

COMM 3202 - Digital Filmmaking I

Fall 2024 Syllabus, Section 101, CRN 15514

Instructor Information

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Office: LBV 346

Office Hours:

TR 4:30 pm- 5:45 pm, and Fridays 10 am-12 pm (Virtual)

Office Phone: (956) 326-3047

Times and Location

M 1:15pm-2:35pm in Canseco Hall 201

Course Description

Through class and instructor analysis of each student's idea for a short video, the class will cover pre-production details: initial concepts, synopsis, treatment, script, storyboards, shot list, scheduling, location scouting, and cost. Using screenings and analysis of classic scenes, the choices available to the video maker are discussed in depth with focus on subsequent application. Students will work on individual video projects, and on one 6-10 minute final group project. To be taken concurrently with COMM 3102. Course may be repeated once for credit when topic changes.

Psychology & Communication Department, College of Arts & Sciences

Additional Course Information

As you develop an idea for a short film or video, this course teaches you how to explore the following questions: What are you going to shoot? How are you going to shoot it? How are you going to structure it? Through class and instructor analysis of each student's idea, the class will cover pre-production details: initial concepts, synopsis, treatment, script, storyboards, shot list, scheduling, location scouting, and editing. The class will also cover how choices are made about character and story development, narration and dialogue, visual composition and camera placement, jump cuts, continuity, montage, camera movement, and lighting. Students will have the opportunity to practice and demonstrate their understanding of the material by shooting two individual short videos and one final group project that will be screened to a public audience. All students will propose a final project around the 6th week of class. The final projects will be pitched and discussed in week 6 of the semester, and their progress will be followed and analyzed until completion.

Course Objectives:

This class introduces you to digital production methods, processes, concepts, HD and 4K formats, camera operation, and editing techniques (Adobe Premiere software). You will also learn to develop and edit short videos and narrative films.

No Use of Generative AI Tools is Permitted: This course assumes that work submitted by students – all process work, drafts, brainstorming artifacts, final works– will be generated by the students, working individually or in groups as directed by class assignment instructions. The use of AI is also prohibited on proctored exams. This policy indicates the following constitute violations of academic honesty: a student has another person/entity do the work of any substantive portion of a graded assignment for them, which includes purchasing work from a company, hiring a person or company to complete an assignment or exam, and/or using generative AI tools (ChatGPT or other).

Student Video Guidelines:

1. Student videos produced for a class at TAMIU are the student's intellectual property. The University reserves the right to use films produced in this course for teaching and research purposes.
2. Student videos produced for a class at TAMIU are not official products of the University and should not be used for any official university promotional or marketing purpose unless approved by the student, the professor in charge of the class, and the TAMIU Office of Public Relations, Marketing & Info Services.
3. Students should never use the TAMIU logo on their video or any other creative work unless authorized by the TAMIU Office of Public Relations, Marketing & Info Services.
4. Students should never use the KLRN logo or name on their video or any other creative work.
5. The creative works produced by students at TAMIU in fulfillment of class assignments, whether made on TAMIU premises or elsewhere, with or without TAMIU equipment, and with or without extra funds (hereafter called "Student Works"), are intended as part of an educational experience. The interest of the Communication Program at TAMIU in any Student Work extends only through completing the educational experience associated with such Work. Therefore, the student must include the following statement in the end credits of Student Work: **Made for the course (insert title of course) at Texas A&M International University (insert semester and year).**
6. All students who create or participate in the creation of a Student Work are responsible for such Student Work, including any necessary permission for the use of any copyrighted materials included in such Student Work, and obtaining property release forms and talent release forms in order to distribute work.
7. Once all permissions and releases have been obtained, all students who create or participate in the creation of a Student Work are responsible for the appropriate distribution of that Student Work. Students must identify Student Work as such on all distribution and social media websites, or any other distribution channel, by stating the following: **This film (or video) was made for the course (insert title of course) at Texas A&M International University (insert semester and year).**
8. Should the student(s) make major changes to the creative work after it has fulfilled its educational purpose for a course, the student must delete the above statement from the Work and from any distribution channel where the Work was posted.

