

Communication For Current Students

🕒 5 minute read

Asking questions during live class is the fastest and most efficient way to communicate. Outside of class, the best way to communicate is through Discord and Canvas. For private matters, you can come to office hours or email me at fitzgerald@csus.edu.

In Class

Please ask questions during class. Questions help clarify the material for other students, and they show me where I need to improve my explanation.

Ask your question via Zoom chat whenever it comes up for you during the course of the class meeting. There's no need to wait for me to pause and ask for questions. Don't worry about interrupting. I monitor the chat, and when I see a question come through I will find a natural place to stop and address it.

Occasionally, I might defer a question to office hours. During office hours, we can also meet privately through Zoom breakout rooms, so just ask if you would like to speak privately. You can even send a private message to me through Zoom chat.

Outside Class

Canvas

We will use Canvas announcements for time sensitive, important announcements that everyone in class should see. For example, when I post the final exam I will send a Canvas announcement. Set your [Canvas notification preferences](https://csus.instructure.com/profile/communication) (<https://csus.instructure.com/profile/communication>) to email or give you a push notification for Announcements. You can also set your notifications specific to each course by navigating to the home page of the course and clicking on the button with a bell labeled "View Course Notifications".

STAT 50 sections 01, 02

Fall 2020

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Welcome to STAT 50

Feel free to check out the Canvas course material and start on the...

← Reply

Posted on:

Aug 19, 2020 at 12:05pm

STAT50 Intro Probability+Stat - SECTIONS 01, 02 ↕

View Course Stream

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To Do

Welcome to STAT 50

Aug 19 at 12:05pm |

If you are going to be late on an assignment, then turn in what you have, and leave a comment in the assignment submission form on Canvas telling me what's going on and when you expect to finish. Later, when I grade the assignment, that comment will show up and I will have some context for why that assignment is missing.

Discord

For questions and discussions on course content and policies, please use [Discord](https://discord.com/channels/@me) (<https://discord.com/channels/@me>). Discord describes itself as “the easiest way to talk over voice, video, and text.” The best thing about a public forum like Discord is that everyone in class can benefit from the discussion, and other students can respond and help you as well. This is not possible with email, which is why I check and respond to public questions on Discord much more frequently than email.

If you have a question that requires my input, then tag me with `@Dr. Fitz` to make sure that I pay attention to it. Do not worry about bothering me at any time of the day or night, because I set my notifications so that I am notified if and only if I want to be notified. You should do the same, because it's important to unplug and rest. If I go for a long bike ride or a camping trip, then I'll see the notifications the next time I sign on, no problem.

I've set up our Discord with a handful of channels. Feel free to mute any of them (<https://support.discord.com/hc/en-us/articles/209791877-How-do-I-mute-and-disable-notifications-for-specific-channels->).

- **# general** for general questions on content, class policies, etc.
- **# lost** when you are lost, or you have no idea what is going on, and you need help. No question is too basic here, and nobody will judge you for asking any legitimate question.
- **# off-topic** when you want to share something with the class, but it's not related to the class. For example, finding buddies to play video games with, or [Mandalorian memes](https://gamerant.com/star-wars-mandalorian-best-memes/) (<https://gamerant.com/star-wars-mandalorian-best-memes/>).

I suggest you set your Discord user name for our class to the same name displayed in Canvas, so that I know who you are and I can award you participation points for your helpful contributions to the conversation. If you set your server nickname (<https://support.discord.com/hc/en-us/articles/219070107->

Server-Nicknames), then you can be Jane Doe for our class, but still be TurdBurglar when you're gaming on Discord. On a similar note, keep your profile pictures PG.

Email

Here are three ways to communicate with me privately:

1. Discord direct messages. I'll typically see and respond to these fastest, because I check them most often.
2. Canvas direct messages. Same idea as Discord, but less efficient. Use it if it's the only way you have to communicate.
3. Email fitzgerald@csus.edu. The best option for official forms or messages that I need to forward to other people at the University, or if you need to notify multiple professors simultaneously.

General Advice

Here are a few suggestions for how to make this an enjoyable and safe social experience.

Be polite and considerate of others

You never know how someone else might interpret what you say or write. For example, sarcasm and profanity rarely go over well in the classroom. As students at Sac State, you're governed by about 50 Policies and Procedures (<https://www.csus.edu/student-affairs/policy-procedures.html>), and I'm sure that I'm governed by even more as a faculty member. I've heard the rule of thumb that if you wouldn't say it in front of your grandmother, then don't say it in the virtual classroom. This seems reasonable, based on most of the grandmothers I've met.

Communicate with your fellow students

I designed the participation assignments and discussions so that you can interact and have some exchange of ideas with others in the class. I encourage you to form study groups and meet outside of class; let me know if I can help facilitate this. Explaining a concept to another student is educational for both parties.

Mind what you show on video

Consider finding a good Zoom background (<https://sacstate.smugmug.com/Sac-State-Zoom-Backgrounds/>) that hides your actual room. Technical issues might prevent you from turning on videos, for example, if your internet connection is unstable. You should also turn off your video if there's anything you don't want others to see, for example, if you need to briefly speak to another member of your household.

Talk to me

Talk with me about your classes and career plans, ask me about my educational experiences (<http://webpages.csus.edu/fitzgerald/my-education-path/>), or ask about anything academic and career related. If you're experiencing relationship troubles, depression, or other issues more suitable for a trained counselor, then I may refer you to Counseling Services (<https://www.csus.edu/student-life/health-counseling/>). Keep in mind that all faculty members are mandatory reporters, which means we must report issues (<https://www.csus.edu/title-ix/reporting.html>), such as child abuse.

Take a break

Think before you post, and listen to your better judgement. Don't post anything online that you might regret or be embarrassed about later. This advice holds for your personal, academic, and professional lives. If you're not in the right frame of mind, then sleep on it, and decide what you really want to say, or if you want to say anything at all.

📅 **Updated:** January 24, 2021