

Intermediate Environmental Design Studio
Architecture of the City
Professor Simon Atkinson

South Central: New Opportunities for a Living and Learning Design Community in the Heart of Austin, Texas

There are two parts to this document:

1. An overall description of the projects.
2. The formal University course requirements.

Introduction

The quality of life of persons living in cities is one of the greatest challenges in our facing the future. People require safe, walkable, pollution-free neighborhoods that, at the same time, are both visually stimulating and ecologically sensitive. Also, we can gain advantage through compact cities offering proximity to local grocery, school, transit, work, and the rich array of culture that cities offer.

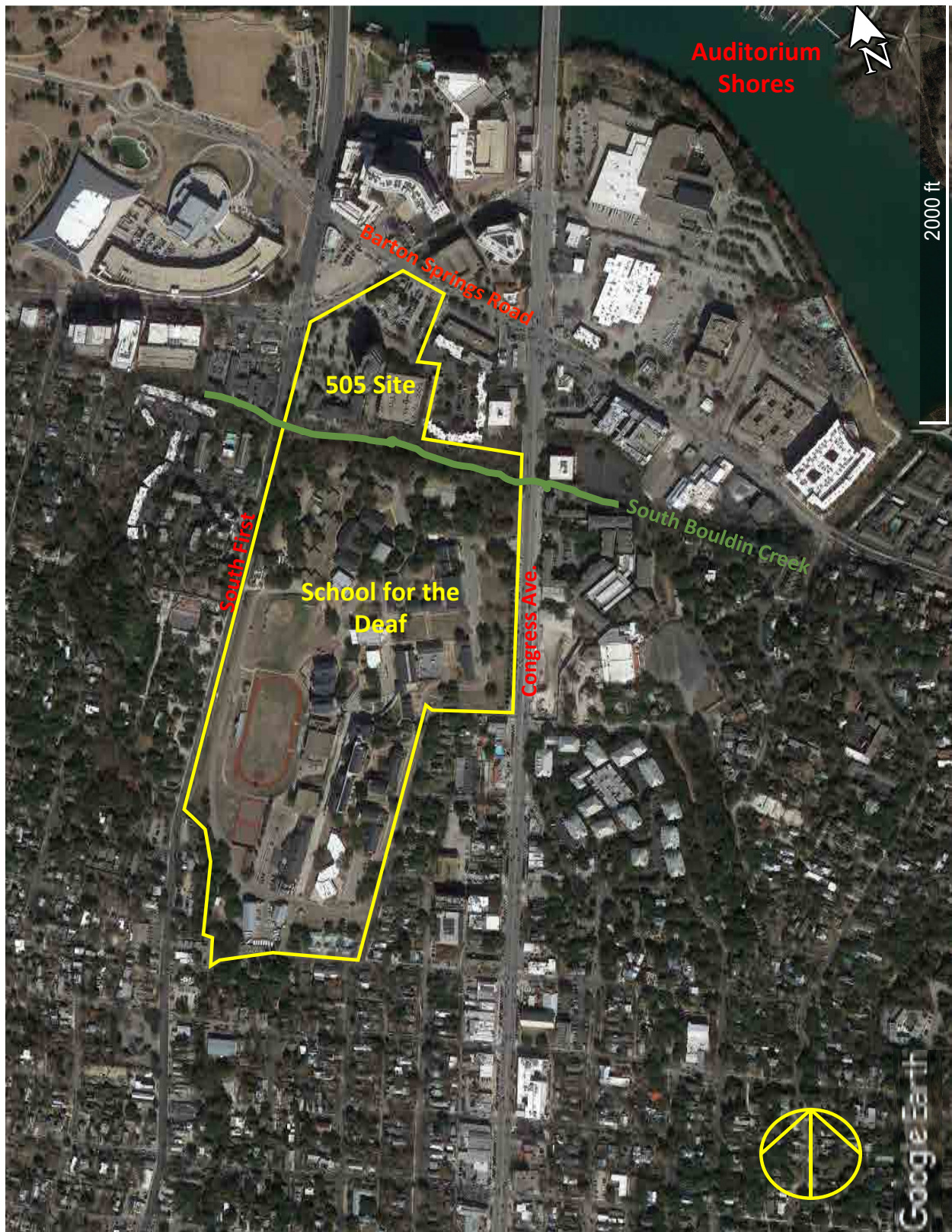
However, it is important to note that many Americans have been hesitant to adopt the central city, seen by them to be places of crime, outworn buildings, a general ugliness of surface parking lots, and occupied by people “not like us”. Change is taking place as the “millennials” and “baby boomers” are seeking “pockets” and whole districts where they are readapting city lifestyles. Isn’t it time to design for a more inclusive, and integrated city, - “the city adopted”, where everyone feels they belong, and where we live in balance with nature, and in houses that are environmentally sustainable, and add to a quality of life? At the same time, we face the serious issue of lower income families being displaced, and thus unable to take advantage of the city, as they simply are not affordable.