Program Learning Outcomes

SLO 1: Application of knowledge and skills: Students will apply and integrate the knowledge and skills acquired in the program in professional settings.

SLO 2: Communicative competence: Students will demonstrate communicative competence in public and social contexts.

SLO 3: Knowledge, research, and writing: Students will demonstrate their theoretical knowledge, research, and writing skills while analyzing a communication phenomenon or professional problem.

Student Learning Outcomes

1. Students will be able to discuss and evaluate images and their communication potential.
2. Students will be able to recognize the possibilities when working with digital tools.
3. Students will be able to demonstrate film production techniques, share them with a public audience, and respond to feedback.

Important Dates

Visit the Academic Calendar ([tamiau.edu](https://www.tamiau.edu)) (<https://www.tamiau.edu/academiccalendar/>) page to view the term's important dates.

Textbooks

Group	Title	Author	ISBN
Required	The Digital Filmmaking Handbook	Sonja Schenk and Ben Long	ISBN-13 : 978-1733150217

Other Course Materials

To go to the bookstore, [click here \(https://www.bkstr.com/texasaminternationalstore/home/\)](https://www.bkstr.com/texasaminternationalstore/home/).

Production Equipment:

Students will need production equipment and editing software on a media computer (PC or Mac) to complete class projects. Cameras, lighting equipment, sound recorders, microphones, headphones, and iMac computers with Adobe Software are available for students to borrow from the department/KLRN studio. Students can use their equipment for class projects, but personal equipment should be comparable to what students can check out from the department. The use of iPhones or Smart Tablets to edit projects is highly discouraged, as these tools are not considered professional.

Equipment checkout is located in Canseco Hall 201. All equipment will be checked out in CH 201 after class or lab and is to be returned the following meeting time unless special permission has been given to the student by the professor. Equipment checked out on Tuesday, Thursday, or Friday is unavailable. If any student should be delinquent with the rules of checkout more than 3 times, checkout privileges will be forfeited for the delinquent student.

Also, all equipment must be returned to CNS 201 before the final exam day. Failure to return equipment before the final exam will result in a failing grade!

Grading Criteria

Projects: During the semester, students will learn production methods/concepts, how to operate a camera, and how to edit their videos/films. The first two shorts are designed to familiarize students with the equipment and filmmaking techniques. The final project will be a 6 to 10-minute narrative, experimental, or documentary short. Each student/group will be responsible for submitting a treatment, script, storyboards, shot lists, and property/talent releases for their final project. The final project will be done in groups of three or four students. The first two projects (the chase scene and commercial) can be done solo or in a team of 2 or 3 people. All projects and work turned in should demonstrate an understanding of the material covered in class.

Exams: Both the midterm and exam #2 will include fill-in-the-blank, short answer, matching, and multiple-choice questions, as well as an essay question worth 20% of the exam grade. The course has two exams. The first is around midterm, and the second is toward the end of the semester. Before taking the exam, you will be given a study guide sheet. The exams will be online, so you will need Lockdown Browser and Respondus Monitor to take online exams. The exams will be accessed on Blackboard in the week's folder.

Screenings: Project screenings will be held the day projects are due, and students should be prepared to discuss and answer questions about their creative choices. We will hold critiques and provide constructive feedback for all creative assignments. ALL PROJECTS MUST BE TURNED IN ON THEIR DUE DATE. You may upload your projects to your YouTube channel and play them for the class on due dates. However, you'll need to export an MP4 file of the project and place it in the TAMIU Media 1 folder for the course. To receive a grade for your projects, you must be present during critiques and respond to feedback. Failure to participate in critiques will result in a zero for the assignment. Please do not email me a YouTube link of your video project. I will not grade YouTube links.

