FMP 403 – INDEPENDENT FILM
Fall 2021 – Session A
August 19 – October 8
Course # 84288/84289
Course Website: https://independentfilm.hol.asu.edu

Instructor: Andrea Canales & Andres Torres-Vives
Email: andrea.canales@asu.edu
Email: andres.torres.vives@asu.edu

Office: Zoom, Google Meet or by appointment with Andrea at FilmBar (815 N. 2nd Street, PHX, AZ 85004) / Torres-Vives @ https://asu.zoom.us/my/andres.torres

Virtual Office Hours: By Appointment Via E-Mail, Phone or Video Conference

Email Subject: FMP 403 [followed by your question]

NOTE: This is a 7 WEEK COURSE that covers the same material as a 15-week semester. If you cannot handle a compressed schedule or rigid deadlines, you may want to consider a different course! NO late assignments or exams are permitted unless it is a documented medical emergency. If you are having difficulty, ask for help before things are due! All due dates and times are ARIZONA time zone.

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course examines the history of independent filmmaking, with a specific focus on the American independent filmmaking traditions and how those traditions are influenced by and in turn influence other filmmaking practices (including Hollywood studio filmmaking, foreign films, avant-garde films, etc.)
This is an ONLINE course, with material divided between online lectures, required readings, and both required and suggested viewings. Students will be evaluated through quizzes, participation and contribution to online discussions, and written assignments designed to meet and reflect course objectives.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES:**

- Analyze independent filmmaking aesthetics in relation to conventional film aesthetics
- Evaluate independent film as a professional practice in relation to the mainstream American film industry
- Compare both the personal and political elements of independent film in relation to contemporary cultural studies and practices
- Apply advanced academic research to analyze independent filmmaking practices, theory, and independent film criticism

**LEARNING OUTCOMES:**

Upon successfully completing this course, the student will:

- Demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of the individuals, institutions, and innovative practices that significantly impacted the history of independent film
- Understand current industrial practice where independently made films intersect with popular film/media productions in a variety of media marketplaces
- Demonstrate an appreciation for the ways in which independent film represents the distinct and unique perspective of both individuals and groups that are not typically expressed or represented in contemporary culture

**Announcements and updates:** The professor will communicate with the students via email and through Announcements on the main page of the course website. Be sure your ASU email is working properly. *We ONLY USE ASU.EDU email!* Check the Announcements and your email regularly for updates and pertinent information!

**PLEASE BE ADVISED THAT PROFESSOR CANALES HANDLES LECTURE AND COURSE CONTENT QUESTIONS ONLY. IF YOU HAVE TECHNICAL QUESTIONS ABOUT THE COURSE WEBSITE OR HOW TO OPERATE IT, SEE BELOW.**

**Technical Support (PLEASE READ!)**

Please do not contact your instructor with technical questions. *Herberger Online* handles all technical questions and issues that may arise in this course.
Please contact the support team **immediately** if you encounter technical issues while completing an assignment or exam and you are unable to resolve the problem and reset your work.

The Herberger Online support team is available to assist you 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. You may reach them anytime at:

- holsupport@asu.edu
- 1-888-298-4117
- 480-965-3057 (International)

When contacting support, please provide:

- The full name of this course (ABC 123: Long Name)
- The title(s) of any assignment(s) you’re having trouble with
- A brief description of the problem
- Detailed, step-by-step instructions to reproduce the problem

**WEBSITE & LOG-IN**

Please note that ALL class activities take place at this Herberger website:

https://courses.hol.asu.edu/courses/independentfilm/

We do NOT use Canvas or Blackboard for this class.

Your login for the FMP 403 site is your normal ASURITE login name and password. Account information can be found at: https://herbergeronline.asu.edu/services/accounts.php

If you have any trouble using that name or password to log in, contact Herberger Online help as noted above. The Teaching Assistants and I cannot help in this area, so you MUST contact Herberger Online for all tech help now and, in the future, that includes any issues with the website, exams, or assignment submissions. You can copy the instructor via email after you create a report online as instructed above.

