

Syllabus

UGS 302 Fall 2024

The Science of Happiness

Unique Number: 61770

TTh 11:00 - 12:30, MAI 220D

Professor: Dr. Brent Iverson

Office: NHB 5.136A (Norman Hackerman Building, the one with the “canoe thing” on the end facing Speedway)

Course Website: <https://utexas.instructure.com/courses/1403967>

Office Hours: Wednesdays at 4 PM and Thursdays at 3 PM, NHB 5.136A

MAIN POINT:

The main point of this class is to help each of you make informed decisions from now on that help you live a happier life. Full stop. That really is the main point of the class. But wait, this is COMPLICATED. There are no simple answers here. The best thing for us to do is learn together about what is known and accepted. In this course, we will gain a better understanding of the concept of happiness from a historical and multi-cultural perspective. We will see happiness from the point of view of modern psychology research. We will also learn about recent breakthroughs in neuroscience related to the biochemistry underlying the feeling of happiness in the brain and how happiness and addiction are unfortunately related at the molecular level. The main textbook for the course (“The Good Life. Lessons From The World’s Longest Scientific Study of Happiness” by Robert Waldinger and Marc Schultz) describes the useful information that has been learned through the longest continuous study of happiness ever undertaken, spanning generations.

SIGNATURE COURSE MISSION

This is a Signature Course. Signature Courses at the University of Texas Austin are a unique graduation requirement, and one that will set your education apart from everyone else in the state. This course will connect you with distinguished faculty members in distinctive learning environments. By way of this rigorous intellectual experience, you will develop college-level skills in research, writing, speaking, and discussion through an approach that is both interdisciplinary and contemporary.

SIGNATURE COURSE ESSENTIALS

- **Information Literacy:** A major element of the course will be reading and searching the peer-reviewed scientific literature. You will learn to recognize the difference between data and anecdote, a fact-based conclusion and unsupported opinion.
- **University GEM:** On October 19 we will visit a true gem at UT Austin, the Blanton Museum of art on campus.
- **Writing:** This course carries the Writing Flag. You will not have exams, but there is a final paper that will count for 30% of your final grade.
- **Oral Communication:** This is a discussion-based course, and you are expected to contribute each class. In addition, each of you will present a formal oral presentation on October 31 that will be worth 20% of your final grade.
- **Herbert Family University Lecture Series:** You must attend at least one of these lectures. They are going to be really cool!
 - Fall 2024 Herbert Family University Lecture Series to take place on September 16th and 17th at Bass Concert Hall. Both nights will share the theme *Beyond Debate: Dialogue, Discussion, and Discourse*, with night 1 focusing on the importance of difficult conversations and night 2 focusing on engaging in effective dialogue.
 - Doors will open at 6:30pm and the lectures will start promptly at 7:00pm, followed by a Q&A that will end by 8:00pm. The lectures are free and open to all UT students, faculty, and staff. Please share this information with your Signature Course students!

WRITING FLAG

Like I said above, this course carries the Writing flag. Writing flag courses are designed to give students experience with writing in an academic discipline. In this class, you can expect to complete a substantial writing project, and receive feedback from your instructor to help you improve your writing. You will also have the opportunity to revise your assignment, and you may be asked to read and discuss your peers' work. You should therefore expect a substantial portion of your grade to come from your written work. Writing Flag classes meet the Core Communications objectives of Critical Thinking, Communication, Teamwork, and Personal Responsibility, established by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board.

PackBack - READ THIS, YOU HAVE NEVER SEEN ANYTHING LIKE PackBack!

Decades of studies have proven that engaging with a subject on a daily basis is the best way to learn (create long term memories). Soon, we will understand this at the cellular level! To accomplish this daily engagement, we will be using an AI-based system called PackBack. It is so cool, it is based on creating discussions among different students. The bottom line is that each of you will be asking a single question and making two comments about other student's question often during the semester. I will cue up the topic of the question based on the discussions of that day. The AI evaluates the quality of your questions and

comments!! I know, this sounds a little creepy, but I am positive you will like it once you start using it!

