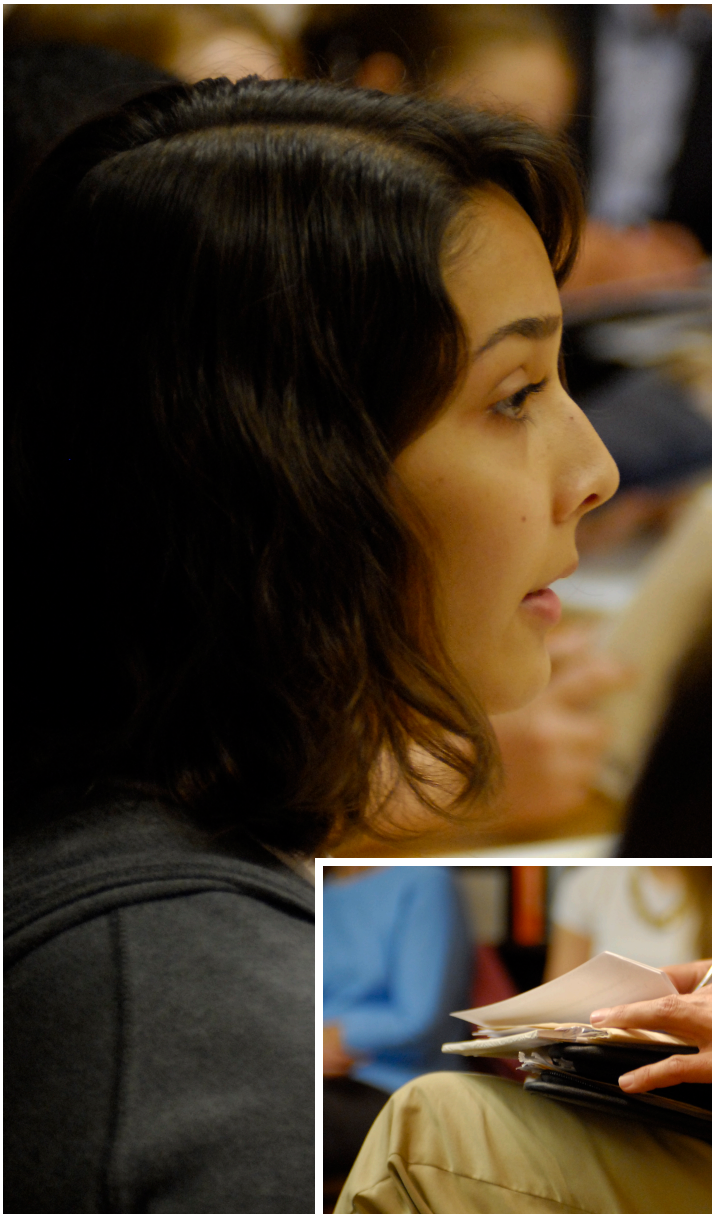


# *Signature Course*

**Faculty Resource  
Manual**





# *Signature Course*

## **Faculty Resource Manual**

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# SIGNATURE COURSE CONTACT INFORMATION

## Who to contact regarding:

### Signature Course Program

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### Assessment

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### First-Year Information Literacy

Cindy Fisher, AJ Johnson, Michele Ostrow, Meghan Sitar  
Signature Course Librarians  
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### FIG Program

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FIG Program Coordinator  
[dalia916@mail.utexas.edu](mailto:dalia916@mail.utexas.edu)  
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### Student Issues

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### Writing

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Dr. Paul Woodruff  
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512-475-7000



# WHAT IS A SIGNATURE COURSE?

A first-year Signature Course is designed to introduce UT undergraduates to academic discussion and analysis of issues of contemporary real-world importance from an interdisciplinary perspective. The issues to be discussed in Signature Courses are sufficiently complex that the lens of a single discipline does not create an adequate picture; to view such issues completely, an image created from the lenses of multiple disciplines is required.

**SIZE** Signature Courses may be taught in two formats, as small seminars (15-18 students) or as large lecture courses (50 or more students). The large format courses must have specially trained teaching assistants at a ratio of one to every fifty students, each responsible for three discussion sections of 17 or fewer students.

**TOPICS** Faculty are encouraged to choose topics that are exciting for them. All topics should have an issue of contemporary importance and introduce students to the methods of more than one discipline. Faculty submit their individual course proposals to the Signature Course program office for review by the Undergraduate Studies Advisory Committee. Courses of any topic are welcome, so long as they provide appropriate treatment of the academic and developmental goals of the program.