Deadlines: Deadlines are crucial in the film industry and related communication fields. Late work will not be accepted unless the student has discussed the matter with the professor before the project's due date. Regardless of permission, points will be deducted for lateness. Excuses for late submissions must align with the university's policies.

Group Projects: Teamwork is an essential requirement of the filmmaking process. Therefore, all team members are expected to contribute to the film project equally if working in a team. Failure to work in a team sufficiently will result in point deductions for some or all team members (depending on the circumstances). For the final group project, each member will submit a team evaluation form outlining each member's contribution to the team.

GRADE	PERCENTAGE
A	91-100
B	80-90.9
C	70-79.9
D	60-69.9
F	Below 60

Grading

Grading Breakdown:

- Project 1 10% (Chase Scene)
- Project 2 15% (Commercial)
- Project 3 20% (Final Exam; includes meeting all deadlines)
- Midterm 15%
- Exam 2 15%
- Treatment 10% (for final project)
- Script 10% (for final project)

Schedule of Topics and Assignments

Day	Date	Agenda/Topic	Reading(s)	Due
Mon	8/26	M: Introduction to the course; review of course syllabus and course requirements W: Sample short films	Chapter 1	
Mon	9/2	M: Digital Video, the basics and Planning your shoot W: Introduction to the equipment	Chapters 3 and 4	
Mon	9/9	M: Lighting and the camera lecture W: Introduction to the camera	Chapters 6 and 7	
Mon	9/16	M: Filmmaking Techniques lecture W: Practicing to WB, Focus, Exposure and Composition	Chapter 8	
Mon	9/23	M: Writing your Script lecture W: Pre-Production for Project 1	Chapter 2 (Writing)	
Mon	9/30	M: Shoot Project 1 W: Edit Project 1	Chapter 5 (Actors)	
Mon	10/7	M: Project 1 (The Chase Scene) Due! W: Back to the Cutting Room, the Treatment		Project 1
Mon	10/14	M: Pitch and Treatment for Final Project due! W: Midterm Exam Review		Pitch and Treatment
Mon	10/21	M: Midterm Exam W: Pre-Production for Final Project Film; crew up	Chapter 11	Midterm Exam
Mon	10/28	M: Shooting Commercials_Sample commercials W: Edit Commercial	Chapter 9 (Sound)	
Mon	11/4	M: Project 2 due W: Back to the cutting room for project 2 if needed	Chapter 12	Project 2
Mon	11/11	M: Dailies due; Final script due W: Exam 2 Review; Work on final group project	Chapter 13	Final Project script due Dailies Due
Mon	11/18	M: Exam 2 W: Edit Final Project	Chapters 14 and 15	Exam 2
Mon	11/25	M: Rough cut due W: Thanksgiving Holiday	Chapters 16 and 17	Rough Cut due!

Mon	12/2	M: Fine cut due W: Shoot to Kill Film Festival, the final exam for the class is on Wednesday, Dec. 4th at 1:10 pm, location TBA.	Chapter 18	Fine Cut due!
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University/College Policies

Please see the University Policies below.

COVID-19 Related Policies

If you have tested positive for COVID-19, please refer to the Student Handbook, Appendix A (Attendance Rule) for instructions.

Required Class Attendance

Students are expected to attend every class in person (or virtually, if the class is online) and to complete all assignments. If you cannot attend class, it is your responsibility to communicate absences with your professors. The faculty member will decide if your excuse is valid and thus may provide lecture materials of the class. According to University policy, acceptable reasons for an absence, which cannot affect a student's grade, include:

- Participation in an authorized University activity.
- Death or major illness in a student's immediate family.
- Illness of a dependent family member.
- Participation in legal proceedings or administrative procedures that require a student's presence.
- Religious holy day.
- Illness that is too severe or contagious for the student to attend class.
- Required participation in military duties.
- Mandatory admission interviews for professional or graduate school which cannot be rescheduled.

