

# INF 385T - Special Topics in Information Science: Deep Learning and Multimodal Systems

**Tuesdays 3:30PM-6:30PM**

**Location: UTA 1.210A**

**Instructor:** [Dr. Abhijit Mishra](#) (he/his)

**Email:** [abhijitmishra@utexas.edu](mailto:abhijitmishra@utexas.edu)

## **Office Hours (through zoom only)**

Tuesday: 6:30PM-8:00PM (in person, after class or through zoom)

Zoom link: <https://utexas.zoom.us/j/8979599959>

Meeting ID: 897 959 9959

**(Install zoom and Login using UT credentials)**

**Canvas:** <https://utexas.instructure.com/courses/1366978>

## **Communication and Asking for Help**

Please ask all questions that are applicable to the entire class on Canvas, so that others may benefit from the discussion. Only use email for questions unique to individual circumstances; in those cases, please address all questions to [abhijitmishra@utexas.edu](mailto:abhijitmishra@utexas.edu).

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## **Course Description**

Deep Learning (DL) is a subfield of machine learning (ML) that is based on artificial neural networks (ANNs) with multiple layers (hence, “deep”), which are designed to perform complex tasks. Unlike traditional ML, deep learners leverage huge amounts of labeled data and powerful computing resources to learn and improve over time, so much so that they can perform tasks in computer vision, speech recognition, and natural language processing with similar accuracies as humans. DL, as a field, has tremendously grown in the last five years or so and has already had a significant impact on many areas of AI, making it a valuable skill to have and an exciting area of research and development.

The proposed graduate-level course aims to cover theoretical and applied aspects of Deep Learning and how it is used to solve real-world problems, dealing with multimodal data such as text, audio and images or a mixture of them. Classes in each week may be divided into two segments: **(a) Theory and Methods**, a concise description of a deep learning algorithm, and **(b) Practicum**, a hands-on session on applying the algorithm on multimodal real world data such as textual, visual and audio data.

## **Objectives**

By attending and navigating through the course completely and successfully, students will have achieved the following objectives:

**1. Understanding Multimodal Data Integration** *i.e.*, grasping the fundamental concepts and techniques for integrating and processing data from multiple modalities, such as text, images, audio, and video. This goal involves learning how to effectively represent and fuse diverse types of data in deep learning models.

**2. Mastering Deep Learning Fundamentals** *i.e.*, striving to build a strong foundation in deep learning principles, including neural networks, optimization techniques, activation

functions, loss functions, and regularization methods. This knowledge is essential for creating effective multimodal models.

**3. Creating Multimodal Architectures i.e.,** knowing how to design and implement advanced multimodal architectures that can handle various data types simultaneously. This involves understanding how to construct neural networks that can process and combine inputs from different modalities to improve overall model performance.

**4. Applying Multimodal Models to Real-World Problems i.e.,** having an idea of how to tackle real-world problems across different domains with the help of deep learning based multimodal solutions. Students will seek to develop projects that leverage multimodal data to achieve tasks such as sentiment analysis, image captioning, audio-visual recognition, and more.

**5. Evaluating and Interpreting Model Outputs:** Students might aspire to learn how to evaluate the performance of multimodal models effectively. This includes understanding metrics for assessing model accuracy, precision, recall, and F1 score in a multimodal context. Additionally, students could aim to interpret model outputs to gain insights into how the model makes decisions based on different modalities.

### Prerequisites

#### **[1] INF 380P: Introduction to Programming in Python or equivalent programming coursework**

The proposed ML is applied in nature and there is a lab session in each class where students will code in Python. While the instructor will provide handouts for python basics, there is no way a student without any knowledge in programming will be able to pick up and fully participate in classes. Hence, INF380P (or equivalent programming course) is a necessary prerequisite.

#### **[2] INF385T-Introduction to Machine Learning or equivalent ML coursework**

Students are expected to have been exposed to harnessing and processing data, and apply traditional machine learning algorithms (such as Logistic Regression, SVMs, Decision Trees and Feed Forward networks). INF385T may be treated as a co-requisite but it is preferable to complete INF385T before registering for the NLP course. Alternatively, students may opt for a combination of the following courses (or courses that are similar in nature):

SDS 321 - Introduction to Probability and Statistics

SDS 323 - Statistical Learning and Inference

CS-329E: Elements of Data Analytics

INF385T - Artificial Intelligence in Health

#### **OR Undergraduate Courses:**

I310D: Introduction to Human Centred Data Science

I320D (undergraduate): Topics in Data Science – Applied Machine Learning with Python

### Instruction Modality

Class meetings will be **in person**, with some exceptions, dependent on the state of the COVID-19 pandemic. Only if we are unable to meet in person, classes will be held virtually via Zoom. The classes will consist of a mixture of lectures and hands-on sessions. As of now, there are **no plans to record lectures**.

## Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

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 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 Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD). Please refer to SSD's website for contact and more information: <http://diversity.utexas.edu/disability/>. If you are already registered with SSD, 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.

## Required Materials

There is no required textbook for this course; all assigned readings will be available online at no cost. Reading materials/resources will be added to canvas for each module. However, throughout the course, we will keep referring to the following classic book by Ian Goodfellow and Yoshua Benjio:

**[1] Goodfellow, I., Bengio, Y., & Courville, A. (2016). Deep learning. MIT press. Free access here: <https://www.deeplearningbook.org/>**

If you wish to purchase it (it's definitely a great addition to your personal library), you can do so by visiting this Amazon link [https://www.amazon.com/Deep-Learning-Adaptive-Computation-Machine/dp/0262035618/ref=sr\\_1\\_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1472485235&sr=8-1&keywords=deep+learning+book](https://www.amazon.com/Deep-Learning-Adaptive-Computation-Machine/dp/0262035618/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1472485235&sr=8-1&keywords=deep+learning+book)

## Required Devices

**This course requires students to bring their laptop computers**, although it is device agnostic (PC and Mac preferable but do let me know beforehand if you are working with any customized hardware+ OS , something like Raspberry PI board + Linux) . Students will be required to install Python, SQL and Jupyter notebooks. For resource heavy exercises, we may use Google Colaboratory.

## Class Participation

Students are expected to attend every class and actively engage themselves in class discussions and complete the lab tutorial at the end of every session. They may polish and submit the tutorial by 11:59PM on the class day.

## Assignments and Course Project

The class format is split between reading and coding assignments for the first half of the semester followed by a project the second half of the semester.

### 1. Assignments

**SIX** assignments will be given in the first half of the semester. Each assignment will have: (a) a theoretical question based on weekly assigned readings and (b) a coding exercise similar to the practicum. Assignments are intended to bring conceptual clarity, stimulate algorithmic thinking and emulate practical deep learning implementation scenarios. Moreover, students will be encouraged to reuse the code from the coding assignments in their course projects.

### 2. Course Project

The goal of the course project is to promote effective planning, execution, and communication of an DL-centric product/research idea. Assignments related to the course project will be related to (a) Project Planning (b) Gathering Resources (c) Experiment Design and Execution, and (d) Preparing presentation, report, and demo. Students will be required to present before the class.

### Examination:

A single **in-class** quiz, worth a total of 25 points, will be administered. The quiz will comprise a 10 MCQs and a maximum of 3 subjective questions and is scheduled to last no longer than 1.5 hours. This examination is designed to be open book/notes; however, access to the internet will not be allowed.

### Important Dates:

- 1. February 17, 2025** : Group Formation for Project/Activities
- 2. February 24, 2025** : Preliminary proposal due for group project
- 3. March 10, 2025:** In-class Quiz (5 questions, 50 points)
- 4. April 14, 2025:** Group project work in progress presentation and feedback soliciting (5-7 minutes per group and counted towards class activity)
- 5. April 21:** Final presentation of group project (last class)
- 6. May 1:** Final project-report submission

### Late Work and Missed Work

In an effort to accommodate any unexpected personal events, I have enacted a grace policy of two days for this course. You do not have to utilize this policy, but if you find yourself struggling with unexpected personal events, I encourage you to email me as soon as possible (in advance of the due date) to notify me that you are using our grace policy. You may either have a two-day grace period for one assignment, or you may have 2 one-day extensions for two different assignments. The only absences that will be considered excused are for religious holidays or extenuating circumstances due to an emergency. If you plan to miss class due to observance of a religious holiday, please let us know at least two weeks in advance. You will not be penalized for this absence, although you will still be responsible for any work you will miss on that day if applicable. In the event of an unexcused absence, we do not guarantee the opportunity to make up missed in-class work, but one may be granted. Check with us for details or arrangements.

### Grading Policies

Course grades will be made up of the following components. Final letter grades will be awarded according to the grade cutoffs below, including pluses and minuses.