**FACULTY** Signature Courses may be taught by distinguished faculty from any college or school at the university. These must be regular departmental faculty who have been recommended as good teachers by their department chairs. The program calls for regular faculty in the hope that incoming students will come to know faculty with whom they may wish to work in later years. Regular faculty include tenured and tenure-track professors, as well as senior lecturers, clinical faculty and, in exceptional cases, adjunct or emeriti professors.

**SEMESTER** Most Signature Courses are offered in the fall semester, but some are taught in the spring and summer sessions.

Signature Courses will also introduce students to the best faculty and resources that UT has to offer and, at the same time, help develop skills at the college level in writing, speaking and discussion. The program aims to provide all first-year students at the university with a course that helps them mature intellectually from promising high school students to good college students.

*Taken from the University Quality Enhancement Plan*

# GOALS OF THE SIGNATURE COURSE

## **Increase Student and Faculty Interaction**

Both the intellectual climate of the university and student success improve when students and faculty connect outside the classroom on academic endeavors. Faculty accessibility provides the opportunity for students to meet individually with experienced and distinguished faculty in their first year.

- 1) Experienced and distinguished faculty will contribute to the academic and intellectual development of first-year students through staffing Signature Courses.
- 2) Students will meet individually with a professor or teaching assistant to review student written work.

## **Develop Student Communication Skills**

Employers increasingly cite effective communication skills as the most essential attribute of the graduates they seek to hire. Direct instruction and practice of communication skills provide students with a solid foundation upon which to build their competency for the classroom and beyond.

- 1) Written Communication Skills
  - a) Students will be able to present their ideas and arguments in prose that is organized, coherent, and appropriate.
  - b) Students will be able to defend a position using data and analysis.
  - c) Students will be able to identify and correctly use data sources appropriate to class content or discipline.
  - d) Students will demonstrate correct writing mechanics, including accurate syntax, grammar, and vocabulary.
- 2) Oral Communication Skills
  - a) Students will demonstrate effective public communication skills, including proper use of logic, organization, content, and overall presentation.
  - b) Students will be able to make a presentation such that fellow classmates can recapitulate the main points of the presentation.

## **Acquaint Students with Unique Resources (“Gems”) of the University**

Related to Signature Course content, knowledge of the university’s resources is essential for student success, especially in the first year. These courses should be unique to UT and should highlight resources unique to this large research campus.

Students will be able to describe their use of at least one university co-curricular resource that provides information, assistance, or support leading to acquisition of course related knowledge.



### **Provide a Cross-disciplinary Understanding of Inquiry**

Integrative learning, in which students “see connections as well as difference among disciplines” (Huber & Hutchings, 2003), is essential for student mastery of critical thinking. The most important questions asked by scholars and scientists require knowledge of more than one discipline to answer. The courses should give students a sense of the range of intellectual resources that a great university can bring to bear on a significant question. Many fields of study are inherently interdisciplinary. Good examples are astronomy in the natural sciences, geography in the social sciences, and classics in the humanities.

- 1) Students will be able to identify major course topics, develop their own relevant opinions, and support their views using resources and reasoning culled from at least two theoretical approaches, including, but not limited to historical, educational, business, political, social, economic, scientific or environmental perspectives.
- 2) Students will demonstrate their ability to engage in critical thinking by synthesizing course content and relating it to strategies of inquiry in other disciplines.
- 3) Students will be able to explain how one of the disciplinary perspectives of the course relates to at least one area of intellectual interest to the individual student, regardless of expected major.

### **Real-World Transferability of Course Content**

Students are seeking to learn things they may put to use in their adult lives. Signature Courses will bring home to students the usefulness of their content, whether their topics are in current events or in the history of empires in the ancient world.

- 1) Students will demonstrate orally or in writing the ability to apply their academic knowledge in addressing real-world issues.
- 2) Students will be able to appraise the relevance of Signature Course content for use in business, professional and/or social institutions.

### **Give Students a Shared Intellectual Experience**

On a large campus, a shared intellectual experience is an important marker of community and contributes to student integration with the academic environment.

- 1) Students will increase their intellectual engagement by attending at least one University Lecture Series event.
- 2) During organized discussion sessions, students enrolled in Signature Courses will discuss the main learning points presented during the University Lecture Series events using respectful, well-reasoned arguments.

*Taken from the University Quality Enhancement Plan*

# SIGNATURE COURSE FUNDING

Compensation — Undergraduate Studies transfers funding to colleges offering signature course faculty - \$15,500 for each small format course and \$30,500 for each large format course. How your college distributes these funds is left up to your dean with the one restriction from the Provost: that these funds may not be used to pay summer salary to a Signature Course instructor teaching in one of the long semesters. Transfers are made for both the Fall and Spring semesters to colleges on September 1 of each year.