To get started, after the first class, you have until tomorrow (Wednesday) night to finish asking one question and making two comments. First you will need to sign up with PackBack. You should have already received an email about how to do that. Then, go to the PackBack link. Spend a few minutes and come up with a great question and make some helpful comments to other student's questions! This is going to be so interesting for all of us!

GRADING

The grading for this course is straightforward. This is a discussion-based course. We will learn through discussion of assigned materials (videos and reading). I will not be lecturing. **You will need to come prepared to each class period, ready to participate in the discussions.**

30% of your grade will be based on your contributions to the discussions over the course of the semester. See below on how this will be measured.

10% of your grade will be based on your PackBack participation (See above). I will be looking more for your participation, but I will be looking at the analysis of your posts as well.

15% of your grade will be based on your preparation. See below on how this will be measured.

15% of your grade will be based on a short 4-5 minute oral presentation you will be making on November 5.

30% of your grade will be based on a final paper of at least 7 pages in length (double-spaced) that you will turn in on December 9.

You will get feedback on 2 early drafts of the paper, but these first two drafts will not be graded. I will be looking for improvement over the three versions of the paper. A significant element of this course involves learning how to identify and understand appropriate peer-reviewed references, so you will be required to include at least 7 peer-reviewed references as part of your final paper.

REQUIRED TEXTS:

- 1) "Happiness" by Tim Lomas, part of the MIT Press Essential Knowledge Series, Cambridge Mass., 2022.
- 2) "The Good Life. Lessons From The World's Longest Scientific Study of Happiness" by Robert Waldinger and Marc Schultz, Simon & Schuster, New York, 2023.

You will also be required to view various videos and read a number of scholarly articles made available during the semester.

ATTENDANCE:

This is a discussion-based class, so attendance in person is required without an excused absence. I will be taking attendance each day, and if you miss more than 2 classes over the course without a reasonable excuse (illness, etc.), you will lose 10% of your preparation and participation grade for the course for each additional day missed. That is 10% of 50% or **5% for the final grade calculation** for each unexcused absence after the first two.

You need to come to every class possible.

DISCUSSION

Part of your grade for participation depends on your success in discussion. When you succeed, the whole class is better able to do well. When you do badly in discussion, you make it hard for others.

Ask yourself this: In the most recent class discussion, did you learn anything from a fellow student? If not, ask yourself what went wrong.

BASICS: Before Class Starts

Arrive in class on time, after reading the assignment or viewing the assigned video.

Bring your book or computer so you can refer to the reference material.

Bring a question or two from the reading.

ADVANCED: During Class

A good discussion occurs when everyone has a chance to speak and to be heard by the others.

- Listen to other students; let them have their say.
- Listen with your mouth closed.
- When you speak, speak to what the latest speaker has said.
- Speak to the class, not to your instructor.
- Feel free to disagree with what a classmate has said.
- Do not be shy about expressing your views.
- Do not take up more than your share of class time—even if you know you are the smartest person in the class.
- Be prepared to back up your views by citing a piece of the text, or by giving a reason.

BEASTS: Don't Be One of Them

- The sleepy Sloth cannot stay awake. He did not plan enough time for sleep last night.
- The bullying Buffalo has all the answers and makes sure that no one else has a chance at a question. She interrupts a lot.
- The miserly Mink hoards his wisdom and will not share it with anyone. He knows he is the smartest person in the room, and so he has nothing to say to the others.
- The agreeable Aardvark never differs with anyone over anything. If she disagreed with someone, she feels she would have to be unpleasant. Besides, she would have to give reasons for disagreeing, and that is hard work.

THE ONE RULE: Respect

Treat everyone in the class with respect. An ideal discussion group is a circle of respect, united by the goal of gaining understanding through sharing of ideas.

- In a circle of respect:
- People pay attention.
- They listen to each other.
- They speak up.
- They give honest opinions and disagree where necessary.