Students are responsible for providing satisfactory evidence to faculty members within seven calendar days of their absence and return to class. They must substantiate the reason for the absence. If the absence is excused, faculty members must either provide students with the opportunity to make up the exam or other work missed, or provide a satisfactory alternative to complete the exam or other work missed within 30 calendar days from the date of absence. Students who miss class due to a University-sponsored activity are responsible for identifying their absences to their instructors with as much advance notice as possible.

Classroom Behavior (applies to online or Face-to-Face Classes)

TAMIU encourages classroom discussion and academic debate as an essential intellectual activity. It is essential that students learn to express and defend their beliefs, but it is also essential that they learn to listen and respond respectfully to others whose beliefs they may not share. The University will always tolerate different, unorthodox, and unpopular points of view, but it will not tolerate condescending or insulting remarks. When students verbally abuse or ridicule and intimidate others whose views they do not agree with, they subvert the free exchange of ideas that should characterize a university classroom. If their actions are deemed by the professor to be disruptive, they will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action (please refer to Student Handbook Article 4).

TAMIU Honor Code: Plagiarism and Cheating

As a TAMIU student, you are bound by the TAMIU Honor Code to conduct yourself ethically in all your activities as a TAMIU student and to report violations of the Honor Code. Please read carefully the Student Handbook Article 7 and Article 10 available at <https://www.tamiu.edu/scce/studenthandbook.shtml> (<https://www.tamiu.edu/scce/studenthandbook.shtml/>).

We are committed to strict enforcement of the Honor Code. Violations of the Honor Code tend to involve claiming work that is not one's own, most commonly plagiarism in written assignments and any form of cheating on exams and other types of assignments.

Plagiarism is the presentation of someone else's work as your own. It occurs when you:

1. Borrow someone else's facts, ideas, or opinions and put them entirely in your own words. You must acknowledge that these thoughts are not your own by immediately citing the source in your paper. Failure to do this is plagiarism.
2. Borrow someone else's words (short phrases, clauses, or sentences), you must enclose the copied words in quotation marks as well as citing the source. Failure to do this is plagiarism.

3. Present someone else's paper or exam (stolen, borrowed, or bought) as your own. You have committed a clearly intentional form of intellectual theft and have put your academic future in jeopardy. This is the worst form of plagiarism.

Here is another explanation from the 2020, seventh edition of the Manual of The American Psychological Association (APA):

"Plagiarism is the act of presenting the words, idea, or images of another as your own; it denies authors or creators of content the credit they are due. Whether deliberate or unintentional, plagiarism violates ethical standards in scholarship" (p. 254). This same principle applies to the illicit use of AI.

Plagiarism: Researchers do not claim the words and ideas of another as their own; they give credit where credit is due. Quotations marks should be used to indicate the exact words of another. Each time you paraphrase another author (i.e., summarize a passage or rearrange the order of a sentence and change some of the words), you need to credit the source in the text. The key element of this principle is that authors do not present the work of another as if it were their own words. This can extend to ideas as well as written words. If authors model a study after one done by someone else, the originating author should be given credit. If the rationale for a study was suggested in the discussion section of someone else's article, the person should be given credit. Given the free exchange of ideas, which is very important for the health of intellectual discourse, authors may not know where an idea for a study originated. If authors do know, however, they should acknowledge the source; this includes personal communications (p. 11). For guidance on proper documentation, consult the Academic Success Center or a recommended guide to documentation and research such as the Manual of the APA or the MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers. If you still have doubts concerning proper documentation, seek advice from your instructor prior to submitting a final draft.

TAMIU has penalties for plagiarism and cheating.

