BIOL 3301-90L Fall 2019 Syllabus

Your instructors

Lead professor

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Student consultation hours: Wednesdays, 9:30-10:45 am, Blackboard Collaborate Ultra

Coaches

Tamara Allen
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Time commitment

Be prepared to spend 8 hours per week on this course. This is an advanced course for Biology majors and you should expect a significant workload. Falling behind in this course is bad, because the concepts are cumulative. Not becoming proficient with information and objectives presented in one week will lead to low scores for that week and later ones.

Required course materials

Textbook

*Evolution: Making Sense of Life* (any edition). All chapter readings will refer to the *second edition*. 
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First</td>
<td>Carl Zimmer, Douglas J. Emlen</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>Roberts and Company Publishers</td>
<td>978-1-936-22136-3</td>
<td>N/A (out of print)</td>
<td>Unkn oun</td>
<td>Unkn oun</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>N/A (out of print)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Prices given for textbook purchase. Textbook rentals are also available.

**SimUText software**
You will use this almost every week as a “lab” type activity to further investigate the ideas from class. You will buy SimUText directly from SimBio as you go through the process below ($49.00).

If you took this class online before, you do **not** have to re-purchase the software, but you **do** have to contact SimBio to make sure you are in the right course! Contact SimBio support staff by completing an online request here: https://simutext.zendesk.com/hc/en-us/requests/new

It is important that you review the information below **before** you subscribe to the SimUText for Biological Evolution at The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley. To avoid possible problems, **do not wait until the last minute**.

- **Check your tech!** Visit https://simutext.zendesk.com/hc/en-us/categories/200170134-Check-Your-Tech to confirm that the SimUText application will work on your computer, and/or to explore your options if there is a problem.
- If you purchased a SimUText Voucher from your bookstore, be sure to have it with you when subscribing, as you will need to enter your voucher code.
- When you are ready to subscribe and download installers, follow this link to start the process: https://www.simutext2.com/student/register.html#/key/UGAz-V6Ad-hHAK-tfmz-BwJJ.
- When you are installing and it asks for your “lab or recitation section,” use your discussion group number, which is listed in “Start here,” then “Your discussion group number” in the upper left menu bar.
- After you have completed the subscription process, if you need to download the SimUText application installers again, you will be able to access them by logging into the SimUText Student Portal: https://www.simutext2.com/student.

Should you encounter problems, you may need your course-specific Access Key. It is: **UGAz-V6Ad-hHAK-tfmz-BwJJ**


If you need to use the university computers, go to **instructions for using SimUText on a USB flash drive**.

**Technical requirements**

**Computer hardware**

To participate in this online course, you should have easy access to a computer less than five years old with high-speed internet connection via cable modem, LAN, or DSL. To ensure you are using a supported browser and have required plug-ins please refer to **Blackboard Help - Browser Support** from Blackboard's resource page.

**Student technical skills**
You are expected to be proficient with installing and using basic computer applications and have the ability to send and receive email attachments.

Software

- Web browser such as Firefox or Chrome (for routine use)
- Respondus LockDown browser (for exit quizzes and exams)
- Adobe’s Acrobat Reader and Flash Player
- Microsoft Office
- Virus protection

Technical assistance

If you need technical assistance at any time during the course or to report a problem with Blackboard you can:

- Visit the Blackboard Student Help Site
- Submit a Blackboard Helpdesk Ticket
- COLTT Help Desk Contact Information (UTRGV’s Blackboard Support)
- Location: EEDUC 2.202, BCASA 613
- Phone: Edinburg, 956-665-5327; Brownsville, 956-882-6792
- Monday – Thursday, 7:30 AM – 7:00 PM; Friday, 7:30 AM – 6:00 PM

Course description and goals

Genetic, ecological, and paleontological aspects of evolution. Includes review of evolutionary history and thought, species concepts, speciation, and other evolutionary processes. Emphasis is on evolutionary mechanisms. Prerequisites: BIOL 1406 (or BIOL 1487) and BIOL 1407 (or BIOL 1488), or permission of instructor.