The transfer amounts are intended to reimburse the college for faculty time and to allow for modest course costs (field trips, special equipment, guest lecturers, etc.). The source of funding will dictate the kinds of course costs that will be allowable on these funds. For the large format courses the \$30,500 transfer includes funding for one teaching assistant. UGS transfers additional funds when large format courses exceed 50 students to cover the costs of additional TAs. If you have questions about how the funding will work in your college, please contact your dean's office. All funding decisions are made in the colleges.

## FUNDING FAQ

### **What about funds for special course expenses?**

Your course may need funds for field trips, special equipment, outside lecturers, etc. The funding that UGS transfers to your college includes funds for such purposes. As you design your syllabus, make notes of expenses you anticipate and request them through your chair as early as possible.

### **Will individual stipends be awarded in Fall 2009, or will all funds now go to the Departments as professional development funds?**

All funds will be transferred to your dean's office. There will be no individual stipends transferred by UGS. The funds we transfer are incentives to colleges to release faculty to teach the courses on-load. Some colleges may choose, however, to use some of the money for professional development.

### **How much will by department get for the course?**

How much your department receives depends on your dean's office. Please contact your dean's office for information on how the money is handled.

### **Are the TA funds separate or do they come out of the total?**

For large format courses, the first TA is paid for in the lump sum; after that, we add increments for additional TAs. There is no funding for TAs in the UGS 302 courses (seminars).

**When do we get the money?**

Your college will receive the transfer on September 1. After that, how much comes to your department, and when, depends on your dean's office.

**Is it possible to request resources closer to when the course starts?**

That's between you, your chair, and your dean. Unfortunately, UGS is not able to reimburse faculty for extra expenses related to your course (such as photocopying, a gift to thank a guest, or food for students). All funding for the course is distributed to your dean's office.

**If I am team-teaching a course, how will the money be distributed?**

If you are team-teaching a course with another instructor, please contact Cindy Wilson in the Signature Course Office to discuss how your funds should be distributed.

# TEACHING ASSISTANTS

## HIRING YOUR TEACHING ASSISTANTS FOR UGS 303

Signature Course faculty and their departments should recruit TAs through their departments as for any other class the department offers. UGS will not participate in hiring for these positions.

Because the TA orientation takes place in August for fall and early January for spring, we need to have the names of the TAs from your department with enough lead time to inform them about the required orientation. Please let us know if this timeline presents a problem.

### Hiring Requirements for TAs

There are some unique requirements for Signature Course TAs. We hope that you will take them into consideration when screening graduate students for these positions. The requirements are:

- At least one TA for your Signature Course should have experience. We would prefer that they have been teaching assistants for at least one other undergraduate course.
- The TA should have or be willing to develop skills in teaching not only writing assignments but also oral presentations. These are important components of the Signature Course.
- TAs will be required to attend a TA Orientation as well as two other subsequent training sessions and an observation. A certificate recognizing their work will be given to the TAs who successfully complete all sessions of the training.
- TAs should meet with the professor of their course at least once a week.

## PAYMENT INFORMATION FOR YOUR TAs

Financial support for all TAs for these courses comes from the Office of the Dean of Undergraduate Studies. The support for one TA is included in the lump sum that is transferred to the college. If you are teaching a course with over 50 students, funding for additional TAs will be transferred for every additional 50 students enrolled in your course. For example, if you have a course with 100 students, additional funds will be transferred to your dean's office for another TA for a total of 2 TAs.

Your college will determine the pay rate for each TA and your departmental administrative staff will actually make the appointment. If your departmental administrator has questions or needs assistance, please call the Signature Course Program Coordinator, Cindy Wilson at 471-4421.

Undergraduate Studies does not provide financial support or training for teaching assistants in UGS 302 (the seminar course).

# PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR SIGNATURE COURSE FACULTY

Each spring the Dean of Undergraduate Studies holds an orientation/luncheon for all new and returning Signature Course professors. The orientation will introduce the goals of the Signature Course and give faculty a chance to meet other professors who will be teaching in the program.

At the orientation, additional optional workshops will be announced and faculty will be given an opportunity to register for these programs. The Signature Course program hopes to offer workshops that address the unique demands placed on the Signature Course faculty as well as give the faculty opportunities to learn and share successful teaching practices.

# PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR SIGNATURE COURSE TAs

The unique challenges of serving as a TA for a Signature Course include helping first-year students develop college level skills in writing, speaking, and discussion. The School of Undergraduate Studies, in collaboration with the UT Learning Center, has created a training program to help Signature Course TA's develop and document their teaching effectiveness in this venture. The program includes both pre-semester and ongoing training workshops, combined with observation, feedback and mid-semester evaluation.