Grade Component	Percentage
Attendance, Participation in class and Lab Completion	20%
Mid terms Quiz	10%
Six Assignments	40%
Final Project	30%

## Grade Breaks

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

## Course Syllabus

(Readings to be updated in Canvas)

**All instructions, assignments, week-wise readings, rubrics and essential information will be on the Canvas website.** Check the site regularly and use it to ask questions about the course schedule. Changes to the schedule may be made at my discretion and if circumstances require. For example, we might want to slow down, speed up or drop certain topics depending on student input. It is your responsibility to note these changes when announced.

### 1. WEEK 1. Introduction to Deep Learning (Jan 13)

**Lecture:** Course overview and syllabus, What is machine learning and deep learning, types of learners,

**Practicum:** Multidimensional data handling, dot product and gradient computing using NumPY, PyTorch

#### Readings:

[1] Raschka, S. (2020, August 5). Chapter 1: Introduction to Machine Learning and Deep LearningLinks to an external site.. Sebastian Raschka, PhD. Retrieved January 7, 2023, from <https://sebastianraschka.com/blog/2020/intro-to-dl-ch01.html>

[2] Goodfellow, I., Bengio, Y., & Courville, A. (2016). Deep learning. MIT press. Free access here: <https://www.deeplearningbook.org/> (Chapter 1 and non-math portions of Chapter 5).

### 2. WEEK 2. Perceptrons and Optimization of Objectives through Gradient Descent (Jan 20)

**Lecture:** Introduction to perceptrons and linearly separable functions, Optimization of linear functions, Gradient Descent, A note on convexity

**Practicum:** Simple Gradient Descent Demonstration with NumPy and PyTorch

**Readings:**

[1] Introduction - The Perceptron [https://web.mit.edu/course/other/i2course/www/vision\\_and\\_learning/perceptron\\_notes.pdf](https://web.mit.edu/course/other/i2course/www/vision_and_learning/perceptron_notes.pdf)

[2] A Neural Network in 11 lines of Python Part 1 <http://iamtrask.github.io/2015/07/12/basic-python-network>

[3] Understanding Gradient Descent Algorithm <https://www.analyticsvidhya.com/blog/2021/03/understanding-gradient-descent-algorithm>

**Assignment 1: Posted**

**3. WEEK 3. Training Multilayered Neural Networks - Back Propagation of Gradients, Loss Functions (Jan 27)**

**Lecture:** Non-linear functions, deep neural networks, optimization objectives and loss functions, back propagation basics

**Practicum:** Back propagation example in PyTorch

**Readings:**

1. Yann LeCun, Yoshua Bengio, Geoffrey Hinton, Deep Learning (<https://www.cs.toronto.edu/~hinton/absps/NatureDeepReview.pdf>) Nature 521, no. 7553 (2015): 436-444. doi:10.1038/nature14539

2. [Chapter 6] Goodfellow, I., Bengio, Y., & Courville, A. (2016). Deep learning. MIT press. Free access here: <https://www.deeplearningbook.org/>

**Assignment 2: Posted**

**4. WEEK 4. Overfitting and Regularization in Neural Networks - Data Preparation, Dropout Technique (Feb 3)**

**Lecture:** Overfitting and under-fitting recap, Datasets and data splits, L1 and L2 regularization in Neural Nets, Dropout

**Practicum:** Revisiting back propagation with regularization and dropout enabled

**Readings:**

1. Srivastava, N., Hinton, G., Krizhevsky, A., Sutskever, I., & Salakhutdinov, R. (2014). Dropout: a simple way to prevent neural networks from overfitting. The journal of machine learning research, 15(1), 1929-1958.

2. What is overfitting? <https://www.ibm.com/topics/overfitting>

3. Intuitions on L1 and L2 Regularization: <https://towardsdatascience.com/intuitions-on-l1-and-l2-regularisation-235f2db4c261>

4. Ryan P. Adams. Overfitting and Regularization <https://www.cs.princeton.edu/courses/archive/fall18/cos324/files/regularization.pdf>

**Assignment 2: Posted**

**5. WEEK 5. Special Deep Neural Networks I - Convolutional Neural Networks for Images as Data (Feb 10)**

**Lecture:** Introduction to CNNs, Significance, Multi-layered and multi filter CNNs , Popular CNN based architecture for image classification

