

# INF 303D: Academic Success in the Digital University

---

Ms. Rachel Simons  
Unique Number: 28000  
Fall 2016

<https://utexas.instructure.com/courses/1176140>

## Syllabus

---

The syllabus for INF 303D includes goals for the course, the grading policies, and an overview of assignments. Note that because the course is conducted entirely through the Canvas Learning Management System, all relevant information about the course can also be found in Canvas. **Any announcements made within the Canvas instance during the semester regarding deadlines, assignments, or other course information should be considered to supersede this syllabus.** If, at any time throughout the semester, you have questions about the syllabus, please contact your instructor for clarification.

## Contact

---

**Instructor:** Rachel Simons  
**Office Hours:** By appointment  
**Email:** (please contact me in Canvas messaging first) [rnsimons@utexas.edu](mailto:rnsimons@utexas.edu)  
**Office:** UTA 5.558  
**TA:** TA Pool  
Email: [ta\\_pool@ischool.utexas.edu](mailto:ta_pool@ischool.utexas.edu)  
Google Hangout:  
[https://talkgadget.google.com/hangouts/\\_/g4p4bw3kagcndiumrjgephaa7ia](https://talkgadget.google.com/hangouts/_/g4p4bw3kagcndiumrjgephaa7ia)  
Skype: ischool.itlab

## Course Goal

---

*Academic Success in the Digital University* (INF 303D) is a course designed for undergraduate students that provides an overview of important digital and information resources, tools, and skills that students enrolled in a modern “digital” university should know in order to complete their studies and as graduates of such a university going out into society.

*Academic Success in the Digital University* (INF 303D) allows students to explore and share key resources available at UT-Austin, to learn some important guidelines and background about the information and communication technologies that they will encounter, and to better prepare for interacting within the digital world while at UT-Austin and for the rest of their lives as digital citizens. This course is designed to expose students to a wide variety of information and academic resources, tools, and skills while simultaneously teaching students how to interact with many different features of the primary learning management system used at UT-Austin (namely, Canvas).

## Course Objectives

---

In this course, students will learn:

- about the basic digital necessities that are required in order to be a successful student at UT-Austin;
- how to use the primary learning management platform at UT-Austin (namely, Canvas);

- about useful digital tools that are available to students at UT-Austin;
- about the full variety of resources (both online and off-line) available through the UT library system;
- how to find, evaluate, and cite information resources, especially using the UT library system;
- about the expected standards for academic honesty at UT-Austin (and beyond) and how to uphold them;
- about the history and practice of academic scholarship and of citation and copyright practices;
- about the history, technical applications, and protocols that make the Internet possible;
- about the political, financial, and social implications of creating and sharing content online and in the digital world;
- about the basic concepts of ethical digital design, accessibility, and usability;
- about a basic framework for understanding how to balance and protect their information privacy and security in the digital world (and why this matters);
- how to understand, prevent, and recover from different types of malicious cyberattacks;
- about digital citizenship and some of the significant issues in information ethics;
- how to create and share content responsibly and ethically with others online, including on a website (particularly using a visual content editor, and some HTML).

Students will enact the following learning techniques:

- reading about history and current news related to information, information evaluation, information processing, and information and communications technology;
- discussing history, current news, and personal opinions related to information and information and communications technology, especially the Internet and digital world;
- taking interactive quizzes in order to reiterate and reinforce the course content;
- completing hands-on projects (both individual and group) in order to practice presenting and assessing information related to the course topics in a variety of contexts.

Students will additionally develop a personal website portfolio that is both a formative and summative evaluation of their work and learning over the course of the semester.

## Course Prerequisites

---

While there are no prerequisite classes for INF 303D, there are a few things that you should know before starting this course. **Online courses require a higher level of self-motivation and self-pacing than most classroom-based course.** Accordingly, you should know that:

1. You are responsible for contacting (as soon as possible) your instructors, peers, and TAs in order to ask questions or to get help .
2. You need to pay very close attention each week to the course Canvas instance (especially the “modules” page, the “announcements” page, and the “assignments” page) in order to keep up with what's going on in the course.
3. You will need to monitor all of your communications through Canvas and through email at least once a day in order to keep up with the course.
4. You need to organize your time effectively so that you can spend at least 12 hours a week working on this class.