PARTICIPATION GRADING

Participation counts for 30 points in the final score, but you can actually earn bonus points.

Here's how it works: If you speak up in discussion, you get a check mark. If you support what you say from the assigned text or video (page number) or by a clear argument, you get a second check. If you help bring another student's ideas out, you get a third check. Each check counts for one-half point.

A little math will show that you can earn bonus points. Twenty-eight classes will be graded for discussion: $28 \times 1.5 = 42$. But it won't be easy to earn bonus points!

PREPARATION.

If the instructors doubt that you have done the reading they may give informal quizzes. For any day in which you are found not to be prepared, you will lose two points. This could lead to a major deficit, to balance the bonus from discussion.

COURSE SCHEDULE: This is approximate, as specific dates and topics might change as the course proceeds.

August

- 27 Course preview discussion. What can we learn from the Castaway movie starring Tom Hanks
- 29 General definition of Happiness and discussion of the human history of the concept.

September

- 3 Philosophers and Poets on Happiness
- 5 Further defining the various aspects of Happiness.
- 10 The Architecture of Happiness.
- 12 The Drivers of Happiness.
- 17 How neurons work.
- 19 Synapses and Action Potentials.
- 24 The Structure of the Brain.
- 26 Meeting at the Blanton Museum

October

- 1 Why are humans so smart?
- 3 Public Service Timeout: Neural Networks and AI.
- 8 Introduction to Neurotransmitters.
- 10 The Role of Genetics in Happiness.
- 15 Physical Fitness and Happiness.
- 17 Happiness Short-Circuited: Addiction Part 1.
- 22 Happiness Short-Circuited: Addiction Part 2.
- 24 Class Activity.
- 29 Class Conversation about Kratom: Is it a Problem or Solution?
- 31 Does Money Buy Happiness? A Conflict Resolved.

November

- 5 4-5 Minute Oral Presentations of your Final Paper Topics.
- 7 The Good Life Discussion Part 1 (Chapter 1) – **ChaptGPT draft of paper due before class.**
- 12 The Good Life Discussion Part 2 (Chapters 2 and 3).
- 14 The Good Life Discussion Part 3 (Chapter 4).
- 19 The Good Life Discussion Part 4 (Chapter 5).
- 21 The Good Life Discussion Part 5 (Chapter 6 and 7) - **2nd draft of paper due before class.**

December

- 3 The Good Life Discussion Part 6 (Chapters 8 and 9).
- 5 The Good Life Discussion Part 7 (Chapter 10 and Conclusion) and Course Wrap-up.
- 9 **No class but final papers are due before midnight.**

READING OR VIDEO ASSIGNMENTS:

Reading or video assignments are due BEFORE class on the following days. **In other words, you will need to come to class ready to discuss each of the assignments.** I know there is a lot of reading for this course, there are two different books and the first few peer-reviewed articles may take you a while. However, you will learn to be more efficient reading these articles, and in fact, learning how to read a peer-reviewed article is an explicit learning objective of this class!

August 27 Watch the movie “Cast Away” starring Tom Hanks (2000, 20th Century Fox). This is widely available through movie streaming services and you will need to watch this before the first class meets on August 22.

August 29 Read Chapter 1 and 2 in “Happiness” (pages 1 – 54)

September 3 Read “[Happiness: Paradise Within Thee](#)” (Woodruff presenting)

September 5 Read Chapter 3 in “Happiness” (pages 55 – 95)

September 10 Read Chapter 4 in “Happiness” (pages 97 – 129)

September 12 Read Chapter 5 in “Happiness” (pages 131 – 167)

September 17 Watch the following videos:

Neuron Anatomy and Basics

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6qS83wD29PY>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HUuUUJktL6E>

<https://www.khanacademy.org/science/biology/human-biology/neuron-nervous-system/v/anatomy-of-a-neuron>

September 19 Watch the following videos:

Membrane Potential

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tIzF2tWy6KI>

Synapse and Action Potentials

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WhowH0kb7n0>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OvVl8rOEncE>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mItV4rC57kM>

<https://www.khanacademy.org/science/health-and-medicine/human-anatomy-and-physiology/nervous-system-introduction/v/overview-of-neuron-function>

September 24 Watch the following videos:

Brain Structure and Function

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kMKc8nfPATI>

https://www.google.com/search?q=neural+connections+in+brain&client=safari&rls=en&sxsrf=AB5stBiNx EhAvdHdG93IKAPh_nS74rk6kw%3A1688864593085&ei=UQeqZMfqBPWqgtsPhPi-

October 24 There is no assignment for this classes. You should be thinking of possible final paper topics and doing some associated background literature searching.

October 29 Practice Scientific Information Retrieval/Literacy.

Look up peer-reviewed information about the botanical supplement Kratom and **be prepared** to defend its use or support tighter controls around its sale and consumption. You will need to cite facts from articles during our discussion. You are learning how to find scholarly articles here, so learning how to find appropriate articles is a big part of the assignment.

October 31 Read the following articles in this order:

[Article 9 “High income improves evaluation of life but not emotional well-being” Daniel Kahneman and Angus Deaton](#)

[Article 10 “Experienced well-being rises with income, even above \\$75,000 per year” Matthew A. Killingsworth](#)

[Article 11 “Income and emotional well-being: A conflict resolved” Matthew A. Killingsworth, Daniel Kahneman, and Barbara Mellers](#)

November 5 You will need to identify the topic for your final paper as any topic you choose related to the science of happiness, especially as it might relate to your own future. The goal is to empower you to apply the concepts we have been discussing to your own present and future lives. In other words, it is important that in the paper you make what we have been learning meaningful for you in the present and/or future. **For today’s class you should prepare a four-minute to five-minute oral presentation to the group, clearly explaining:**

- 1) Your exact topic
- 2) Why you chose your topic
- 3) Your main points
- 4) Conclusions, i.e. take home lessons

You must use slides (Powerpoint). You will be evaluated on how well you communicate your ideas during the presentation. Be ready to answer questions. **The presentation will be graded and will account for 20% of your final grade because learning how to give brief but powerful presentations is an important skill for college and the workplace. You will need to send me an electronic copy of your slides before the class starts at: iversonb@austin.utexas.edu**

November 7 Read Chapter 1 of “A Good Life: Lessons From The World’s Longest Scientific Study of Happiness” by Robert Waldinger and Marc Schultz (pages 1-26)

Before class you also need to send me a very first draft of your paper written entirely by ChatGPT. Yes, that is correct, this draft of your paper must be entirely written by ChaptGTP. Shoot for at least 5 pages double-spaced, but shorter will be accepted if that is all you get. We will provide feedback but no grading. The topic of the paper will be the one presented on October 31, but of course you can refine it based on feedback you received.

Recall: Your final paper can be on any topic you choose related to the science of happiness, especially as it might relate to your own future. The goal is to empower you to apply the concepts we have been discussing to your own present and future lives. In other words, it is important that in the paper you make what we have been learning meaningful for you in the present and/or future.

Send an electronic version (PDF) of your paper to: iversonb@austin.utexas.edu before class.

November 12 Chapters 2 and 3 of “A Good Life” (pages 27 – 85)

November 14 Chapter 4 of “A Good Life” (pages 86 – 116)

November 19 Chapter 5 of “A Good Life” (pages 117 – 139)

November 21 Chapters 6 and 7 of “A Good Life” (pages 140 – 195)

The first real draft of your 7-page (double-spaced) paper is due before class. You can keep what you liked about your ChatGTP draft then add to it, or start from scratch, it is up to you. You must include at least 7 references from the peer-reviewed literature. The more peer-reviewed references the better. We will provide feedback but no grading.

December 2 Chapters 8 and 9 of “A Good Life” (pages 196 – 249)

December 4 Chapter 10 and Conclusion of “A Good Life” (Pages 250 – 282)

December 9 Final paper is due before 10 PM.

