3/21	Poster design workshop	Week 10 project updates	3/21
			Supervisor submits mid-semester evaluation	March TBD
11	3/28	Project updates	Week 11 project updates	3/28
12	4/4	Poster preparation	Week 12 project updates	4/4
13	4/11	Poster preparation		
14	4/18	Update lightning presentation & portfolio	Consent to share capstone project details in UT iSchool website	4/18
			Week 13-14 project updates	
15	4/25	Wrap-up	Upload final poster to canvas	April TBD
			Poster submission for printing	
			Supervisor submits final evaluation	

This class is using the Lectures Online recording system. This system records the audio and video material presented in class for you to review after class. Links for the recordings will appear in the Lectures Online tab on the Canvas page for this class. You will find this tab along the left side navigation in Canvas.

To review a recording, simply click on the Lectures Online navigation tab and follow the instructions presented to you on the page. You can learn more about how to use the Lectures Online system at <http://sites.la.utexas.edu/lecturesonline/students/how-to-access-recordings/>.

You can find additional information about Lectures Online at: <https://sites.la.utexas.edu/lecturesonline/>.

Course Policies and Disclosures

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY EXPECTATIONS

As of September 9, 2024

Students who violate University rules on academic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary penalties, including the possibility of failure in the course and/or dismissal from the University. Since such dishonesty harms the individual, all students, and the integrity of the University, policies on academic dishonesty will be strictly enforced. For further information, please visit the Student Conduct and Academic Integrity website at: <http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/conduct>.

CONFIDENTIALITY OF CLASS RECORDINGS

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

GETTING HELP WITH TECHNOLOGY

Students needing help with technology in this course should contact the UT iSchool Helpdesk:
help@ischool.utexas.edu

CONTENT WARNING

Our classroom provides an open space for the critical and civil exchange of ideas. Some readings and other content in this course will include topics that some students may find offensive and/or traumatizing. I'll aim to forewarn students about potentially disturbing content and I ask all students to help to create an atmosphere of mutual respect and sensitivity.

SHARING OF COURSE MATERIALS IS PROHIBITED

No materials used in this class, including, but not limited to, lecture hand-outs, videos, assessments (quizzes, exams, papers, projects, homework assignments), in-class materials, review sheets, and additional problem sets, may be shared online or with anyone outside of the class without explicit, written permission of the instructor. Unauthorized sharing of materials promotes cheating. The University is well aware of the sites used for sharing materials, and any materials found online that are associated with you, or any suspected unauthorized sharing of materials, will be reported to Student Conduct and Academic Integrity in the Office of the Dean of Students. These reports can result in sanctions, including failure of the course.

RELIGIOUS HOLY DAYS

By UT Austin policy, you must notify me of your pending absence as far in advance as possible of 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, you will be given an opportunity to complete the missed work within a reasonable time after the absence.

LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I would like to acknowledge that we are meeting on the Indigenous lands of Turtle Island, the ancestral name for what now is called North America. Moreover, I would like to acknowledge the Alabama-Coushatta, Caddo, Carrizo/Comecrudo, Coahuiltecan, Comanche, Kickapoo, Lipan Apache, Tonkawa, and Ysleta Del Sur 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.

University Resources for Students

COUNSELING AND MENTAL HEALTH CENTER (CMHC)

All of us benefit from support during times of struggle. Know you are not alone. If you or anyone you know is experiencing symptoms of stress, anxiety, depression, academic concerns, loneliness, difficulty sleeping, or any other concern impacting your wellbeing – you are strongly encouraged to connect with CMHC. The Counseling and Mental Health Center provides a wide variety of mental health services to all UT students including crisis services, counseling services with immediate support, and well-being resources. Additionally, CARE Counselors are located within the academic schools and colleges. These counselors get to know the concerns that are unique to their college's students. For more information on CMHC, visit <https://cmhc.utexas.edu> or call 512-471-3515 or you may also contact Bryce Moffett, LCSW (iSchool CARE counselor) at 512-232-2983.

UNIVERSITY HEALTH SERVICES (UHS)

Your physical health and wellness are a priority. University Health Services is an on-campus high-quality medical facility providing care to all UT students. Services offered by UHS include general medicine, urgent care, a 24/7 nurse advice line, women's health, sports medicine, physical therapy, lab and radiology services, COVID-19 testing and vaccinations, and much more. For additional information, visit <https://healthyhorns.utexas.edu> or call 512-471-4955.