Learning objectives/outcomes for the course

The Department of Biology student learning outcomes

1. Role of the cell: The Biology graduate knows the role of the cell in life and living systems, and understands the interrelationships among subcellular structures that contribute to its functioning as a unit.
2. Role of genetics: The Biology graduate understands the role of genetics in inheritance and can explain how environmental conditions influence natural selection processes and contribute to adaptation.
3. Diversity of life: The Biology graduate is aware of the diversity of life and interrelationships between an organism and its environment.
4. Structure and function: The Biology graduate understands how the organization of a specific structure within an organism is related to a specific function, understands
interrelationships among organs and organ systems within an organism, and how interaction between structure and function contribute to the survival of the organism.

5. Scientific method: The Biology graduate can formulate a testable hypothesis, evaluate and design experiments, analyze and interpret data, and communicate research findings in both oral and written form.

Specific course objectives

1. State evidence that evolution occurred and what mechanisms caused evolution. Provide a scientifically accurate definition for basic evolutionary terminology.
2. Draw a timeline, placing each contributor to the development of evolutionary ideas on the timeline and indicating their contribution and links to other people’s ideas.
3. Draw and interpret phylogenetic trees and use those trees to analyze the evolution of character traits.
4. Explain some ideas of macroevolution including species diversification, species turnover, punctuated equilibria, mass extinctions, and recent hominid evolutionary history.
5. Review basic principles of genetics, including: genotype, phenotype, Punnett squares, dominant, recessive, homozygous, heterozygous, DNA structure and expression.
6. Distinguish between the types of mutations, their consequences for phenotype, and their evolutionary importance. Explain the random and non-random nature of mutations. If given allele or gene frequency data use Hardy Weinberg Equilibrium equations to calculate other values and predict frequencies in future generations.
7. Explain the consequences of mutation and natural selection as evolutionary mechanisms, including under a variety of different conditions such as selection against dominant versus recessive alleles.
8. Explain the consequences of migration, genetic drift, and non-random mating on populations, discuss how these might result in non-adaptive evolutionary change. Use population data to compare the relative contributions of the evolutionary mechanisms.
9. If given a scenario or set of data distinguish among the contributions of phenotypic plasticity and heredity to variation. Explain how selection and heritability interact to affect the strength and rate of evolution (if any) of an organism.
10. Define and explain basic concepts of evo-devo such as: homeobox, co-option and the evolution of complex traits, changes in regulation, developmental constraints, and pleiotropy.
11. Describe a variety of species concepts and paths leading to speciation. If given a set of data apply the various species concepts to decide how many species are present, be able to justify your decision based on each species concepts’ criteria.
12. Define sexual selection and kin selection. Distinguish these from natural selection. Use Hamilton’s rule to calculate when behaviors would be favored by kin selection.
13. Describe reciprocal selection and relate that process to the geographic mosaic theory of coevolution and to species diversification.
14. Explain “the allocation problem” and discuss how it affects an organism’s life-history. Explain why the strength of natural selection varies with the age of an organism.

Learning objectives for core curriculum requirements
This course does not satisfy any core curriculum requirements.

Course organization and online tools

Course structure

This course will be delivered entirely online through the course management system Blackboard Learn. You will use your UTRGV account to login to the course from the My UTRGV site and under applications click on Blackboard Learn.

The course is organized by week. Most weeks follow the same pattern (with the exception of weeks with holidays). Each week contains:

- Preview quiz.
- Recorded lecture.
- Assigned textbook chapters that accompany the lecture topic.
- Reading assignment and group discussion.
- SimUText software module or a similar “laboratory” type assignment to complete.
- Exit quiz on the content of the course from that week.

Discussion forums

You will find the following discussion forums in the course Blackboard site.

