

PSCI 2305 - American National Government

Fall 2024 Syllabus, Section 181, CRN 14119

Instructor Information

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Adjunct Professor
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Office Hours:
TBA
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Times and Location

Does Not Meet Face-to-Face

Course Description

A survey of national government in the United States with emphasis upon the Constitution, government structure, and processes. European background; federal, state, and interstate relations; rights and obligations of citizens; political parties; group organization; the legislative process; and the executive, judicial, and administrative functions in federal government. Prerequisites: Completion of Texas Success Initiative (TSI) Reading requirements, ENGL 1301, or appropriate level developmental course sequence.
Social Sciences Department, College of Arts & Sciences

Additional Course Information

Personal Phone Number: 773.559.6418 – **Students are strongly encouraged to call or text me in case of an emergency.** We live in interesting times. I know many of you are essential workers, have families, are employed full-time and attend school full-time, etc. We depend upon an Internet system that can be overwhelmed at times. *Therefore, I define emergencies as life situations that require one to submit paperwork beyond the due date or time, illness, or the sporadic inability to connect to Internet so you can submit your assignments. Once we speak by phone, students are required to document the conversation in Blackboard or TAMIU's Outlook as soon as possible.*

If students need to speak with me about nonemergency situations, students are strongly encouraged to contact me through Blackboard's classroom email system to schedule an online appointment which will occur through Blackboard first. If I do not respond as quickly as the situation requires, please contact me via Outlook. If students contact me by phone, I require the student to email me about the need for a phone discussion, the time and date our conversation occurred, and resolution through Blackboard as quickly as possible *after* the conversation has occurred. I respectfully request that students do not initiate phone contact for nonemergency situations. See Late Assignment Policy for information pertaining to the submission of late assignments without permission.

I may ask students to verify any challenges. Our Blackboard system was recently upgraded and all of us have a learning curve. I include myself among you. Please know that I am supportive of one facing any difficulties and please be patient with everyone. However, if these situations are ongoing, I may recommend that you contact TAMIU's Student Services Program for support. Their website is www.tamiu.edu/distance/students/university-resources-and-services.shtml (<http://www.tamiu.edu/distance/students/university-resources-and-services.shtml>).

Online Office Hours: TBA. Students will be surveyed to establish an online office hours date and time that are convenient to as many students as possible. Given our various schedules and life demands, this may not be possible. If we have a dedicated office hour time, they will be held during a

weekday evening. They usually last for one hour. The decision will be announced by Blackboard's email system. However, I have taught classes where students chose not to have online office hours. This option is acceptable to me as well.

NOTE: *The course materials will be opened to students at the beginning of the semester. I do this for one reason. There are over 50 students enrolled in the course. Given the large number of students, there are always persons who face challenges that prevent them from accessing and completing the course materials as outlined in the syllabus. It is a challenge for me, as it is for any instructor who teaches large classes, to open, close, reopen, and reclose the sections repeatedly. There are some students who are confused by this and take advantage of the opportunity.*

In short, follow the syllabus for due dates and respond each week accordingly. If there are problems with Blackboard access, email me as previously outlined.

For example, someone may need an extra couple of hours to submit a test or participate in discussion. This is understandable because life situations occur. In such situations, there is no need to contact me if you find yourself participating in a discussion a couple of hours after the due date. But if someone needs more than a couple of hours, please let me know. We can work out a due date specifically for said assignment.

While I make every reasonable attempt to work with students who need a short amount of time to submit late work, there have been times where students do not begin to submit any or little work for days or weeks into the semester. I have had some students believe that if the class is open, that one can submit one's work for the entire course at the end of the semester. I have had some students submit all the course work within the first weeks of the course. In both cases, the students who made these choices made rather poor ones. I will not grade the work because of the student's choice and the choice negatively impacted the student's grade. This prevented students from interacting with others throughout the course. It is unfair to students who completed their work within a reasonable period of time throughout the semester. Participation is a significant portion of your grade.

Students who followed the syllabus, observed the due dates as written in the syllabus, participated in the course throughout the semester, and submitted their tests within a very reasonable period of time were far more successful than those who did not.

