

PSC 343 D: Third World Politics and Economic Development
Spring 2020 / TR 10:00-11:50am / KBB 109

Kevin S. Fridy
Office: KBB 103
Phone: (813) 257-3767
E-mail: kfridy@ut.edu
Course Website: <http://ut.blackboard.com>
Office Hours: Monday (10a-1p) and Wednesday (10a-12p)

Objective:

According to 2013 Gallup report, the median per capita income for the ten richest countries in the world was around \$16,500. For the ten poorest countries, this figure was around \$200. More than a third of the world's inhabitants live on less than \$1,000 a year and about three-fourths make less than \$4,000 a year. The UN estimates around ten percent of the world's population survive on less than \$2 a day. For every 10 people living in the US there are nearly 8 motor vehicles. In countries like Bangladesh, Ethiopia, and Nepal people have less than 1 motor vehicle per 100 people. American adults have on average more than 13 years of schooling. Adults in more than half a dozen countries average less than 3 years of formal schooling. On average Americans live almost twice as long as citizens of Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, and Sierra Leone. In the US three out of every four people have regular access to the Internet. In Eritrea, Guinea-Bissau, and Somalia less than one person out of 20 use the Internet regularly.

Though we might disagree on how inequity should be measured appropriately and which of these disparities signifies some grave global injustice, the notion of "development" and a lack thereof assumes at least some of these disparities are a problem. In this class we first explore the substance of the problem, then we search for causes of the problem, and finally solutions to the problem. In following this path of inquiry, we are engaging with the appropriate literature to help us better understand our world and our positions in it. If at the end of the semester you simply know that there are poor people in the world you will not have gotten much from the course. If, however, you not only know about global disparities but how YOU, as a citizen of the world, both contribute to them and can help alleviate them we have accomplished much.

Student Learning Outcomes:

This course is designed such that students who have immersed themselves in the material, attended lectures regularly, done the readings, completed all assignments diligently, and studied for exams, should be able to do the following by the end of the course:

- The student will be able to describe and find the politics in various conceptualizations of the term “development.”
- The student will be able to explain the differences between major theories of development teasing out implicit and explicit causes and consequences of poverty and wealth embedded in each.
- The student will be able to describe and analyze the impact of public policy on development and vice versa.

Requirements:

Though it may be altered slightly and/or clarified by professorial edict either in class or via email, consider this syllabus a contract between you and your professor that lists both what you can expect from class and what is expected of you. Check it regularly and bring it to class with your notebook. You are expected to read EVERYTHING assigned on the syllabus, which averages between 50 and 100 pages a week. You are also expected to attend EVERY lecture. Visiting me on occasion during office hours to discuss issues raised in class and/or paper topics will not hurt either. If you do these things you will do very well in the course. If you do not do these things you will not do so well in the course. Consider this fair warning up front.

You will be evaluated in this class based on your performance in 6 areas. These areas, along with their relative weights, are as follows:

Scheper-Hughes Reaction Paper (5%) – The second Tuesday of class we will discuss Nancy Scheper-Hughes’ *Death Without Weeping*. The text documents the daily lives of people in Bom Jesus da Mata, an area of Northeastern Brazil where people live a hand-to-mouth existence. Before class you will submit via Blackboard a paper documenting your reactions to the reading. This reaction paper should be no longer than 3 pages (single-spaced, TNR 12-point font) and include both a brief summary of Scheper-Hughes’ work and a thoughtful personal reaction to the lives she chronicles. Please note that “personal” does not mean informal. You should write your paper well and should demonstrate through your writing that you understand what you read, have engaged with the text critically and constructively, and can communicate your thoughts clearly. There are no make-up quizzes without an excused absence.

Sen Quiz (5%) – On Tuesday Week 3 we will have a brief quiz at the beginning of class. The quiz will cover your assigned readings from Sen’s *Development as Freedom*. Quiz format will be multiple choice and short answer. There are no make-up quizzes without an excused absence.

Book Reviews (10%) – Each student will write two academic book reviews over the course of the semester. The first review will cover one of the following texts: Rodney (2/25), Klitgaard (3/24), or Packer (4/7). The second review will cover one of the following texts:

Sachs (3/26), Easterly (3/26), or Yunus (4/2). A book review should not be a laundry list of things you thought about while reading the book or a complete summary of each chapter, but rather a well-organized, informed, and thoughtful synthesis of the text's arguments and critique of these arguments' strengths and weaknesses within the context of the broader discussion within which the author is engaging. Papers should be no longer than 3 pages (single-spaced, TNR 12-point font) and are due at the beginning of the class via Blackboard. Late papers will be penalized at a rate of 10 points per day without an excused absence. Students who have done a book review should come to class prepared to discuss the text they have read and their critique with fellow students. Failure to present your book will result in a 20 point penalty without an excused absence. Books will be assigned during the second week of class so identify your preferences before then.