**TECHNICAL MINIMUMS**

Since this course is delivered entirely via the Internet, the student is responsible for making sure the computer he or she uses to access course materials meets or exceeds the specified computer requirements as listed on the course website. Also, due to the media content of this course, you will be required to set up and configure a media player that will consistently play the digital audio or video files delivered via the course website.
PLEASE NOTE

The student is encouraged either not to enroll, or to drop this course immediately, if he or she does not have at least some computer experience, or if he or she is unwilling or unprepared to assume the added responsibility of an online course. Required skills include downloading files, surfing the net, conferring via email, and a general intermediate computer skill-set.

In addition, this course shall require considerable attention to deadline and prompt session-by-session attention as exams and assignments shall only remain open for a brief period and will not be re-opened on an individual basis. If you are unable to devote the time and attention required by the course on a regular basis, please do not remain enrolled, as this is not a course that can be "crammed" at the end of the term. See the course in this syllabus for a detailed course breakdown and exam and assignment due dates.

GRADED ASSIGNMENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DISCUSSION POSTS (3 @ 50 each)</td>
<td>150</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNIT ONE QUIZ</td>
<td>100</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNIT TWO QUIZ</td>
<td>100</td>
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<tr>
<td>WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS</td>
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<tr>
<td>Short Essays (2 @ 100 each)</td>
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<tr>
<td>72-Hour Review</td>
<td>100</td>
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<td>FINAL PROJECT PROPOSAL</td>
<td>50</td>
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<td>FINAL PROJECT (Paper or Video)</td>
<td>300</td>
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<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
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GRADING SCALE:

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<td>A</td>
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<td>A-</td>
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<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>600-679</td>
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<tr>
<td>E or other failing mark –</td>
<td>0-599</td>
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REQUIRED COURSE MATERIAL:

Video Lectures
The primary “text” of this course are the video lectures that are delivered by Professor Scott and produced by Herberger Online. These lectures vary in length up to about 40 minutes; be sure that you schedule your time appropriately.

Films
A small handful of films will be required; but there are many times when you will be asked to find an independent film on your own, or to choose from a list. Most of these films will be readily available via a commercial streaming service like Netflix or on-demand for a marginal fee (from Amazon, iTunes, etc.).

We also recommend the resource Kanopy, which is free with your ASU tuition. http://asu.kanopystreaming.com/

Readings
The course website will have a “Readings” section that will contain links to articles and other materials that are entirely accessible online. Some material will require you to log in with your ASU ID and password so that you may access the e-books available through the ASU library.

TESTING PROCEDURES

Should you experience problems logging on to a test, email Herberger Online tech help IMMEDIATELY so there is a record of your problem. Also, fill out a computer help problem report. A link to the form is located on the course materials page of the class website. Tests will not be accepted in printed form or via email or attachment. Tests are NOT to be taken as a group effort. If such activity is observed, either physically or through computer records, all students involved will be called to account. Sanctions will be in accordance with the student code of conduct and the rules against academic dishonesty enforced by the university.

NO early or late exams will be given. The multiple-choice exams have a time limit of 40 minutes in which you must complete each test. You will lose 1 point as a penalty for every 2 minutes you go over the 40 minutes allowed so time yourself! Only begin the exam when you are ready to complete it entirely. You may not open it up, then go back to it later, or your score may not post. Also, DO NOT have multiple windows or tabs open while taking an Exam or you may lose your work! Exam window/tab only! Upon completion, your scores will be posted in the course grade checker that can be accessed via your course account. To find out what your course account is go to http://herbergeronline.asu.edu/accounts.
It is recommended that you take a screenshot of your successful completion or exams and assignment submissions. This could protect you if there is a technical issue and we don’t have a record of your submission.

STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESS

To be successful:

- check the course daily
- read announcements
- read and respond to course email messages as needed
- complete assignments by the due dates specified
- communicate regularly with your instructor and peers
- create a study and/or assignment schedule to stay on track
- access ASU Student Resources
COURSE SCHEDULE:
This course is divided into three units, with a quiz scheduled at the conclusion of units 1 and 2.