The Challenge

The Texas School for the Deaf occupies an “island” site south of East Bouldin Creek and flanked by South First Street and South Congress Avenue. They have an urgent need to house teachers, staff, parents of students in the school, and at the same time areas of the campus offer opportunity to establish a vibrant and distinctive edge.

To the north is the inaccessible East Creek, which the City would dearly love to open as a public amenity. At South First Street and Barton Springs Road is the 505 Block of the City of Austin. These northern sites will form the basis to the design of a new community linked to Lady Bird Lake to the north, South First Street, South Congress Avenue, and the facilities of the School for the Deaf.

The School will extend, share part of its facilities, and integrate into a new city fabric of urban housing, city places with a mix of uses, and greenways.



Five teams of three students will produce a strategy and design for “**South Central**”. This then leads to individual designs for carefully conceived urban housing and mixed use projects.

GOALS

- To examine the fabric of the city;
- To consider how people live in, move about in, and gain benefit from city life;
- To look at how design can influence the way we “navigate” city in our daily lives;
- To map the problems and issues facing cities;
- To design public place to further social contact, culture, and the ecology of city;
- To design a district that has a distinct identity, and as such becomes a meaningful addition to the understanding of city;
- To design homes, work places, and amenities that are in close association, and at an appropriate city density;
- To design the resilient city where architecture addresses the forces of nature, and simultaneously aims to be net positive;
- To develop communication skills in section, section axonometric, model, and perspective to represent an urban architecture, and qualities of place.

This studio, as can be seen from the goals statement, aims to take you into new territory where we address buildings with a mix of uses, the grouping and assembling of buildings and places, and also the architecture of landscape and ecology. Furthermore, a good proportion of your investigations and design work will be based in small teams.

Project 1: The Architecture of House and the City

This will be achieved by close consideration of the work of architects, key writers, and landscape architects working at the scale of the city, and case studies of both city districts that work, and new city interventions.

There are two parts to this study: one, an urban house case study, the other to study and represent one of the five boundary areas to the site.

Project 2: The Architecture of Place

The design of a public place bringing a new landscape of identity. Emphasis is placed on “gathering”, and how a democratic and distinguished place can bring hope to an area, as well as acting as a catalyst to new enterprises. The context is characterized by existing structures, surface car parking, and also buildings of limited significance.

Your challenge is: to reposition and restructure the existing parking on the site; to establish a new place identity, including the design of supporting structures and amenities; and through graphic communication and model to clearly represent the qualities of a new city place. Overall, you are aiming to bring a new cultural opportunity to the city, as well as homes and amenities.

Project 3: The Architecture of Home, City Block and Street

Our aim is to design buildings where people will wish to live for a long time, in less space, but with greater comfort. Here, access to sunlight, open space, local amenities, work and school are each of vital importance.