**Practicum:** Image classification example with CNNs and ResNet

**Readings:**

[1] Convolutional Neural Networks for Dummies

<https://towardsai.net/p/deep-learning/convolutional-neural-networks-for-dummies>

[2] O'Shea, K., & Nash, R. (2015). An introduction to convolutional neural networks. arXiv preprint arXiv:1511.08458

## 6. WEEK 6. Special Deep Neural Networks II - Recurrent Neural Networks (Feb 17)

**Lecture:** Introduction to RNNs, Simple RNN, Back-propagations with time, Special purpose RNNs, **Long-short-term-memories**

**Practicum:** Text classification example with RNNs

**Readings:**

1. Speech and Language Processing. Daniel Jurafsky & James H. Martin. Chapter 9. (<https://web.stanford.edu/~jurafsky/slp3/9.pdf> )

2. The Unreasonable Effectiveness of Recurrent Neural Networks (<http://karpathy.github.io/2015/05/21/rnn-effectiveness/> )

[3] Hopfield Network and Boltzmann Machines <https://deeplearning.cs.cmu.edu/F20/document/slides/lec3.boltzmann.pdf>

### Assignment 4: Posted

## 7. WEEK 7. Special Deep Neural Networks III - Transformers (Feb 24)

**Lecture:** Issues with traditional DL architectures, Attention Mechanism, Transformers and their significance

**Practicum:** Text classification example with attention mechanism

**Readings:**

1. An Intuitive Explanation of LSTM <https://medium.com/@ottaviocalzone/an-intuitive-explanation-of-lstm-a035eb6ab42c>

2. Vaswani, A., Shazeer, N., Parmar, N., Uszkoreit, J., Jones, L., Gomez, A. N., ... & Polosukhin, I. (2017). Attention is all you need. Advances in neural information processing systems, 30.

3. The Intuition Behind Transformers — Attention is All You Need. <https://towardsdatascience.com/the-intuition-behind-transformers-attention-is-all-you-need-393b5cfb4ada>

### Project: Group Formation Announcement

## 8. WEEK 8. Generative Models (Mar 3)

**Lecture: TRANSFORMERS** , Representation learning with auto encoders, transfer learning and self supervised learning, pre-training and pre-trained models for image, text and audio data

**Practicum:** Text Summarization example with GPT-2 and transfer learning

**Readings:**

[1] Semi-Supervised Learning, Explained with Examples <https://www.altexsoft.com/blog/semi-supervised-learning/>

[2] Transfer Learning for Machine Learning <https://www.seldon.io/transfer-learning>

[3] The Intuition Behind Transformers — Attention is All You Need. <https://towardsdatascience.com/the-intuition-behind-transformers-attention-is-all-you-need-393b5cfb4ada>

**Project: Proposal and Planning Document Submission Announcement**

**9. WEEK 9. In-class quiz: Self supervised and Transfer Learning (Mar 10)**

**Lecture:**

Sequence to Sequence Modeling, Autoencoders and Transfer Learning, Pretraining and Fine tuning on Image and Text Data

**Practicum:** None

**Readings:**

[1] [https://www.geeksforgeeks.org/exploring-generative-models-applications-examples-and-key-concepts/?utm\\_source=chatgpt.com](https://www.geeksforgeeks.org/exploring-generative-models-applications-examples-and-key-concepts/?utm_source=chatgpt.com)

[2] What is an auto-encoder: <https://www.ibm.com/think/topics/autoencoder>

[3] Variational Autoencoders: <https://www.jeremyjordan.me/variational-autoencoders/>

[4] GANs: <https://blog.paperspace.com/complete-guide-to-gans/>

**10. WEEK 10. Spring Break (no classes held)**

**11. WEEK 11. Unimodal and Multimodal Systems (Mar 24)**

**Lecture:** More sequence to sequence model examples in text and image domain, Automatic speech recognition as a multimodal sequence to sequence modeling task, Multimodal fusion.