Minor adjustments to the schedule may be made. Any such adjustment will be announced through Blackboard.

Program Learning Outcomes

PURPOSE OF THE COURSE

This class is a survey of national government in the United States. There will be an emphasis placed on the U.S. Constitution, the U.S. government structure, and processes. We will also review the European background and discuss the rights and obligations of citizens when it comes to political participation. There will be special attention paid to federal, state, and interstate relations. At the same time, there will be a brief introduction of political parties, group organization, and the legislative process. The class will include discussions of current national issues.

These issues could be controversial or sensitive. However, the college classroom is a bastion of democracy. Here we can debate these difficult topics objectively. If you, as a student, have a strong opinion or thought, you are encouraged to express it. No one will be intentionally degraded but you may be challenged in the course of the debate. Being asked to explain your thoughts is not evidence of degradation. However, this will require students to rely upon objectivity and calm discussion as we dialogue about topics that may be controversial or sensitive.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

At the end of this course you should be able to:

- Recognize and identify the European background of our governmental structure and systems.
- Identify the amendments and articles of the U.S. Constitution & how these relate to government structure, processes, and citizens' rights.
- Explain and distinguish between the role of the legislative, executive, judiciary, and the bureaucracy of the U.S. government.
- Explain and identify the fundamental principles of government.
- Identify the rights and obligations of citizens, the role of political parties, and influence of groups and organizations in the U.S. democratic process.
- Students will confirm their knowledge of civic responsibility by identifying the rights and duties of citizens and how government and citizens' involvement can have an impact on democracy.
- Explain what public opinion is, its influence in the political process, and the role of media in a democratic society.
- Identify governmental process, the policy process and the different types of policy.
- Relate the basic U.S. governmental process and structure to current events.

Student Learning Outcomes

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

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- Identify governmental process, the policy process and the different types of policy.
- Relate the basic U.S. governmental process and structure to current events.

Important Dates

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

Textbooks

Group	Title	Author	ISBN
Required	American Government	Glen Krutz	978-1-947172-66-1

Other Course Materials

The OpenStax is free and accessible on-line.

Title: *American Government*

Authors: Glen Krutz

Year of publication: 2019

Publisher: OpenStax

PDF Version – ISBN-10 – 1-947172-66-2

PDF Version – ISBN-13 – 978-1-947172-66-1

Access here [https://assets.openstax.org/oscms-prodcms/media/documents/american-government-2e-6.11.pdf?](https://assets.openstax.org/oscms-prodcms/media/documents/american-government-2e-6.11.pdf?_gl=1*1ljn5v0*_gcl_au*MTU5MjYzMTIwNC4xNzIwNjY5NTU1*_ga*OTY2OTI5NzUzLjE2Nzg5MzA0OTI.*_ga_T746F8B0QC*MTcyMDY2OTU1NC4zLjEuMTcyMDY2OTU1)

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Grading Criteria

GRADE	PERCENTAGE
A	700-675
B	674-525
C	524-400



D	399-200
F	Below 199

Open Boilerplate

ASSIGNMENT	VALUE
Examinations	300
Essay Examination Questions	150 points
Discussion Points	60
News Discussion Posts	20
Final Examination	40

Schedule of Topics and Assignments

Week of	Agenda/Topic	Reading(s)	Due
8/26	Introduction and Syllabus Review Guiding questions for your introduction are: Why are you taking this course? What are your strategies to succeed in this course? What do you expect to learn in this course? What concerns do you have about this course? What is your major? What do you hope to do after graduation? What is your favorite hobby? Chapter 1: American Government and Civic Engagement Quiz 1 Watch three videos, "What Is the Tragedy of the Commons?", "Political Culture," and "Representative Government." 1 September – Labor Day – No School	Introduction and Syllabus Review Guiding questions for your introduction are: Why are you taking this course? What are your strategies to succeed in this course? What do you expect to learn in this course? What concerns do you have about this course? What is your major? What do you hope to do after graduation? What is your favorite hobby? Chapter 1: American Government and Civic Engagement Quiz 1 Watch three videos, "What Is the Tragedy of the Commons?", "Political Culture," and "Representative Government." 1 September – Labor Day – No School	09/02/2024
9/2	Chapter 2: The Constitution and Its Origins Quiz 2 Watch two videos, "Crash Course: The Constitution," and "Limited Government" video		09/09/2024
9/9	Chapter 3: American Federalism Quiz 3 Watch "Federalism" video First Examination 10 September – Class Census Day and Registration Ends 11 September – National Remembrance and Patriot Day – School is in session		09/16/2024
9/16	Chapter 4: Civil Liberties Quiz 4 Listen to video, "Racist Language Causing Concern in Nebraska" and Complete News Discussion #1 assignment Watch "Civil Liberties" video and play "I Have a Right?" Simulation Chapter 5: Civil Rights Watch video on "Crash Course: Affirmative Action" Quiz 5 All tuition must be paid this week		09/23/2024



