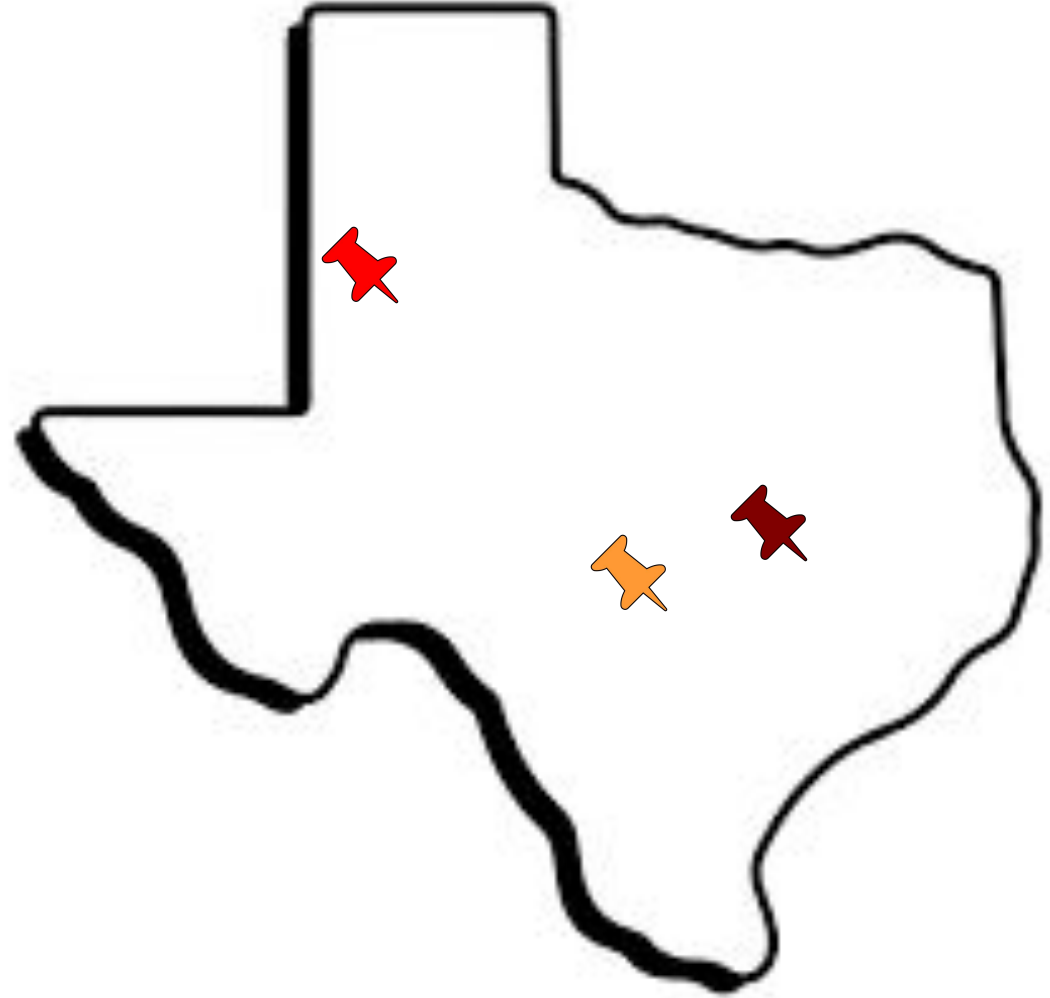


College Towns

Composition I
ENGL 1301 0310
Professor Smart
June 24, 2022





Collaborative Project

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Slide Deck Designed by Jessica Clark

INTRODUCTION

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College Station

by Jessica L. Clark



Fig 1. The First College Station City Council, 1938-1939
 Pictured from left to right: John S. Hopper (City Marshall), Letcher P. Gabbard, George P. Wilcox, John H. Binney, Ernest Langford, Alva Mitchell and Luther Jones.