5. Although you will have some degree of freedom in deciding how to pace your work in this course, there are strict deadlines for all assignments that you will be held responsible for meeting.
6. Students who are unable to motivate and organize themselves (and especially those who don't communicate with their instructors or TAs) tend to be unsuccessful in a virtual classroom environment.
7. Although it is not necessary to be a computer expert to complete this course successfully (and in fact, we will teach you more about this!), you do need to know the basics of operating a personal computer and navigating the Internet in order to even access this course. You are additionally expected to know how to:
  - a. access this course on the Canvas Learning Management Platform;
  - b. create folders and view the contents of a disk (e.g., your computer);
  - c. open an application or program;
  - d. send and receive e-mail;
  - e. search the Internet.
8. You must submit work that meets college-level writing standards.
9. You must participate civilly and ethically with your classmates in discussions and with your groupmates in projects.

If you don't know how to do any of these things, or if you have documented disabilities that prevent you from doing them, let your instructor or the TAs know during the first week of class. We can then decide on the best course of action.

## Required Texts

---

**All required readings, video, images, and audio files are available online in the Canvas instance.** Required media can be found listed (and embedded) directly on each content page of the course modules. There are no required texts that must be purchased for this course.

## Attendance and Grading Policies

---

**INF 303D consists of seven modules in the course Canvas instance.** Each module has its own focus of topics and corresponding assignments. However, this course is designed to provide a familiar, similar structure to the content and assignments between these modules.

Note that you will have an assignment of some type (and usually more than one) due **nearly every week**. The assignments are paced throughout each module in order to help you better understand the content as you work through it and to keep an even work pace.

**There is no comprehensive final exam for this course.**

### Attendance

---

**This is a completely online course: there are no scheduled class meetings (either in person or virtual).** This lack of a fixed meeting time means that students are expected to spend all of the time that would normally be spent in a classroom towards reviewing the course content and participating in the course online discussions.

Because we do not have any regularly scheduled meetings, **“attendance” is not part of your final grade in this course.** Instead, **we have strict deadlines for all of the assignments in this course** that you must plan very carefully for. However, unlike with class attendance, you can always choose to submit your assignments ahead of the deadline in order to avoid any schedule conflicts!

## Late Assignments

---

It is important to complete your work on time, both so you can stay on track and so you can collaborate and interact with your fellow students. **Late assignments will not be accepted**, except in cases of serious, multi-day (well documented) illness or emergency. You will receive a **zero** if you do not submit your assignment on time. We use the **Canvas upload time as the official time of the submission**, so if you submit your assignment even one second after the deadline, Canvas will mark your assignment as late and you will receive a zero for that assignment. It does not matter what time you start inputting your submission—only what time Canvas logs as your official submission time. Please make sure you **submit your assignments well in advance of the deadline**: computer problems, network outages, and other “technical” issues will not be considered a valid excuse for submitting an assignment late, so make sure you **submit your work early**.

Plan ahead. You have all of your deadlines for assignments, so it is up to you to pace yourself adequately in order to finish them on time (being sick one day should not disrupt your submission of these assignments.) As there is no scheduled class time, you must be responsible for getting all work (including the reading) done in a timely manner. This course allows for a lot of flexibility for you to schedule your work, so we will be very strict about excused late work.

## High-Level Schedule

---

The primary topics covered in *Academic Success in the Digital University* include: important digital resources and tools available at UT-Austin (including Canvas); the UT Libraries' resources and services (both in person and online); scholarly communication, the research process, and information evaluation; the Internet (its history, how it works today, and its future); essential information security and privacy issues; basic website design and website usability; and digital citizenship and information ethics.

In this course, **you will complete seven instructional modules**, titled:

1. Introduction to the Course and to Online Learning
2. The UT Libraries and Introduction to Scholarly Communication
3. Academic Honesty, Copyright, and Creative Commons
4. The Internet: From ARPANET to Infinity and Beyond
5. Basic Website Design and Usability
6. Information Security and Privacy Basics
7. Digital Citizenship and Information Ethics

**Each of the modules consists of three graded elements: online discussions, quizzes, and a project (may be in multiple parts).** Each module is designed to last for approximately two weeks of the semester: the next module will unlock on the final day of the current module. (Because of the content and schedule, Modules 1 and 2 will overlap somewhat.) **The final portion of each module project will (usually) be due at the end of the final day (at 11:59 p.m.) of that module.**

MODULE	DATES	COMPONENTS	TOTAL POINTS
<b>0</b>	8/24 - 9/7	2 Discussions (20 pts) 2 Quizzes (10 pts) Project (20 pts)	50
<b>1</b>	9/7 - 9/21	2 Discussions (20 pts) 3 Quizzes (10 pts) Project (20 pts)	50