Your paper must be at least 7 pages (double-spaced) and include at least 7 peer-reviewed references. The more peer-reviewed references the better. You can keep anything you liked about your ChatGTP draft. This will be graded and will count for 30% of your final grade.

Send an electronic version (PDF) of your paper to: iversonb@austin.utexas.edu before 10 PM.

This course takes part in UT Austin's SHIFT initiative and incorporates protective factors to promote student wellness and mitigate the risks associated with drug and alcohol misuse, including adverse academic outcomes.

COUNSELING AND MENTAL HEALTH CENTER

The Counseling and Mental Health Center (CMHC) provides counseling, psychiatric, consultation, and prevention services that facilitate students' academic and life goals and enhance their personal growth and well-being. <https://cmhc.utexas.edu>

STUDENT EMERGENCY SERVICES

Student Emergency Services supports students through challenging or unexpected situations by providing outreach, advocacy, intervention, and referrals to relevant campus and community organizations. <http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/emergency/>

BCCAL – BEHAVIOR CONCERNS AND COVID-19 ADVICE LINE

If you have concerns about the safety or behavior of fellow students, TAs or Professors, and if you have questions concerning Covid-19, call BCCAL (the Behavior Concerns and Covid-19 Advice Line): 512-232-5050. Your call can be anonymous. If something doesn't feel right – it probably isn't. Trust your instincts and share your concerns. <https://safety.utexas.edu/behavior-concerns-advice-line>

UNIVERSITY HEALTH SERVICES

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

HONOR CODE

Affirmation

I pledge, as a member of the University of Texas community, to do my work honestly, respectfully, and through the intentional pursuit of learning and scholarship.

Elaboration

- I pledge to be honest about what I create and to acknowledge what I use that belongs to others.
- I pledge to value the process of learning in addition to the outcome, while celebrating and learning from mistakes.
- This code encompasses all of the academic and scholarly endeavors of the university community.

Context

While this Honor Code guides your work at the University of Texas, the values and tenets it expresses are universal and will pertain throughout your professional lives.

You will be allowed to use ChatGTP or similar AI text generator in this course, and in fact, you will be required to do so for the first draft of your final paper. Note that not all classes at UT Austin will allow the use of ChatGTP or similar AI text generator, so make sure you are aware of the specific restrictions for each of your classes, as this will vary.

It is the responsibility of students to know the general guidelines delineating conduct in violation of the Honor Code as listed in Subchapter 11–400 of Appendix C, Prohibited Conduct in the General Information Catalog, which can be found at the weblink listed below.

The remedy for a violation of the Honor Code will reflect the severity of the violation. A faculty member who suspects that a student has violated the Honor Code can choose to meet with the student and propose a mutually agreeable remedy, which must be approved by the Dean of Students. If the student and faculty member cannot agree on a remedy, the matter will be referred to the Dean of Students. A faculty member can also directly refer the matter to the Dean of Students for resolution. At any point in the process, a student can request a meeting with a representative from Student Conduct and Academic Integrity to discuss or better understand all available options for resolving the alleged matter. The range of possible remedies and the procedures for establishing the ultimate remedy are detailed in Subchapter 11–500 in the weblink given below.

<https://catalog.utexas.edu/general-information/appendices/appendix-c/student-conduct-and-academic-integrity/>

The Following Policies Are Taken From The Undergraduate Catalogue And Apply To All Classes At UT Austin

INCOMPLETES:

A student is expected to complete a course, including a self-paced course, in a single semester, summer term, or summer session. If the course is not completed as expected, the student normally will not be given additional time to complete it, or allowed to do additional work to achieve a better grade. In rare instances, for nonacademic reasons and at the discretion of the instructor, a temporary delay of the final course grade, symbol X, may be recorded.

Approved uses of the symbol X. The symbol X is not issued for student or faculty convenience; it may be issued for one of the following reasons only in the case of compelling, nonacademic circumstances beyond the student's control.