WEEK 1-2: UNIT ONE – INDIE FORM AND TECHNIQUE

Objectives for this unit:
- Describe how independent films use specific formal techniques that differ from conventional filmmaking.
- Explain the relationship between independent film techniques and non-cinematic forms, including visual art, music, literature, and performance.

Lesson One: Introduction
Video Lectures:
1. What is an Indie Film? (lecture01)
2. Declarations of Independence (lecture02)
3. Doing Effective Research (lecture08)

Discussion 1: Introduction Assignment
DUE WEDNESDAY AUGUST 25, 11:59 PM

Lesson Two: Formal Techniques
Video Lectures:
1. Formal Aesthetics
2. History of Avant-Garde Films
3. The Growth of Avant-Garde Films
4. Shadows

Readings:
Articles by Rabinowitz and Metz
Reviews of “Shadows”
“Shadows” website

Watch:
“Shadows”
http://asu.kanopystreaming.com/video/shadows-0

Assignment:
Essay 1 – “Shadows” and Formal Technique
700-900-word essay
DUE TUESDAY AUGUST 31, 11:59 PM
Lesson Three: Indie Films and Narrative

Video Lectures: 1. Independent Film & Narrative  
2. Studying Independent Film

Readings: Articles about “Slacker”

Watch: “Slacker”  
https://youtu.be/b-U_1DCGEY  
(also available for $1.99 on Amazon, may be better quality)

Watch an ADDITIONAL film from list provided  
Or suggest one via e-mail or discussion post

END OF UNIT QUIZ (1): DUE TUESDAY SEPTEMBER 7, 11:59 PM

Assignment: Essay 2 – Your selected film and narrative  
700-900-word essay  
DUE MONDAY SEPTEMBER 13, 11:59 PM

Note: Be sure you watch the supplemental “Doing Effective Research” lecture for guidance on how to complete this assignment (lecture08)

WEEK 3-4: UNIT TWO - INDIE BUSINESS

Objectives for this unit:

- Explain how “independent” has been historically defined in comparison to conventional filmmaking financing, production, and distribution.
- Identify the ways in which specific terms relate to the production and distribution of independent film as defined by various film communities.
- Determine how current independent films and their position and place affect today's film/media marketplace.

Lesson Four: Understanding Studio and Indie Filmmaking Practices

Video Lecture: 1. Early Indie Pioneers and the Studio System

Readings: Articles about Oscar Micheaux  
Articles about Alice Guy-Blache
Watch: Short Films

“The Immigrant”
https://youtu.be/ycLOeCUJ9V0

“The Playhouse”
https://youtu.be/hQVdZSJ_HKM

“The Life and Death of 9413: A Hollywood Extra”
https://vimeo.com/212551702

“Mystery of the Leaping Fish”
https://youtu.be/fprVONwmYnc

“The Musketeers of Pig Alley”
https://archive.org/details/TheMusketeersOfPigAlley

Discussion 2: Who Would You Want to Work With?
DUE MONDAY SEPTEMBER 20, 11:59 PM

Lesson Five: New Definitions and Post-War Paradigms

Video Lectures:
1. Deregulation and the Indie Audience Growth
2. Independent Filmmaking 1960’s-1970’s

Readings:
Article by Kinkade and Katovich
Selections from AFI History of Amer. Cinema

Lesson Six: Indie Practices Today

Video Lecture:
1. 1980-Present: The Birth of the First Generation of “Indie”

Readings:
Selections from AFI History of Amer. Cinema

END OF UNIT QUIZ (2): DUE FRIDAY SEPTEMBER 24 11:59 PM

Assignment: 72-HOUR REVIEW
DUE WEDNESDAY SEPTEMBER 29, 11:59 PM
WEEK 5-6: UNIT THREE - INDIE SPIRIT

Objectives for this unit:

- Explain how independent films can be understood and examined in relation to a specific filmmaker’s cultural identity and personal/political beliefs.
- Analyze how independent films represent specific identities and practices from underrepresented groups including consideration of gender, race, region, religion, sexual identity, class, etc.

