

Summer Project: A Daily Log of CenTex Weather

- 6/14: Today was certainly an interesting day... we began with expected temperatures in the upper 90s with heat indices approaching 105 and a near-zero chance of rain. Well, Mother Nature certainly does not care what we “expect” because a freak pop-up storm sprang up just northeast of me in the nearby town of Temple, Texas. I watched this storm track in the unusual Northeast to Southwest fashion, just barely clipping me as it went by. Aside from the loud booms of thunder, I was able to catch a really neat rainbow composed of red shades as the sun lowered along the horizon in the west, illuminating the rain curtains to my east. It is pretty rare for us to experience rainbows like this since storms normally come from the west/northwest, so I definitely made a mental note and memory!
- 6/15: Ugh. I always forget how much I dislike the summer season in central Texas. We had our first Heat Advisory of the season today, but here’s the catch: it was unexpected!!! Heat Advisories had gone up a few counties east of me (Bell), where heat indices were expected to reach 107 in some places, while we were expected to “only” be 102. After taking a break from my schoolwork, I stepped outside to grab the mail and it felt like Mother Nature herself slapped me across the face. It was so unbelievably muggy and sweltering, I knew the forecast had been off. Sure enough, when I checked the weather again, the Heat Advisory had been extended to my county for heat indices nearing 110 degrees!!! I really don’t mind the heat, but it’s the humidity that gets me!
- 6/16: At least the forecast was right today: hot and dry. Luckily, we did not have a heat advisory today, but that doesn’t mean the air was enjoyable! I was thankful for it to have only clocked in at 94, but I genuinely miss the... dare I say it... wintertime. The weather seems to be getting interesting soon, because our local news stations have begun warning us in advance of the newest tropical system forming in the Gulf. An 80% chance of developing in the next 2 days and a 90% chance in the next 5?! AND it is expected to come due north? Classic Gulf storm, but still stressful. I mean... I’m not going to lie here, I AM just a little bit excited to see the cloud structure of outer bands coming in and watching the tropical downpours, I just hope this storm doesn’t undergo rapid intensification and cause property/life damage. Fingers crossed this will just be a cool meteorological event!
- 6/17: Just another hot day. But what is to be expected in a Texas summer? That disturbance in the Gulf is still having some issues spinning up, so I’m thinking more and more like it will just be a quick Louisiana drencher! I am going to (unfortunately) keep this one short, simply because there just wasn’t much going on today!
- 6/18: UPDATE: It appears as though tropical storm Claudette is getting ready to form! It has been designated as a potential tropical cyclone since its center is not well formed, but nonetheless crazy to see this storm spin up so close to home. It now has a real storm-cone, and it looks like it will miss the Texas coastline. Even more so (sadly for me), it looks like the storm will also not bless us with any rain bands... it seems to be a very east-heavy storm... sigh. No sign of relief from this disgusting humidity!

