

UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN

HISTORY BLACK ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN THE USA

COMMODIFICATION OF BLACK CULTURE: Hip Hop, Superstar Athletes & BLACK CORPORATE AMERICA Entrepreneurs

HISTORY 350R-- African American Studies 374D, American Studies 321E

Spring 2017 TTH 2:00-3:30 GAR 1:122

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Office Hours: TTh 10:00-11:00

TTH 12:30-2:00

W By appointment

"This course may be used to fulfill three hours of the U.S. history component of the university core curriculum and addresses the following four core objectives established by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board: communication skills critical thinking skills, personal responsibility, and social responsibility." Also, see page 11 for Independent Inquiry and Writing flags information.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Within the construct of African American Business history, race, American capitalism, contemporary American popular culture and global capitalism, this course will focus on an important aspect in the contemporary political economy of black Americans. Specifically, the commodification (sale) of black culture provides the conceptual frame for an examination of the phenomenon of both the superstar black athlete as an entrepreneur and the Hip Hop Superstar as an entrepreneur in post-Civil Rights America. The emphasis in this course, then, is to critically examine and analyze the impact of a multiplicity of societal, cultural and economic factors in the post-modern information age, propelled by new technologies in the New Economy of Global Capitalism. Also, consideration will be given to the new diversity as it impacts on the political economy of African Americans and American capitalism.

Yet, during the "Golden Age" of black business in the early 20th century, there were examples of African Americans participating in the development of enterprises that paralleled mainstream white business activity in Industrial America such as the first African American car manufacturing company, C.R. Patterson & Sons. The Ohio-based company was founded by ex-slave in 1865 and manufactured carriages. In 1916, the founder's son Frederick Douglass Patterson, built his first car, the Patterson-Greenfield below...



Early advertisements showed the Patterson Car company's marketing brand announced: "If it's a Patterson, it's a good one." Also the company said their cars be more efficient than the Model T. The cars cost about \$850 each while a Model T cost \$620 and reached speeds up to 50 miles per hour, while a Model T cost \$620 and averaged 20 miles per hour. The Patterson Company could not compete with Ford's assembly-line production and eventually stopped production of the Patterson-Greenfield car. In the 1920s, the Patterson Company became a subcontractor manufacturing busses for Ford.

See Juliet E. K. Walker, **The History of Black Business in America: Capitalism, Race, Entrepreneurship** ((New York/London: Macmillan/Prentice Hall International, 1998; 2nd Printing, Macmillan, 1999), 203, 239, 262

By the 1930s, most black business sales were limited to black consumers. In the Civil Rights era, black hair care manufacturers expanded into million dollar enterprises. Beginning with the post-Civil Rights and Black Power eras, the only black businesses that profited from multi-million dollars sales in **American's mainstream consumer market** were those enterprises that commodified (sold) black cultural expressions, primarily in music, sports and cable TV media enterprises. Ironically, with few exceptions most of the profits derived from the sale of black culture go to white corporate America.

PURPOSE OF COURSE

Proceeding from an interdisciplinary perspective, the course considers the super-rich hip hop entrepreneurs, superstar black athletes and the cable media billionaire moguls well as their emergence as cultural icons, contrasted with the comparatively overall poor performance of Black Business not only within the intersection of race, gender, class, but also within the context of transnationalism in the globalization sale of African American Culture in post-Civil Rights America. But who profits? Indeed, also, why and how has the criminal element in the black community used modern business methods to succeed such as exemplified by the movie "American Gangster," which starred Denzel Washington.

Most important, the major question is why business receipts for African Americans, who comprise almost thirteen percent of this nation's population, amounted in 2007 to only .5%, that is, less than one (1) percent of the nation's total business receipts? In addition, why is it that among the various occupational categories in which blacks participate in the nation's economy, especially as businesspeople that black entertainers and sports figures are the highest paid? What does this say about race, class, gender and hegemonic masculinities in America at the turn of the new century?