General Help

Post any questions or comments you may have about course mechanics or technical issues to this forum. There are two discussion forums devoted to answering questions about the course.

- Course policy forum: This is for questions about how the course operates, grading, the syllabus, and so on.
- Course content forum (muddiest point): This is for questions about the science and concepts discussed in the course.

Weekly discussion forums

Forums related to discussion reading assignments, as described in each Weekly Assignments folder. To post your writing go to the Discussion Board for the current week, then to the thread for your group. Put your initial discussion posts and responses in the thread for your group to receive credit for your writings. The group you are assigned to can be found in the “Your progress” or gradebook link. There is an item called Discussion Group assignment.

Forums versus email
If you have a general question about course content or mechanics, please post it to one of the two Course Help discussion forums. Doing so gives students in the course an opportunity to help one another and allows everyone to benefit from answers to your questions.

Any email asking a **general course question** will get a standard reply asking that the question be posted in the appropriate discussion forum and will **not be answered by email**. I apologize for this, but with hundreds of students in this class, it is not practical to respond to general questions individually. You are welcome to email me directly if your question is specific to you personally.

Example: “When is the final exam?” or “Can you clarify the difference between a node and a branch?” are general questions that should be posted in the help forums. “I need an accommodation for the week 6 exit quiz because I was in the hospital” is a question specific to you that should be emailed.

The academic coaches and I are facilitators in the discussion forums. We may occasionally correct misconceptions and/or redirect conversations that need redirecting. I may also post comments following the completion of discussion indicating my general impressions of the comments and conclusions. Finally, after grading, the coaches will write general notes of trends and common problems people in your group seem to be making in their writing.

**Quizzes**

There are two types of quizzes in this class.

**Preview quizzes**

Preview quizzes are short (five question) quizzes to familiarize you with the major concepts in the coming week. You can take these multiple times (usually three times), and the highest score is kept. They are not timed. During normal weeks, the target for completing the preview quiz is Monday at 11:00 pm. You **must** complete the preview quiz to “unlock” the exit quiz for the week.

**Exit quizzes**

Exit quizzes are longer quizzes to assess your understanding of the material for the week. Exit quizzes test your knowledge, comprehension, and ability to apply your knowledge to new situations. Application questions (higher level) will test your understanding of the concepts, not the specific scenarios or examples presented. An exit quiz can be taken only once and is timed.

Exit quizzes are usually split into two parts. One part consists of short answer questions (for example, multiple-choice, true-false, and matching questions). The other consists of essay questions to be written in sentences. Quiz questions draw from the recorded lecture, textbook chapters, assigned readings, discussions, and SimUText assignments. The duration of a quiz depends on the nature of the questions. 30 seconds for recall questions, 1-2 minutes for problem-solving, and 5 minutes per essay.
Exit quizzes must be **completed** by Friday at 11:00 pm each week. **Budget your time accordingly!** You should not start the first part of an exit quiz at 10:55 pm and expect to complete both the short answer and essay portions of the quiz in time.

Exit quizzes require use of [Respondus Lockdown Browser](#). Be sure to follow the directions in the Week 1 Learning Activities Folder that show you how to install this software before you attempt to take the quiz. If you have problems with the Respondus Lockdown Browser, contact our local on-campus support:

- Ruben Zamora: ruben.zamora@utrgv.edu
- Raymundo Garza: raymundo.garza@utrgv.edu

Take the exit quizzes as if you were in a classroom setting. Do not use books, notes, or any study materials. Using these materials to take a quiz is considered cheating and academic dishonesty violations will be pursued via the Dean of Students.

You **must** complete the preview quiz to “unlock” the course material for the following week.