**Practicum:** Fine tuning image / text models, Exploring multimodal fusion techniques with transfer learning and fine tuning

**Readings:**

o. Multimodal Fusion: <https://medium.com/@raj.pulapakura/multimodal-models-and-fusion-a-complete-guide-225ca91f6861>

1. What is ASR? How Does it Work? Our In-Depth 2023 Guide <https://www.simonsaysai.com/blog/automatic-speech-recognition>
2. Understanding Automatic Speech Recognition (ASR) in the Future of Communication <https://deepgram.com/learn/automatic-speech-recognition-asr-future-communication>
3. Essential Guide to Automatic Speech Recognition Technology <https://developer.nvidia.com/blog/essential-guide-to-automatic-speech-recognition-technology/#:~:text=Deep%20learning%20speech%20recognition%20pipeline,probabilities%20over%20characters%20over%20time>. Links to an external site.
4. Dosovitskiy, A., Beyer, L., Kolesnikov, A., Weissenborn, D., Zhai, X., Unterthiner, T., ... & Houlsby, N. (2020). An image is worth 16x16 words: Transformers for image recognition at scale. arXiv preprint arXiv:2010.11929.
5. Antol, S., Agrawal, A., Lu, J., Mitchell, M., Batra, D., Zitnick, C. L., & Parikh, D. (2015). Vqa: Visual question answering. In Proceedings of the IEEE international conference on computer vision (pp. 2425-2433).
6. Marino, K., Rastegari, M., Farhadi, A., & Mottaghi, R. (2019). Ok-vqa: A visual question answering benchmark requiring external knowledge. In Proceedings of the IEEE/cvf conference on computer vision and pattern recognition (pp. 3195-3204).
7. Radford, A., Kim, J. W., Hallacy, C., Ramesh, A., Goh, G., Agarwal, S., ... & Sutskever, I. (2021, July). Learning transferable visual models from natural language supervision. In International conference on machine learning (pp. 8748-8763). PMLR.

## Assignment 5: Posted

## 12. WEEK 12. Deep Reinforcement Learning (March 31)

**Lecture:** Loss functions, Non-differentiability, Problem with supervised fine tuning, Rewards,, Reinforcement Learning basics, Policy gradient methods, Applications in gaming and robotics.

**Practicum:** Implement REINFORCE and other policy gradient algorithms for classification.

### Readings:

1. Terven, J., Cordova-Esparza, D. M., Ramirez-Pedraza, A., Chavez-Urbiola, E. A., & Romero-Gonzalez, J. A. (2023). Loss functions and metrics in deep learning. *arXiv preprint arXiv:2307.02694*.
2. Original REINFORCE Paper: "Simple Statistical Gradient-Following Algorithms for Connectionist Reinforcement Learning" by Ronald J. Williams (1992) <https://people.cs.umass.edu/~barto/courses/cs687/williams92simple.pdf>
3. <https://www.geeksforgeeks.org/reinforce-algorithm/>
4. Bahdanau, D., Brakel, P., Xu, K., Goyal, A., Lowe, R., Pineau, J., ... & Bengio, Y. (2016). An actor-critic algorithm for sequence prediction. arXiv preprint arXiv:1607.07086.

5. Schulman, J., Wolski, F., Dhariwal, P., Radford, A., & Klimov, O. (2017). Proximal policy optimization algorithms. *arXiv preprint arXiv:1707.06347*.

6. Rafailov, R., Sharma, A., Mitchell, E., Manning, C. D., Ermon, S., & Finn, C. (2023). Direct preference optimization: Your language model is secretly a reward model. *Advances in Neural Information Processing Systems*, 36, 53728-53741.

### **13. WEEK 13. Large Language Models, Prompt Engineering and Reinforcement Learning in Deep Learning - RLHF (Apr 7)**

**Lecture:** LLM basics, Optimization of LLMs through reinforcement learning (RLHF), Prompt Engineering

**Practicum:** Loading and performing inference using open source LLMs

#### **Readings:**

1. Illustrating Reinforcement Learning from Human Feedback (RLHF)

<https://huggingface.co/blog/rlhf>

2. Wei, J., Wang, X., Schuurmans, D., Bosma, M., Xia, F., Chi, E., ... & Zhou, D. (2022). Chain-of-thought prompting elicits reasoning in large language models. *Advances in Neural Information Processing Systems*, 35, 24824-24837.

3. Zhao, W. X., Zhou, K., Li, J., Tang, T., Wang, X., Hou, Y., ... & Wen, J. R. (2023). A survey of large language models. *arXiv preprint arXiv:2303.18223*.

4. Wang, X., Wei, J., Schuurmans, D., Le, Q., Chi, E., Narang, S., ... & Zhou, D. (2022). Self-consistency improves chain of thought reasoning in language models. *arXiv preprint arXiv:2203.11171*.