Within the context of superstar black athlete as entrepreneurs, class discussion and student research papers will explore the business activities of superstar black athletes, such as Magic Johnson, contrasted, as an example, with that of the business activities of a Michael Jordan. Also, the course will consider the rise of superstar black athlete entrepreneurs as an expansion of African American business activities within the context of the expansion of global capitalism. Are there factors beyond race that explain the economic success of a Don King or George Foreman, Mike Tyson, and Muhammad Ali, as contrasted with their predecessors such as Joe Louis and Sugar Ray Robinson in the world of boxing? Does the expansion of global capitalism transcend race when considering the economic success of Tiger Woods and the Williams sisters? Does the increasing success of superstar Black athletes suggest a "declining significance of race" or has the expansion of global capitalism superseded race? Also, for consideration, if Blacks gained control of all aspects of a Sports Industry, basketball and football, as examples, would there be a decline in white consumer support of these industries? In addition, what factors contribute to the limitations of Black Athletes in the Sports Industry beyond the playing fields such as sports wearing apparel

manufacturing, team ownership, as well as top management positions in various aspects of the sports industry? Is there a glass ceiling for Black women in the Sports Industry or does gender limit the degree of success for all women in the Sports Industry? Particularly, the course will consider student interpretation of the impact of the forces of race, class and the commodification of black cultural expressions as factors, e.g., the phenomenal athletic abilities of these Black athletes, that have contributed to their successes on the playing fields, courts, links, tracks,

Within the context of Hip Hop entrepreneurship, foremost, what are the enterprises that have been generated by the Hip Hop Industry? Who are moguls, the entrepreneurs, in the Hip Hop Industry whose business activities reflect risk-taking and innovation? Can these entrepreneurs be viewed within the tradition of the Schumpeterian tradition of creative capitalist, where entrepreneurial motivation extends beyond the desire for the accumulation of profits, but rather is motivated by non-economic forces: “the will to conquer, the impulse to fight, to prove oneself superior to others, to succeed for the sake, not of the fruits of success but of success itself.” What market factors precipitated the growth of the Hip Hop Industry? What historic factors in post-Civil Rights America precipitated the growth of the Hip Hop Industry? What are the economic implications for Black America as a result of the Hip Hop Industry? In what ways, economically, has Black America profited or not profited from the Hip Hop Industry?

Within the scope of the post-Civil Rights era history of black business, has the commodification of black culture been the most profitable avenue to wealth for black entrepreneurs? Why? Also, how do the profits in the Hip Hop Industry compare with profits in other American industries, as well as those industries that distinguish the expansion of in global capitalism? Why has the commodification of black culture been the most viable business activity for blacks in the mainstream of American business life? In the overall economic life of Black America, who profits from Hip Hop? And, how do they profit, financially? Or, has the Hip Hop culture marked a turning point whereby black labor and black culture are now benefiting the progenitors? Then, too, in what ways and in what financial amounts or financial benefits have hip hop profits trickled down to the black community?

Within comparative context of People of Color and White Corporate American Entrepreneurship,

From slavery to freedom, the economic value of the labor of African Americans has benefited White America. Does it continue to do so? Or, has the Hip Hop culture marked a turning point whereby black labor and black culture are now benefiting the progenitors? Or, do we find that the in the instance of Hip Hop, i.e., the commodification of black culture continues to benefit White America? In the overall economic life of Black America, who profits from Hip Hop? Who profits from the labor of superstar sports athletes? And, how do they profit, financially? Finally, who provides a model for the economic advancement of African Americans in the 21st century? Bob Johnson, Oprah Winfrey, Tyler Perry, Dave Bing, Magic Johnson, Michael Jordan, Russell Simmons, Fifty Cent, Diddy-Sean Combs, Beyonce', J-Zay, Tiger Woods, the Williams Sisters? Or, Nigerian-born Houston-based Kase Lawal, the second African American with business receipts of more than \$1 billion. Then, more recently, the Austin, Texas based Robert F. Smith, CEO and founder of private equity firm Vista Equity Partners, who with net worth of \$2.5 billion, ranked No. 268 on Forbes' list of wealthiest Americans, joining Oprah Winfrey and Michael Jordan in being the only three African American billionaires. .

