CPS 5195 - Graduate Seminar CRN: 23104 and  
CPS 6185 - Graduate Seminar CRN: 27487  
CLASS TIME: 4:00-4:50 PM, Mondays (virtually using MS Teams)  
Professor. Natasha S. Sharma  
nssharma@utep.edu  
jecastillofatule@miners.utep.edu  
Office Hours: By appointment.  
Virtual class link:  link  

Teaching Assistant: Jose E Castillo Fatule  
Email: jecastillofatule@miners.utep.edu  

COURSE DESCRIPTION  
This course enables graduate students to learn through participating in Socratic seminars themed  
on topics ranging from state-of-the-art computational science research to professional  
development and discussing diversity in the computational science community. We will take  
advantage of the online format of this course and organize a combination of talks from speakers  
across the country. The talks need not be scheduled at the meeting class times. Time willing, the  
participants of the course will have the opportunity to give presentations in the latter half of the  
course.  

LEARNING MODULES  
These online classes will be held on Microsoft Teams. The blackboard platform is where  
the homework will be announced and turned in.  
OneNote will be used for a dynamic sharing of lecture notes if needed.  

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING  
The understanding of the students will be assessed through weekly assignments (about 13  
assignments) and class participation.  
It is the student’s responsibility to maintain the grade average required by a scholarship,  
other financial support, or any other requirements. The course grade will be assigned strictly  
based on the class average obtained using the grade calculation formula given below using  
only the grades posted on the blackboard platform. The student’s scholarship, financial  
support requirements, or any other personal requirements will not be under consideration  
when assigning final grades.  

TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS  
Course content is delivered via the Internet through the Blackboard learning  
management system. Ensure your UTEP e-mail account is working and that you have  
access to the Web and a stable web browser. Google Chrome and Mozilla Firefox are the  
best browsers for Blackboard; other browsers may cause complications. When having  
technical difficulties, update your browser, clear your cache, or switch to another browser.  

You will need to have access to a computer/laptop, scanner, webcam, and microphone.
An excellent application for scanning homework and exams is **CamScanner**. Please install it on your smartphone to take legible scans. You will need to download or update the following software: Microsoft, and Adobe Acrobat Reader. Check that your computer hardware and software are up-to-date and able to access all parts of the course.

If you do not have word-processing software, you can download Word and other Microsoft Office programs (including Excel, PowerPoint, Outlook, and more) for free via UTEP’s Microsoft Office Portal. Click the following link for more information about [Microsoft Office 365](https://office.microsoft.com) and follow the instructions.

**IMPORTANT:** If you encounter technical difficulties beyond your scope of troubleshooting, please contact the UTEP Help Desk as they are trained specifically in assisting with the technological needs of students. Please do not contact me for this type of assistance. The Help Desk is much better equipped than I am to assist you!

**Course Communication:** How we will stay in contact with each other

Because this is an online class, we won’t see each other in the ways you may be accustomed to: during class time, small group meetings, and office hours. However, there are a number of ways we can keep the communication channels open:

- **Office Hours:** We will not be able to meet on campus, but I will still have office hours for your questions and comments about the course.

- **Email:** UTEP e-mail is the best way to contact me. I will make every attempt to respond to your e-mail within 24-48 hours of receipt. When emailing me, email from your UTEP student account, and please put the course number in the subject line. In the body of your e-mail, clearly state your question. At the end of your e-mail, be sure to put your first and last name, and your university identification number.

- **Discussion Board:** If you have a question that you believe other students may also have, please post it in the Help Board of the discussion boards inside of Blackboard. Please respond to other students’ questions if you have a helpful response.

- **Announcements:** Check the Blackboard announcements and course website frequently for any updates, deadlines, or other important messages.

**NETIQUETTE**

As we know, sometimes communication online can be challenging. It’s possible to miscommunicate what we mean or to misunderstand what our classmates mean given the lack of body language and immediate feedback. Therefore, please keep these netiquette (network etiquette) guidelines in mind. Failure to observe them may result in disciplinary action.

- Always consider the audience. This is a college-level course; therefore, all communication should reflect polite consideration of others’ ideas.

- Respect and courtesy must be provided to classmates and to the instructor at all times. No harassment or inappropriate postings will be tolerated.
When reacting to someone else’s message, address the ideas, not the person. Post only what anyone would comfortably state in a face-to-face situation.

Blackboard is not a public Internet venue; all postings to it should be considered private and confidential. Whatever is posted in these online spaces is intended for classmates and professors only. Please do not copy documents and paste them to a publicly accessible website, blog, or other space.