Graduate students who fulfill the requirements listed below will receive a Teaching Certificate in First-Year Interdisciplinary Instruction from the School of Undergraduate Studies:

## *Orientation (before classes begin)*

Introduction to the concept of Signature Courses and the role and responsibilities of a Signature Course teaching assistant

## *Training (3 hours)*

September/January training (1.5 hours), based on topics of interest solicited from teaching assistants at orientation.

November/March Training (1.5 hours), based on issues which have emerged through observation and mid-semester feedback.

If TAs are unable to attend either of these training sessions, requirement can be satisfied by participation in an ASPECTS seminar offered by DIIA: [www.utexas.edu/academic/diia/gsi/index.php](http://www.utexas.edu/academic/diia/gsi/index.php).

UTLC staff are available at any time during the semester to consult with TA's individually on classroom issues, student learning concerns, or for an additional observation.

*Mid-Semester Observation*

TAs are observed by UTLC Staff and given feedback.

*Student Feedback (mid-semester)*

TAs solicit mid-semester feedback from their students in this designated two-week window.

*Reflection Essay (early December/May)*

A short reflection piece on the challenges and rewards of working with first-year students and interdisciplinary curriculum, incorporating insights gained from mid-semester feedback.

*Recognition Reception*

Undergraduate Studies will present Teaching Certificates and recognize the author of the best reflection essay with a cash prize.

# FIELD TRIPS

<http://registrar.utexas.edu/catalogs/gi07-08/app/appk.html>

## **Policy Statement**

It is the policy of the University of Texas at Austin to promote safe travel by students to and from events and activities covered by this policy.

## **Scope**

This policy applies to the travel of enrolled undergraduate or graduate students to attend activities or events that are organized and/or sponsored by the University of Texas at Austin and occur more than twenty-five miles from the University campus.

## **Travel Authorization**

To request authorization, members of the faculty, staff, or sponsored student organizations who organize activities covered by this policy must submit a completed Request for Authorization for Student Travel form, along with the required documents and information, to the appropriate administrator for approval.

Whenever possible, the request should be submitted at least five working days in advance of travel to the activity or event. The following information/documents must be submitted along with the Request for Authorization for Student Travel form:

- A list of participants including their names, local addresses and phone numbers, and the names and phone numbers of persons to contact in case of an emergency.
- The name and phone number for the responsible University employee(s) who will be available to the students at all times during the travel and activity.
- Copies of valid operators' licenses for any students who will operate vehicles.
- Copies of current medical insurance certificates, or both sides of a current group insurance membership card, for each person who wishes to participate in the activity or event. The purchase of a reasonably priced, short-term special events policy can be arranged by academic and administrative units on behalf of students who do not have, or cannot verify, current medical coverage. Information concerning this coverage is available from the Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs, (512) 471-1133.
- Completed and signed Release and Indemnification Agreements for each participant.
- Completed and signed Authorization for Emergency Medical Treatment forms for each participant.

When leading group trips, faculty or staff members should carry emergency contact information, proof of medical insurance coverage, and the authorization for emergency medical treatment for each participant.

# ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

## CLASS ROSTERS

[https://utdirect.utexas.edu/nrport/clips\\_nros.WBX](https://utdirect.utexas.edu/nrport/clips_nros.WBX)

On this site, you may access a roster with photos of your students.

## FINAL EXAM & CIS

During the proposal process, you will indicate whether or not you need to schedule a final exam. The Signature Course office will then schedule an exam for you based on that request.

The Signature Course has its own Course Instructor Survey. Surveys will be ordered for all faculty members (in UGS 302 and 303) and teaching assistants (in UGS 303). If you have special needs or questions about the CIS, please contact Erin Negron in the Signature Course office at 471-4421. Once your CIS forms have been received in the Signature Course office, we will contact you with information on deadlines and procedures.

## GRADE REPORTING

<https://utdirect.utexas.edu/registrar/egrades/egckauth.WBX>

On this page, you can find your deadline for submitting grades as well as a demo on how to submit grades online. The Signature Course Office will send an email each semester reminding faculty of the final deadline for grades and how to access the online grade submission system.

## OFFICE HOURS

The Signature Course office would like to collect the time and location of your office hours. Please include your office hour information on your syllabus

If you do not have an office and would like assistance in finding a place to hold office hours, contact Cindy Wilson in the Signature Course office.

