

US AND TEXAS CONSTITUTION AND POLITICS  
GOVT2306 - SECTION 9 - CLASS 14070  
PRELIMINARY SYLLABUS 8/16/23

Fall 2023

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<b>Instructor:</b> Tom Hanna, MA	<b>Time:</b> T Th 11:30 AM to 1:00 PM
<b>Email:</b> <a href="mailto:tlhanna@central.uh.edu">tlhanna@central.uh.edu</a>	<b>Place:</b> SW 102

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**Office Hours:** Thursday 1:30 to 2:30 PM, PGH 391

**Course Overview:** What is the *American experiment*? How was the American experiment designed and why? This course is a companion course to GOVT2305 and is designed to provide you with the tools to answer this question. We will focus primarily on the Constitutional structure and politics of the American system for the first two-thirds of the semester and in the last third will consider the Texas Constitution and politics. We will examine the pre-Constitution documents that influenced the Constitution, the Constitution and the Bill of Rights, civil rights and liberties, the constitutional structure, federalism, separation of powers, limited government and civil liberties. We will also discuss the evolving and current politics, public opinion, and elections of the United States.

**Course Pages:**

1. Direct Link: <https://canvas.uh.edu/courses/1134>
2. or AccessUH <https://accessuh.uh.edu/>

The course website where you will access all homework, quizzes, exams, and your digital textbook is in Canvas. You can enter it through AccessUH and the Canvas icon, or directly through the link above. You will logon with your Cougarnet ID and Password.

If you cannot gain access to the class Canvas site, contact User Services in room 116, PGH (713/743-1411) or stop by the TSS Help Desk in Hoffman Hall Room 116.

For Canvas technical support, please contact Canvas technical support.

**REQUIRED TEXT:**

DO NOT purchase the hardcopy textbook(s). They are included in your student fees through the CTAP program. If you would like a hardcopy of the book, you can order it directly from Norton.

This course has two textbooks. If you did not opt out of CTAP, these are automatically loaded in Canvas. If you did opt out of CTAP, you **MUST** pay full price for access codes for both books through the bookstore in order to do the Inquisitive homeworks that are 25% of your grade.

- *We The People*. 14th edition. Fourteenth Edition. by Benjamin Ginsberg, Theodore J. Lowi, Margaret Weir, Caroline J. Tolbert, Andrea L. Campbell, and Megan Ming Francis. W.W. Norton and Company. ISBN 978-1-324-03461-2
- *Governing Texas*. Sixth Edition. by Anthony Champagne, Edward J. Harpham, Jason P. Casellas, and Jennifer Hayes Clark. W.W. Norton and Company. ISBN 978-1-324-03916-7

**Course Work and Grading:**

THIS COURSE HAS BEEN DESIGNED TO PROVIDE STUDENTS WITH A STRUCTURED PATH TO COURSE SUCCESS, INCLUDING PRACTICE QUIZZES AND STUDY HELPS IN ADDITION TO ASSIGNED READINGS. WE HAVE ADOPTED AN E-TEXT FROM NORTON, IN PART TO REDUCE COST.

You have access to the ebook and all materials through Canvas.

## POINT TOTALS and GRADES

Your final grade will be determined by the following method:

1. Syllabus Quiz - 5%
2. Participation, and Professionalism - 10%
3. Two Midterm Exams (60 points each) and One Final Exam (75 points) - 50%
4. Inquisitive Exercises - 25%
5. Online Deliberation Activity - 10%

The Final exam will be cumulative with about half the material from the final Module. The exams will cover materials from the lectures, readings, and in class films, if applicable.

Final Grades for the course will be based on the following scale. I reserve the right to make adjustments to the grades based on overall performance in the course. There might be extra credit in the course. Please do not ask for individualized extra credit opportunities.

### University of Houston Standard Grading Scale

A	93-100	B-	80-82.49	D+	67-69.49
A-	90-92.49	C+	77-79.49	D	63-66.49
B+	87-89.49	C	73-76.49	D-	60-62.49
B	83-85.49	C-	70-72.49	F	59.49 and below

### Exams

1. The exams will test your knowledge of the readings, lectures, and classroom discussions.
2. The format for each of the exams will be the same – a series of multiple choice, multiple answer, and true/false questions. There will be no fill in the blank or writing questions.
3. The Midterm Exams are each worth 60 points and have 60 questions worth 1 point each. You will have 60 minutes each to complete the Midterm Exams.
4. The final Exam is worth 75 points, with 75 questions plus two bonus questions. You will have 75 minutes to complete the Final Exam.
5. Exams will be conducted at one of the CASA centers on campus. More detailed information about the procedure is available in the Syllabus and on Canvas.