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 <https://ugs.utexas.edu/slc> or call 512-471-3614 (JES A332)."

STUDENT EMERGENCY SERVICES (SES)

Student Emergency Services in the Office of the Dean of Students helps students and their families during difficult or emergency situations. Assistance includes outreach, advocacy, intervention, support, and referrals to relevant campus and community resources. If you need to be absent from class due to a family emergency, medical or mental health concern, or academic difficulty due to crisis or an emergency situation, you can work with Student Emergency Services. SES will document your situation and notify your professors. Additional information is available at <https://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/emergency/> or by calling 512-471-5017.

Important Safety Information

If you have concerns about the safety or behavior of fellow students, TAs or professors, contact BCCAL (the Behavior Concerns and COVID-19 Advice Line) at <https://safety.utexas.edu/behavior-concerns-advice-line> or by calling 512-232-5050. Confidentiality will be maintained as much as possible, however the university may be required to release some information to appropriate parties.

CLASSROOM SAFETY AND COVID-19

To help preserve our in-person learning environment, the university recommends the following.

- For any illness, students should stay home if they are sick or contagious, not only to stop the spread, but also to prioritize their personal well-being.
- UHS provides [symptomatic COVID-19 testing](#) for students. Schedule your appointment by calling 512-471-4955 or online within the [MyUHS patient portal](#). Learn more about [symptomatic COVID-19 testing](#) here.
- Disposable masks are available for students at the William C. Powers, Jr. Student Activity Center and the Texas Union hospitality desks.
- The [exposure action chart](#) offers guidance on what to do if you have been exposed to someone who has COVID-19 or if you test positive. If you experience symptoms, stay home, isolate, and follow instructions for symptomatic in the chart.
- Stay up-to-date on [COVID-19 vaccinations](#) by getting all available boosters when eligible. Vaccines are available through University Health Services.
- Additionally, UHS maintains up-to-date resources on COVID-19, which can be found here: [COVID-19 Information and Resources](#).

CARRYING OF HANDGUNS ON CAMPUS

Texas' Open Carry law expressly prohibits a licensed to carry (LTC) holder from carrying a handgun openly on the campus of an institution of higher education such as UT Austin. Students in this class should be aware of the following university policies:

- Students in this class who hold a license to carry are asked to [review the university policy regarding campus carry](#).
- Individuals who hold a license to carry are eligible to carry a concealed handgun on campus, including in most outdoor areas, buildings and spaces that are accessible to the public, and in classrooms.
- It is the responsibility of concealed-carry license holders to carry their handguns on or about their person at all times while on campus. Open carry is NOT permitted, meaning that a license holder may not carry a partially or wholly visible handgun on campus premises or on any university driveway, street, sidewalk or walkway, parking lot, parking garage, or other parking area.
- Per my right, I prohibit carrying of handguns in my personal office. Note that this information will also be conveyed to all students verbally during the first week of class. This written notice is intended to reinforce the verbal notification, and is not a “legally effective” means of notification in its own right.

TITLE IX DISCLOSURE

Beginning January 1, 2022, Texas Education Code, Section 51.252 (formerly known as Senate Bill 212) requires all employees of Texas universities, including faculty, report any information to the Title IX Office regarding sexual harassment, sexual assault, dating violence, and stalking that is disclosed to them. Texas law requires that all employees who witness or receive any information of this type (including, but not limited to, written forms, applications, one-on-one conversations, class assignments, class discussions, or third-party reports) must report it to the Title IX Coordinator. Before talking with me, or with any faculty or staff member about a Title IX related incident, please remember that I will be required to report this information.

Although graduate teaching and research assistants are not subject to Texas Education Code, Section 51.252, they are mandatory reporters under federal Title IX regulations and are required to report a wide range of behaviors we refer to as sexual misconduct, including the types of misconduct covered under Texas Education Code, Section 51.252. Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 is a federal civil rights law that prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex – including pregnancy and parental status – in educational programs and activities. The Title IX Office has developed supportive ways and compiled campus resources to support all impacted by a Title IX matter.

If you would like to speak with a Case Manager for Support and Resources, who can provide support, resources, or academic accommodations, in the Title IX Office, please email: supportandresources@austin.utexas.edu. A Case Manager can also provide support, resources, and accommodations for pregnant, nursing, and parenting students.