## SCHEDULING REQUEST FORMS

[www.utexas.edu/ugs/signature\\_courses/proposal/proposal/](http://www.utexas.edu/ugs/signature_courses/proposal/proposal/)

The Signature Course schedulers use an online system to schedule your course. The system asks you to give several options for rooms/times for your Signature Course. The scheduling request is due the first week of November for each academic calendar year. We will do our best to schedule you with your top room and time preference, but because of the scarcity of classrooms available around campus, we cannot guarantee your first choice. After the Registrar returns preliminary room and time assignments, our office will notify you of what your schedule is. At this time let us know of any problems you foresee in your schedule, and we will do all we can to find a remedy.



## SIGNATURE COURSE FACULTY BLACKBOARD COMMUNITY

<https://courses.utexas.edu>

The Signature Course office has created a community on Blackboard. To enter, click "Signature Course Faculty" under "My Organizations" heading after you log in.

### *Course Descriptions & Syllabi*

Each semester we will need a detailed course description and a copy of the syllabus for your Signature Course. You must post an electronic copy to the Signature Course Faculty Community on Blackboard.

You must post your syllabus to Blackboard by the 12th class day of the semester you are teaching. The Signature Course program keeps the syllabi of all Signature Course courses for archival purposes.

The site is used to post announcements, articles of interest, and other documents that may be of interest to the faculty, TAs, and Peer Mentors. Blackboard also contains Discussion Boards where you can post questions or topics of interest that relate to the Signature Course. We hope you will visit the site often.

## TEXTBOOK ORDERS

### **Book Orders**

If you will be ordering books for your course through the University Co-op, you can order online through [www.coop-bookstore.com](http://www.coop-bookstore.com). You will need your unique number, ISBN numbers, and your estimated enrollment.

Any questions about this process can be directed either to Sally Bergom in the Signature Course Office, (512)-232-1788, [sbergom@austin.utexas.edu](mailto:sbergom@austin.utexas.edu) or to Susan Rudisill at the University Coop, (512) 476-7211 x8128, [srudisil@universitycoop.com](mailto:srudisil@universitycoop.com).

### **Desk Copies**

There is also information for obtaining desk copies as well as other resources for faculty at: [www.universitycoop.com/ePOS/form=cat.html&cat=867&store=108#choosetextbook](http://www.universitycoop.com/ePOS/form=cat.html&cat=867&store=108#choosetextbook)

### **Course Packets**

If you need to order a course packet from University Duplicating, go to: [www.utexas.edu/services/copycenters/coursepackets.html](http://www.utexas.edu/services/copycenters/coursepackets.html)

### **“Clickers”**

Any sort of remote control/clicker for large format courses will have to be ordered along with your textbooks. You can do this through the regular textbook request form. For example, if you would like to order an Iclicker, you can enter "Iclicker" into the title field on the request form and they can enter the ISBN for the clicker in the ISBN field.

# ASSESSMENT IN SIGNATURE COURSES 2009-2010

With the selection of Signature Courses as the University's Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) we have a substantial obligation to SACS to assess and report on the goals of the Signature Course program and how those goals are being met. The assessments are based on student learning outcomes and are designed to let us know if students are performing at our expectations. Our goal in designing the assessments is to be unintrusive when possible and sensitive to the demands placed on faculty and students to be part of assessments.

The six goals of the Signature Course are assessed in a variety of direct and indirect methods that include:

- **A common Signature Course-specific Course Instructor Survey (CIS)**

Faculty can select paper or electronic administration, but we find better return rates on paper administration of form B64. The Signature Course Office will order the forms based on faculty preference for paper or electronic.

- **A common Signature Course-specific Teaching Assistant CIS (UGS 303 only)**

Large format courses will include a separate CIS for teaching assistants.

- **Assessment of written assignments from a sample of course sections**

Each semester, the assessment office in School of Undergraduate Studies will request permission to sample written assignments from students. The students in the selected sections will be contacted and asked to submit samples of papers electronically. On occasion, faculty may be asked to notify students of the collection and to encourage their participation. The papers are graded by trained raters, independent of the course or assignment grade. The rubric against which these papers are rated provides us with information on students written communication skills and the achievement of the cross-disciplinary and real-world transferability goals of the course.

- **Assessment of oral communication assignments from sample of course sections**

In alternating semesters, the assessment office in the School of Undergraduate Studies will request permission from faculty to rate a sample of oral communication assignments. The rating of this requires more intrusive methods, including an in-class rater or videotaping a session. Faculty who do not wish the interruption may also select to use the common Oral Communication rubric and share results with UGS assessment. The rubric for oral communication assignments, like the written assignment, provides us with information on student oral communication skills.