- **Penalties for Plagiarism:** Should a faculty member discover that a student has committed plagiarism, the student should receive a grade of 'F' in that course and the matter will be referred to the Honor Council for possible disciplinary action. The faculty member, however, may elect to give freshmen and sophomore students a "zero" for the assignment and to allow them to revise the assignment up to a grade of "F" (50%) if they believe that the student plagiarized out of ignorance or carelessness and not out of an attempt to deceive in order to earn an unmerited grade; the instructor must still report the offense to the Honor Council. This option should not be available to juniors, seniors, or graduate students, who cannot reasonably claim ignorance of documentation rules as an excuse. For repeat offenders in undergraduate courses or for an offender in any graduate course, the penalty for plagiarism is likely to include suspension or expulsion from the university.
 - *Caution:* Be very careful what you upload to Turnitin or send to your professor for evaluation. Whatever you upload for evaluation will be considered your final, approved draft. If it is plagiarized, you will be held responsible. The excuse that "it was only a draft" will not be accepted.
 - *Caution:* Also, do not share your electronic files with others. If you do, you are responsible for the possible consequences. If another student takes your file of a paper and changes the name to his or her name and submits it and you also submit the paper, we will hold both of you responsible for plagiarism. It is impossible for us to know with certainty who wrote the paper and who stole it. And, of course, we cannot know if there was collusion between you and the other student in the matter.
- **Penalties for Cheating:** Should a faculty member discover a student cheating on an exam or quiz or other class project, the student should receive a "zero" for the assignment and not be allowed to make the assignment up. The incident should be reported to the chair of the department and to the Honor Council. If the cheating is extensive, however, or if the assignment constitutes a major grade for the course (e.g., a final exam), or if the student has cheated in the past, the student should receive an "F" in the course, and the matter should be referred to the Honor Council. Additional penalties, including suspension or expulsion from the university may be imposed. Under no circumstances should a student who deserves an "F" in the course be allowed to withdraw from the course with a "W."
 - *Caution:* Chat groups that start off as "study groups" can easily devolve into "cheating groups." Be very careful not to join or remain any chat group if it begins to discuss specific information about exams or assignments that are meant to require individual work. If you are a member of such a group and it begins to cheat, you will be held responsible along with all the other members of the group. The TAMIU Honor Code requires that you report any such instances of cheating.
- **Student Right of Appeal:** Faculty will notify students immediately via the student's TAMIU e-mail account that they have submitted plagiarized work. Students have the right to appeal a faculty member's charge of academic dishonesty by notifying the TAMIU Honor Council of their intent to appeal as long as the notification of appeal comes within 10 business days of the faculty member's e-mail message to the student and/or the Office of Student Conduct and Community Engagement. The Student Handbook provides more details.

Use of Work in Two or More Courses

You may not submit work completed in one course for a grade in a second course unless you receive explicit permission to do so by the instructor of the second course. In general, you should get credit for a work product only once.

AI Policies

Your instructor will provide you with their personal policy on the use of AI in the classroom setting and associated coursework.

TAMIU E-Mail and SafeZone

Personal Announcements sent to students through TAMIU E-mail (tamiu.edu or dusty email) are the official means of communicating course and university business with students and faculty –not the U.S. Mail and no other e-mail addresses. Students and faculty must check their TAMIU e-mail

accounts regularly, if not daily. Not having seen an important TAMIU e-mail or message from a faculty member, chair, or dean is not accepted as an excuse for failure to take important action.

Students, faculty, and staff are encouraged to download the SafeZone app, which is a free mobile app for all University faculty, staff, and students. SafeZone allows you to: report safety concerns (24/7), get connected with mental health professionals, activate location sharing with authorities, and anonymously report incidents. Go to <https://www.tamiau.edu/adminis/police/safezone/index.shtml> for more information.