- 6/19: Well, Tropical Storm Claudette has formed! Over land! It ended up achieving storm status right after landfalling in Louisiana! Unfortunately, not a cloud is in sight here in Belton, Texas, and it is nearly 100 degrees with heat indices a few degrees warmer than that. I went to one of my friend's graduation parties today... an outdoor party... and the heat was sweltering. Because of our torrential rains in May and early June, the mosquitos have EXPLODED! I am absolutely covered in bites, but I am gracious to be at home and experiencing the weather in Belton, no matter how I sometimes come off! Luckily, it looks like we may have a very brief break in the heat. We are supposed to get a cold front tomorrow night that brings some rain and drops our temps by 15 degrees. I mean it will still be 85, and only for one day, but hey, I'll take it!
- 6/20: The cold front has made its debut this evening! I watched storms bubble up just north of me right before sunset, and they came crashing down. I was able to catch some pretty cool clips of lightning and rain, and it was a bit stronger than I anticipated. Luckily, there was no damage, but it rained hard for a good half-hour. The storms continued strengthening as they went south, prompting severe warnings just west of Austin. Thank gosh it wasn't here because after that hailstorm in Norman, I don't think my car could handle much more.
- 6/21: What a day. I honestly have troubles trying to explain this experience because it was really weird. The day started off feeling like any other (despite the cold front's passage): mid 70s and very humid. As the day progressed, the temperature warmed very slowly, which seems straight forward, but it didn't FEEL right. The sun's rays were so intense, being exposed to sunlight made me feel like a vampire. But in the shade, you could feel the air around you being noticeably cooler... you could tell it wasn't from here if that makes sense. Ugh. This kind of experience is so hard to put into words, but I am never going to forget it because a cold front in June in central Texas is already crazy enough! Unfortunately, it looks like the heat is supposed to come back tomorrow, but luckily not in the upper 90s! It may only be a few degrees, but I will take 92 over 98 any day!
- 6/22: I think I may have spoken too soon. I had to do some yard work today at ~noon... dear goodness it was so hot. I know that many of my entries have been over me complaining about how hot and humid it is, but hey, it keeps me self-aware! The good news is: this definitely has not been the worst June I've experienced here. That being said, I can still acknowledge when the air is assaulting me! Maybe I should research a way to harvest the energy from "air heat." I would surely be a billionaire. Some models are hinting at more cooler temps and rain this weekend, but I am skeptical as always because Texas always has a trick up its sleeve!
- 6/23: This morning was absolutely beautiful. Cloudy skies and a nice breeze kept the air moving and the temperatures bearable. Unfortunately, as I have realized is typical during summer, the clouds break and become clear just before noon and with it comes a lot of the stuff I complain about. I am very much so looking forward to the rain and cooler temperatures this weekend. I have looked more into what is causing this and it looks like a high pressure sitting over us is going to get nudged westward and allow some nice(r) weather to come in. We also may be having some tropical development! The National Hurricane Center now has a 30% hatched area

out near Africa for the next 5 days. This may not seem like much, but if it does form, there is the chance it could make the long journey all the way to the mainland!

Update 2:

- 6/24: It. Was. Not. Pleasant. We got up to about 96 and it was so humid, it felt like I was walking through a bog! If I can just last until the 27th, it looks like we will enter a wetter, cooler period. Of course for Texas standards, this is still going to be upper 80s and lower 90s, but I will certainly not complain. It looks like it will be an interesting period, because I recently saw a temperature outlook for the whole country, and it had a blue "Far Below Average" right over almost exclusively Texas through July. Let's hope so, because I will never turn down a mild summer in Texas!
- 6/25: Today was slightly cooler, but honestly not by much. I think today we were right at 94, which is still not as hot as yesterday. The air was also slightly drier, which combined with the slightly cooler temperatures, made it bearable for most of the day. That system out by Africa is zooming across the Atlantic, but it doesn't seem to be getting its act together very well. I'm beginning to think that it is going to fizzle out somewhat soon. A loss to not see the storm develop, but a win in protecting life and property!
- 6/26: JUST ONE MORE DAY! I don't know if I have ever been so excited for a "cold front." These hot summer days just aren't it. I can't even imagine how the Pacific Northwest will feel, I hear they are expecting temps of 110+. In Oregon/Washington?! Oh my goodness... maybe I really shouldn't complain. I also find it very interesting climatologically speaking, I mean, how often do these kinds of temperatures get to that latitude in a temperate rainforest environment? A long question, but intriguing, nonetheless. It was always mind-boggling for me to see latitudes north of Texas be significantly warmer, but I suppose everything happens for a reason.
- 6/27: Ya know, for a while today, I was questioning if it was even going to rain. As it turns out, the precipitation mode for today was isolated pop-up storms that have a brief window of intense downpours followed by a collapsing updraft and fizzling out. It seemed like it was raining everywhere but my house. OF COURSE that changed when I had to drive my sister to work. I got to her work just down the road and snagged a really cool picture of a downburst of very heavy rain and wind just to our south! But... then I turned around and saw my own downburst right over my neighborhood. Ugh. I had to drive right into it, which was rough to say the least, and then run through what was possibly the world's biggest rain drops into my house. Just the 10 feet from my car driveway to my front door left me soaked. At least it was cool afterwards!
- 6/28: Today was very similar to yesterday, but BETTER! The pop-up storms were coming and going, but what happened today was one I made sure to record. Just as what happened early-on in my project, a storm had set up just to my east. This one was more expansive, though, and I was able to watch the full scale dissolution of the storm! With the sun beginning to set to our west, I was again able to watch a partial rainbow form, with both legs being about halfway complete, but missing the arch of the rainbow. Regardless, it was super cool to see. Then, I got

to witness one of my most favorite weather phenomenon: it was raining while the sun was out! (I have included a great video where I was able to angle the phone such that you can see the drops). Fun fact: many areas of the U.S. don't have a word for this situation! However, areas of the Midwest oftentimes call it a "Sunshower" while areas of the southeast (and I have in fact heard this in Texas) call it "The-Devil-Is-Beating-His-Wife." I know it seems hard to believe, but look it up!!!