Why not more Black American entrepreneurs, such as Reginald Lewis, the first black American entrepreneur with sales above \$1 billion? Also, there are black-owned companies such as World Wide Technology Inc., St. Louis-based IT products and services (branch in Austin), \$5 billion sales in 2012; CAMAC International Corp., a Houston-based crude oil, gas exploration, and production and trading company, \$1.6 billion sales, established by a Nigerian immigrant, Kasen Lawal ; or Bridgewater Interiors L.L.C. Detroit-based Automotive parts supplier, revenues, \$1,186,

billion? Why not an African American Bill Gates, Michael Dell, Ray Kroc, Sam Walton, Warren Buffett? Why not an African American Jerry Yang, Vinod Khosla?

Then, too, who are their American counterparts among other people of color: Africans, Latinos, Asians (,Japanese, Koreans, Chinese, Indians, Middle-Easterners) and those people of color globally who participate in the mainstream global capitalist economy? Who are their American counterparts among people of color: Africans, Latinos, Asians (,Japanese, Koreans, Chinese, Indians), and Middle-Easterners. And, how does Black American Entrepreneurship compare with White Corporate American Entrepreneurship and also within the context of American and Global Capitalism

REQUIRED BOOKS

Eldridge, Lewis, *Capitalism: The New Segregation*

Lewis, Reginald, *Why Should White Guys Have All the Fun: How Reginald Lewis Created a Billion-Dollar Business Empire*

O’Malley, Zach, *Empire State of Mind: How Jay Z Went from Street Corner to Corner Office,*

Smith-Shomade, Beretta, *Pimpin’ Ain’t Easy: Selling Black Entertainment Television*

Stoute, Steve, *Tanning of America: How Hip Hop Created a Culture That Rewrote Rules of a New Economy*

Walker, Juliet E. K. *History Black Business in America: Capitalism, Race, Entrepreneurship* [Course Packet]

Select one of the below books for a required critical book review analysis:

Bell, Gregory, *In the Black: A History of African Americans on Wall Street*

House-Soremkeum, Bessie, *Confronting the Odds: African American Entrepreneurship in Cleveland, Ohio*

Johnson, Earvin Magic, *32 Ways to Be a Champion in Business*

LaFeber, Walter, *Michael Jordan and the New Global Capitalism*

Rhoden, William, *Forty Million Dollar Slaves: Rise, Fall, Redemption of the Black Athlete*

See additional suggested books listed below for the book review

Also, see: Walker, Juliet E. K., ed., *Encyclopedia of African American Business History*

<u>COURSE REQUIREMENTS</u>	<u>DATE DUE</u>	<u>GRADE PERCENT</u>
Class Participation	Each Class Day	10%
Take-home Mid-Term Exam	Mar 2 Distributed March 7, DUE	30%
Critical Book Review Analysis	Mar 21	10%

Research Paper Class Presentation	Apr 18, 20, 25, 27, May 2,4	10%
Course Research Paper (15 pages)	May 8	40%

Class Participation 10%

Students are expected to participate in each class session, always prefacing their discussion from various assessments and interpretations of the assigned readings.

Mid-Term Take-Home Exam 30%

The exam will be based on your assessment of the history of black business from Reconstruction to the 21st century. The independent economic self-help business activities of African Americans are usually ignored in both black and white content history books. WHY? Most important, considering the abysmal state of African American business, your exam should proceed from the perspective of Carter G. Woodson’s statement that: “Those who fail to understand the past live to repeat it.” The point is: would knowledge that African Americans have a virtual four century participation in the nation’s business encourage more black business participation?