Copyright Restrictions

The Copyright Act of 1976 grants to copyright owners the exclusive right to reproduce their works and distribute copies of their work. Works that receive copyright protection include published works such as a textbook. Copying a textbook without permission from the owner of the copyright may constitute copyright infringement. Civil and criminal penalties may be assessed for copyright infringement. Civil penalties include damages up to \$100,000; criminal penalties include a fine up to \$250,000 and imprisonment. Copyright laws do not allow students and professors to make photocopies of copyrighted materials, but you may copy a limited portion of a work, such as article from a journal or a chapter from a book for your own personal academic use or, in the case of a professor, for personal, limited classroom use. In general, the extent of your copying should not suggest that the purpose or the effect of your copying is to avoid paying for the materials. And, of course, you may not sell these copies for a profit. Thus, students who copy textbooks to avoid buying them or professors who provide photocopies of textbooks to enable students to save money are violating the law.

Students with Disabilities

Texas A&M International University seeks to provide reasonable accommodations for all qualified persons with disabilities. This University will adhere to all applicable federal, state, and local laws, regulations and guidelines with respect to providing reasonable accommodations as required to afford equal education opportunity. It is the student's responsibility to register with the Office of Student Counseling and Disability Services located in Student Center 126. This office will contact the faculty member to recommend specific, reasonable accommodations. Faculty are prohibited from making accommodations based solely on communications from students. They may make accommodations only when provided documentation by the Student Counseling and Disability Services office.

Student Attendance and Leave of Absence (LOA) Policy

As part of our efforts to assist and encourage all students towards graduation, TAMIU provides LOA's for students, including pregnant/parenting students, in accordance with the Attendance Rule (Section 3.07) and the Student LOA Rule (Section 3.08), which includes the "Leave of Absence Request" form. Both rules can be found in the TAMIU Student Handbook (URL: <http://www.tamiau.edu/studentaffairs/StudentHandbook1.shtml>) (<http://www.tamiau.edu/studentaffairs/StudentHandbook1.shtml/>).

Pregnant and Parenting Students

Under Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, harassment based on sex, including harassment because of pregnancy or related conditions, is prohibited. A pregnant/parenting student must be granted an absence for as long as the student's physician deems the absence medically necessary. It is a violation of Title IX to ask for documentation relative to the pregnant/parenting student's status beyond what would be required for other medical conditions. If a student would like to file a complaint for discrimination due to his or her pregnant/parenting status, please contact the TAMIU Title IX Coordinator (Lorissa M. Cortez, 5201 University Boulevard, KLM 159B, Laredo, TX 78041, TitleIX@tamiau.edu, 956.326.2857) and/or the Office of Civil Rights (Dallas Office, U.S. Department of Education, 1999 Bryan Street, Suite 1620, Dallas, TX 75201-6810, 214.661.9600). You can also report it on TAMIU's anonymous electronic reporting site: <https://www.tamiau.edu/reportit> (<https://www.tamiau.edu/reportit/>).

TAMIU advises a pregnant/parenting student to notify their professor once the student is aware that accommodations for such will be necessary. It is recommended that the student and professor develop a reasonable plan for the student's completion of missed coursework or assignments. The Office of Equal Opportunity and Diversity (Lorissa M. Cortez, lorissam.cortez@tamiau.edu) can assist the student and professor in working out the reasonable accommodations. For other questions or concerns regarding Title IX compliance related to pregnant/parenting students at the University, contact the Title IX Coordinator. In the event that a student will need a leave of absence for a substantial period of time, TAMIU urges the student to consider a Leave of Absence (LOA) as outlined in the TAMIU Student Handbook. As part of our efforts to assist and encourage all students towards graduation, TAMIU provides LOA's for students, including pregnant/parenting students, in accordance with the Attendance Rule and the Student LOA Rule. Both rules can be found in the TAMIU Student Handbook (<https://www.tamiau.edu/scce/studenthandbook.shtml>) (<https://www.tamiau.edu/scce/studenthandbook.shtml/>).