### **14. WEEK 14. Scaling Deep Learning Models and Parameter Efficient Training Techniques (Apr 14)**

**Lecture:** Distributed training and parallelism, Model compression techniques: Quantization, pruning, and distillation, Low rank adaptation and other performance oriented fine tuning.

#### **Project: 5 minute project progress presentation**

#### **References:**

Knowledge Distillation:

<https://pub.towardsai.net/a-gentle-introduction-to-knowledge-distillation-6240bf8eb8ea>

Parameter Efficient Training:

Intrinsic Dimensionality: <https://arxiv.org/pdf/2012.13255>

Lora: <https://arxiv.org/pdf/2106.09685>

QLora: <https://arxiv.org/abs/2305.14314>

### **15. WEEK 15. Final Project Presentations (Apr 21)**

**Project: Final Project Presentations**

## 16. WEEK 16. No-exam (Project Reports Due on May 1)

### Mantra for Student Success : Navigating the DL Course

- Achieve higher attendance, aiming for 100% to maximize exposure and engagement during lectures and practical exercises.
- Submit practicums and assignments promptly, recognizing that minor errors can be overlooked while focusing on continuous improvement.
- Prioritize transparency by appropriately citing tools, resources, and data sources, showcasing your commitment to ethical and accountable work.
- Approach in-class quizzes with a clear understanding and well-organized thoughts, leveraging your conceptual clarity to excel.
- If programming presents challenges, embrace deliberate practice to strengthen your skills and confidently navigate technical aspects.
- Embrace iteration as you prepare presentations, ensuring impactful task demonstrations, comprehensive analyses, and well-structured reports.
- Recognize that success in the DL course is a result of these concerted efforts, culminating in your growth as a proficient and accomplished DL practitioner.

### Academic Integrity

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>.

### AI Tools Usage Policy:

The utilization of AI-powered tools, including platforms like ChatGPT, Google Gemini, Meta LLaMa, DALL-E, or ANY other small/large language/image/audio/video generative models, to create content such as text, code, images, multimedia, or any related materials intended for assignments, quizzes, or projects that contribute directly to the evaluation of grades within this course is **strictly proscribed**. Exceptions to this rule apply only if the incorporation of such systems aligns with the specified objectives of the assignment or project. Breaching this policy may result in the initiation of proceedings related to student misconduct.

Should there be any suspicion surrounding the content submitted by a student, suggesting the involvement of an AI tool, I retain the authority to request clarification from the student. This clarification may be sought through email communication or arranged verbal discussions in the form of one-on-one meetings. In the event of any inconsistencies between the provided explanations and the submitted solutions, I reserve the right to instigate misconduct proceedings against the concerned student. Upon enrolling in this course, students inherently express their agreement to adhere to this policy as well as any forthcoming policies described below.

### Course Material Sharing Policy

Unauthorized sharing or distribution of lecture notes, slides, or examination questions is strictly prohibited without prior permission from the instructors. Failure to adhere to this policy may result in the initiation of legal actions. In the event that class should be

recorded, 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 these restrictions by a student could lead to Student Misconduct proceedings.

### **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.

### **Names and Pronouns**

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. I will gladly honor your request to address you by your chosen name and by the gender pronouns you use. Class rosters are provided to the instructor with the student's chosen (not legal) name, if you have provided one. If you wish to provide or update a chosen name, that can [be done easily at this page](#), and you can [add your pronouns to](#) Canvas.

### **Basic Needs Security**

Any student who faces challenges securing their food or housing and believes this may affect their performance in the course is urged to contact the Dean of Students for support. UT maintains the [UT Outpost](#) which is a free on-campus food pantry and career closet.

### **Mental Health Support**

I urge students who are struggling for any reason and who believe that it might impact their performance in the course to reach out to me if they feel comfortable. This will allow me to provide any resources or accommodations that I can. If immediate mental health assistance is needed, call the Counseling and Mental Health Center (CMHC) at 512-471-3515 or you may also contact Bryce Moffett, LCSW (iSchool CARE counselor) at 512-232-2983. Outside CMHC business hours (8a.m.-5p.m., Monday-Friday), contact the CMHC 24/7 Crisis Line at 512-471-2255.

### **Land Acknowledgement**

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.

### **Title IX Reporting**

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

1. Intervene to prevent harmful behavior from continuing or escalating.

2. Provide support and remedies to students and employees who have experienced harm or have become involved in a Title IX investigation.
3. Investigate and discipline violations of the university's relevant policies.

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

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