

UNLF 10211: Introduction to University Life

Fall 2020

Instructor:

Michael Strausz
<https://michaelstrausz.com>

Peer Guide:

Sydney Wheeler

Course Description & Overview

This one-hour, seminar-style course for first-semester students provides knowledge, skills, and strategies to help students successfully transition into the academic community. Students are introduced to fundamental questions and issues of the university experience— understanding the nature and purpose(s) of higher education at TCU, practicing critical thinking, studying for and reflecting upon course material and experiences, sustaining academic and personal integrity, setting learning goals, honoring diversity and inclusion in the academic community, taking responsibility, managing stress, exploring campus resources, and developing life-long learning habits. Within the context an instructor, Peer Guide, and a cohort of first-year peers, students will explore and discuss these and other topics relevant to navigating the college transition.

Course Learning Outcomes

Students in this course will:

- Discuss the purpose(s) of college and TCU's mission
- Develop both short and long-term goals
- Define and discuss critical thinking related to higher education and learning
- Discuss encountering diverse people and perspectives
- Discuss the importance of academic and personal integrity in a learning community
- Identify and implement self-management strategies such as time-management, study skills, managing stress, and cultivating well-being
- Identify campus resources
- Utilize a mentoring relationship with an Instructor and Peer Guide for support in the transition to college and in cultivating the habit of reflection as it pertains to their learning experiences.

Attendance Policy

I expect you to virtually attend the synchronous Zoom sessions on Mondays from 2:00-2:50. I will also record classes and upload them to D2L, and if you cannot attend for any reason, I expect you to watch the recording before the next synchronous Zoom session and email me four questions and/or insights that occurred to you as you watched the video of the Zoom session. If you are more than 10 minutes late to a session or have to leave early, I will also expect you to watch a Zoom session and email me four question and/or insights that occurred to you as you watched the video. Because attendance is vital to success in this class, more than 3 absences without an email about the Zoom recording before the next synchronous session will result in the student receiving a failing grade (F) in the course.

Late Work

In general, I do not accept late discussion questions or replies. I accept late papers, but with a 5 point penalty (out of 30) per 24 hours late. However, if your work is late because of an

Official University Absence, an illness, or a personal or family emergency, please communicate with me as soon as you can we can discuss rescheduling your work.

Academic Integrity Policy

Academic Misconduct (Sec. 3.4 from the [TCU Code of Student Conduct](#)): Any act that violates the academic integrity of the institution is considered academic misconduct. The procedures used to resolve suspected acts of academic misconduct are available in the offices of Academic Deans and the Office of Campus Life and are listed in detail in the [Undergraduate Catalog](#) and [Graduate Catalog](#).

Recording of Class Sessions

Our class sessions will all be recorded for use by enrolled students, including those who are unable to attend live. Students who participate with their camera engaged or utilize a profile image are consenting to have their video or image recorded. If you are unwilling to consent to have your profile or video image recorded, be sure to keep your camera off and do not use a profile image. Likewise, students who un-mute during class and participate orally are consenting to have their voices recorded. If you are not willing to consent to have your voice recorded during class, you will need to keep your mute button activated and communicate exclusively using the "chat" feature, which allows students to type questions and comments live.

Anti-Discrimination and Title IX Information: **Statement on Title IX at TCU**

As an instructor, one of my responsibilities is to help create a safe learning environment on our campus. It is my goal that you feel able to share information related to your life experiences in classroom discussions, in your written work, and in our one-on-one meetings. I will seek to keep any information you share private to the greatest extent possible. However, I have a mandatory reporting responsibility under TCU policy and federal law and I am required to share any information I receive regarding sexual harassment, discrimination, and related conduct with TCU's Title IX Coordinator. Students can receive confidential support and academic advocacy by contacting [TCU's Confidential Advocate in the Campus Advocacy, Resources & Education office](#) at (817) 257-5225 or the [Counseling & Mental Health Center](#) at <https://counseling.tcu.edu/> or by calling (817) 257-7863. [Alleged violations can be reported to the Title IX Office](#) at <https://titleix.tcu.edu/student-toolkit/> or by calling (817) 257-8228. Should you wish to make a confidential report, the Title IX Office will seek to maintain your privacy to the greatest extent possible, but cannot guarantee confidentiality. Reports to law enforcement can be made to the Fort Worth Police Department at 911 for an emergency and (817) 335-4222 for non-emergency or TCU Police at (817) 257-7777.