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Digits beyond the third decimal point are truncated, not rounded.

6. If you miss a Midterm exam, the Final Exam will automatically count as your makeup exam. No excuses, emails, phone calls, notes, etc. are necessary or wanted. The makeup is automatic. There will be no makeup for the Final Exam, as grades will be posted as soon as possible after it is complete.
7. This should go without saying, but at least one of you will try to take vacation during the semester. Vacation happens during breaks. That is what they are for. Rescheduling for vacation is not an option.

**Inquisitive** Inquisitive is a study aid that appears with the material for each week of the course.

Do not wait until the last minute to complete these chapter exercises. The quizzes are best done with some time to take notes and study a bit. And, obviously, the boost to your grade that you get from Inquisitive will be greater the more time you spend reviewing and improving your performance. There are no extensions in this course with the single exception of one "Get Out of Jail Free" each semester. You have ample time to finish each assignment if maintain a schedule. So if you wait until the last minute and have technical issues, illness, forgetfulness, family problems, etc. causing your work to be late after the first missed assignment you will not receive credit or exemption.

**What you need!** Obviously to do all this, you will need a computer, an Internet connection, the appropriate password for Canvas, and access to a copy of our Norton e-text. If you have difficulty getting on to Canvas, you should contact User Services located on the ground floor of PGH (PGH 116 – 713/743-1411). If you have difficulty because of your hardware, you should also contact User Services. It may be necessary for you to use one of the on-campus computer labs to work on this course if your hardware's specifications do not permit your machine to talk to Canvas.

The class is based heavily on Inquisitive Modules, in class assignments (graded as quizzes), and scheduled tests. You must meet the deadlines shown in the syllabus. Unfortunately, because of the numbers of students who take this course, the class cannot be tailored to your personal schedule. You must read this syllabus and the Canvas modules very carefully with attention to the assignments and deadlines.

You will need to allocate time each week for the course and meet the deadlines. Once past, you will not receive any points and the assignments will close.

The Inquisitive materials are prepared by our publisher (Norton). These materials are accessible through the Canvas account.

Inquisitive provides a way for you to pad your grade. You will have time to study to insure that you get good grades on your Inquisitive modules not to mention the fact that this studying will also prepare you for course exams. You earn points in Inquisitive by reviewing and studying material in each chapter and this also leads to higher grades on exams. Your advantage is that outcomes on the weekly graded material are entirely in your hands. If you put in a reasonable amount of time each week and do honest work, you cannot get a bad grade in this course. The Inquisitives are designed for self-testing, repeating material you don't understand until you get 100%. Doing it the way it is designed will help you learn the material AND give you the points. Dishonest methods may save you time, but will leave you with a bad grade when you get to the closed book, closed note proctored exams.

The due dates for Inquisitive assignments are listed in each Module's assignments in Canvas. If you fail to take them by the deadline, you will not receive any points for that module. We cannot open a module after it has been closed. If you are having technical trouble with Blackboard Learn, you must contact the UH Help Desk (713 / 743-1411) with enough time to complete the assignment before it closes. It is best to complete these assignments as soon as possible.

**Course Policies:**

**REVIEW OF MAJOR EXAMS AND DATES:** All three major exams will be taken online at the CASA CBB lab. If you don't have an account with CASA, please sign up for one. Instructions are on in this email and a link to CASA can be found on AccessUH. Here is a link to the CASA FAQ. <https://www.uh.edu/casa/testing-center/faq/>. Exam dates are Sept. 21, October 26, and December 7. There is no make-up for the Final Exam as my goal is to post semester grades within 24 hours of its completion.

My basic expectation is that as a student preparing to enter the workforce, school is your profession while you are here. Many of you, of course, work at other jobs as well. The point is that this is a professional environment, not recreation. Professional courtesy toward your fellow students and the instructor along with a professional attitude toward completing your work as assigned are a bare minimum to succeed in this class.