- 6/29: Rain, rain, rain. More pop-up storms and some really cool weather shots. This time, the storms were moving a little more erratically, primarily moving along outflow boundaries from previous storms. The ones that hit us formed along a northbound boundary, so I got to watch a storm/broken line of storms form south and track straight towards us. We got absolutely soaked, but I love watching the storms bubble up from a distance and inch their way towards me. I love watching the rain shafts shift from a deep gray to a light gray to almost brown shade as they begin their final approach. I was able to take a few neat photos of the storms at various stages of approach, so you can see what I mean!
- 6/30: The last day of June is here, and we barely broke 90. It was only 91 today, and the abundance of clouds made it a decent day to be outside. Oh yeah! A tropical update: so that original system has basically died out, just as I expected. What I didn't expect was the tropical disturbance right behind it! It looks like this one is going to become our next named storm and track across the Caribbean. After that, it is either the Gulf coast or the Florida peninsula. Hopefully the mountainous terrain combined with the brisk forward motion will keep this storm from being too terrible, but we will have to wait and see. It is not expected to become a hurricane, but I have my suspicions given how unpredictable this summer has been so far weather-wise.
- 7/1: Hello July and hello Tropical Storm Elsa! Firstly, allow me to be the first to say, I just wish Elsa wasn't the "E" name... simply because if you look it up online, you will see the Disney movies not the tropical Atlantic, and ALSO "Elsa" already has a nationwide connotation with winter and ice... it's summer. I am definitely thinking way too deep on this one, but I mean, come on. Anyways, back to the weather. Today and tomorrow look like they will be very hot and humid, but not for long. We have an even more unsettled pattern coming up next week, so I think I can endure 2 days at 95 for a week of 87. We'll have to wait and see though... don't want to count my chickens before they've hatched!
- 7/2: So it got hot. Quick. We were at 96 today before we finally got some relief. It wasn't exactly supposed to rain today, but it was quite nice when it did. As I was finishing up my class over zoom and getting ready to work, I noticed the sunlight disappearing. I was correct. I snagged a cool picture of this wall of heavy rain barreling towards me from the south. Was I driving while doing this maneuver? Well, that's classified information. What isn't classified was the cool scud cloud that formed in the humid air just ahead of the rain shaft. I didn't notice it until I was staring at the picture, and it is a cool little appendage!

- 7/3: I called it! I knew this season was one where you really can't predict with much certainty. Tropical Storm Elsa has become Hurricane Elsa, despite a brisk forward movement, lack of alignment between low and mid-level centers, and some wind shear. I mean, granted she looks rough, she is certainly filled with surprises. Aside from Elsa having her eyes set on Cuba and then the Florida peninsula, it was gorgeous here in Texas. Actually, it was very not gorgeous, but anything with little heat is immaculate for summertime. We only hit 84 today, but we were dealing with on and off showers. It wasn't bad, but it felt more like an early spring day than it did JULY. What was also interesting was, and I wish I had snagged a picture, the cloud formations. You know how the clouds like very ragged and kind of sloppy early in the morning before they dry out? That's how these looked... but all day. So much so that when the sun was setting, I actually thought it was rising for a brief moment. Hopefully you know what I'm talking about because, if not, this is awkward for everyone.