Exam #1 (35%) – Given out in-class on Thursday 27 February. The exam will cover all material from the readings and in-class discussions for weeks 1 through 6. If you miss a class over this period, it is your responsibility to get notes from one of your colleagues. The closed book exam may include multiple choice, short answer, and essay questions. There will be NO review sheet. Late or early exams will only be given in extreme circumstances with prior permission (at least two weeks in advance) from the professor or a documented and approved excuse. Unexcused late exams will be penalized at a rate of 10 points per day. If you miss an exam it is YOUR responsibility to contact me on the day of the exam or sooner to schedule a make-up.

Exam #2 (35%) – exactly like Exam #1 in format but covering material from week 1 through Week 14. It will be administered during the assigned final exam period on Tuesday 5 May. A heavy emphasis will be placed on lessons covered after Exam #1.

Hypothesis Testing Demonstration (10%) – During the second week of class you will select a general topic at random (see the available course topics on development traps and solutions with an *). You should read the assigned material for this topic shortly after receiving it and identify a central or peripheral hypothesis in the literature to test. Testing requires identifying appropriate cases, an appropriate source of data for your independent variable, an appropriate source of data for your dependent variable. It also requires at a minimum descriptive analysis. During the class we cover your *ed topic you will be given 10 minutes to explain 1) your hypothesis, 2) your case and data section, and 3) your analysis. You should also be prepared to lead a short, approximately 5 minutes, Q&A or discussion on your presentation. Since more than one student may select the same general topic, it is your responsibility to coordinate with them so that your hypotheses and tests presented to class are distinct from each other. Blackboard has a folder with several potentially useful data sets and data visualization tools but you should feel free to make use of others. On Thursday 13 February your professor will demonstrate a couple of these hypotheses testing presentations and provide you with a rubric for yours.

If you do not understand what is expected of you with regard to any of these assignments it is your responsibility to seek clarification in a timely manner which your professor will gladly provide.

Important Due Dates:

Scheper-Hughes Paper	Tuesday 28 January
Sen Quiz	Tuesday 4 February
Book Reviews	
Rodney	Tuesday 25 February
Klitgaard	Tuesday 24 March
Easterly	Thursday 26 March
Sachs	Thursday 26 March
Yunus	Thursday 2 April
Packer	Tuesday 7 April
Exam #1	Thursday 27 February
Exam #2	Tuesday 5 May
Hypothesis Presentation	weeks 7-14 as assigned

Grading:

The course letter grade will be determined according to the following scale:

<i>Letter Grade</i>	<i>Quality Points</i>	<i>Numeric Scale*</i>
A	4.0	93-100
AB	3.5	88-92
B	3.0	83-87
BC	2.5	78-82
C	2.0	73-77
CD	1.5	68-72
D	1.0	60-67
F	0.0	Below 60

*I will round up at the .5 and NOT before. For example, if you earn an 87.49 you will receive a B for the class. If you earn an 87.5 you will receive an AB. The only exception to this rule concerns the line between a D and an F. If you make below 60 points, even if it is by the smallest fraction of a point, I will NOT round up.

Required Texts:

Collier Paul Collier. *The Bottom Billion*.

Scheper-Hughes Nancy Scheper-Hughes. *Death Without Weeping*.

SPS Seligson and Passé-Smith. *Development and Underdevelopment*, 5th ed.

Sen Amartya Sen. *Development as Freedom*.

(☞) Reading available through UT Blackboard.

And two of the following six:

Easterly William Easterly. *The White Man's Burden*.

Klitgaard Robert Klitgaard. *Tropical Gangsters*.

Packer George Packer. *The Village of Waiting*.

Rodney Walter Rodney. *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*.

Sachs Jeffrey Sachs. *The End of Poverty*.

Yunus Muhammad Yunus. *Banker to the Poor*.

COURSE SCHEDULE

The course schedule is subject to change at the professor's sole discretion. Any changes will be announced in class, via email, and/or via Blackboard.