- **Focus Groups**

Each semester, faculty will be invited to participate in focus groups to discuss the six goals of the Signature Course program. Students who are past participants of Signature Courses will also be invited to share their impressions on the achievement of the six course goals.

- **Surveys**

Faculty and students may be asked to respond to electronic surveys regarding their impressions of the Signature Course mid-semester. These surveys help us identify ways in which we can offer faculty mid-course assistance.

- **Alumni Surveys**

Although we do not yet have any graduates of the University who have enrolled in Signature Courses, we will eventually survey alumni to determine the utility of the course in their real world applications.

- **Audit Measures**

Student attendance at the University Lecture Series is recorded by swiping student ID cards at the events. The attendance audit helps determine the extent to which the ULS contributes to the goal of a common intellectual experience for students and allows comparison to other data about student-faculty interaction.

Questions about the assessments can be directed to  
School of Undergraduate Studies Assessment Team  
Dr. Cassandre Alvarado, Assistant Dean.  
[ugs-assessment@austin.utexas.edu](mailto:ugs-assessment@austin.utexas.edu)

# RESOURCES

## CAREER EXPLORATION CENTER

[www.utexas.edu/student/cec](http://www.utexas.edu/student/cec)

512-471-1217

UT students have a number of University resources to help with career decisions and job placement. The Career Exploration Center (JES A115A) helps put students on the path to self-discovery. The Center assists students with questions about majors and career decisions. Freshmen often use the Career Exploration Center to get an overview of their options about majors, careers, internships, and graduate school.

## CENTER FOR STRATEGIC ADVISING

David Spight, Asst. Dean

Open Monday-Friday, Open 8-5 in FAC 411

[ugs-advising@austin.utexas.edu](mailto:ugs-advising@austin.utexas.edu)

The Strategic Advising Center assists students with course schedules, major exploration, personal issues, and general advising. If you have a problem with a student or if a student is regularly missing class, please contact the CSA. They will be happy to assist you.

## COUNSELING & MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

<http://cmhc.utexas.edu/index.html>

512-471-3515

Counseling and Mental Health Services (CMHC) helps students with their personal concerns so that they can meet the daily challenges of student life. Staffed by psychologists, psychiatrists, social workers, and other licensed mental health professionals, the Center is open to registered U.T. students between 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday.

### *How to Use CMHC's Services*

They are located on the 5th floor of the Student Services Building (SSB), 100 West Dean Keeton Street. Call or walk into the Center between 8 am and 4 pm to schedule the first initial consultation. Students will be asked to come in 30 minutes prior to his/her appointment to complete some initial paperwork. If the student does not allow for this extra time, he/she will be rescheduled. CMHC tries to match students with the therapist who has the expertise to meet his/her needs. The student may be referred to individual counseling, group counseling, psychiatric assessment, or biofeedback for stress management.

## FRESHMAN INTEREST GROUPS (FIG)

<http://www.utexas.edu/ugs/fig>

512-232-3447

A First-year Interest Group is a cohort of up to 25 first-year students who take two to four courses together. Typically, one of these classes is small, to allow students to recognize their FIG-mates in both small and large classes. In addition, each FIG cluster attends a weekly 1-hour seminar that is facilitated by a peer mentor and a facilitator. In the seminar, students take part in discussions about issues they encounter as a first-semester student such as:

- study and time management
- social opportunities and issues
- campus life and involvement opportunities

Your Signature Course may be part of a FIG cohort or you may have a number of FIG students in your course. All questions and inquiries about the College-based FIG and Transfer Interest Group programs should be directed to [fig@uts.cc.utexas.edu](mailto:fig@uts.cc.utexas.edu). Questions about the Residential FIG program should be directed to [resfig@mail.utexas.edu](mailto:resfig@mail.utexas.edu).

## GENERAL STUDENT ADVISING

Many times, students need to seek advising from an advisor in their own college. These situations might include:

1. Dropping a course
2. Seeking a degree check
3. Seeking an exception to degree requirements
4. An emergency situation
5. Applying to graduate

In these instances, students should be referred to an advisor in their college. If the student does not know who his/her advisor is, you may refer the student to the Center for Strategic Advising and an advisor there can help him/her.

## AVOIDING PLAGIARISM RESOURCE SHEET

<http://www.lib.utexas.edu/services/instruction/resourcesheet.pdf>

## UT LIBRARIES & INFORMATION LITERACY

<http://www.lib.utexas.edu/signaturecourses>

[Lib-instruction@utlists.utexas.edu](mailto:Lib-instruction@utlists.utexas.edu)

512-495-4534

First-year students rarely enter college with the skills to do college-level research and think critically about information. The new core curriculum provides a unique opportunity to ensure that all first-year students receive instruction in basic research and information evaluation skills.