Final Update:

- 7/4: Happy Fourth of July!!! Today was a pretty good Fourth if I say so myself! It started off cloudy for me, but it cleared out throughout the day, which combined with the near-zero winds, set us up nicely for some great firework displays. We went out to a friend's property and watched fireworks until the wee hours of the morning, and it was certainly nice. Additionally, I received an email from United Airlines saying they moved my flight up to July 8th!!! Well, am I excited to see my family in Austria? Yes. Am I excited to try and finish my classes from an airport and then from my grandfather's apartment, which I will not get to until 7pm Friday, July 9th? No. Very much I am not, but it looks pretty expensive to move my flight, so I will simply have to make do. Anyways, maybe I will be able to snag a cool picture from the plane?!
- 7/5: The weather is still absolutely bonkers for Texas during this time of year. We just can't seem to shake this rain! We had a flash flood today... and it was certainly interesting. I got to watch a small line of storms come in from the east, yes they were moving from east to west, and it was super windy as the rain cooled air approached. Then the heavy rains hit... and hit... and hit. It started raining at about 6 pm, and then the storms stalled out over us! It rained hard until they finally looked like they were fizzling out at about 8 pm. But then, something interesting happened. The remaining shower started expanding in all four directions and strengthening again! It rained straight through 11 pm, so I got to watch our flood advisory turn into a flood warning and then into a flash flood warning. Poor mom and sister had to go out in that nastiness to feed the horses... but hey, better them than me!
- 7/6: Since my flight is departing from Houston on Thursday, a friend and I decided to go down today and meet our other friend who lives in the area (we are all meteorology majors) after class. As we headed down to Houston, we ran into a decaying thunderstorm right next to a very compact new storm. That seems hard to explain, but you will understand with today's photo. Oh, it was absolutely gorgeous! Since the sun was setting behind us, the clouds took on a nice orange hue, and a rainbow emerged under the dying thundershower. We ended up driving right into the little cell (talk about odds), and I took what was arguably the most beautiful picture of this project. The open fields of Texas combined with the setting sun illuminating a rainbow and small storm was the perfect memory to create!

- 7/7: Just one more day until takeoff! Also. In case anyone was wondering: Houston is muggy, like seriously muggy. I deeply regret ever complaining about the humidity back home because it felt like the air here was trying to suffocate me! And dear lord, the cicadas were so loud, their squeals were ripping through the air all day, which is saying something because they might as well have been trying to scream through peanut butter. On top of that, it rained on and off with heavy downpours 4 or 5 times today. The raindrops themselves were enormous, I was kind of shocked by how big they were. Emily (one of my friends) reassured me that this was just a typical day in Houston. Combined with the traffic, I think I have decided that Houston is not exactly the city I want to live in unless I absolutely have to!!!
- 7/8: So yesterday was an extremely busy day, as you could imagine, so I am writing this entry a day late (I'm so sorry about that). The day started off busy because I woke up late (yikes), and I still needed to get my international driver's license before going to the airport. Combined with eating meals, I did not have much time before getting to the airport at about 5:15 pm. The weather was good... however I emphasize WAS, which you will understand later. I boarded my first plane to Frankfurt (after being accosted for my coffee in my carry-on for my grandmother and having my vaccination card checked literally 5 times) at 7:15. My flight was all set to depart on time at 7:40... the captain had even come on the intercom to tell the attendants to buckle up when they realized: NOBODY LOADED THE BAGS. Ugh. Come on. We had to sit on the plane for another 1.5 hours until the bags were loaded, and then we were off... but not until we had a brief rain delay. It started pouring cats and dogs. You could imagine how frustrated I was at this point. Luckily, it was a short delay, and we were off! It was 10 hours to Germany and then... OOPS, sorry, but your regularly scheduled program has been interrupted by a 7-hour time change, so this will continue on the final, 7/9 entry. Until then: enjoy the cool pictures of clouds during the flight!
- 7/9: Now where was I? Oh yes. So, my flight landed in Germany, at which point I had a 3-hour layover until my flight to Salzburg, Austria. Luckily, this one was only 1 hour and didn't really have any delays. When I landed at the airport, my grandfather scooped me up and I went off to his townhome! I was there for literally just one hour until I had my final class time, but between landing and class (and then immediate slumber), I was able to briefly take in my surroundings. Oh, how I missed Austria! The mountains are beautiful, and the summertime is characterized by 70–80-degree days with some rain every now and then (AND NO HUMIDITY). I absolutely love the weather here so far, and I expect that to continue. This project is ending on a very symbolic, interesting way for me... While I did not get to do my original study abroad, I technically did get the experience, albeit for a brief moment... Seems to me like some sort of twist of fate. Regardless, I am so grateful to have been able to, in a rather unorthodox fashion, “study abroad.” This project was a lot of fun, and I can not wait to look back at these memories of the Summer of 2021: a time when life was approaching normality, but not quite there yet.