**Course Policies:** What do you need to do to be successful in the course

**ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION**

Attendance in the course is determined by participation in the learning activities of the course. Your participation in the course is important not only for your learning and success but also to creating a community of learners. Participation is determined by completion of the following activities:

- Reading/Viewing all course materials to ensure understanding of assignment requirements
- Participating in an engaging discussion with your peers
- Participating in scheduled Blackboard Collaborate lectures

Because these activities are designed to contribute to your learning each week, they cannot be made up after their due date has passed.

**EXCUSED ABSENCES AND/OR COURSE DROP POLICY**

According to UTEP Curriculum and Classroom Policies, “When, in the judgment of the instructor, a student has been absent to such a degree as to impair his or her status relative to credit for the course, the instructor may drop the student from the class with a grade of “W” before the course drop deadline and with a grade of “F” after the course drop deadline.” See academic regulations in the UTEP Undergraduate Catalog for a list of excused absences. Therefore, if I find that, due to non-performance in the course, you are at risk of failing, I will drop you from the course. I will provide 24-hour advance notice via email.

**OR**

I will not drop you from the course. However, if you feel that you are unable to complete the course successfully, please let me know and then contact the Registrar’s Office to initiate the drop process. If you do not, you are at risk of receiving an “F” for the course.

**Attendance Policy**

Lecture attendance is required and noted at the beginning of class; more than two unexcused absences will result in an instructor-initiated drop and/or final grade reduction. Your academic/research advisor will be consulted before final action is decided and taken. It is the student’s responsibility to cover the topics missed during this absence.

**Tardiness Policy**

There is a zero-tolerance policy for tardiness in this class. Besides the fact that showing up late disrupts the entire class, tardiness is a personal reflection of being unprofessional and lacking time management skills. To this end, no students will be permitted in the class after
the first five minutes of the lecture time have passed. Furthermore, students who miss these parts of the lecture due to tardiness will be responsible to cover the topics missed. If you anticipate potentially being late, please email your instructor ideally 24 hours before the lecture and the instructor will try to provide accommodation accordingly.

**Homework Policy**

Homework will be assigned on a regular basis. Homework will need to be turned in through Blackboard. Once the announcement of the homework is made, it is the student’s responsibility to make sure they understand the assigned task and make clarifications if needed well before the deadline for submission. This clarification should be made preferably via email or during lecture time or during office hours. The grades of the homework and exams will be made via Blackboard. It is the student’s responsibility to look at the awarded numeric grades as soon as possible and carefully go over the grading of the assignment. There is a 2-week "statute of limitations" for students to contact the instructor/grader on matters related to the grading of a specific assignment. This 2-week deadline is counted from the day of the grade notification.

**Make-up Work**

Make-up work will be given only in the case of a documented emergency. Note that make-up work may be in a different format than the original work, may require more intensive preparation, and may be graded with penalty points. If you miss an assignment and the reason is not considered excusable, you will receive a zero. It is therefore important to reach out to me—in advance if at all possible—and explain with proper documentation why you missed a given course requirement. Once a deadline has been established for make-up work, no further extensions or exceptions will be granted.

**Alternate Means of Submitting Work in case of technical issues**

I strongly suggest that you submit your work with plenty of time to spare in the event that you have a technical issue with the course website, network, and/or your computer. I also suggest you save all your work (answers to discussion points, quizzes, exams, and essays) in a separate Word document as a backup. This way, you will have evidence that you completed the work and will not lose credit. If you are experiencing difficulties submitting your work through the course website, please contact the UTEP Help Desk. You can email me your backup document as a last resort. You need to mark the grader in the email for the submitted work.

**Incomplete Grade Policy**

Incomplete grades may be requested only in exceptional circumstances after you have completed at least half of the course requirements. Talk to me immediately if you believe an incomplete is warranted. If granted, we will establish a contract of work to be completed with deadlines.

**Accommodations Policy**

The University is committed to providing reasonable accommodations and auxiliary services to students, staff, faculty, job applicants, applicants for admissions, and other beneficiaries of University programs, services, and activities with documented disabilities...
in order to provide them with equal opportunities to participate in programs, services, and activities in compliance with sections 503 and 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 and the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act (ADAAA) of 2008. Reasonable accommodation will be made unless it is determined that doing so would cause undue hardship for the University. Students requesting accommodation based on a disability must register with the UTEP Center for Accommodations and Support Services (CASS). Contact the Center for Accommodations and Support Services at 915-747-5148, email them at cass@utep.edu, or apply for accommodations online via the CASS portal.