<b>2</b>	9/19 - 10/3	2 Discussions (20 pts) 2 Quizzes (10 pts) Project (20 pts)	50
<b>3</b>	10/3 - 10/17	2 Discussions (20 pts) 3 Quizzes (10 pts) Project (20 pts)	50
<b>4</b>	10/17 - 11/2	2 Discussions (20 pts) 3 Quizzes (10 pts) Project (20 pts)	50
<b>5</b>	11/2 - 11/16	2 Discussions (20 pts) 2 Quizzes (10 pts) Project (20 pts)	50
<b>6</b>	11/16 - 12/5	2 Discussions (20 pts) 3 Quizzes (10 pts) Project (20 pts)	50
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>350</b>

**The learning objectives, module overview, and required assignments for each module will be posted on the first page (the “Introduction” page) of each module.** For each module, you must also check each individual content page in order to see what the additional required media are for that page.

You will need to **check each assignment's “assignment” page in order to see the requirements and rubric for that particular assignment.** All work must be submitted by **11:59 p.m.** on the specified due date. Assignments will include instructions for how they should be submitted, but each assignment will require some part to be submitted to Canvas.

## Required Media

**All required media can be found listed (and embedded) directly on each content page of the course modules.** The main content for this course has been developed and collected by several individuals working together within the UT-Austin School of Information and in collaboration with the UT-Austin library system: this content can be found on the main pages of each module.

We will additionally ask you to read articles from other schools and websites, watch online videos produced here or elsewhere, visit important websites, and work through online tutorials created by the School of Information or other locations at UT-Austin and online. **You will be held responsible for reading the content written on all pages in the Canvas instance and for viewing/hearing any outside media that is specifically listed on a content page under “Required Media.”**

## Grading

The course is graded on a scale of **350** total points. Each module has a possible total of **50** points and the points for each of the modules come from three areas:

- 1. Discussions = (20 points per module)**
- 2. Quizzes = (10 points per module)**
- 3. Project(s) = (20 points per module)**

Each of these types of assignments are briefly outlined below. All assignments are always due at 11:59 p.m. on the due date.

## Discussions

---

In each module, you will make contributions to the discussion forum as part of your participation in this class. PLEASE NOTE: You will be expected to participate in the discussion forum throughout the week, not only at the end of each module. Each discussion is graded on a ten-point scale.

**Initial discussion submissions must meet the minimum word length requirement (either 150 or 250 words, depending on the discussion) and should make it clear to the instructor or TA that you have understood the required media for that week.** (The first discussion of each module is intended to be more of an icebreaker introduction to the topics of that module, while the second discussion should show true comprehension of the module content.) Additionally, each discussion has a clear list of requirements on the assignment page which must also be met in order to receive full credit for the post. These initial posts are worth a maximum of 6 points each.

**In addition, students must post twice more in each discussion, preferably in response to submissions from two other students** (2 points possible per each response, for a total of 4 points). These responses should be at least two sentences long and should move the conversation forward. Responses such as "I agree. Great post!" or similar short responses will not receive any credit.

**In order to receive the maximum credit on either the initial post or the response posts, you must go beyond simply meeting the minimum requirements and demonstrate significant thought and effort.** You can examine the "rubric" for any discussion in order to learn more details about the grading scheme for that discussion.

## Quizzes

---

**The content of each module has been broken down into 2 or 3 quizzes in order to test your comprehension of the main module content and of the outside media as you are progressing through the module.** We have staggered the deadlines for the quizzes so that you cannot take all of them at the end of the module. These quizzes are intended to encourage to be more interactive with the content of this course (which can be quite passive) rather than to punish you for guessing the wrong answer.

**All quizzes in this course are "open-book" and are not timed: you may refer back to the module content and readings while you take the quiz.** Most quizzes will also allow you to re-take the quiz one more time (and Canvas will keep the higher score). However, **some quizzes can only be taken once**, so be sure to read the quiz instructions carefully! The total possible for all quizzes (combined) in each module is 10 points.

## Projects

---

**Each module has a project with a final portion that is (usually) due at the end of the module and that relates to the main topics of the module.** Project formats and requirements will differ from module to module, but each project is also designed incorporate skills taught throughout the course. **It is important that you to start these projects early, particularly since many of these projects will be group projects.** You can contact your Instructor, your peers, or the TAs early if you need help. Each project will require you to submit some component in Canvas (although in different formats) in order to be evaluated prior to the end of the module.