**Comprehensive final exam**

You **must** take the final exam in-person in a campus computer lab. Arrive early, bring, a calculator (not phone), a writing implement, and your review notecard (3 inches × 5 inches, handwritten, readable without enhancements like a magnifying glass). You will sign up for a time slot using the “Final Exam Sign Up” wiki page in the Communications Hub on Blackboard. If you live outside the area and need the exam proctored off-campus, discuss with Zen and use the information here to find a proctoring site near you. [http://www.utrgv.edu/online/getting-support/student-support/proctoring/index.htm](http://www.utrgv.edu/online/getting-support/student-support/proctoring/index.htm)

**Online student consulting hours via Blackboard**

I plan to be online for consulting and questions at 9:30 am on Wednesdays (no appointments necessary). During consulting hours, I will be reachable in Blackboard Collaborate Ultra. I check other messages (such as emails, text, and Twitter) regularly, though not at any particular time. If you cannot meet at that time, you can contact me to set up another time.

**Course grading policies**

Final grades assigned for this course will be based on the percentage of total points earned.

**Letter grading scheme**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Points</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>&gt;180</td>
<td>90 – 100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>160-179.9...</td>
<td>80 – 89.9...</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
C  140-159.9...  70 – 79.9...
D  120-139.9...  60 – 69.9...
F  <120  < 60

**Point assignment**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preview quizzes, 15 quizzes, 1 point each</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exit quizzes, 15 quizzes, 3 points each</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussions, 15 topics, 3 points each</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assignment (usually SimUText), 12 assignments, 3 points each</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final exam</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total possible points</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Viewing grades in Blackboard**

Points you receive for graded activities will be posted to the Blackboard Grade Book. Click on the Your Progress link on the Course Menu to view your points. We will update online grades each time a grading session has been complete, which is usually less than seven days after an activity is completed.

Answers to quiz questions are **not** released to maintain the integrity of the course. Sorry.

**Late work**

You **must** complete certain tasks to proceed to later ones. Specifically:

- You must complete the preview quiz to “unlock” the exit quiz for that week.
- You must complete the exit quiz for the week to “unlock” course materials for the next week.

Late work can be submitted with the approval of the instructor. Late work that is not accompanied by documentation may be subject to a minimum -20% late penalty. Discussion forum postings are not eligible to be submitted late, as the point is for posts to be seen and read by others so that they can respond to them.

**Unavoidable absences**
If unforeseeable events prevent you from completing work, you must provide written documentation of those events to have your grades adjusted so you are not penalized by the missing work. The exact nature of the adjustment that will be provided will depend on the nature and timing of the events affecting you (i.e., a single day where you missed one quiz deadline may not be handled the same was as if you missed an entire week). Written documentation must be from verifiable sources that do not have clear ties to you. For example, memos on company letterhead with contact information of individuals who can confirm events are acceptable. Letters from family members are not adequate.

**Course assistance and academic coaches**

This course uses academic coaches (listed above) to make sure that every student gets the attention they need. In a large online course, it is easy to get lost in the crowd and academic coaches are assigned to help a small number of students succeed in the course. The coaches are trained in the course format, course material, and grading is overseen by Zen Faulkes. Grading by each coach is assessed to ensure they are broadly comparable. The best use of the academic coaches for the student is to use them as a starting point if you have a question. If it is something they cannot do, they will you refer you to Zen.

**Course policies**

**Participation**

Online courses require your active participation. Here are some tips for success:

- In discussion forums, you learn from one another by posing questions, justifying your comments, and providing multiple perspectives. When you prepare for discussions through thoughtful reflection, you contribute to your own successful learning experience as well as to the experience of your peers.
- Log in to the course frequently (at least several times per week; logging in daily from Monday to Friday is recommended) and check the announcements. This will keep you apprised of any course updates, progress in discussions, assignment information, and messages requiring immediate attention.
- Be aware of and keep up with the Course Schedule in the syllabus.

**Build rapport**

If you find that you have any trouble keeping up with assignments or other aspects of the course, make sure you let Zen know as early as possible. As you will find, building rapport and effective relationships are key to becoming an effective professional. Make sure that you are proactive in informing Zen when difficulties arise during the semester so that we can help you find a solution.