Missing the final examination. The student is unable to take a final examination because of illness or for another nonacademic reason. A physician's statement or other satisfactory verification is required.

Incomplete classroom assignment. The student has not been able to complete the required class or laboratory assignments for a reason other than lack of adequate effort. A request for temporary delay of the final course grade because of incomplete class or laboratory work can be made only if the student has a passing average on the classwork or laboratory work already completed and has taken and passed the final examination (unless a final examination is not given in the course or the student is unable to take the examination for reasons indicated in the previous paragraph).

Reexamination petition. Only a student who has a grade average of at least C- on all classwork and laboratory work submitted before the final examination may request a temporary delay of the final course grade because he or she failed the final examination, which is the examination given during the final examination period as defined in the official examination schedule. If the instructor denies the student's reexamination petition, the student's final course grade remains as originally determined. If the instructor grants the petition, and the student earns a grade of at least C- on the reexamination, then the instructor substitutes the reexamination grade for the original examination grade in determining the student's final course grade. If the instructor grants the petition, and the student earns a grade on the reexamination of less than C-, then a final course grade of F must be recorded.

An incomplete (X) is a temporary delay in reporting the final course grade. An X may properly be assigned for students who must miss the final due to illness or other imperative nonacademic reasons. An X may also be given when the student has not been able to complete all the required assignments for reasons other than lack of diligence but only if the student has a passing grade on the work completed. Documentation of non-medical excuses will be required. In general it is best for students to see a counselor in their Dean's Office regarding non-medical excuses for missing the final. **Just to be clear, you will be required**

to have a written medical excuse stating you are physically unable to turn in the final paper by the person who treated you if the reason for the request for a missed final paper is illness. NO EXCEPTIONS. Students have one long semester to make up an X and extensions are rare. After one long semester, the X converts to an F if no other grade is reported.

An X will not be assigned to allow the student an opportunity to repeat the entire course; the only assignments or exams that should be completed to resolve the X are those that were missed for legitimate reasons during the semester. In addition, the X should be assigned only if the student has been informed and the exact procedures by which the student will make up the work are agreed upon. The assignment of an X constitutes a contract between the student and the instructor. It is often helpful to have the arrangement in writing, specifying what the student is expected to do to complete the course, including due dates.

DROP DATES:

Through the twelfth class day. From the first through the twelfth class day in a long-session semester, and from the first through the fourth class day in a summer term, a student may drop a class through the registration system. If the dropped class must be taken in conjunction with another class, the student must drop the second class as well. Each student should meet with his or her advisor before dropping a class. A class dropped during this period is deleted from the student's academic record. It does not count toward the six-drop limit.

From the thirteenth class day through the deadline to drop a class for academic reasons. From the thirteenth class day through the deadline to drop a class for academic reasons in a long-session semester, and from the fifth through the last class day in a summer term, a student may drop a class only with the approval of his or her dean. In some colleges and schools, the approval of the student's advisor is also required. If the student is allowed to drop, the class remains on the student's academic record with the symbol Q, which identifies a drop without academic penalty. In addition, the student's dean determines whether the student is dropping the class for an academic or a nonacademic reason. If the dean determines that the reason is academic, the drop is counted toward the six-drop limit described above.

After the deadline to drop a class for academic reasons. After the deadline to drop a class for academic reasons has passed, there are only two possible ways for a student to drop a class. One way is in the case of urgent, substantiated, nonacademic reasons, which must be approved by his or her dean. Approved nonacademic drops that occur during this period are not counted toward the six-drop limit described above. The other way is for the student to seek approval to use the One-Time-Exception. Approved One-Time-Exception (OTE) drops that occur during this period are counted toward the six-drop limit described above. To seek either type of drop within this period a student must submit the completed OTE form to the student's dean's office by the last class day.