Week 1 (January 21-24)

Tuesday Introduction
Readings: ☞ syllabus

Thursday Raising A Fundamental Question - What is the "third world"?
Readings: **Collier** ch 1; and ☞ Silver, Marc. 2015. "If You Shouldn't Call It The Third World, What Should You Call It?" *Goats and Soda*, 4 January.

Week 2 (January 27-31)

Tuesday Development's Opposite Felt (*Scheper-Hughes review is due via Blackboard before the beginning of class*)
Readings: **Scheper-Hughes**. Everyone should read chs 1-3 and chs 10-12. Students should also read two additional chapters depending on the final digit in their Student ID. Students with an ID ending in 1-3 should read chs 4 and 5, 4-7 should read chs 6 and 7, and 8-0 should read chs 8 and 9.

Thursday Development's Opposite Measured I
Readings: ☞ Lepenies, Philipp. 2016. "What It's All About: A Short Primer on GDP." In *The Power of a Single Number: A Political History of GDP*. New York, NY: Columbia; and **SPS** chs 2-5 (Passé-Smith, Wade, Firebaugh, Passé-Smith).

Week 3 (February 3-7)

- Tuesday* Development's Opposite Measured II (*Sen Quiz at beginning of class*)
Readings: ☞ Cobb, Clifford, Ted Halstead, and Jonathan Rowe. 1995. "If the GDP is Up, Why is America Down?" *Atlantic Monthly*, October; ☞ "The Mountain Man and the Surgeon." 2005. *The Economist*, 24 December; and *Sen* (Everyone should read chs 1-4 and chs 11-12. Students should also read two additional chapters depending on the final digit in their Student ID. Students with an ID ending in 1-3 should read chs 5 and 6, 4-7 should read chs 7 and 8, and 8-0 should read chs 9 and 10).
- Thursday* Theories of Development – Modernization and Dependency Theory
Readings: *SPS* chs 17, 20, and 23; and ☞ Herkenrath, Mark and Volker Bornschie. 2003. "Transnational Corporations in World Development – Still the Same Harmful Effects in an Increasingly Globalized World Economy?," *Journal of World-Systems Research* 9(1): 105-139.

Week 4 (February 10-14)

- Tuesday* Theories of Development – Globalization and Neo-Liberalism
Readings: ☞ Fukuyama, Francis. 1989. "The End of History?" *The National Interest*, Summer; ☞ Williamson, John. 2004. "The Washington Consensus as Policy Prescription for Development," 13 January; and ☞ Rodrik, Dani. 2006. "Goodbye Washington Consensus, Hello Washington Confusion," *Journal of Economic Literature* 44: 973-987.
- Thursday* Hypothesis Testing Demonstration
Readings: None, I will go over assignment and give a demonstration.

Week 5 (February 17-21)

- Tuesday* Origins of Global Disparity – Guns, Germs, and Steel, Part I
Readings: *SPS* ch 8.
- Thursday* Origins of Global Disparity – Guns, Germs, and Steel, Part II
Readings: None, we will watch the second half of Jared Diamond's *Guns, Germs, and Steel*.

Week 6 (February 24-28)

- Tuesday* Origins of Global Disparity Reconsidered – The Case of Africa
Readings: *Rodney*, the entire book if you are writing a review and a selection (☞) if you are not.
- Thursday* **EXAM #1**

Week 7 (March 2-6)

- Tuesday* Development Traps – Conflict*
Readings: *Collier* ch 2; and ☞ Lacey, Marc. 2005. "Beyond the Bullets and Blades." *New York Times*, 20 March.
- Thursday* Development Traps – Neighborhood Effect*
Readings: *Collier* ch 4; and ☞ Chira, Susan. 1987. "Boom Time in South Korea: An Era of Dizzying Change." *NY Times* (7 April).

*** Spring Break (March 9-13) ***

Week 8 (March 16-20)

Tuesday Development Traps – Natural Resources I
Readings: None, we will watch *Big Men*.

Thursday Development Traps – Natural Resources II*
Readings: *Collier* ch 3; and ☞Junger, Sebastian. 2007. “Blood Oil.” *Vanity Fair* (February).

Week 9 (March 23-27)

Tuesday Development Traps – Bad Governance*
Readings: *Klitgaard*, the entire book if you are writing a review and a selection (☞) if you are not; *Collier* ch 5; and ☞Maass, Peter. 2005. “A Touch of Crude.” *Mother Jones*, January/February.

Thursday Solutions – Aid (Big Money) I*
Readings: *Sachs* and *Easterly*, the entire book if you are writing a review for either and a selection (☞) of the book(s) you are not reading; *Collier* ch 7.