1. **Respect for other people** is non-negotiable. You will respect the instructor, any guests, your classmates, and people not present including but not limited to people we read about dead or alive as well as University faculty, staff, and administration.
2. **Academic Honesty:** Lack of knowledge of the academic honesty policy is not a reasonable explanation for a violation. Any act of academic dishonesty is cause for failing the course and a disciplinary report to the University.
3. **Read the syllabus carefully.** If you are not sure about a course policy, after reading the syllabus, there will be time during every class period devoted to answering questions. If you do not read the syllabus carefully, you are vulnerable to making mistakes that will cost you points in the class.
4. **Valid Email Address:** The University of Houston considers your e-mail address in PeopleSoft the official method of contact between you and the university. As a prerequisite of this course, you must have a valid e-mail address in PeopleSoft. You may not claim an incorrect or blank e-mail address as an excuse in the case of missed communications from the professor or staff. In addition, please follow the **Email policies** below.
5. **Schedules** Remember that this is a structured course with regular deadlines. If you cannot meet the deadlines, you should not be in this class. Review these deadlines and scheduled events carefully. You must do the assigned work during the semester on time. Each semester we have students who fail to do the assignments and then ask to have them reposted, or who want us to extend the course for them for a period after the semester is over. **We do not have the staff to tailor this course in this fashion to 500 individual student schedules.** You must do the work during the semester and meet the deadlines.
6. **Canvas Modules** Your homework is organized in Modules in Canvas which should be completed in order. The first Module contains a **Syllabus Quiz**, which you must complete before you can proceed with the other Modules. Not completing the Syllabus Quiz on time may result in being dropped from the course.
7. **Computer equipment.** There will be online quizzes and study assignments. The class staff cannot make special arrangements to deliver the material to you. If you have a computer problem, you should have your computer repaired, if that is necessary, or contact the university IT Help Desk at 713-743-1411, or visit them in room 116 of Hoffman Hall. One of the most frequent problems that students have in this class is that they wait until the last minute to do assignments and then have problems with their personal computer that cause them to miss the deadline. Plan ahead to avoid this mistake.
8. **Computer Equipment: In Class** There will be assignments completed in class which will take the format of Canvas quizzes. Some will be actual quizzes where you will need to know the answer but many will be easy points for filling in answers that are provided. In either case, you will need a

device capable of completing Canvas quizzes. A laptop/notebook computer is the preferred method for reliability, but if you have another device that is fine.

9. **Missed internet assignments.** If you do not complete an online assignment by the date and time listed, you will not be allowed to make up the assignment. Your grade for that assignment will be zero. There are no exceptions to this rule. We realize that unforeseen circumstances arise, and that is why each student gets one "Get Out of Jail Free Card". If you wait until the last minute to complete the assignment and then suffer computer problems, you will miss the deadline. Give yourself enough time to do the online work at home or at the university.
10. **Posting Grades.** Grades will be posted on the Canvas site.
11. **Dropping the course.** You may drop or withdraw without a grade up until the official university reporting date (ORD). If you drop the course after that, you must receive a grade, or take a "W." Please consult the academic calendar for the last day to drop a course with a grade or withdraw with a "W".
12. **Rule 9: Dropping you from the course.** If we believe that you are not actively engaged in the class (i.e., you are missing assignments, exams, or are failing to respond to communications) we reserve the right to unilaterally drop you from the course. We don't want to do this, so please make sure to give this course your full effort.
13. **Disruptions to class: Entering and leaving**If arriving to class early or leaving late, please take a seat near the door and do so with a minimum of noise. If you need to take a break, please keep disruption to a minimum.
14. **Disruptions: Noise and conversation**Please do not disrupt class with side conversations and noise. If you do, you will be asked to leave for at least that class period and your professionalism grade will be impacted. You may be dropped from the course.
15. **Extra Credit**The grade structure includes extra credit. Other opportunities may be offered. Take advantage of this when it is offered. Do not expect more at the end of the semester. Extra credit can not raise you more than half a letter grade and in no case can it raise anything below A- to an A.
16. **Electronic Devices**Use of electronic devices is required for this class, but must be limited to class material and sound should be turned off. Any disruptions related to electronic devices will result in being asked to leave for at least that session and an appropriate deduction from your professionalism grade.
17. **Quizzes/In Class Assignments**Quizzes will be regular and unannounced with a quiz during many class periods. The time of quizzes may vary from beginning to middle to end of class.
18. **Quizzes and Attendance**I reserve the right to take attendance following any quiz by full roll call, by randomly checking names, or otherwise. Anyone not present who took the quiz will face academic dishonesty discipline. At a minimum this will most likely lead to receiving a zero for all quizzes for the semester.
19. **Get Out of Jail Free Card** Each student gets one "Get Out of Jail Free" card for the semester. You may use it to drop a single Inquisitive Grade, to add two extra points to any Exam, or to drop a single participation exercise/quiz. If the end of the semester rolls around and you haven't decided, I will add the two points to your final exam grade. To exercise an option, please send a courteous, professional email to the TA or me \*asking\* to use your Get Out of Jail Free. Remember that this is a courtesy, not an entitlement, so do not act entitled or make demands as that would not be professional.