Your challenge is: to design a small district in the inner city. You will then design a city block, its adjacent streets and landscape, as a place of enduring quality. The building will incorporate a range of house types, work places and local amenities. Through graphic communication and models, to demonstrate the spatial qualities of home in association with access, open space, street, and associated work areas and places.

Project 1 is a team project.

Project 2 will be a team project which will lead into an individual design within the context of the team proposal.

Project 3 will be a team-based district design setting the framework for an individual design of urban homes, and city block, including detail of uses, and adjacent street environment.

Teams are expected to consist of three members

Indicative Readings

Beatley, T. *Biophilic Cities*

Bentley, I. *Responsive Environments*

Carmona, M. *Public Places, Urban Spaces: the Dimensions of Urban Design*

Cooper Marcus, C. *People Places*

Gosling, D. *Gordon Cullen*

Jacobs, J. *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*

Mostafavi, M. *The Life of Cities*

Mostafavi, M. and Douherty. *Ecological Urbanism*

Towers, G. *Introduction to Urban Housing Design*

Whyte, W. *City: Rediscovering the Center*

Timetable

Project 1 Jan 23 - Feb 6

Project 2 Feb 6 - Mar 4

Project 3 Part A Mar 4 - Apr 5
 Part B Apr 5 - May 8

ARC 520E INTERMEDIATE DESIGN STUDIO II: ENVIRONMENTAL

Spring 2019

MWF 1pm-5pm

Professor Simon Atkinson

SUT 3.130B

Office Hours: By Appointment

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PREREQUISITES

ARC 320D, ARC/ARI 221K, and ARC 415K with a grade of at least C in each.

CURRICULUM FLAG

This course carries the Independent Inquiry flag. Independent Inquiry courses are designed to engage students in the process of inquiry over the course of a semester, providing a student with the opportunity for independent investigation of a question, problem, or project related to the student's major. At least one-third of the grade will be based on independent investigation and presentation of one's own work.

INTERMEDIATE DESIGN STUDIO

Students pursuing the Bachelor of Architecture must complete four Intermediate Design Studios during their second and third years. Building on the Foundation Design Studios taken during the first year, the goal of the Intermediate Studios is to prepare students for Advanced Design Studios in their fourth and fifth years.

Each Intermediate Studio will be structured around one of four broad themes of inquiry (Operational, Environmental, Integration, and Speculation) and will offer a critical framework and vocabularies for design and development into key issues emphasized in the theme. Intermediate Studios will also serve as a platform to prepare students for the range of offerings of the Advanced Studios (e.g. Comprehensive, Urban Design, Landscape Architecture, etc.). Intermediate Studios will follow a similar structure, but each instructor will individually determine the scope and design problem for each studio.

THEME: ENVIRONMENT

This studio emphasizes architecture as a response to context: architecture and landscape architecture in the city and in nature, urban issues, housing, making place. This studio should take advantage that students are concurrently enrolled in or have already completed the course Site Design.

STUDIO STRUCTURE

Assignment #1: Research and Analysis (2 weeks)

15% of final grade

Students will work in teams.

This will be achieved by close consideration of the work of key writers, architects, and landscape architects working at the scale of the city, and case studies of both city districts that work, and new city interventions. **Your task will be to diagram, working in a team, a potential**

approach to a neighborhood district, its role, and potential relationship to adjacent areas, and the city as a whole.

Your task will be to diagram a potential additional district integrated into the master plan, while at the same time suggesting revisions to existing plan proposals.

Assignment #2: (3.5 weeks)

20% of final grade

Students will work in teams.

The design of a public place bringing a new landscape of identity. Emphasis is placed on “gathering”, and how a democratic and distinguished place can bring hope to an area, as well as acting as a catalyst to new enterprises. The context is characterized by both outstanding historic structures, surface car parking, and also buildings of limited significance.

Your challenge is: to reposition and restructure the existing parking on the site; to establish a new place identity, including the design of supporting structures and amenities; and through graphic communication and model to clearly represent the qualities of a new city place.