Lesson Seven: Understanding Independent Films

Video Lectures:
1. Race, Ethnicity, National Identity & Independent Film
2. Queer Identity & Politics in Film
3. Indie Film and Regional Identity
4. Technology & Indie Film

Assignment: FINAL PROJECT PROPOSAL
DUE THURSDAY SEPTEMBER 30, 11:59 PM

Discussion 3: Discuss a film that introduced you to a marginalized community?
DUE MONDAY OCTOBER 4, 11:59 PM

Lesson Eight: Understanding Independent Filmmakers

Video Lectures:
1. Indie and the Auteur Filmmaker: Case Study – Linklater
2. Final Remarks

Readings: As required for your project (research)

Assignment: Final Paper or Video Project
1500-1750-word essay or 5-6-minute video or Pedagogy Portfolio
DUE FRIDAY OCTOBER 8, 11:59 PM
Anti-Discrimination Statement

The Herberger Institute of Design and the Arts at Arizona State University upholds, values, and cherishes student and faculty diversity, no matter the circumstance.

As members of the ASU community, we are charged with challenging injustices and social inequities of any kind through education. These values are an integral part of our standing as an institution and must be upheld by all members of the ASU community, including but not limited to all Herberger Institute of Design and the Arts staff, faculty and students.

The call is clear and present at ASU for every member of our community to do their part in fostering a culture of Inclusive Excellence that contributes meaningfully to lasting equity for all. For students and faculty alike, this culture of Inclusive Excellence creates role models, broadens perspectives, combats negative stereotyping and enables artists, designers and makers of the 21st century to think creatively, critically and, above all, compassionately about our impact on the world at large.

This course and Arizona State University welcomes all students regardless of race/ethnicity, gender identities, gender expressions, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, age, disabilities, religion, regional background, Veteran status, citizenship status, nationality and other diverse identities that we each bring to class.

Each of us bear intersectional perspectives that are born out of our backgrounds and identities, and each of us has a contribution to make towards our culture of Inclusive Excellence. As your instructor, I expect that all of my students abide by the following community agreements:

- to bring a willingness to deeply inspect your own assumptions about the world, identifying areas in which you may need to unlearn implicit biases and behaviors;
- to help others learn by respectfully voicing your thoughts and reactions, acknowledging that they are partial to and shaped by the way you make sense of the world;
- to demonstrate a curious and eager inquiry into how others make sense of the world.
Diversity of experiences, backgrounds and opinions are essential to cultivating a rich academic environment which in turn strengthens our capacity to be ethical and empathetic creative-thinkers. I aim for students of all backgrounds to be well served by this course and that the diversity students bring to this class be viewed as a resource, strength and benefit.

The materials of this course, including readings and assignments, will reflect this commitment to diverse and inclusive knowledge. If a student feels that there has been a discrepancy between my teaching practices and the university’s commitment to Inclusive Excellence, you are encouraged to discuss your concerns directly with me.

I value your learning experience and welcome all opportunities to enrich the efficacy of this course for all student groups. Here are resources available to all students to report incidents of bias, harassment, and other forms of discrimination inside and outside the classroom:

- Unsure of whether the concern you experience or witness falls under the criteria of bias, harassment, and other forms of discrimination? You can fill out the Herberger Institute Community of Care form at herbergerinstitute.asu.edu/caring describing the situation. One of the members of the Herberger Institute Behavioral Response Team will connect with you.

- Anyone who believes that they have been subjected to discrimination, harassment, or retaliation in violation of this policy, or who believes that this policy has been violated, should report the matter immediately to the Office of University Rights and Responsibilities or the Dean of Students office or directly fill out an incident report.

- Unless a person is restricted by law from doing so, any employee who is informed of or has a reasonable basis to believe that sexual harassment has occurred, shall immediately report all information regarding the occurrence(s) to the Office of University Rights and Responsibilities or the Title IX Coordinator or the Dean of Students office.

- More reporting pathways are available to students on the University’s Prohibition Against Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation policy page.
Academic Integrity and Student Honor Code:

The ASU student honor code affirms the commitment of ASU to uphold the values, principles, and ethics of academic integrity. All students are expected follow the code which states:

“We, the students of Arizona State University, have adopted this code as an affirmation of our commitment to academic integrity and our participation in ethical education.