#### **Email and CommunicationPolicies:**

- **Face to Face: Best Communication** The primary mode of communication for this class will be in person face-to-face communication during a period of each class session designed specifically for that purpose. I will start most lectures with any necessary announcements. There will be a period designated in each class period for procedural questions of a general nature. The second best mode of communication from you to me is your attendance at office hours.
- **Official University Email Address** You are expected to use your official @cougarnet.uh.edu email account for this course, not your @uh.edu forwarder. This means you will need to log into Outlook to access your official UH email. You should be doing this anyway, as important communications from UH including financial possibilities are delivered there. Email communications related to this course will be sent to your Exchange email account which each University of Houston student receives. The Exchange mail server can be accessed via Outlook, which provides a single location for organizing and managing day-to-day information, from email and calendars to contacts and task lists. Exchange email accounts can be accessed by logging into Office 365 with your Cougarnet credentials or through Access UH. They can also be configured on IOS and Android mobile devices. Additional assistance can be found at the Get Help page.
- **You can expect to lose points** if you do not check this email *at least* every Monday morning before class, sometime Tuesday or Wednesday, and every Thursday afternoon. You will be responsible for checking your e-mail regularly for class updates and announcements. This will be your main source of information, updates, and announcements other than being in class.
- **Sending Emails to the TA or Professor** Emails to the TA or me must come from your official Cougarnet Outlook email address and must have this **course name and section number and nothing else in the subject line**.
- **Professionalism in emails** Emails to the TA or me should be polite but brief. Impolite emails **will** result in a deduction to your professionalism grade. Demanding emails *will* result in a deduction to your professionalism grade.
- **Professionalism and Unnecessary Emails** There will be a period in each class for asking procedural, scheduling, and other questions. Unnecessary emails about these sorts of issues **will very likely** result in a deduction to your professionalism grade.
- **Emails and Office Hours** For substantive concerns, please come to my office hours or make an appointment to see me. The main reason you will need email is to confirm your "spot in line" during office hours or to arrange an appointment. If it is not important enough for a face-to-face during the substantial time that I am on campus each week, it probably can wait until class time and is not worth an email.
- **Responses to your emails** I will do my best to respond to emails by the end of business on the next Monday to Thursday business day. Emails received Friday to Sunday will be answered on Monday or before. If I do not answer your email in those times, you may email again making sure to use your official Cougarnet Outlook email address with the course and section number in the subject line. If you were emailing regarding office hours and they are approaching, please just come to office hours.

### Tentative Course Outline:

See Canvas

**Grading Policy:** Syllabus Quiz (5%), Quizzes, Participation, and Professionalism (10%) Homework (30%), Exams: Midterm 1 (15%), Midterm 2 (15%), Final (25%).

### Important Dates:



Midterm #1 .....	Ābān 16, 1393
Midterm #2 .....	Āzar 21, 1393
Final Exam .....	Dey 18, 1393

### EXAM PROCEDURES and RULES:

Exams will be administered in person via CASA. Exams are multiple choice, and closed note/book. Using electronic devices or notes during the exam will result in a zero, and could result in possible charges of violating the academic honesty policy.