CRITICAL BOOK REVIEW ESSAYS 10% .

Each student is to select two (2) books from the below recommended list. Each review is worth five points for a total of 10 percentage points of your grade. **Your critical book review (three-four pages) should include the following:**

1. brief overview/summary of the book
2. your assessment of the significance of the book’s content as it relates to race, black business and the expansion of global capitalism in the late 20th and early 21st centuries.
3. insight gained from the book on the implications of race as it relates to the commodification of black culture and the implications of the future of black business in America
4. Why you would or would not recommend this book as a source of information on the commodification of black culture and on American capitalism and its impact, positive or negative on the future of black business in America

Suggested Books for Critical Book Review

Asante, Mark, *It's Bigger Than Hip Hop: The Rise of the Post-Hip-Hop Generation*
 Boyd, Todd, *Young, Black, Rich and Famous: The Rise of the NBA, The Hip Hop Invasion and the Transformation of American Culture*
 Butler, John Sibley, *Entrepreneurship and Self-Help Among Black Americans: Reconsideration of Race and Economics*
 Chamas, Dan, *The Big Payback: The History of the Business of Hip-Hop*
 Curry, Mark, *With the Devil: How Puff Burned the Bad Boys of Hip Hop*
 Daniels, Cora, *Black Power, Inc: The New Voice of Black Success*

Daniels, Cora, *GhettoNation: Journey Into the Land of Bling and Home of the Shameless*
 Golus, Carrie, *Russell Simmons: From Def Jam to Super Rich*
 Graves, Earl G. *How to Succeed in Business Without Being White: Straight Talk on Making It in America*
 Greenburg, Zack O'Malley, *Empire State of Mind: How Jay-Z Went from Street Corner to Corner Office*
 House-Soremkeum, Bessie, *Confronting the Odds: African American Entrepreneurship in Cleveland, Ohio*
 Johnson, Earvin Magic, *32 Ways to Be a Champion in Business*
 Johnson, John H. *Succeeding Against the Odds: The Autobiography of a Great American Businessman*
 Kitwana, Bakari, *Why White Kids Love Hip Hop: Wangstas, Wiggers, Wannabes, New Reality of Race in America*
 LaFeber, Walter, *Michael Jordan and the New Global Capitalism*
 Shapiro, Thomas, *The Hidden Cost of Being African American: How Wealth Perpetuates Inequality*
 Marable, Manning, *How Capitalism Underdeveloped Black America*
 Morgan, Joan, *When Chickenheads Come Home to Roost: A Hip-Hop Feminist Breaks It Down*
 Oliver, Richard, Tim Leffel, *Hip-Hop, Inc.: Success Strategies of the Rap Moguls*
 Pulley, Brett, *The Billion Dollar BET: Robert Johnson and the Inside Story of BET*
 Rhoden, William C. *Forty Million Dollar Slaves: The Rise, Fall, and Redemption of the Black Athlete*
 Shalhoup, Mara, *BMF: The Rise and Fall of Big Meech and the Black Mafia Family*
 Shapiro, Thomas, *The Hidden Cost of Being African American: How Wealth Perpetuates Inequality*
 Smiley, Tavis and Cornel West, *The Rich and the Rest of Us*
 Watkins, Boyce, *Black American Money: How Black Power Can Survive in a Capitalist Society*

Oral Presentation of Student Research Paper 10%

Course Research Paper 50%

A research paper guideline will be provided. Topics for student research paper will be generated from both class readings and class discussion in addition to the various questions raised above in the above "Course Description." Various sources, both primary and secondary, can be used, e.g., business as well as sports magazines, biographies, scholarly studies, both books and journal articles, which provide information on the business of sports and the sports industry, and various internet sources. Finally, your research paper should provide a discussion on how the topic has contributed/changed/broadened your perspectives of African American history, African American Business history and the impact of race and the commodification of black culture