Why is information literacy important?

The ability to locate, evaluate and use information has always been important, but in today's Information Age, with the explosion of online library and Internet resources, these abilities take on a new urgency. Having more information from which to choose can make research more difficult rather than easier. Often the easiest information to find is unfiltered or unreliable, making information literacy skills more important than ever.

The competencies are written to be applicable across disciplines, for a variety of assignments and over time. The practical application of these competencies will ensure that students will be able to understand the nature of information and how it is created and disseminated; recognize the utility of scholarly encyclopedias for finding background information; effectively search the Library Catalog and databases to find books and articles, recognize the difference between popular and scholarly sources; evaluate sources, including web sites; and create bibliographies.

How is information literacy taught?

There are a variety of approaches to teaching these competencies. UT faculty may request any of these approaches based on their preferences and what works best for their discipline. Regardless of the method of delivery, best practices indicate that students learn best when teaching is tied to a specific research assignment and timed when students have an information need.

Popular approaches include:

1. Library instruction sessions – in the library or the classroom, sessions are taught by a librarian and include active learning
2. Exercises/assignments and tailored research guides – created by librarians in consultation with faculty
3. Online tutorials tied to course content
4. Involving a librarian in your online course (ex: Blackboard)
5. Competencies training for Teaching Assistants in large format Signature Courses

Visit us online to view examples of past assignments, research guides, online tutorials, or schedule an appointment or instruction session.

## UNDERGRADUATE WRITING CENTER

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

512-471-6222

The Undergraduate Writing Center offers free, individualized, expert help with writing for any UT undergraduate, by appointment or on a drop-in basis. The writer works with a trained consultant to define goals for the session, for example:

- deciding on a topic.
- clarifying and organizing ideas.
- researching, drafting, and revising.
- improving grammar, punctuation, and usage.
- citing sources properly.

Consultants help students develop strategies to improve their writing. The assistance they provide is intended to foster independence. Each student determines how to use the consultant's advice. They cannot guarantee better grades, nor do they proofread or edit essays for students; rather they encourage students to take an active part in the consultation and become more confident writers.

## WRITING COORDINATOR

Dr. Susan "George" Schorn

[gsschorn@mail.utexas.edu](mailto:gsschorn@mail.utexas.edu)

512-232-1421

Contact Dr. Schorn if you would like assistance with writing assignments in your course or if you have questions about the writing flag.

# GEMS

The University of Texas at Austin is home to some of the most prestigious museums and archives of the nation. All students are encouraged to explore these “gems of the university” as a part of their signature course.

## BLANTON MUSEUM OF ART

[www.blantonmuseum.org/](http://www.blantonmuseum.org/)

**Contact: Martha Bradshaw, Manager of Visitor Services, 232-1988**

As the art museum of a major research university, the Blanton Museum exhibits and maintains works of art to further teaching and research. The museum houses 17,000 objects in a new facility that was completed in 2006. Its collections represent four broad areas, including American and Contemporary, Latin American Art, European Paintings, and Prints and Drawings.

## CENTER FOR AMERICAN HISTORY

[www.cah.utexas.edu/](http://www.cah.utexas.edu/)

**Contact: Erin Purdy, Assistant Director of Communications, 475-4692**

The Research and Collections Division of the Center for American History is located in Sid Richardson Hall, Unit 2 of UT-Austin’s main campus. This is the Center’s main research facility and repository for the vast majority of the Center’s book, manuscript, map, newspaper, photographic, sound, and ephemera collections. It is open to the public, Mondays through Saturdays.



Photo: Marsha Miller

## HARRY RANSOM HUMANITIES RESEARCH CENTER

[www.hrc.utexas.edu/](http://www.hrc.utexas.edu/)

**Contact: Danielle Sigler, Curator for Academic Affairs, 232-5170**

The HRC is one of the premier cultural institutions in the world. Holding more than 45 million items, the extensive collections include 36 million literary manuscripts, one million rare books, five million photographs, and over 100,000 works of art. Highlights include the Gutenberg Bible (c. 1455), the First Photograph (c. 1826), important paintings by Frida Kahlo and Diego Rivera, and major manuscript collections of James Joyce, Ernest Hemingway, T.S. Eliot, D.H. Lawrence, Isaac Bashevis Singer, and Tennessee Williams, to name but a few.

Exhibitions and events are free and open to the public.

