

## **Syllabus Appendix:**

(Or, “Guidelines for Completing the Corona-Virus FALL Semester”)

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### **I. Obviously, Attendance Is Online (and NOT Face-to-Face):**

Since the format of the class is a 100% online structure, attendance will be done a little bit differently. In lieu of regularly-scheduled class time (e.g., Tuesdays/Thursdays), **Attendance & Participation we will done through online discussion boards through Blackboard.**

Since this course is an online class, you should be prepared to contribute to the week’s readings by asking questions, answering questions, and by having conversations & interactions with your fellow classmates. Discussions are not only helpful, they’re infinitely more rewarding for your learning and development as a student. You are expected to have read the readings for the day, prior to that day’s class that way we can all discuss them over the questions or comments that I post. Overall, the discussions that will occur in class will help you develop further and also prepare you for the quiz/final exam.

### **II. Working Through Blackboard (Bb):**

At the beginning of each week (Monday or Tuesday morning at the latest) I will post some thoughts and comments that I think are relevant for that week’s readings, films, or learning material. Or, maybe I’ll post a question or something for you all to think about. You can consider this like a “lecture” in which I’m trying to help you out in terms of learning and thinking.

It is your responsibility to read my comments and try to answer the questions (if at all), or to try to post your own comments or questions about the films OR about the assigned readings OR whatever. Everybody in the class should be prepared to do some of the work or “heavy lifting” in terms of spurring discussion and interacting with me or with others. You won’t have a great experience if it’s just me talking, and your learning will be more rewarding if/when you ALL are posting/commenting and are interacting with each other as well.

It is expected that in addition to your own weekly posts & comments, you all will also respond to at least two of your classmates per week. So basically, you will have to post you own thoughts & comments (or asking questions), but you will also have to interact with your peers & classmates. If you fail to post any thoughts or comments, don’t answer my questions and don’t reply to two of your classmates, then I will count it as an absence (and you will not gain Attendance & Participation points for that week).

### III. Note on “SUBSTANTIVE” Participation & Discussion:

Again, much of this class will be based on substantive engagement online. “Substantive engagement” means that you have completed the reading, thought about it, formulated opinions, and are prepared to engage in discussion with one another about the material. Your participation and discussion grades will also be based on completion of online discussion activities that might include (but is not limited to) my comments, discussion points, questions to students, assigned readings, details from films, and/or your classmates’ responses. Posts should include more than just short, non-responsive answers, like “interesting!” or “good point!” In other words, the task is to ask serious questions and/or to write a meaningful response that is designed to elicit conversation with me and the other students in this class.

### IV. Being Successful in an Online Class:

Online learning is not a “spectator sport.” It is everyone's responsibility to participate as fully as they can so everyone can get the most from the experience. Here are some simple rules to follow to ensure your participation and engagement in the learning process:

- Ask questions: If you don't know the answer, someone else will. The discussion board is the area for asking questions related to content OR any problems (related to the class) you are having. Make sure that you have clearly indicated the subject of your message.
- Reach out to others: Offer a fact, article, link, or other item that can help others learn something you can share.
- Be appropriate: The online classroom is not the place for insulting or insensitive comments, attacks, or venting. Inappropriate behavior can be subject to disciplinary action, as well.
- Be diplomatic: When sending messages on emotionally charged topics, I recommend that you write the message and then walk away for at least an hour before re-reading the message and then sending it. Re-reading emotionally charged messages ensures that they are constructive instead of destructive. Think of the person at the other end.
- Stay focused: Stay on topic to increase the efficiency of your learning.

### V. Accessing Films for Analysis & Discussion:

Please check the schedule in last pages of the Class Syllabus that will guide you through the class for these next 7 weeks. I have already requested free online access to our scheduled films (to be streamed through Blackboard AT NO COST TO YOU), and most of them are available and you will be able to stream them online for free, through the UTEP library/on Blackboard (or Bb).

In Bb, you can check the folder right now called “Course Films” that is right below the “Course Content” folder. **Basically, the majority of films are available right now through Bb to be streamed for free.** All you need to do is log-in with your UTEP student ID & passwords.

## **VI. Accessing OTHER films through iTunes or YouTube is also required:**

Although most of our class films are provided digitally by the UTEP library through Bb (free for students), not all course films are available through UTEP. Thus, students will be responsible for the \$2.99 or \$3.99 rental fees for those remaining films, whether it is through *iTunes* or *YouTube*. Obviously, this is not an ideal situation, but under the circumstances this is the easiest and most workable solution to not having those films available through our UTEP library or Blackboard.

## **VII. Plagiarism:**

Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. If you are caught plagiarizing (submitting work that is copied from another source or another student's work), then an official report will be filed with the Dean of Students. For plagiarism cases, students risk reprimand and possible suspension from the university. So please do not submit plagiarized work. If you want more information on what actually constitutes as plagiarism, refer to this website:

<https://www.plagiarism.org/article/what-is-plagiarism>

Again, please be aware that for online classes, there is more potential for academic misconduct because students often assume that copying & pasting words or ideas from online documents is permissible. It is extremely important to know that **copying & pasting anything from somewhere else or something else is NOT allowed.**

FYI: Students are not even allowed to copy their own words & ideas (from themselves) – for example, from previously posted comments or discussions. Sometimes, your professor might post a question as a “practice question” on Bb, inviting students to comment or give opinions, and then, the same question might appear again as a “required question” a Quiz or Exam. In this case, students sometimes think it's permissible to copy & paste their previous thoughts or comments, but even **this is not allowed and is considered plagiarism (or copying/cheating)**. In general, students must be extra careful to not risk plagiarism and to avoid academic misconduct in a 100 % online environment.

## **VIII. Professor's Office Hours:**

Since we are not having regular class time, I will not be holding regular office hours. Office hours will now be conducted through email, or if requested, by Zoom meeting or Skype chat if you wish. If you feel you'd rather have a discussion with me about something, just let me know and we'll set up an online chat/meeting. If not, email should suffice. But please let me know if you have any questions, concerns, or if there is anything else that I can do for you.

**My email:** [ravantmier@utep.edu](mailto:ravantmier@utep.edu)

**[Plz note that my email does not have “miners” in the address, so if you send it to “miners.utep.edu,” I will never receive that message.]**

## **IX. Due Dates & Deadlines:**

In order to stay on track with the syllabus schedule and to have a regular routine & pace, we're going to need due dates & "deadlines" for the discussions. Unless otherwise noted, your weekly reading and assigned questions (and any comments or responses posted by you on Bb) are going to be due on each Sunday night of each week. **YOU SHOULD, HOWEVER, AIM FOR COMPLETING THE WORK DURING THE WEEK**, bcuz "substantive" interaction & participation is not likely to happen late on Sunday nights... at the last minute. Nevertheless, the due date/ deadline for each week's discussion comments & participation will be on Sunday evening of each week.

Plz note, however, that quizzes & exams will be due on the specific day that they're assigned (NOT on Sundays). Plz check the Syllabus for those specific dates.