We embrace the duty to uphold ASU’s Honor Code, and in light of that duty, We promise to refrain from academic dishonesty. We pledge to act with integrity and honesty to promote these values among our peers. We agree to always abide by the Sun Devil Way and uphold the values of the New American University.”

Every student is expected to produce his/her original, independent work. Any student whose work indicates a violation of the ASU Academic Integrity Policy including cheating, plagiarism, and dishonesty will be subject to disciplinary action.

Plagiarism is defined as deliberately passing off someone else’s words or ideas as your own. All necessary and appropriate sanctions will be issued to all parties involved with plagiarizing any and all course work.

Plagiarism and any other form of academic dishonesty that is in violation with the Student Code of Conduct will not be tolerated. Arizona State University and the Herberger Institute for Design and the Arts expect the highest standards of academic integrity from all students.

Failure to meet these standards may result in suspension or expulsion from the university or other sanctions as specified in the ASU Student Academic Integrity Policy (http://provost.asu.edu/academicintegrity), “[e]ach student must act with honesty and integrity, and must respect the rights of others in carrying out all academic assignments.”
This policy also defines academic dishonesty and sets a process for faculty members and colleges to sanction dishonesty. Violations of this policy fall into five broad areas that include but are not limited to:

- Cheating on an academic evaluation or assignments
- Plagiarizing
- Academic deceit, such as fabricating data or information
- Aiding Academic Integrity Policy violations and inappropriately collaborating
- Falsifying academic records

I sanction any incidents of academic dishonesty in my courses using University and HIDA guidelines. Should you have any question about whether or not something falls subject to this clause, feel free to contact me or review the university policy on academic integrity at the above link.

Per ASU policy, a student may not avoid the consequences of academic dishonesty by withdrawing from a course, and may be placed back in the course in order to face sanctions resulting from academic integrity violations. You are responsible for abiding by this policy.

- **Student Learning Community Conduct:**

ASU adheres to a university-wide Student Code of Conduct. The philosophy behind this policy states: The aim of education is the intellectual, personal, social, and ethical development of the individual.

The educational process is ideally conducted in an environment that encourages reasoned discourse, intellectual honesty, openness to constructive change and respect for the rights of all individuals. Self-discipline and a respect for the rights of others in the university community are necessary for the fulfillment of such goals.

The Student Code of Conduct is designed to promote this environment at each of the state universities. You are expected to treat your instructor and your fellow classmates with respect and kindness.

In all correspondence and in Discussion Board postings, you should show respect for the viewpoints of others who may disagree with you or see things from a different perspective.
Criticizing, ridiculing, insulting, or belittling others will not be accepted. Keep in mind that electronic communications do not have the advantage of nonverbal cues that are so much a part of interpersonal communication.

Humor or satire can sometimes be misinterpreted in strictly electronic communication forums.

In addition, all students should be aware of their Rights and Responsibilities at Arizona State University.

- **Copyright:**

Students must refrain from uploading to any course shell, discussion board, or website used by the course instructor or other course forum, material that is not the student's original work, unless the students first comply with all applicable copyright laws;

faculty members reserve the right to delete materials on the grounds of suspected copyright infringement. The course content, including lectures and other handouts, is copyrighted material.

Students may not share outside the class, upload, sell, or distribute course content or notes taken during the conduct of the course (see ACD 304–06, “Commercial Note Taking Services” for more information). THIS CONTENT IS PROTECTED AND MAY NOT BE SHARED, UPLOADED, SOLD, OR DISTRIBUTED.

- **Threatening or disruptive behavior:**

Self-discipline and a respect for the rights of others in the classroom or studio and university community are necessary for a conducive learning and teaching environment.

Threatening or violent behavior will result in the administrative withdrawal of the student from the class. Disruptive behavior may result in the removal of the student from the class.
Threatening, violent, or disruptive behavior will not be tolerated in this class, and will be handled in accordance with ASU policy (SSM 104-02).

For more information please visit: https://eoss.asu.edu/dos/srr/PoliciesAndProcedures and https://eoss.asu.edu/dos/safety/ThreateningBehavior.