Overall, you are aiming to bring new cultural and housing opportunity to the city.

Assignment #3: Main project (9 weeks);

65% of final grade

Students will work individually, with designs framed within a team context.

Our aim is to design buildings where people will wish to live for a long time, in less space, but with greater comfort. Here, access to sunlight, open space, local amenities, work and school are each of vital importance. Your challenge is: to design a small district in the inner city. You will then design a city block, its adjacent streets and landscape, as a place of enduring quality. The building(s) will incorporate a range of house types, work places, education/community facilities, local amenities, and green space. Graphic communication and models will demonstrate the spatial qualities of home in association with access, open space, street, and associated work areas and places.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will be exposed to a series of learning goals several times and from different angles over the four Intermediate Studio sequence. The goal is that similar issues are repeated from studio to studio but from different angles, allowing students to find, within the diversity of the topics, a “common thread” as they go through the sequence of the four studios. The level of expectation will grow as students go from being introduced to an issue, to becoming competent at it. Some issues would be only mentioned in passing in one studio but will be studied in more depth in another.

- *Design Composition Skills:* Developed through three-dimensional architectural form and space, both exterior and interior; building envelope
- *Design Integration Skills:* Demonstrated through creative engagement with issues of materiality, structures, construction, and environmental system
- *Site Analysis and Design:* Developed through the creative engagement with relevant contextual; environmental and programmatic factors underlying the project

- *Critical Thinking*: Quality of conceptual and critical thought; learning from precedents; research skills
- *Graphic Skills*: Quality of presentation; clarity of communication; appropriateness of media strategy and level of skill displayed
- *Basic grasp of accessibility and egress*
- *Collaborative and Leadership Skills*: Demonstrated through the active engagement in all activities of the studio

STUDIO CULTURE

The School of Architecture believes in the value of the design studio model. Studio learning encourages dialogue, collaboration, risk-taking, innovation, and learning-by-doing. The studio offers an environment where students can come together to ask questions and make proposals, which are developed and discussed among classmates, faculty, visiting professionals, and the public-at-large. Studio learning offers intensive one-on-one instruction from faculty members, and provides the opportunity for each student to develop his/her critical thinking skills and spatial and material sensibilities. The design studio offers a synthetic form of education, where project-based learning becomes the foundation for developing an understanding of and commitment to the school's core values — broadmindedness, interconnectivity, professionalism, exploration and activism — all in service of architecture's fundamental mission: to improve the quality of the built and natural environments.

<https://soa.utexas.edu/programs/architecture/architecture-studio-culture>

DESIGN CONVERSATIONS: JESSEN LECTURES

The School of Architecture offers a wide range of opportunities for students to extend the design conversations taken place in studios (Lecture Series, Goldsmith Talks, Exhibitions, etc). Students are encouraged to participate and be engaged. Specifically, all B.Arch and BSAS students in studio are expected to attend all the Jessen Lectures (three per semester by lead practitioners from around the world). The lectures and the group discussions in studio that follow are important for the holistic education of intellectually engaged students and participation will have an impact on students' grades (see below).

EVALUATION CRITERIA

While each project contains certain quantifiable elements for evaluation, a significant portion of each grade is derived from broader and more subjective criteria.

Student work will be evaluated according to its rigor and evolution over the semester. Grades are subject to deductions for late arrivals, absences, and late or incomplete work at the discretion of the instructor.

Grading for an assignment is broken into four components, each of which is given roughly equal weight:

Pursuit: the consistent and rigorous development and testing of ideas.

- The ability to formulate a query or thesis and pursue a self-determined concomitant method of inquiry
- The ability to identify and implement various processual mechanisms (software, sketch drawing and models, etc.) in the development of the design
- Initiative as demonstrated in work ethic – Does the student do what is asked; go beyond what is asked; direct their own efforts; eager to produce the next iteration of the design?

Grasp: the ideas and understanding of the project at hand and integration of knowledge introduced in companion courses.