Statement of Disability Services at TCU

Disabilities Statement: Texas Christian University complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 regarding students with disabilities. Eligible students seeking accommodations should contact the [Office of Student Access and Accommodation](#) located in Sadler Hall, 1010. Accommodations are not retroactive, therefore, students should contact the Coordinator as soon as possible in the term for which they are seeking accommodations.

Further information can be obtained from Student Access and Accommodation, TCU Box 297710, Fort Worth, TX 76129, or at (817) 257-6567.

Adequate time must be allowed to arrange accommodations, and accommodations are not retroactive; therefore, students should contact the Coordinator as soon as possible in the academic term for which they are seeking accommodations. *Each eligible student is responsible for presenting relevant, verifiable, professional documentation and/or assessment reports to the Coordinator.* [Guidelines for documentation](http://www.acs.tcu.edu/disability_documentation.asp) may be found at http://www.acs.tcu.edu/disability_documentation.asp.

Students with emergency medical information or needing special arrangements in case a building must be evacuated should discuss this information with their instructor/professor as soon as possible.

Technology Policies

Email

Only the official TCU student email address will be used for all course notification. It is your responsibility to check your TCU email on a regular basis.

Course Materials

TCU students are prohibited from sharing any portion of course materials (including videos, PowerPoint slides, assignments, or notes) with others, including on social media, without written permission by the course instructor. Accessing, copying, transporting (to another person or location), modifying, or destroying programs, records, or data belonging to TCU or another user without authorization, whether such data is in transit or storage, is prohibited. The full policy can be found at: <https://security.tcu.edu/polproc/usage-policy/>.

Violating this policy is considered a violation of Section 3.2.15 of the Student Code of Conduct (this policy may be found in the Student Handbook at <https://tcu.codes/code/index/>), **and may also constitute Academic Misconduct or Disruptive Classroom Behavior** (these policies may be found in the undergraduate catalog at <https://tcu.smartcatalogiq.com/current/Undergraduate-Catalog/Student-Policies/Academic-Conduct-Policy-Details>). TCU encourages student debate and discourse; accordingly, TCU generally interprets and applies its policies, including the policies referenced above, consistent with the values of free expression and First Amendment principles.

Further, if a student anticipates that they will not consent to instructor's video and/or audio participation being recorded, they need to contact the instructor immediately so the instructor may work with the student to determine how to assess their class participation and assignments that may require collaboration during the class session.

Netiquette: Communication Courtesy Code

All members of the class are expected to follow rules of common courtesy in all email messages, discussions, and chats. If I deem any of them to be inappropriate or offensive, I will forward the message to the Chair of the department and appropriate action will be taken, not excluding expulsion from the course. The same rules apply online as they do in person. Be respectful of other students. Foul discourse will not be tolerated. Please take a moment and read the [basic information about netiquette](#).

Participating in the virtual realm, including social media sites and shared-access sites sometimes used for educational collaborations, should be done with honor and integrity. Please review [TCU's guidelines on electronic communications](#) (email, text messages, social networks, etc.) from the [Student Handbook](#).

Course Readings & Resources

All required readings and other materials are available on the course's D2L cite.

Additional information for students

There is a document available on the course's D2L site called "UNPR syllabus appendix" with sections called "Campus Life and the Student Experience will Be Different This Year," "Health and Wellness," "Face Coverings and Physical Distancing," "Statement on TCU's Discrimination Policy," "Obligations to Report Conduct Raising Title IX or VAWA Issues," and "Emergency Response Information," as well as a more extensive statement about academic misconduct. Please let me know if you have any trouble finding this document or any questions about its contents.

Grades in this course are determined by student performance on the following measures:

MEASURE	COURSE ELEMENTS & EXPECTATIONS	TOTAL POSSIBLE POINTS
Attendance	See Attendance Policy on page 1. Beginning with the second absence without a subsequent email with questions and observations about the Zoom recording, 10 points will be deducted from the student's final Attendance grade for each absence.	30
Online discussion of course materials	We will have an online text-based discussion of each reading that we do and video that we watch for this class. I expect you to participate fully in those discussions. There is a more specific assignment in the module called "Course Syllabus and Assignments," and there are links to discussion boards after each reading.	30
Written Reflections	Students will write two short personal reflections (450-500 words each) in which they respond to compelling ideas from readings and class discussions. These papers are due on Monday, October 12 at 2:00pm Monday and 2:00pm on Monday, November 2. <u>Each written reflection is worth up to 30 points.</u> More specific assignments and grading rubrics will be distributed later in the semester.	60
Campus Experiences	Students will attend two campus experiences during the semester (in person or virtually). Campus experiences are events organized by official campus groups or entities to contribute to student learning/growth and that contribute to campus culture. Instructors will suggest and/or approve experiences that qualify. Students receive 30 points for attending each campus experience, as verified by the Instructor and/or Peer Guide. You must complete one of these	60