- **Withdrawal:**

If you are unable to complete the course, it is your responsibility to arrange for withdrawal from the class. You will not be automatically withdrawn and unless you are officially withdrawn from the course you will receive a final grade based upon the total points you have earned for the semester.

Students are required to pay all tuition and fees for any registered course unless enrollment is officially cancelled during the 100% refund period. Please visit the Academic Calendar to review the withdrawal deadlines for this semester.

For more information on Drop/Add and Withdrawal visit: https://students.asu.edu/drop-add

- **Special Accommodations:**

Your instructor will make any reasonable adaptations for limitations due to any disability documented with the Student Accessibility and Inclusive Learning Services (SAILS), including learning disabilities. Please contact the instructor during office hours or by appointment to discuss any special needs you may have.

You must contact the SAILS to process the paperwork for special course accommodations. To request academic accommodations due to a disability, please contact the SAILS (https://eoss.asu.edu/drc); Phone: (480) 965-1234; TDD: (480) 965-9000).

Students who feel they will need disability accommodations in this class but have not registered SAILS should contact SAILS immediately. Students should contact the Center on the campus that your class is being held.
Campus-specific location and contact information can be found on the SAILS website. SAILS offices are open 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday – Friday. Check the above website for eligibility and documentation policies (https://eoss.asu.edu/drc).

This is a very important step as accommodations may be difficult to make retroactively.

If you have a letter from their office indicating that you have a disability which requires academic accommodations, in order to assure that you receive your accommodations in a timely manner, please present this documentation to me as soon as possible so that your needs can be addressed effectively.

- **Title IX and Mandated Reporter Policy:**

  Title IX is a federal law that provides that no person be excluded on the basis of sex from participation in, be denied benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity. Both Title IX and university policy make clear that sexual violence and harassment based on sex is prohibited.

  An individual who believes they have been subjected to sexual violence or harassed on the basis of sex can seek support, including counseling and academic support, from the university.

  If you or someone you know has been harassed on the basis of sex or sexually assaulted, you can find information and resources at https://sexualviolenceprevention.asu.edu/faqs.

  As a mandated reporter, I am obligated to report any information I become aware of regarding alleged acts of sexual discrimination, including sexual violence and dating violence.

  ASU Counseling Services, https://eoss.asu.edu/counseling, is available if you wish to discuss any concerns confidentially and privately.
• **Policy on Sexual Discrimination:**

Policy on sexual discrimination as described in ACD 401, "Prohibition Against Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation", including the fact that the instructor is a mandated reporter and therefore obligated to report any information regarding alleged acts of sexual discrimination.

Arizona State University is committed to providing an environment free of discrimination, harassment, or retaliation for the entire university community, including all students, faculty members, staff employees, and guests.

ASU expressly prohibits discrimination, harassment, and retaliation by employees, students, contractors, or agents of the university based on any protected status: race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity, and genetic information.

**Student Services & Resources:**

You will find a list of student resources at: https://eoss.asu.edu/resources

Resources included are advisement, registration, financial aid, disability services, counseling, tutoring, library, and more.

**Non-emergency Student Care process:**

If you are concerned for your own or a fellow student’s well-being, please review and complete the form at: herbergerinstitute.asu.edu/caring and the HIDA Care Team will reach out.
FOR EMERGENCIES CALL 911.

(Be prepared with the physical address of the location.)

Academic Calendar and Important Dates:

The academic calendar can be found here: https://students.asu.edu/academic-calendar

STUDENT SUCCESS

To be successful:

● check the course daily
● read announcements
● read and respond to course email messages as needed
● complete assignments by the due dates specified
● communicate regularly with your instructor and peers
● create a study and/or assignment schedule to stay on track
● access ASU Student Resources

Helpful Contact numbers:

● Counseling Services (Tempe campus) (480) 965-6146
● Empact 24 Hour Crisis Line (480) 921-1006
● Health Services (480) 965-3349
● Student Success Center (480) 965-9072
● Student Rights and Responsibilities (480) 965-6547
● Disability Resource Center (480) 965-1234