- A strong and clearly stated design objective
- Spatial acuity as demonstrated in plan – including reasonable disposition of programmatic elements – and sectional development
- Synthetic and critical thinking; the ability to holistically organize a project as demonstrated through creative engagement with issues of materiality, structures and construction, structural and environmental system integration, building materials and assembly, sustainable practices, etc. in support of the design objective
- Structural competence and material sensitivity as demonstrated in wall thickness, floor plates, and assembly

Resolution: of the design objective; the demonstration of competence, completeness, and finesse in the final design presentation.

- Quality of presentation; clarity of communication; appropriateness of media strategy and level of skill displayed through the work presented at all stages of the design process; technical documentation

Engagement: the active participation in studio activities, leadership, collaboration, group discussions and reviews.

A student must earn a letter grade of C or better in order for the course to count towards a degree in the School of Architecture and to progress in to the next studio. A letter grade of C- will not satisfy degree requirements.

GRADE DESCRIPTIONS

A/A- **Excellent**

Project surpasses expectations in terms of inventiveness, appropriateness, visual language, conceptual rigor, craft, and personal development. Student pursues concepts and techniques above and beyond what is discussed in class. Project is complete on all levels.

B+/B/B- **Above Average**

Project is thorough, well presented, diligently pursued, and successfully completed. Student pursues ideas and suggestions presented in class and puts in

effort to resolve required projects. Project is complete on all levels and demonstrates potential for excellence.

C+/C

Average

Project meets the minimum requirements. Suggestions made in class and not pursued with dedication and rigor. Project is incomplete in one or more areas.

C-/D+/D/D- Poor

Project is incomplete. Basic grasp of skill is lacking, visual clarity or logic of presentation are not level-appropriate. Student does not demonstrate the required competence and knowledge base.

F

Fail

Project is unresolved. Minimum objectives are not met. Performance is not acceptable. Note that this grade will be assigned when students have excessive unexcused absences.

X

Excused Incomplete

Can be given only for legitimate reasons of illness or family emergency. Simply not completing work on time is not an adequate cause for assigning this evaluation. It may only be used after consultation with the Associate Deans' offices and with an agreement as to a new completion date. Work must be completed before the second week of the next semester in which the student is enrolling, according to the School of Architecture policy.

ATTENDANCE

Punctual and regular attendance is mandatory. Participation is expected. With three (3) unexcused absences, the student's final grade for the course will be lowered by a full letter grade. The final grade will be lowered by a full letter grade for each unexcused absence thereafter. Aside from religious observances, absences are only excused with written documentation of a medical issue or family emergency. The student is responsible for completing work missed due to excused absences and initiating communication with the instructor to determine due dates.

If a student is late (5 minutes after the start of class) three (3) times, it will be counted as one (1) unexcused absence. Students should notify the instructor prior to class if lateness or absence is known in advance. Students must notify instructors directly regarding lateness or absences; Asking a classmate to inform the instructor is not acceptable.

RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCES

A student shall be excused from attending classes or other required activities, including examinations, for the observance of a religious holy day, including travel for the purpose. A student whose absence is excused under this subsection may not be penalized for that absence and shall be allowed to take an examination or complete an assignment from which the student

is excused within a reasonable time after the absence. University policy requires students to notify each of their instructors as far in advance of the absence as possible so that arrangements can be made.

By UT Austin policy, you must notify the instructor of the pending absence at least fourteen days prior to the date of a religious holy day. If you must miss a class, an examination, an assignment, or a project in order to observe a religious holy day, you will be given an opportunity to complete the missed work within a reasonable time after the absence.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Students who violate University policy on academic integrity are subject to disciplinary penalties, including the possibility of failure in the course and/or dismissal from the University. Since such dishonesty harms the individual, all students, and the integrity of the University, policies on academic integrity will be strictly enforced. Refer to the Student Conduct and Academic Integrity website for official University policies and procedures on academic integrity: <http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/conduct/academicintegrity.php>. University Code of Conduct: <http://catalog.utexas.edu/general-information/the-university/#universitycodeofconduct>