	two experiences and notify the professor by class on October 12 and you must complete the second experience and notify the professor by November 23 .	
Mentor Meetings	Each student will meet with the Instructor and Peer Guide over Zoom once during the semester outside of normal class time. The purpose of these sessions is to provide an opportunity for students to reflect on their learning, explore challenges they are experiencing, and to seek feedback regarding any aspects of the student experience that they may have questions about. We will schedule these meetings and distribute an assignment and grading rubric later in the semester.	60
Semester-End Reflection & Presentation	We will end the semester with a final project with three parts. First, students will create an artifact (a video, photo slideshow, drawing, poem, diagram, infographic, short PowerPoint, etc.) that highlights their learning and growth this semester. Second, students will make a 4-5 minute presentation of their artifact to the class on either November 9 or November 16 (students will be assigned one of those two days later in the semester. Third, students will write a short (450-500 word) paper that reflects on their first semester at TCU. This paper will be due on Monday, November 23 at 4:30pm . More specific assignments and grading rubrics will be distributed later in the semester. Each component of this assignment (the artifact, presentation, and paper) will be worth 20 points.	60
TOTAL	A: 270-300 pts B: 240-270 pts C: 210-240 D: 180-210 F: Below 180	300 Points

Course Schedule

17-Aug *Week 1: Welcome, Introductions, and Overview of Course*

No assigned materials

24-Aug *Week 2: The Purpose of College: What are We Doing Here?*

Assigned reading: "What is College For?" *Chronicle of Higher Education*, 2013.

31-Aug *Week 3: Managing Your Life & Pursuing Well-being in College: Mindfulness*

Assigned reading: Rogers, Holly. 2016. *The Mindful Twenty-Something: Life Skills to Handle Stress... and everything else*. Oakland, CA: New Harbinger Publications, Inc, Chapter 1.

7-Sep *Week 4: Managing Your Life & Pursuing Well-being in College: Time Management*

Assigned materials: Watch Tim Urban's TED talk "Inside the Mind of a Master Procrastinator."

14-Sep *Week 5: Identifying Campus Resources*

No assigned materials

21-Sep *Week 6: Self, Perspectives & Identities*

Assigned materials: Watch Taiye Selasi's TED talk "Don't ask where I'm from, ask where I'm a local."

28-Sep **CLASS CANCELLED FOR YOM KIPPUR**

5-Oct *Week 7: Learning in a Diverse & Inclusive Community*

Assigned reading: Strike, Kenneth A, and Pamela A Moss. 2008. "Tolerance, Diversity, and Hate Speech." In *Ethics and College Student Life: A Case Study Approach*. 3rd Edition. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson, pp. 32-41.

12-Oct *Week 8: SMART Goal-Setting for Your First Year of College*

Assigned reading: Daniel Terry, "S.M.A.R.T. Goal Setting for your First Year of College."

First reflection paper due by the beginning of class.

19-Oct *Week 9: Thinking, Learning, & Studying in College*

Assigned reading: Cottrell, Stella. 2010. "What is Critical Thinking?" In *Critical Thinking Skills: Developing Effective Analysis and Argument*. New York, NY: Palgrave.

26-Oct *Week 10: More Thinking, Learning, & Studying in College*

Assigned reading: Gardner, John N, and Betsy O Barefoot. 2016. "College-Level Thinking: Higher and Deeper." In *Your College Experience: Strategies for Success*. 12th Edition. Boston, MA: Bedford/St. Martin's.

2-Nov *Week 11: Academic & Personal Integrity*

Assigned reading: Strike, Kenneth A, and Pamela A Moss. 2003. "Case 2.1, Cheating." In *Ethics and College Student Life: A Case Study Approach*. 3rd Edition. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson.

Second reflection paper due by the beginning of class.

9-Nov *Semester-end presentations*

No assigned materials

16-Nov *Semester-end presentations*

No assigned materials

23-Nov **Final reflection paper due at 4:30pm**