**Assignment completion and time zones**
All assignments for this course will be submitted electronically through Blackboard. Assignments and discussions must be submitted by the given deadline. You are strongly recommended to complete work some hours before the deadline, in case a technical problem arises.

**Due dates and times**

All due dates and times are shown in Central Standard Time. If you are traveling or live outside of this time zone, adjust your schedule accordingly.

Because quizzes are operated by computers, times are accurate to the second, not minute. For example, if a due date is “11:00 pm”, 10:59:59 pm is on time, but 11:00:00 pm is **late**.

**Incomplete policy**

In cases of emergency or special circumstances, students can request an “Incomplete” grade. An incomplete will only be assigned if the course has been completed with only the final exam remaining. If there are weekly modules left to complete, the course must be re-taken. The final exam must be completed before the end of the next semester.

**Important dates for Fall 2019**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>26 August</td>
<td>First day of classes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29 August</td>
<td>Last day to add a course or register for Fall 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 September</td>
<td>Labour Day – no classes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 November</td>
<td>Last day to drop a course; will count toward the 6-drop rule</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28-29 November</td>
<td>American Thanksgiving – no classes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 December</td>
<td>Last day of class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 December</td>
<td>Study day – no classes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-12 December</td>
<td>Final exams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13-14 December</td>
<td>Commencement exercises</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Weekly schedule**

This schedule is designed so that all assignments are completed during the regular work week (Monday to Friday) so that you do not have to spend weekends on this class (though you can if you want to). The outline below shows a typical schedule for most weeks. Some weeks have different deadlines due to holidays. See “Course outline” below for a detailed week by week breakdown.

**Monday**

- Read textbook chapter(s).
- Watch recorded lecture.
- Complete 5 question preview quiz by 11:00 pm. You **must** complete the preview quiz before the exit quizzes will be released to you.

**Tuesday**

- Read assigned paper for discussion.
- Post to weekly discussion forum on assigned paper by 11:00 pm.

**Wednesday**

- Read other people's discussion board posts.
- Work on assignment (usually SimUText).
- If needed: Chat to Zen during online office hours (9:30 am, Blackboard Collaborate Ultra).

**Thursday**

- Respond to other people's discussion board posts by 11:00 pm.
- Work on assignment (usually SimUText).

**Friday**

- Submit weekly assignment (usually SimUText) by 8:00 pm.
- Complete the exit quiz with Respondus lockdown browser by 11:00 pm. The exit quiz is usually split into two parts, which take about 30 minutes combined. You must complete the first (short answer) before the second part is released (written answers). You **must** complete the exit quiz for the next week's materials to be released to you.

**Weekend**

- Enjoy your weekend!
- If you prefer, get a jump on the coming week! Course materials for upcoming week are available Saturday at 8:00 am.