Week 10 (March 30-April 3)

Tuesday LAST DAY TO WITHDRAW
Solutions – Aid (Big Money) II
Readings: None, we will watch *Life and Debt*.

Thursday Solutions – Aid (Small Money)*
Readings: *Yunus*, the entire book if you are writing a review and a selection (☞) if you are not; ☞Maren, Michael. 1993. “The Food-Aid Racket.” *Harper’s* (August): 10-12.

Week 11 (April 6-10)

Tuesday Solutions – Aid (Sweat)*
Readings: *Packer*, the entire book if you are writing a review and a selection (☞) if you are not; and ☞Ruhfus, Juliana. 2012. “Cambodia’s Orphan Business.” *Al Jazeera* (27 June).

Thursday Solutions – Aid (Revolutionary or Naïve)
Readings: ☞Lozovsky, Ilya. 2015. “Cards against Humanitarians.” *Foreign Policy* (28 September).

Week 12 (April 13-17)

Tuesday Solutions – Military Might*
Readings: *Collier* ch 8; and ☞Moseley, William. 2009. “Stop the Blanket Militarization of Humanitarian Aid.” *Foreign Policy*, 31 July.

Thursday Class Cancelled (Away at MPSA Conference)

Week 13 (April 20-24)

Tuesday Solutions – International Norms (Governance)*
Readings: *Collier* ch 9; and ☞Kleiner, Sam. 2013. “Apartheid Amnesia.” *Foreign Policy*, 18 July.

Thursday Solutions – International Norms (Economics, Part I)
Readings: None, we will watch *Mardi Gras Made in China*.

Week 14 (April 27-May 1)

Tuesday Solutions – International Norms (Economies, Part II)*

Readings: *Collier* chs 6 and 10; and Packer, George. 2002. “How Susie Bayer’s T-Shirt Ended Up on Yusuf Mama’s Back.”

Thursday What Can We Do?

Readings: *Collier* ch 11.

***** EXAM #2 in class from 11:00am-1:00pm on Tuesday 5 May *****

General Classroom Information:

These are a few things every student should know.

Emergency Conditions - In case of any adverse condition or situation which could interrupt the schedule of classes, each student is asked to access www.ut.edu for information about the status of the campus and class meetings. In addition, please refer to Blackboard for announcements and other important information. You are responsible for accessing this information.

Special Needs - If there is a student who requires accommodations because of any disability, please go to the Academic Success Center in North Walker Hall for information regarding registering as a student with a disability. You may also call (813) 257-5757 or email disability.services@ut.edu. Please feel free to discuss this issue with me, in private, if you need more information.

Classroom Disruption Policy – Every student has the right to a comfortable learning environment where the open and honest exchange of ideas may freely occur. Each student is expected to do his or her part to ensure that the classroom (and anywhere else the class may meet) remains conducive to learning. This includes respectful and courteous treatment of all in the classroom. According to the terms of the University of Tampa Disruption Policy, the professor will take immediate action when inappropriate behavior occurs.

Audio and Video Recording – There is a boatload of research suggesting students learn more during lectures when they take notes the old fashioned way with paper and a pen or pencil. Even if you do not buy this evidence or consider yourself an outlier, electronic devices prove distracting to your neighbors and may have a stifling impact on conversation if your peers suspect they are being recorded on such a device. Unless you are given permission by the instructor in writing prior, you may NOT record video or audio of lectures or discussions. Violating this policy will result in your removal from class.

Mental Health Counseling – College can be a stressful time in a young person's life. The American Psychiatric Association published a recent study of college students observed over the course of a single academic year. Over 60% of students reported feeling things were hopeless one or more times, almost 40% of the men and 50% of the women reported feeling so depressed that they had difficulty functioning one or more times, and 10% of the students reported seriously considering attempting suicide at least one time. If at some point during your time at UT you begin to feel depressed or out of control for any reason you should realize that you are not alone and there is help available to you. Your professors are happy to counsel you on the problems you are having coping with academic life, but there are dedicated mental health counselors available to you through UT's Health and Counseling Center located at 111 North Brevard Ave. (behind Austin Hall) who you may feel more comfortable disclosing certain types of non-academic problems to. The time to deal with mental health issues is when they arise and not after your grade has deteriorated. Their email is healthcenter@ut.edu and their phone numbers are 813-253-6250 (during business hours) and 813-257-7777 (outside of business hours for emergencies).