NONACADEMIC Q-DROP:

After the last day for academic Q-drop students with substantiated nonacademic reasons (as determined by the Dean's Office) may be allowed to drop a course. Faculty will be asked to provide information on student performance up to the time of the nonacademic Q-drop request but are not responsible for making the decision about assigning a grade of Q. Please encourage students who experience significant nonacademic problems such as extended health-related problems or family emergencies to contact the Dean's Office.

ONE-TIME EXEMPTION (OTE) DROP POLICY:

Students have the option once in their undergraduate degree to drop a class or drop out of all classes in a semester right up until the last class day. A student must submit the completed OTE form to the student's dean's office by the last class day. Any drop or withdrawal allowed under the OTE will be subject to the same academic and financial aid rules governing other drops or withdrawals taken during the semester. A student may not drop a class in which a final grade has been assigned. This will be verified by the student's dean's office. A student may not drop a class if there are any pending investigations of scholastic dishonesty for the class in question. Any drop assigned will not be considered final until any investigations of scholastic dishonesty for the class in question are resolved.

Drops allowed under the provisions of the OTE will be considered academic drops and will count toward the six-drop limit. Students who have reached the six-drop limit are not eligible to use the OTE to drop a course. Students who are requesting to use the OTE for a withdrawal will be allowed to withdraw regardless of current grades in classes. No instructors' signatures will be required on the form.

Pending scholastic dishonesty will be verified by the student's dean's office with the Dean of Students Office. Withdrawal will not be approved if there is a pending scholastic dishonesty case.

COURSES TAKEN ON A PASS/FAIL BASIS (CR/NC)

The University defines a D- as a passing grade for undergraduate students. The instructor is obliged to assign a grade of CR (Credit) for a student registered on a pass/fail basis who has a D- or better in the course. It is important that the roster indicate the student is registered for the course on a pass/fail basis. Otherwise, a letter grade must be assigned. There is a time limit for students to change courses from a grade basis to pass/fail basis and vice versa. During the long session, it is the same as the final deadline for drop/withdrawal for academic reasons. See the current academic calendar for the exact date. After that deadline, students should see a counselor in the Student Division of the Dean's Office of their college.

For majors within the College of Natural Sciences, the College has instituted a minimum C-standard of passing grades for courses in order to progress to subsequent courses. For

example, a grade of C- in M408N (calculus-I) is required to progress to M408S (calculus-II). This minimum standard applies to graduation requirements as well (see +/- grading below).

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES:

The rights of students with disabilities are protected under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act, which are civil rights provisions aimed at ending discrimination against persons with disabilities. Section 504 specifically refers to post-secondary and vocational education services. The legislation reads: "No otherwise qualified handicapped individual in the United States shall, solely by reason of his handicap, be excluded from the participation, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance." The University of Texas at Austin provides a wide variety of services to assist students with disabilities in becoming active members of the University community. These services vary according to the different types of impairments.

[The Disability and Access office at UT Austin](#) is charged with assisting disabled students. They estimate that about 2000 students qualify for their support including students with mobility impairments, learning disabilities, visual impairments, hearing impairments, ADD and ADHD, and others. By law, these students are guaranteed a learning environment with reasonable accommodation of their disability.

I will provide any necessary and reasonable accommodation for students with disabilities, including accommodations. In order to qualify for accommodations, you will need to contact the Disability and Access office (<https://diversity.utexas.edu/disability/>). They will supply the documentation and recommendations needed for us to provide appropriate accommodations.

ABSENCES DUE TO ATHLETICS OR OTHER UNIVERSITY ACTIVITIES:

Any athlete competing for UT on an NCAA or club level team needs to notify me as soon as possible about any missed classes. Written documentation from the Athletic department will be required for accommodations to be given.

RELIGIOUS HOLY DAYS:

A student who misses classes or other required activities, including examinations, for the observance of a religious holy day should inform me as far in advance of the absence as possible. For reference, sections 51.911 and 51.925 of the Texas Education Code relate to absences by students and instructors for observance of religious holy days.