## THE FINE ARTS LIBRARY

[www.lib.utexas.edu/fal/index.html](http://www.lib.utexas.edu/fal/index.html)

**Contact: Laura Schwartz, Head Librarian, 475-4476**

The Fine Arts Library (FAL), a unit of the The University of Texas Libraries, opened July 16, 1979. The library contains the art and music collections and most of the theatre and dance materials. The Fine Arts Library collection includes approximately 300,000 books and scores,



900 current serial subscriptions, 36,000 compact discs, 4,400 video cassettes and videodiscs, 6,200 reels of microfilm, and 24,000 microfiche.

## LYNDON BAINES JOHNSON LIBRARY AND MUSEUM

[www.lbjlib.utexas.edu/](http://www.lbjlib.utexas.edu/)

**Contact: Marsha Sharp, Education Specialist, 721-1095**

The Lyndon Baines Johnson Library and Museum is one of eleven presidential libraries administered by the national Archives and Records Administration. The library houses forty million pages of historical documents, which include the papers from the entire public career of Lyndon Baines Johnson and also from those of close associates. These papers and the vast administrative files from the presidency are used by anyone interested in conducting research about the Lyndon Johnson presidency. The galleries in the museum feature fascinating exhibitions about LBJ's presidency and about other aspects of 20th century social and political history. The galleries are open to the public and admission is free of charge.

## TEXAS NATURAL SCIENCE CENTER

[www.utexas.edu/tmm/](http://www.utexas.edu/tmm/)

**Contact: Christina Cid, Program Coordinator, 232-5509**

The Texas Natural Science Center encourages awareness of biological diversity through research, exhibits, and education/outreach and is made up of the Texas Memorial Museum, the Vertebrate Paleontology Lab, the Non-vertebrate Paleontology Lab, and the Texas Natural History Collections. The museum leads research in the disciplines of paleontology, geology, biology, herpetology, ichthyology and entomology has amassed a \$4-billion collection of 5.7 million specimens. All exhibits and education/outreach programs are based on these specimens, most of which are from Texas and many of which are unique and irreplaceable. Programming spotlights dinosaurs and fossils, Texas wildlife, and gems and minerals.

## UT CAMPUS TELESCOPES

<http://outreach.as.utexas.edu/>

**Contact: Lara Eakins, Lab Services Supervisor, 471-1307**

The UT Department of Astronomy hosts "star parties"—guided stargazing through UT telescopes— three nights each week. There is no charge and reservations are not required. Check the web site for times and in case of cancellation due to poor visibility.

## UT PRESS

[www.utexas.edu/utpress/](http://www.utexas.edu/utpress/)

**Contact: Drea Johanssen, Administrative Assistant, 232-7603**

The University has built its reputation on its faculty, its nationally recognized centers for advanced study, and its archives and collections in literature, history, art, and the sciences— sources on which the Press has drawn for decades. From its earliest days, the Press has collaborated with the University's Center for Middle Eastern Studies, Center for Mexican American Studies, and Institute for Latin American Studies. Outside the University, our Southwestern Writers Collection Series is drawn from an archive at Texas State University at San Marcos.

## THE PERFORMING ARTS CENTER

[www.utpac.org/](http://www.utpac.org/)

**Contact: Cameron Smith, Public Relations Manager, 471-0634**

Since its first performance in 1981, the University of Texas Performing Arts Center has evolved into one of the largest and most extraordinary university arts presenters in the country. Powered by a commitment to educate, enlighten and entertain, the PAC has helped establish UT and Austin as a venue for international culture and performing arts. Like the university and city that give it life, the PAC promotes an artistic fusion and diversity in which pop legends, chamber orchestras, alternative rock bands and world music superstars share the season.

## B. IDEN PAYNE THEATRE

[www.finearts.utexas.edu/tad/facilities/b\\_iden\\_payne\\_theatre/index.cfm](http://www.finearts.utexas.edu/tad/facilities/b_iden_payne_theatre/index.cfm)

**Contact: Amanda Flores, Public Affairs Specialist, 232-5337**

The B. Iden Payne Theatre provides the perfect setting for plays and dance performances, allowing audiences a close-up look at the action on stage. This facility not only stages productions by students of the UT Department of Theatre & Dance, but also productions by internationally celebrated theatre companies and dance troupes.

## WALLER CREEK

[www.wallercreek.org](http://www.wallercreek.org)

**Contact: Christina Cid, Program Coordinator, 232-5509**

Waller Creek is an urban watershed that runs from North Austin through the city and campus into Lady Bird Lake downtown. Even though it's in the middle of the city, the creek is home to a great diversity of wildlife. From the Great Blue Heron to the Roseate Skimmer Dragonfly, many types of animals rely on the creek habitat for survival.



Photo: Marsha Miller