MENTAL HEALTH AND SUPPORT SERVICES

Taking care of your general well-being is an important step in being a successful student. If stress, test anxiety, racing thoughts, feeling unmotivated, or anything else is getting in your way, there are options available for help:

- In-house CARE counselor (see below)
- For immediate support
 - Visit/call the Counseling and Mental Health Center (CMHC):
M-F 8am-5pm | SSB, 5th floor | 512-471-3515 | cmhc.utexas.edu
 - CMHC Crisis Line:
24/7 | 512-471-2255 | cmhc.utexas.edu/24hourcounseling.html
- Free services at CMHC:
 - Brief assessments and referral services: cmhc.utexas.edu/gettingstarted.html
 - Mental health & wellness articles: cmhc.utexas.edu/commonconcerns.html
 - MindBody Lab: cmhc.utexas.edu/mindbodylab.html
 - Classes, workshops, and groups: cmhc.utexas.edu/groups.html

CARE PROGRAM

Counselors in Academic Residence (CARE) Program places licensed mental health professionals within the colleges or schools they serve in order to provide better access to mental health support for students who are struggling emotionally and/or academically.

Abby Simpson (LCSW) is the assigned CARE counselor for the School of Architecture. Faculty and staff may refer students to the CARE counselor or students may directly reach out to her. Please leave a message if she is unavailable by phone.

Abby Simpson, LCSW | BTL 114B | 512-471-3115 (M-F 8am-5pm)

https://cmhc.utexas.edu/CARE_simpson.html

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Students with disabilities who require special accommodations must obtain a letter that documents the disability from the Services for Students with Disabilities area of the Office of the Dean of Students (471-6259 voice or 471-4641 TTY for users who are deaf or hard of hearing). This letter should be presented to the instructor in each course at the beginning of the semester and accommodations needed should be discussed at that time.

<http://diversity.utexas.edu/disability/>

SECURITY, SAFETY, AND SUSTAINABILITY

The studio is an exceptional learning environment. Since it is a place for all, it necessitates the careful attention to the needs of everyone. All spraying of fixative, spray paint, or any other substance should be done in the shop. Security is a necessary component for a studio that is accessible to you and your colleagues 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Do not leave your studio without your studio key and do not leave your studio unlocked. Hold yourself and your studiomates accountable for the security of your shared space.

The studio is an opportunity to apply sustainability principles, being mindful to recycle and reuse to reduce material consumption at UTSOA. Recyclable materials should be placed in blue bins or any other containers with white bags. The Material Exchange, a give-and-take system for students to donate materials and take what they need for studio and fabrication coursework, is available throughout the semester to all UT students in the UTSOA Technology Lab. All unwanted, reusable materials should be brought to the Material Exchange station in the Technology Lab at the end of the semester.

BCAL

Concerns regarding the safety or behavior of fellow students, Teaching Assistants (TA), or Professors can be reported to the Behavior Concerns Advice Line (BCAL): 512-232-5050. Calls can be made anonymously. If something doesn't feel right, it probably isn't. Trust your instincts and share your concerns.

EMERGENCY EVACUATION

In the case of emergency evacuation:

- Occupants of buildings on The University of Texas at Austin campus are required to evacuate buildings when a fire alarm is activated. Alarm activation or announcement requires exiting and assembling outside.
- Students should familiarize themselves with all exit doors of each classroom and building they may occupy. Remember that the nearest exit door may not be the one used when entering the building.

- Students requiring assistance in evacuation shall inform their instructor in writing during the first week of class. In the event of an evacuation, follow the instruction of faculty or class instructors.
- Reentry into a building is prohibited unless given instructions by the following: Austin Fire Department, The University of Texas at Austin Police Department, or Fire Prevention Services offices.

Information regarding emergency evacuation routes and emergency procedures can be found at: www.utexas.edu/emergency.