**Reserving CASA time for exams is 100% your responsibility and is between you and CASA. I do not have the power to get you in if you do not make a reservation.**

Exam Procedures:

1. Students will need to create an account if they do not have one by visiting <https://www.casa.uh.edu/>
2. Once an account is created, the student will need to visit CASA-CBB to register fingerprints, UH Cougarnet ID card, and photo. This should be done as soon as possible, and certainly before exam day. This is a one-time process and carries over each semester.
3. **All students must have a reservation to take an exam at CASA. There is a no walk-in or stand-by waiting policy. The latest date/time to make a reservation for any exam is the date/time before the actual exam date/time. However, it is highly recommended that all students schedule for their test as soon as the online scheduler is available to avoid the peak time and to maximize your chance getting reservation.**
4. Students must arrive at CASA with their UH Cougarnet ID card.
5. Students taking an exam in Canvas need to have a valid Cougarnet ID and Cougarnet Password.
6. Students must store all personal belongings before entering the testing area. Students are not permitted to bring any personal belongings to the Testing Center. Items such as briefcases, notebooks, backpacks, purses, calculators (unless instructed otherwise), pagers, cell phones, recording devices, photography equipment, and any other prohibitive item that is not related to the testing session must be placed at the check-in desk.
7. Check in begins 20 minutes before their reservation time. As a courtesy, they allow students to check in no more than 15 minutes late to their reservation. If the student arrives more than 15 minutes late to their exam reservation, then they have missed their reservation. There are no exceptions or standby options. Please do not contact me or CASA to request late admission. You will need to take a makeup exam in mid-May with a penalty.
8. Any problems (technical or subject matter) during the exam will be recorded in an incident report by the proctor and sent directly to me.

### CURRENT ISSUE ONLINE DISCUSSION

Civil and productive discussion of political issues is essential in a democracy. To facilitate experience with such deliberation, we will be participating in online discussions on the issue of social media regulation. The forums will take place the last three weeks of October. **YOU SHOULD SIGN UP EARLY TO ENSURE YOU GET YOUR PREFERRED TIME.** Sign up information will be posted to a Canvas Announcement and to your official University email.

**Religious Holy Days** If you must miss an examination 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.

**Syllabus Changes** Please note that the instructor may need to make modifications to the course syllabus. Notice of such changes will be announced as quickly as possible through Canvas and/or official University email.

**Cancelled Classes** Classes may be canceled on rare occasions. The class will be informed of these dates by official university email and will be held responsible for any readings or assignments.

**Mental Health and Wellness Resources** The University of Houston has a number of resources to support students' mental health and overall wellness, including CoogsCARE and the UH Go App. UH Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) offers 24/7 mental health support for all students, addressing various concerns like stress, college adjustment and sadness. CAPS provides individual and couples counseling, group therapy, workshops and connections to other support services on and off-campus. For assistance visit [uh.edu/caps](http://uh.edu/caps), call 713-743-5454, or visit a Let's Talk location in-person or virtually. Let's Talk are daily, informal confidential consultations with CAPS therapists where no appointment or paperwork is needed. The Student Health Center offers a Psychiatry Clinic for enrolled UH students. Call 713-743-5149 during clinic hours, Monday through Friday 8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. to schedule an appointment. The A.D. Bruce Religion Center offers spiritual support and a variety of programs centered on well-being.

**Need Support Now?** If you or someone you know is struggling or in crisis, help is available. Call CAPS crisis support 24/7 at 713-743-5454, or the National Suicide and Crisis Lifeline: call or text 988, or chat [988lifeline.org](http://988lifeline.org).

**Academic Honesty Policy** High ethical standards are critical to the integrity of any institution, and bear directly on the ultimate value of conferred degrees. All UH community members are expected to contribute to an atmosphere of the highest possible ethical standards. Maintaining such an atmosphere requires that any instances of academic dishonesty be recognized and addressed. The UH Academic Honesty Policy is designed to handle those instances with fairness to all parties involved: the students, the instructors, and the University itself. All students and faculty of the University of Houston are responsible for being familiar with this policy.

**Title IX/Sexual Misconduct** Per the UHS Sexual Misconduct Policy, your instructor is a "responsible employee" for reporting purposes under Title IX regulations and state law and must report incidents of sexual misconduct (sexual harassment, non-consensual sexual contact, sexual assault, sexual exploitation, sexual intimidation, intimate partner violence, or stalking) about which they become aware to the Title IX office. Please know there are places on campus where you can make a report in confidence. You can find more information about resources on the Title IX website at <https://uh.edu/equal-opportunity/title-ix-sexual-misconduct/resources/>.