Anti-Discrimination/Title IX

TAMIU does not discriminate or permit harassment against any individual on the basis of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, veteran status, sexual orientation or gender identity in admissions, educational programs, or employment. If you would like to file a complaint relative to Title IX or any civil rights violation, please contact the TAMIU Director of Equal Opportunity and Diversity/Title IX Coordinator, Lorissa M. Cortez, 5201 University Boulevard, Killam Library 159B, Laredo, TX 78041, TitleIX@tamiau.edu, 956.326.2857, via the anonymous electronic reporting website, ReportIt, at <https://www.tamiau.edu/reportit> (<https://www.tamiau.edu/reportit/>), and/or the Office of Civil Rights (Dallas Office), U.S. Department of Education, 1999 Bryan Street, Suite 1620, Dallas, TX 75201-6810, 214.661.9600.

Incompletes

Students who are unable to complete a course should withdraw from the course before the final date for withdrawal and receive a “W.” To qualify for an “incomplete” and thus have the opportunity to complete the course at a later date, a student must meet the following criteria:

1. The student must have completed 90% of the course work assigned before the final date for withdrawing from a course with a “W”, and the student must be passing the course;
2. The student cannot complete the course because an accident, an illness, or a traumatic personal or family event occurred after the final date for withdrawal from a course;
3. The student must sign an “Incomplete Grade Contract” and secure signatures of approval from the professor and the college dean.
4. The student must agree to complete the missing course work before the end of the next long semester; failure to meet this deadline will cause the “I” to automatically be converted to an “F”; extensions to this deadline may be granted by the dean of the college. This is the general policy regarding the circumstances under which an “incomplete” may be granted, but under exceptional circumstances, a student may receive an incomplete who does not meet all of the criteria above if the faculty member, department chair, and dean recommend it.

WIN Contracts

The Department of Biology and Chemistry does not permit WIN contracts. For other departments within the college, WIN Contracts are offered only under exceptional circumstances and are limited to graduating seniors. Only courses offered by full-time TAMIU faculty or TAMIU instructors are eligible to be contracted for the WIN requirement. However, a WIN contract for a course taught by an adjunct may be approved, with special permission from the department chair and dean. Students must seek approval before beginning any work for the WIN Contract. No student will contract more than one course per semester. Summer WIN Contracts must continue through both summer sessions.

Student Responsibility for Dropping a Course

It is the responsibility of the student to drop the course before the final date for withdrawal from a course. Faculty members, in fact, may not drop a student from a course without getting the approval of their department chair and dean.

Independent Study Course

Independent Study (IS) courses are offered only under exceptional circumstances. Required courses intended to build academic skills may not be taken as IS (e.g., clinical supervision and internships). No student will take more than one IS course per semester. Moreover, IS courses are limited to seniors and graduate students. Summer IS course must continue through both summer sessions.

Grade Changes & Appeals

Faculty are authorized to change final grades only when they have committed a computational error or an error in recording a grade, and they must receive the approval of their department chairs and the dean to change the grade. As part of that approval, they must attach a detailed explanation of the reason for the mistake. Only in rare cases would another reason be entertained as legitimate for a grade change. A student who is unhappy with his or her grade on an assignment must discuss the situation with the faculty member teaching the course. If students believe that they have been graded unfairly, they have the right to appeal the grade using a grade appeal process in the Student Handbook and in the Faculty Handbook.

Final Examination

All courses in all colleges must include a comprehensive exam or performance and be given on the date and time specified by the Academic Calendar and the Final Exam schedule published by the Registrar’s Office. In the College of Arts & Sciences all final exams must contain a written component. The written component should comprise at least 20% of the final exam grade. Exceptions to this policy must receive the approval of the department chair and the dean at the beginning of the semester.

Mental Health and Well-Being

The university aims to provide students with essential knowledge and tools to understand and support mental health. As part of our commitment to your well-being, we offer access to Telus Health, a service available 24/7/365 via chat, phone, or webinar. Scan the QR code to download the app and explore the resources available to you for guidance and support whenever you need it. The Telus app is available to download directly from TELUS (tamiu.edu) (<https://www.tamiu.edu/counseling/telus/>) or from the Apple App Store and Google Play.