MOST IMPORTANT

Whatever the topic of your research paper, it must include field research, that is, you must identify and interview someone in that business field so you can get a realistic appraisal/perspective. For example, if you wanted to write about business success of Beyonce—perhaps you could interview her mother, a co-partner in House of Dereon fashion line in Houston. The point is select a topic that will allow you to get some kind of first-hand knowledge of black participation in that business area. Then, there is Houston-based George Foreman involved in several entrepreneurial activities. **What this means is that the documentation for your research paper must include three kinds of sources: primary, secondary and oral sources**

Students are required to see me during my office hours during both the conceptualization and writing phases of your research paper. **A research paper guide will be provided.**

ALL RESEARCH PAPERS ARE DUE BEFORE OR BY MAY 8

LATE RESEARCH PAPERS ACCEPTED—but with ten (10) points taken off the paper's grade for each day the paper is late.

As Frederick Douglass said in 1857:

"If there is no struggle, there is no progress. Those who profess to favor freedom and deprecate agitation, are men who want crops without plowing up the ground, they want rain without thunder and lightning.

People might not get all they work for in this world, but they must certainly work for all they get."

COURSE OUTLINE

Date	Topic and Assigned Readings
Jan 17, 19 Business?	Introduction to Course: African American History: Where is Black Business?
Jan 24, 26 Sept 1	Post-Civil War Prelude to 20th Century Black Business <i>Walker, History of Black Business in America: chap 6</i>
Jan 31, Feb 2	"The Golden Age of Black Business": Economic Ideologues DuBois, BTW, Garvey the Entrepreneurs Madame C.J. Walker, Maggie Lena Walker, <i>Walker, History of Black Business in America: chap 7</i>
Feb 7, 9	Black Business in a Separate Economy, 1930s-1960s <i>Walker, History of Black Business in America: chap 8</i>
Feb 14, 16	"Federal Government and Black Business, 1960s-1990s <i>Walker History of Black Business in America: chap 9</i>
Feb 21, 23	Black Entrepreneurship and the Rise of Black Corporate America <i>Walker, History of Black Business in America: chap 10</i>
Feb 28, Mar 2	Black Entrepreneurship and The Fourth Wave Rise of Back Corporate <i>Walker, History of Black Business in America: chap 11</i>
Mar 2	MIDTERM TAKE HOME EXAM DISTRIBUTED
Mar 7	MIDTERM TAKE HOME EXAM DUE –NO LATE EXAMS ACCEPTED [90 MINUTES MAKE-UP EXAM –NO NOTES, COMPUTERS, CELLS]

Mar 7, 9

First African American Billion Dollar Business

Lewis, *Why Should White Guys Have All the Fun: How Reginald Lewis Created Billion-Dollar Business*

Mar 14, 16

SPRING BREAK

Mar 21, 23

First Billion Dollar Sale of Black Culture: Bob Johnson's BET

Smith-Shomade, Beretta, *Pimpin' Ain't Easy: Selling Black Entertainment Television*

Mar 28, 30

SUPERSTAR BLACK ATHLETES' ENTREPRENEURSHIP: Who Gets What?

See Suggested Readings and Students Can Select Other Books on the Topic

Apr 4, 6

Commodification of Black Culture: Hip Hop Enterprises. Who Gets The Most ?

Stoute, *Tanning of America: How Hip Hop Created a Culture That Rewrote Rules of a New Economy*

Apr 11, 13

Black Consumers, Black Business: Where do We Go From Here?