Title IX Statement - Sexual violence includes nonconsensual sexual contact and nonconsensual sexual intercourse (which is any type of sexual contact without your explicit consent, including rape), dating violence, sexual harassment, sexual exploitation, domestic violence, and stalking. You may reach out for confidential help or report an incident for investigation. If you choose

to write or speak about an incident of sexual violence and disclose that this violence occurred while you were a UT student, the instructor is obligated to report the incident to the Title IX Deputy Coordinator for Students. The purpose of this report is to provide a safe and nondiscriminatory environment for all students. The Deputy Coordinator or his or her designee will contact you to let you know about the resources, accommodations, and support services at UT and possibilities for holding the perpetrator accountable. If you do not want the Title IX Coordinator notified, instead of disclosing this information to your instructor, you can speak confidentially with the following individuals: - The Victim's Advocacy Hotline 813.257.3900; Dickey Health & Wellness Center (wellness@ut.edu) 813.257.1877; Health and Counseling Center (healthcenter@ut.edu) 813.253.6250. They can connect you with support services and discuss options for holding the perpetrator accountable.

Academic Assistance – The Academic Success Center (academicsuccess@ut.edu) in North Walker Hall offers free peer tutoring, credited academic skills courses, national testing services, and services for students with disabilities. The Saunders Writing Center (323 Plant Hall, x6244) aids students with their writing projects. The Public Speaking Center (KBB 200, speakingcenter@ut.edu) offers students help with presentations. You pay for these services through your tuition and there is no shame in using them if you need help with your course work. I am more than happy to discuss any academic issues you might have during office hours but if I think one of these services can help you be more successful I will not hesitate to recommend it.

Academic Integrity – Cheating, plagiarism, copying and any other behavior that is contrary to University standards of behavior will not be tolerated. Students caught violating any aspect of the University of Tampa's Academic Integrity Policy will be penalized in all cases. Penalty ranges from "0" on an assignment to "F" for the course without regard to a student's accumulated points. Students may also face expulsion. It is the student's responsibility to become familiar with the policies of the university regarding academic integrity and to avoid violating such policies. Policy information is found at: <http://ut.smartcatalogiq.com/en/current/catalog/Academic-Policies-and-Procedures/Academic-Integrity-Policy>

Class Rules, Etiquette, and Advice:

I like my job a lot. There are few things I can imagine doing more satisfying than providing inquisitive minds with an atmosphere conducive to thinking more critically about their own assumptions and the world in which we live. The image of students leaving my classroom just a bit more prepared to make their society better is sustaining. Following is a list of things you can do to help me maintain this image as well as some things you can do to reveal it as a mirage. Doing more of the former and less of the latter will make me happy whereas the converse will make me sad!

DO read the assigned texts – The amount and content of the reading assignments are well within the realm of reasonable for a class at this level. I have looked at syllabi from many different institutions of higher learning to come confidently to this conclusion. Do the assigned readings before each class and you will get the most out of the lectures. Though there are some things covered in the assigned readings that will not be covered in lecture, and vice versa, the lectures and readings build off each other. I will not hesitate to pull exam questions from readings not covered in class and from lectures not covered in the readings.

DO engage in class discussions in an intelligent way – There will be lots of opportunities for you to contribute to conversations in the classroom. Most of my lectures have a built in component for student input because I think it is important that you not only read and hear the information, but have to reconstitute and challenge it. I am also delighted to entertain questions when you have them and follow tangents that you would like to explore. Class periods when students are engaged and contributing seem to go by much faster than class periods when students are checked out. Students who regularly contribute to the classroom conversation do significantly better than students who do not on exams. So pretend the information we are covering is really interesting and jump at the opportunity to challenge the material. After a while you will find that you do not have to pretend any more. If you are shy this is good practice for you. Use the class to build your confidence and public speaking skills. If you are worried about your peers' impressions of you forget about it. Those who value education will find your contributions useful and those who roll their eyes are dull and uninteresting.

DO visit me during office hours – If you have a question about something we covered in class, need feedback on an assignment, want to discuss something you discovered outside of class that you think connects to course content in an interesting way, or just want to chat FEEL FREE to drop by my office during office hours. I keep five hours per week and these hours are for you. You are not pestering me or taking me away from something more important. It is nice to talk with students outside of our regular classroom setting.