**Reasonable Academic Adjustments/Auxiliary Aids** The University of Houston is committed to providing an academic environment and educational programs that are accessible for its students. Any student with a disability who is experiencing barriers to learning, assessment or participation is encouraged to contact the Justin Dart, Jr. Student Accessibility Center (Dart Center) to learn more about academic accommodations and support that may be available to them. Students seeking academic accommodations will need to register with the Dart Center as soon as possible to ensure timely implementation of approved accommodations. Please contact the Dart Center by visiting the website: <https://uh.edu/accessibility/> calling (713) 743-5400, or emailing [jdcenter@Central.UH.EDU](mailto:jdcenter@Central.UH.EDU).



**Excused Absence Policy** Regular class attendance, participation, and engagement in coursework are important contributors to student success. Absences may be excused as provided in the University of Houston Undergraduate Excused Absence Policy and Graduate Excused Absence Policy for reasons including: medical illness of student or close relative, death of a close family member, legal or government proceeding that a student is obligated to attend, recognized professional and educational activities where the student is presenting, and University-sponsored activity or athletic competition. Under these policies, students with excused absences will be provided with an opportunity to make up any quiz, exam or other work that contributes to the course grade or a satisfactory alternative. Please read the full policy for details regarding reasons for excused absences, the approval process, and extended absences. Additional policies address absences related to military service, religious holy days, pregnancy and related conditions, and disability.

**Recording of Class** Students may not record all or part of class, livestream all or part of class, or make/distribute screen captures, without advanced written consent of the instructor. If you have or think you may have a disability such that you need to record class-related activities, please contact the Justin Dart, Jr. Student Accessibility Center. If you have an accommodation to record class-related activities, those recordings may not be shared with any other student, whether in this course or not, or with any other person or on any other platform. Classes may be recorded by the instructor. Students may use instructor's recordings for their own studying and notetaking. Instructor's recordings are not authorized to be shared with anyone without the prior written approval of the instructor. Failure to comply with requirements regarding recordings will result in a disciplinary referral to the Dean of Students Office and may result in disciplinary action.

**Resources for Online Learning** The University of Houston is committed to student success, and provides information to optimize the online learning experience through our Power-On website. Please visit this website for a comprehensive set of resources, tools, and tips including: obtaining access to the internet, AccessUH, Blackboard, and Canvas; using your smartphone as a webcam; and downloading Microsoft Office 365 at no cost. For questions or assistance contact UHOnline@uh.edu.

**UH Email** Please check and use your Cougarnet email for communications related to this course. Faculty use the Cougarnet email to respond to course-related inquiries such as grade queries or progress reports for reasons of FERPA. To access your Cougarnet email, login to your Microsoft 365 account with your Cougarnet credentials. Visit University Information Technology (UIT) for instructions on how to connect your Cougarnet e-mail on a mobile device.

**Webcams** Access to a webcam is required for students participating remotely in this course. Webcams must be turned on (state when webcams are required to be on and the academic basis for requiring them to be on). (Example: Webcams must be turned on during exams to ensure the academic integrity of exam administration.)

**Security Escorts and Cougar Ride** UHPD continually works with the University community to make the campus a safe place to learn, work, and live. The security escort service is designed for the community members who have safety concerns and would like to have a Security Officer walk with them, for their safety, as they make their way across campus. Based on availability either a UHPD Security Officer or Police Officer will escort students, faculty, and staff to locations beginning and ending on campus. If you feel that you need a Security Officer to walk with you for your safety, please call 713-743-3333. Arrangements may be made for special needs.

**title** Parking and Transportation Services also offers a late-night, on-demand shuttle service called "Cougar Ride" that provides rides to and from all on-campus shuttle stops, as well as the MD Anderson Library, Cougar Village/Moody Towers and the UH Technology Bridge. Rides can be requested through the UH Go

app. Days and hours of operation can be found at <https://uh.edu/af-university-services/parking/cougar-ride/>.

**Helpful Information** Coogs Care: <https://uh.edu/dsa/coogscare/>

Student Health Center: <https://www.uh.edu/healthcenter/>