COVID-19 Accommodations

Students are not permitted on campus when they have a positive COVID-19 test, exposure, or symptoms. If you are not permitted on campus, you should contact me as soon as possible so we can arrange the necessary and appropriate accommodation. (Classes with on-campus meetings) Students who are considered elevated risk according to CDC (Center for Disease Control) guidelines and/or those who live with individuals who are considered elevated risk may contact the Center for Accommodations and Support Services (CASS) to discuss temporary accommodation for on-campus courses and activities.

Scholastic Integrity

Academic dishonesty is prohibited and is considered a violation of the UTEP Handbook of Operating Procedures. It includes cheating, plagiarism, and collusion. Cheating may involve copying from or providing information to another student, possessing unauthorized materials during a test, or falsifying research data on laboratory reports. Plagiarism occurs when someone intentionally or knowingly represents the words or ideas of another as one's own. Collusion involves collaborating with another person to commit any academically dishonest act. Any act of academic dishonesty attempted by a UTEP student is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. All suspected violations of academic integrity at The University of Texas at El Paso must be reported to the Office of Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution (OSCCR) for possible disciplinary action. To learn more, please visit HOOP: Student Conduct and Discipline.

Class Recordings

Using recordings will enable you to access class lectures, group discussions, and so on if you miss a synchronous or in-person class meeting due to illness or other extenuating circumstances. Our use of such technology is governed by the Federal Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and UTEP's acceptable-use policy. A recording of class sessions will be kept and stored by UTEP, in accordance with FERPA and UTEP policies. Your instructor will not share the recordings of your class activities outside of course participants, which include your fellow students, teaching assistants, or graduate assistants, and any guest faculty or community-based learning partners with whom we may engage during a class session. You may not share recordings outside of this course. Doing so may result in disciplinary action.

Copyright Statement for Course Materials
COVID-19 Precautions

You must STAY AT HOME and REPORT if you (1) have been diagnosed with COVID-19, (2) are experiencing COVID-19 symptoms, or (3) have had recent contact with a person who has received a positive coronavirus test. Reports should be made at [screening.utep.edu](http://screening.utep.edu). If you know of anyone who should report any of these three criteria, you should encourage them to report. If the individual cannot report, you can report on their behalf by sending an email to COVIDaction@utep.edu.

For each day that you attend campus—for any reason—you must complete the questions on the UTEP screening website (screening.utep.edu) prior to arriving on campus. The website will verify if you are permitted to come to campus. Under no circumstances should anyone come to class when feeling ill or exhibiting any of the known COVID-19 symptoms. If you are feeling unwell, please let me know as soon as possible, and alternative instructions will be provided. Students are advised to minimize the number of encounters with others to avoid infection.

Wear face coverings when in shared areas of campus or when others are present. You must wear a face covering your nose and mouth in this class. If you choose not to wear a face covering, you may not enter the classroom. If you remove your face covering, you will be asked to put it on or leave the classroom. Students who refuse to wear a face covering and follow preventive COVID-19 guidelines will be dismissed from the class and will be subject to disciplinary action according to Section 1.2.3 Health and Safety and Section 1.2.2.5 Disruptions in the UTEP Handbook of Operating Procedures.

(Classes with on-campus meetings) Please note that if COVID-19 conditions deteriorate in the City of El Paso, all course and lab activities may be transitioned to remote delivery.

Course Resources: Where you can go for assistance

UTEP provides a variety of student services and support:

**Technology Resources**

- **Help Desk**: Students experiencing technological challenges (email, Blackboard, software, etc.) can submit a ticket to the UTEP Helpdesk for assistance. Contact the Helpdesk via phone, email, chat, website, or in person if on campus.

**Academic Resources**

- **UTEP Library**: Access a wide range of resources including online full-text access to thousands of journals and eBooks plus reference service and librarian assistance for enrolled students.
- **University Writing Center (UWC)**: Submit papers here for assistance with writing style and formatting, ask a tutor for help and explore other writing resources.
- **Math Tutoring Center (MaRCS)**: Ask a tutor for help and explore other available math resources.
- **History Tutoring Center (HTC)**: Receive assistance with writing history papers, get help from a tutor and explore other history resources.
● **RefWorks**: A bibliographic citation tool; check out the RefWorks tutorial Fact Sheet and Quick-Start Guide.

**Individual Resources**

- **Center for Accommodations and Support Services**: Assists students with ADA-related accommodations for coursework, housing, and internships.
- **Counseling and Psychological Services**: Provides various counseling services including individual, couples, and group sessions and career and disability assessments.