All written components of a project that are submitted to Canvas will be passed through the Turnitin plagiarism check software. The results of this software analysis are not the only method that we will use to determine whether something is plagiarized. **If we find blatant plagiarism (copying and pasting from Wikipedia, for example) you will be referred to Student Judicial Services and you will likely fail this course.** Plagiarism is unfortunately one of the most common mistakes that students make in an online course. Follow the guidelines provided in this course content carefully and ask for help if you are unsure at any point about what might constitute plagiarism. Do not assume that your previous school programs and education have fully prepared you to avoid all forms plagiarism—**there's no shame in admitting that you are unsure!**

The final submission of each project in each module will vary. **Be sure to read the assignment description page for each project carefully:** you will be held responsible for submitting your projects (group or individual)—and then checking that submission—according to the requirements and any assignment not following these guidelines will not receive any credit.

If submitting a website URL, it is critically important that you submit the correct URL, since your project will be graded based on the **screenshot** that Canvas takes at the time of your submission. If you submit the incorrect URL and Canvas takes a screenshot of your login screen (for example), you won't receive credit for that part of the assignment. Double check all of your submission before you walk away and contact your peers or the TAs immediately if you are experiencing problems. **Don't let technical errors get in your way of succeeding in this course!**

We will make every effort to fairly evaluate your participation and effort in every project, including group projects. Students will be afforded the opportunity to evaluate their groupmates' performances, especially in extreme cases. However, the reality is that working with others (in both the academic context and beyond) can sometimes be difficult and unfair. So treat your teammates with respect and make the effort that you would want others on your team to make! Good communication between teammates always makes for better projects and better grades.

## Grade Conversions

---

The TAs and I make every effort to have your submissions graded within a week of the assignment deadline. However, there are some assignments that take longer to grade. If you have any questions or concerns about your grades, please let me know! This class uses an accumulation of points to determine your grade, not a percentage. This can be confusing if you are used to looking at averages, so the chart below should help.

**YOU MUST COMPLETE ALL MAJOR ASSIGNMENTS (PROJECTS) IN ORDER TO PASS THE CLASS.** If you fail to turn in even one part of one of the projects, you will not pass the class—regardless of the number of points that you have collected. Mistakes or technical errors are not an excuse!

*You will find your grades in the lefthand menu of Canvas. If you have any trouble with your grades, please contact the instructor directly.*

A	325 - 350 points
A -	315 - 324
B +	301 - 314
B	290 - 300
B -	280 - 289
C +	269 - 279
C	255 - 268
C -	245 - 254
D+	234 - 244
D	220 - 233
D-	210 - 219 (minimum for pass/fail students to pass)
F	Below 210 points



# University Policies

---

## Academic Integrity

---

Please abide by the University's policy on academic integrity. All work that you submit must be your own: *"Scholastic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, cheating and plagiarism... Students who violate University rules on scholastic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary penalties, including the possibility of failure in the course and/or dismissal from the University. University policies on scholastic dishonesty will be strictly enforced."* (From: The University of Texas: General Information, Appendix C.)

## Special Needs

---

The University of Texas at Austin provides upon request appropriate academic accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. To determine if you qualify, please contact the Dean of Students at 471-6259; 471-4641 TTY. If they certify your needs, then we will happily work with you to make appropriate arrangements. Be sure to let both your instructor and the TAs know about any certified special needs that you may have.

## Religious or Holy Day Observance

---

We are happy to provide any necessary arrangements for religious or holy day observances. However, you should know that the University policy states that *"A student who misses classes or other required activities, including examinations, for the observance of a religious holy day should inform the instructor as far in advance of the absence as possible, so that arrangements can be made to complete an assignment within a reasonable time after the absence."* (<http://www.utexas.edu/student/registrar/catalogs/gi04-05/ch4/ch4g.html>) Additionally, except in very specific cases, a religious observation does not necessarily preclude you from submitting assignments early (a day or two in advance of the deadline).

## Email

---

You are required to check your email regularly for this course, especially because the course is conducted completely through electronic means. University policy states that *"Electronic mail (e-mail), like postal mail, is a mechanism for official University communication to students. The University will exercise the right to send e-mail communications to all students, and the University will expect that e-mail communications will be received and read in a timely manner."* (<http://www.utexas.edu/student/registrar/catalogs/gi04-05/app/appn.html>).

Both the instructor and the TAs will reply to student emails within 24 hours on weekdays and 48 hours on weekends, barring rare and extenuating circumstances.

We look forward to working with our students this semester. If you have any questions, comments, or concerns about this syllabus or about the course policies, then please do not hesitate to contact us!