Eldridge, Lewis, *Capitalism: The New Segregation*

Apr 18, 20, 25, 27, May 2,4 **Student Research Paper Summary Presentation**

Apr 18, 20 RESEARCH PAPER CLASS PRESENTATION

1. _____ 2. _____

3. _____ 4. _____

Apr 25, 27 RESEARCH PAPER CLASS PRESENTATION

5. _____ 6. _____

7. _____ . 8. _____

9 _____ 10. _____

11. _____ . 12. _____

May 2, 4 **RESEARCH PAPER CLASS PRESENTATION**

13 _____ 14. _____

15. _____ . 16. _____

17 _____ 18. _____

19 _____ 208. _____

MAY 8 RESEARCH PAPER DUE. The best research papers will be published in the *Undergraduate Journal of Black Business History* published by UT's Center of Black Business History, Entrepreneurship and Technology

UNDERGRADUATE WRITING CENTER

Students, a Research Paper Guide will be provided. In addition, as you begin to write your research paper, **please consider the Undergraduate Writing Center**, which provides professional consulting services for students who want to improve their writing. Students can bring their assignments to the UWC and work with a consultant on any aspect of their writing--from brainstorming, to developing and organizing an argument, to learning the conventions of usage and punctuation.

The Undergraduate Writing Center Located in FAC 211 (Flawn Academic Center), and the UWC is open from 9 a.m. to 8 p.m. Monday through Thursday and from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Friday. To better familiarize students with our the Undergraduate Writing Center services, the UWC brochure, which details hours and policies can be downloaded from their main website at . www.uwc.utexas.edu.

Most important, your paper must be your own work. By following the above directions, there will be no concern that your paper is not your own—See **UT'S POLICIES** at: [Plagiarism | SJS](#) We offer a wide variety of programs and services to enhance student life at the University of Texas at Austin. We're here for you! deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs/scholdis_plagiarism.php - 13k

Division of Rhetoric and Composition Student Resources; [Student Government/Student Advocates Honor Code](#) LBJ School Public Affairs)<http://www.lib.utexas.edu/admin/cird/bibliographer/bibsubject.htm#subject>

CLASS ATTENDANCE

University regulations mandate that students with more than three unexcused absences must be given an F grade.

There are occasions when a student will miss class due to illness or personal problems. If illness or personal problems require you to miss more than three classes, you must present verification of these circumstances from your Physician, Dean or funeral director. If your circumstances prevent you from meeting class attendance requirements, please discuss with your Dean the necessity of dropping the course. If your absence is due to university obligations, arrangements must be made in advance to make up any missed work. When absent, it is your responsibility to get the class lecture notes from a classmate. Once this is done and, if you have questions on the lecture notes, see me.

SPECIAL NEEDSThe University of Texas at Austin provides, upon request, academic accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. To determine if you qualify, please contact the Dean of Students at 471-6259; 471-4641 TTY to certify your needs, which will allow me to make appropriate arrangements

—“By UT Austin policy, you must notify me of your pending absence at least fourteen days prior to the date of observance of a religious holy day. If you must miss a class, an examination, a work 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.”)

Co-op [CFO textbook rental program](#) ...**Rental books** can either be returned at the *Co-op* buy back counter or purchased at a discount of the *rental* price. If needed, **Kindle books**

The course is designed so that each student will get an A grade, but only if one attends all classes (university regulations state a student who is absent more than three times must fail the course) and, studies diligently and consistently.

And, of course, A students are those who earn average A grades on all assignments.

Grading System:

GRADES

A 4.0 92-100

- A- 3.67 89-91
- B+ 3.33 88-90
- B 3.0 82-87
- B- 2.67 79-81
- C+ 2.33 77-78
- C 2.0 72-76
- C- 1.67—69-71
- C- 1.67 69-71
- D+ 1.33 67-68
- D 1.0 62-66
- D- 0.67 59-61
- F 0.0 0-58

Information regarding emergency evacuation routes and emergency procedures can be found at
<http://www.utexas.edu/emergency> www.utexas.edu/emergency. Classroom Instruction and Recommended Syllabus Information

To implement this policy and reinforce building evacuation procedures, each faculty member shall provide the following information and instructions to students:

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. Familiarize yourself with all exit doors of each classroom and building you may occupy. Remember that the nearest exit door may not be the one you 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. Do not re-enter a building unless given instructions by the following: Austin Fire Department, The University of Texas at Austin Police Department, or Fire Prevention Services office.