For more information about reporting options and resources, please visit: <https://titleix.utexas.edu>, contact the Title IX Office via email at: titleix@austin.utexas.edu, or call 512-471-0419.

CAMPUS SAFETY

The following are recommendations regarding emergency evacuation from the Office of Campus Safety and Security, 512-471-5767,

- Students should sign up for Campus Emergency Text Alerts at the page linked above.
- Occupants of buildings on The University of Texas at Austin campus must evacuate buildings when a fire alarm is activated. Alarm activation or announcement requires exiting and assembling outside.
- Familiarize yourself with all exit doors of each classroom and building you may occupy. Remember that the nearest exit door may not be the one you used when entering the building.
- Students requiring assistance in evacuation shall inform their instructor in writing during the first week of class.
- In the event of an evacuation, follow the instruction of faculty or class instructors. Do not re-enter a building unless given instructions by the following: Austin Fire Department, The University of Texas at Austin Police Department, or Fire Prevention Services office.
- For more information, please visit [emergency preparedness](#).

Appendix 1. Capstone project proposal form and letter of agreement



CAPSTONE PROJECT PROPOSAL FORM

Student information	
Name:	
Email:	
UT EID:	Graduation Date:
Capstone Course Instructor:	
Brief Proposal Title:	

Capstone Project Information		
Type of Project:	Research Project	Applied project
Supervisor Name:		
Email:	Phone number:	
Name of Organization/Unit/Department:		
Address:		
Website:		

PROPOSAL SECTIONS

The student's capstone project proposal form must include the following sections:

1. **Project Objective:** Clearly state project's objective and describe the Informatics-related work to be performed.
2. **Project Activities and Methods:** List the work activities or tasks you will complete on the way to the final deliverable, including methods as appropriate.
3. **Project Deliverables:** List the expected culminating products of your work.
4. **Preliminary Schedule:** Outline your schedule with tasks and dates of completion.
5. **Work Expectations:** List your work expectations (e.g., on-site attendance, meeting attendance, dress, availability, or social media protocol).
6. **Communication Plan:** List method by which you will communicate with your supervisor
7. **Monitoring & Evaluating Student Progress:** Describe how progress will be monitored (e.g., weekly meetings with your supervisor, routine presentations, or regular emails).
8. **Specific Learning Objectives:** Outline a set of learning objectives that specify what you will gain from the project (as in skills you will hone or knowledge you will gain).
9. **Fit with My Education:** Explain how the project fits into your education (with courses specified).

The contents of your proposal serves as the basis for the letter of agreement.

LETTER OF AGREEMENT TEMPLATE

[Supervisor]

[Organization name]

[Date]

RE: I379C (Capstone) statement of work for [student name]

Dear [Supervisor]:

Thank you for agreeing to act as supervisor on my Informatics-related project, [title of capstone project]. This letter summarizes our discussions thus far and will serve as our agreement regarding the particulars of the project.

1. Project Objective

[describe project in a single paragraph]

2. Project Activities and Methods

I will undertake the following tasks: [list tasks]

3. Project Deliverables

I will produce the following deliverables: [list deliverables]

4. Preliminary Schedule

Although we recognize that unforeseen events may alter my plans, I propose this preliminary schedule. I will contact you immediately if work falls significantly off this schedule.

[provide timeline of dates and deliverables]

5. Work Expectations

[list here any expectations that your supervisor may have of you or you of your supervisor]

6. Communication Plan

[list method by which you will communicate with your supervisor]

7. Monitoring and Evaluating Student Progress

[list here how you will keep your supervisor advised of your progress]

Changes to this statement of work will need to be approved by you and the I379C instructor.

Per class policy, you will need to complete a mid-semester and final evaluation form that the I379C instructor will send you via email. By signing this form, you agree to supervise my capstone project for the entire duration of the semester, to complete the required mid-semester and final evaluation forms, and to permit me to share my reflections from the project as specified in the course syllabus (please see attached). My capstone project will involve approximately 60 hours of work and will involve activities that allow me to apply knowledge and skills that I have completed throughout my Informatics major coursework. My I379C instructor iSchool instructor has the final approval of grades for this project.

Supervisor Signature and Date

Student Signature and Date