**Course outline**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week of semester</th>
<th>Start date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Textbook chapter</th>
<th>Assignment (usually SimUText)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week 01</td>
<td>26 August</td>
<td>Why evolution is true</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Install SimUText and make sure it is ready to use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 02</td>
<td>3 September</td>
<td>History of evolutionary thought</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Timeline of evolutionary thought (Submit file)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week of semester</td>
<td>Start date</td>
<td>Topic</td>
<td>Textbook chapter</td>
<td>Assignment (usually SimUText)</td>
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<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 03</td>
<td>9 September</td>
<td>Geology and phylogenies</td>
<td>3, 4</td>
<td>SimUText: Flowers and trees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 04</td>
<td>16 September</td>
<td>Macroevolution</td>
<td>14, 17</td>
<td>SimUText: Evolutionary evidence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 05</td>
<td>23 September</td>
<td>Review of genetics</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>SimUText: Mendelian pigs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 06</td>
<td>30 September</td>
<td>Mechanisms of evolution</td>
<td>5, 6</td>
<td>SimUText: Sickle-cell alleles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 07</td>
<td>7 October</td>
<td>Mutation and selection</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>SimUText: Darwinian snails</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 08</td>
<td>14 October</td>
<td>Drift, migration, non-random mating</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>SimUText: Bottleneck ferrets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 09</td>
<td>21 October</td>
<td>Quantitative genetics</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>SimUText: Domesticating dogs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 10</td>
<td>28 October</td>
<td>Adaptation</td>
<td>9 (sect. 9.5), 10</td>
<td>SimUText: HIV clock</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 11</td>
<td>4 November</td>
<td>Species and speciation</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>SimUText: Finches and evolution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 12</td>
<td>11 November</td>
<td>Sexual selection and kin selection</td>
<td>11, 16</td>
<td>SimUText: How the guppy got its spots</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 13</td>
<td>18 November</td>
<td>Co-evolution</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>SimUText: Understanding experimental design</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 14</td>
<td>25 November</td>
<td>Life histories and parental care</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>No assignment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 15</td>
<td>2 December</td>
<td>Review</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>No assignment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exams</td>
<td>6-10 December</td>
<td>Final exam taken in computer lab. Sign up for exam sessions will be announced a few weeks before the end of the semester.</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**UTRGV policy statements**

**Students with disabilities**
Students with a documented disability (physical, psychological, learning, or other disability which affects academic performance) who would like to receive academic accommodations should contact Student Accessibility Services (SAS) as soon as possible to schedule an appointment to initiate services. Accommodations can be arranged through SAS at any time, but are not retroactive. Students who experience a broken bone, severe injury, or undergo surgery during the semester are eligible for temporary services.

**Pregnancy, pregnancy-related, and parenting accommodations**

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 prohibits sex discrimination, which includes discrimination based on pregnancy, marital status, or parental status. Students seeking accommodations related to pregnancy, pregnancy-related condition, or parenting (reasonably immediate postpartum period) are encouraged to contact Student Accessibility Services for additional information and to request accommodations.

Student Accessibility Services

Brownsville Campus: Student Accessibility Services is located in 1.107 in the Music and Learning Center building (BMSLC) and can be contacted by phone at (956) 882-7374 or via email at ability@utrgv.edu. Edinburg Campus: Student Accessibility Services is located in 108 University Center (EUCTR) and can be contacted by phone at (956) 665-7005 or via email at ability@utrgv.edu.

**Mandatory course evaluation period:**

Students are required to complete an online evaluation of this course, accessed through your UTRGV account (http://my.utrgv.edu); you will be contacted through email with further instructions. Students who complete their evaluations will have priority access to their grades. Online evaluations will be available:

- Module 1: 2-8 October
- Module 2: 27 November - 3 December
- Full fall semester: 14 November - 4 December

**Attendance**

Students are expected to attend all scheduled classes and may be dropped from the course for excessive absences. (For purposes of this class, attendance is tracked by logins to the class website.) UTRGV's attendance policy excuses students from attending class if they are participating in officially sponsored university activities, such as athletics; for observance of religious holy days; or for military service. Students should contact the instructor in advance of the excused absence and arrange to make up missed work or examinations.

**Scholastic integrity**
As members of a community dedicated to Honesty, Integrity and Respect, students are reminded that those who engage in scholastic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary penalties, including the possibility of failure in the course and expulsion from the University. Scholastic dishonesty includes but is not limited to: cheating, plagiarism (including self-plagiarism), and collusion; submission for credit of any work or materials that are attributable in whole or in part to another person; taking an examination for another person; any act designed to give unfair advantage to a student; or the attempt to commit such acts. Since scholastic dishonesty harms the individual, all students and the integrity of the University, policies on scholastic dishonesty will be strictly enforced (Board of Regents Rules and Regulations and UTRGV Academic Integrity Guidelines). All scholastic dishonesty incidents will be reported to Student Rights and Responsibilities.