In Brazos County, just northwest of Houston, you will find a Texas town so famous for its university that it's called The City of College Station. The relationship between College Station and its associated school, Texas A&M University (TAMU), is wholly unique. The city was incorporated in 1938¹, sixty-two years *after* TAMU had opened in 1876². By contrast, other famous college towns in Texas, such as Lubbock, Austin, Waco, and Denton – were all founded *before* their associated universities. Between 1877 and 1938, College Station had simply been a postal designation named after a train station located west of the TAMU campus. The city largely owes its formation to the efforts of men associated with the University's board of directors, and the very first city council meeting was held on TAMU's campus.¹ Further distinguishing itself from the aforementioned college towns, College Station pays homage to TAMU in its logo, which includes the sentence: "Home of Texas A&M University," and all but one city council member has a direct affiliation with the school.³

The official U.S. 2020 census shows that College Station has a population of 120,511.⁴ TAMU's total enrollment in the fall of 2021 was 73,284 students, 67,133 of which attend school in College Station.² When TAMU students arrive for the fall and spring semesters, the town's population increases by over 50%. Students and graduates of TAMU are known as "Aggies". I had the opportunity to speak with two Aggies: Russell Summers, an Alumnus, and his daughter and current student, Maddi Summers. Russell told me that "College Station is a biggish city with a small-town feel." Maddi said her father often comments on how much College Station has grown since he was a student. However, she "...love[s] that College Station isn't a huge city" and said, "Coming from Austin and seeing how chaotic it is downtown, I'm even more thankful that I chose A&M." As a faithful Aggie, she made sure that I emphasize that she had never considered attending "TU" or "Texas University." (TU is a moniker commonly used by Aggies to refer to The University of Texas (UT) [Austin] because they take umbrage with the notion that UT is "*The*" University [in or of] Texas.)

College Station depends on TAMU students, faculty, and staff to fuel and support much of its economy - including meeting workforce demands. Being home to a highly respected university has its advantages, not the least of which is that it attracts new businesses to the city. Approximately 18,000 students graduate yearly from TAMU, affording companies access to a highly skilled and educated workforce.⁵ The downside, however, is that when the students go - so goes the labor force. Morgan Weaver of *KBTX News* writes that “[summer] means a loss of a significant part of the local job force... It's a problem across every industry.”⁶ Despite that, *Forbes Magazine* ranked College Station No. 2 on its list of "The Best Small Places for Businesses and Careers.”⁷ *Forbes* isn't the only entity recognizing College Station; a sample of some of the dozens of accolades they have received include: "No. 2, Most Dynamic Small Metros in Texas," (Heartland Forward 2022), and "No. 17, Best U.S. Places for Life After College." (Point2Homes 2021)⁸.



College Station provides Aggies, tourists, and locals with no shortage of recreation and entertainment. Like most of Texas, TAMU is serious about its football, and so is the city. Thousands of football tourists, including Russell, are drawn to the city every season. He has frequented College Station for decades to attend football games and immerse himself in the celebrations - regardless of what the scoreboard says at the end. He proudly told me, "Aggies never lose, we simply run out of time, and we always win halftime with the Fighting Texas Aggie Band!" He and his daughter Maddi agreed that the nightlife in College Station is a big draw. The city has the "best drinking holes around," asserted Russell. Maddi loves the abundance of “country [music and] dancing spots around town.”

Fig. 2 - The Fighting Texas Aggie Band Halftime Performance.



Fig 3. Louis L. Adam Memorial Plaza & Wall of Honor, Brazos Valley Veterans Memorial. City of College Station.

College Station and TAMU embrace a culture that honors family, service, and sacrifice. One of the most famous is the TAMU Muster. Both Summers' told me that Muster is TAMU's most significant, "cherished" tradition. Held on San Jacinto Day, Aggies across the world gather in groups of two or more to honor their fellow Alumni who have died in the last year:

At each Muster ceremony around the world, a speaker addresses the crowd before the "Roll Call for the Absent." Names of those from that area who have died in the past year will be read, and as each name is called, a family member or friend will answer "Here" to show that Aggie is present in spirit. Then, a candle will be lit.⁹

The shared culture of service extends to fighting for our country. TAMU, "Commissions more officers than any institution other than the nation's service academies."² College Station is home to the 12-acre Brazos Valley Veteran's Memorial, "dedicated to the veterans of... our nation's wars."¹⁰ The city is also home to war hero, George H.W. Bush's Presidential Library and Museum.¹¹

The city and university's entertainment, culture, and values are tightly woven together. The long list of traditions observed in College Station leans into the idea of fellowship. Russell and Maddi believe that College Station and TAMU share the same values; "Treat everyone as a friend, help a stranger, respect others, and be a good human." Maddi added, "I don't think I'll ever live anywhere as welcoming as College Station."

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Fig 4. Aggie Muster | Texas A&M Traditions. Texas A&M University. (2022)

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LUBBOCK



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The University of Texas at Austin



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CONCLUSION

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