DO NOT send me an email unless it's absolutely necessary – With several classes and nearly 100 students a semester emails can become burdensome. While I know email seems convenient from the student point of view because it is more instantly gratifying and relatively labor free, I have found the method of communication a poor way to convey the complex concepts we deal with in class and for general points of inquiry it is inefficient as emails regularly get lost in my Inbox. So how can you decide if an email must be sent to me? I would encourage you to ask yourself the following three questions:

- 1) Can I find the answer on the syllabus, in a text, or online?
- 2) Is it something one of my colleagues in class can answer?
- 3) Can it wait until next class or office hours?

If you answer any of these questions in the affirmative, PLEASE fight against the temptation to hit send. If you answer all of the questions in the negative, feel free to send the email. Make sure, however, to send it from your @spartans.ut.edu email account and keep in mind that I only check email during office hours. Also if you submit an assignment by email I will NOT grade it. Most assignments I have submitted via Blackboard/Turnitin and for those few which require hardcopies there is a drop box on the outside of my office door.

DO NOT ask if it is on the exam – I do not give out study guides. This is a university class and when I attended university ages ago study guides, like the iPod and indoor plumbing, were not yet invented. This experience taught me that learning things the readings and lectures cover that are not on the exam can be just as important and enlightening as learning things that will appear on the exam. Anything in the readings or lectures is fair game for an exam. Things covered in both readings and lectures, which I post online in the form of Powerpoint slides, are slightly more likely to show up on the exam.

DO NOT ask for extra credit – Rarely I give out extra credit opportunities. When I do, the opportunity is initiated by me and open to all students in class. I have never given an extra credit assignment to a student who initiated the request. Giving out extra credit opportunities

to select students makes grades for my courses unreliable measures of student success and your goal should be to master the material assigned on the syllabus.

DO understand what your grade represents – I assume every student who enters my class wants to take away a greater understanding of the world and that the grade (s)he receives is but a formal, and somewhat abstract and imprecise, reflection of the knowledge (s)he has gained. The average student in my courses typically earns a low B (3.0) or a high C (2.0). This grade represents both effort and skill so students that put in more effort than average and/or are more skilled than average will do better than this, whereas students who put in less effort than average and/or are less skilled will do worse. It is not easy to earn an A in my course and few will. On the other hand it is even more difficult to earn an F in my course but a few students every semester put in nearly no effort and/or do not have the skills necessary for a college-level course in Political Science. I have given failing marks to students who I think are wonderful people and given A grades to students who I would rather never see again. Grades are not personal statements on your character, they are a professional opinion of the work you submit.

DO learn how to question grades respectfully – I do my best to communicate expectations and make sure my comments on graded assignments pinpoint areas where you did well and areas where you needed to put in some more work. There will, however, occasionally be questions about the grade you receive. I will NOT change a grade or let you resubmit an assignment simply because you want a better grade. If, however, you think I have made a mistake I will consider changing a grade only after the following conditions have been met: 1) You must wait at least 24 hours but no more than ten days after receiving your graded assignment to file a complaint. 2) You must submit in writing (*typed* and *printed* out) a detailed explanation of why you think you deserve a different grade. I will review your submission and give you my final decision within a week of receipt at which time I will consider the “negotiation” complete and any further appeals on the issue will be directed to the department chair. Challenges that resemble “I’m an A student so there is no way this paper is a B,” “I was making a good argument it just did not come across in my paper,” “I was having a bad day can you cut me some slack,” or “I need to pass this class to graduate” will be summarily dismissed as they do not speak to the quality of the work.

DO know the university policy on “excused” absences – I do not take roll so the only time you need an excused absence is when there is an assignment due. The UT catalog has a detailed section on excused absences. It falls under the heading “Class Attendance and Participation” in the Academic Policies and Procedures section. There are no excuses for late written assignments. You know about them well in advance and a last minute illness or death in the family should not affect your ability to turn in the assignment or have a colleague do so on your behalf. Excuses for missed exams or presentations are granted following university procedures. The best way to be granted an excused absence is with prior approval. If you will miss an exam or presentation due to a previously scheduled event, let me know at least two weeks in advance and you will almost always be allowed an early exam or presentation. In the event that prior approval is not possible, you must provide acceptable documentation detailing the reasons for your excuse as soon as possible. Be thorough with this documentation as the burden of proving an absence is excusable falls on the student. For each assignment listed in this syllabus there is a detailed policy regarding late penalties. Many of these policies grant an exception for “excused” absences. Whether an absence is “excused” or not is up to the discretion of your professor based on the guidelines outlined above.