Title IX makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender are Civil Rights offenses subject to the same kinds of accountability and the same kinds of support applied to offenses against other protected categories such as race, national origin, etc. If you or someone you know has been harassed or assaulted, you can find the appropriate resources here: <http://catalog.utexas.edu/general-information/appendices/appen> **Syllabus Statements for Flagged Courses: Hist 350R, AFR 374D, AMS 370**

Cultural Diversity in the United States

This course carries the flag for Cultural Diversity in the United States. Cultural Diversity courses are designed to increase your familiarity with the variety and richness of the American cultural experience. You should therefore expect a substantial portion of your grade to come from assignments covering the practices, beliefs, and histories of at least one U.S. cultural group that has experienced persistent marginalization.

Independent Inquiry

This course carries the Independent Inquiry flag. Independent Inquiry courses are designed to engage you in the process of inquiry over the course of a semester, providing you with the opportunity for independent investigation of a question, problem, or project related to your major. You should therefore expect a substantial portion of your grade to come from the independent investigation and presentation of your own work.

Writing

This course carries the Writing Flag. Writing Flag courses are designed to give students experience with writing in an academic discipline. In this class, you can expect to write regularly during the semester, complete substantial writing projects, and receive feedback from your instructor to help you improve your writing. You will also have the opportunity to revise one or more assignments, and you may be asked to read and discuss your peers' work. You should therefore expect a substantial portion of your grade to come from your written work. Writing Flag classes meet the Core Communications objectives of Critical Thinking, Communication, Teamwork, and Personal Responsibility, established by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board.

Background on Campus Carry Laws in Texas

In 2015, the Texas Legislature approved the "campus carry" law, Senate Bill 11. The law provides that License to Carry (LTC) permit holders may carry a concealed handgun throughout university campuses, starting Aug. 1, 2016. The law gives public universities some discretion to regulate campus carry.

The University of Texas at Austin and President Gregory L. Fenves take issues surrounding guns on campus very seriously and have worked to create policies that conform to the new law, protect the rights of citizens and ensure the safety and security of the entire campus.

S.B. 11 provides that, after consulting with students, staffers and faculty members about "the nature of the student population, specific safety considerations and the uniqueness of the campus environment," the university may enact reasonable rules and regulations regarding the carrying of concealed handguns by license holders on campus.

The law stipulates, however, that these rules and regulations may not either "generally prohibit" or "have the effect of generally prohibiting" license holders from carrying concealed handguns on campus.

Classroom

Can I ban the carry of concealed handguns in my classroom?

No. Faculty members cannot ban the concealed carry of handguns in their classrooms. Excluding handguns from classrooms would have had the effect of generally prohibiting student license holders from carrying their handguns, and thus would violate S.B. 11. Language in the law specifically forbids any policies that would generally prohibit campus carry or have the effect of generally prohibiting campus carry. That is why the concealed carry of handguns in classrooms is allowed.

General Information

What do I do if I see a handgun in my classroom or on campus?

If you see a gun, call 911.

Campus carry requires that handguns remain concealed at all times with no exceptions, and if a handgun is visible, however briefly, it may be a violation of university policy and law. Notify law enforcement via 911 and UTPD will arrive and assess the situation. Persons who violate these laws and policies are subject to penalties and fines in addition to disciplinary action imposed by the university.

If your class is in a location where your cell phone does not get reception, identify the nearest location you can make a call at the beginning of the semester so you know where to go, if needed. If you have a TA or AI, have them leave and find the best place to call 911.

Do faculty have a right to know if students are carrying a gun in class?

No. Even if a faculty member were to ask, the LTC holder is not required to respond. Under Texas law, only law enforcement can verify whether a LTC holder is carrying and has a license to carry.

Additional information, see: <https://campuscarry.utexas.edu/students>

ADDENDUM