**Sexual misconduct and mandatory reporting**

In accordance with UT System regulations, your instructor is a “Responsible Employee” for reporting purposes under Title IX regulations and so must report to the Office of Institutional Equity & Diversity (oie@utrgv.edu) any instance, occurring during a student’s time in college, of sexual misconduct, which includes sexual assault, stalking, dating violence, domestic violence, and sexual harassment, about which she/he becomes aware during this course through writing, discussion, or personal disclosure. More information can be found at www.utrgv.edu/equity, including confidential resources available on campus. The faculty and staff of UTRGV actively strive to provide a learning, working, and living environment that promotes personal integrity, civility, and mutual respect that is free from sexual misconduct, discrimination, and all forms of violence. If students, faculty, or staff would like confidential assistance, or have questions, they can contact OVAVP (Office for Victim Advocacy & Violence Prevention) at 665-8287, 882-8282, or OVAVP@utrgv.edu.

**Course drops**

According to UTRGV policy, students may drop any class without penalty earning a grade of DR until the official drop date. Following that date, students must be assigned a letter grade and can no longer drop the class. Students considering dropping the class should be aware of the "3-peat rule" and the "6-drop" rule so they can recognize how dropped classes may affect their academic success. The 6-drop rule refers to Texas law that dictates that undergraduate students may not drop more than six courses during their undergraduate career. Courses dropped at other Texas public higher education institutions will count toward the six-course drop limit. The 3-peat rule refers to additional fees charged to students who take the same class for the third time.

**Student services**

Students who demonstrate financial need have a variety of options when it comes to paying for college costs, such as scholarships, grants, loans and work-study. Students should visit the Students Services Center (U Central) for additional information. U Central is located in BMAIN 1.100 (Brownsville) or ESSBL 1.145 (Edinburg) or can be reached by email (ucentral@utrgv.edu) or telephone: (888) 882-4026. In addition to financial aid, U Central can assist students with registration and admissions.
Students seeking academic help in their studies can use university resources in addition to an instructor's office hours. University Resources include the Advising Center, Career Center, Counseling Center, Learning Center, and Writing Center. The centers provide services such as tutoring, writing help, critical thinking, study skills, degree planning, and student employment. Locations are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Center name</th>
<th>Email</th>
<th>Brownsville office</th>
<th>Brownsville phone</th>
<th>Edinburg office</th>
<th>Edinburg phone</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Advising Center</td>
<td><a href="mailto:AcademicAdvising@utrgv.edu">AcademicAdvising@utrgv.edu</a></td>
<td>BMAIN 1.400</td>
<td>956-665-7120</td>
<td>ESWKH 101</td>
<td>956-665-7120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career Center</td>
<td><a href="mailto:CareerCenter@utrgv.edu">CareerCenter@utrgv.edu</a></td>
<td>BCRTZ 129</td>
<td>956-882-5627</td>
<td>ESSBL 2.101</td>
<td>956-665-2243</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counseling Center</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Counseling@utrgv.edu">Counseling@utrgv.edu</a></td>
<td>EUCTR 109</td>
<td>956-665-2574</td>
<td>BSTUN 2.10</td>
<td>956-882-3897</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning Center</td>
<td><a href="mailto:LearningCenter@utrgv.edu">LearningCenter@utrgv.edu</a></td>
<td>BMSLC 2.118</td>
<td>956-882-8208</td>
<td>ELCTR 100</td>
<td>956-665-2585</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing Center</td>
<td><a href="mailto:WC@utrgv.edu">WC@utrgv.edu</a></td>
<td>BUBLB 3.206</td>
<td>956-882-7065</td>
<td>ESTAC 3.119</td>
<td>956-665-2538</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Updates and changes

Course policies are subject to change. It is the student’s responsibility to check Blackboard for corrections, clarifications, and updates to the syllabus. Any changes will be posted in Blackboard using the Announcements tool.