9/23	Chapter 6: The Politics of Public Opinion Watch the video on Confederate Flag Battle and respond to it in the discussion Watch the Public Opinion video Chapter 7: Voting Play with 270 to Win on Presidential Voting 2024 Watch Daisy Girl advertisement, Electoral College, and 2016 Voter Turnout Quiz 6 and 7 30 September – Graduation Application and Payment Due	09/30/2024
9/30	Chapter 8: The Media Watch the following videos: "Effects of Social Media on 2024 Election", "News Media video", "Rise of the Citizen Journalist", and two videos from PBS Crash Course on the evolution of media in the US and media regulation Quiz 8	10/07/2024
10/7	Chapter 9: Political Parties Quiz 9 Watch two videos, "Political Parties" and "How the Political Parties Switched Sides" Second Examination 14 October – Columbus Day and Indigenous Peoples' Day	10/14/2024
10/14	Chapter 10: Interest Groups and Lobbying Watch three videos, "Crash Course: Interest Groups", "Political Movements", and "Interest Groups" Quiz 10 19 October – Mid-Semester Mark	10/21/2024
10/21	Chapter 11: Congress Watch the following videos: "How a Bill Becomes Law" by PBS, ICivic's "Law Craft", "Congress and Constituency", and "Congress and Party." Quiz 11	10/28/2024
10/28	Chapter 12: Presidency Quiz 12 Watch the following videos: "Crash Course – Presidential Power #1 and #2", "Presidents and Foreign Policy", "Presidents and Domestic Policy," and ICivics' Executive Command simulation	11/04/2024
11/4	Chapter 13: The Courts Quiz 13 Watch videos "Crash Course: Structuring the Courts" and "Judiciary and Supreme Court." 4 November – Registration begins for Wintermester and Spring, 2025 classes 5 November – Election Day. Five points will be given to every student who either photographs him/herself wearing an I Voted sticker that is given to every voter on that day or writes an one-page essay on the topic, The Importance of Voting. Submit the photograph or essay as an email through Blackboard ONLY. The five points will count toward your final grade	11/11/2024
11/11	Chapter 14: State and Local Government Quiz 12 Third Examination	11/18/2024
11/18	Chapter 15: The Bureaucracy Quiz 15 Course Evaluations Open this week 21 November – Last Day to Drop	11/25/2024

11/25	Chapter 16: Domestic Policy Chapter 17: Foreign Policy Quiz 16 3 December – Last Day of Class	12/03/2024
12/2	Final Examination	12/10/2024

Core Curriculum Learning Outcomes

[REMOVE the Core-Curriculum Learning Outcomes which do NOT apply to this course. ***Please don't forget to remove these instructions.***]

Core-Curriculum Learning Outcomes:

1. **Critical Thinking Skills (CT)** - creative thinking, innovation, inquiry, and analysis, evaluation and synthesis of information
2. **Communication Skills (COM)** - effective development, interpretation and expression of ideas through written, oral and visual communication
3. **Empirical and Quantitative Skills (EQS)** - manipulation and analysis of numerical data or observable facts resulting in informed conclusions
4. **Teamwork (TW)** - ability to consider different points of view and to work effectively with others to support a shared purpose or goal
5. **Social Responsibility (SR)** - intercultural competence, knowledge of civic responsibility, and the ability to engage effectively in regional, national, and global communities
6. **Personal Responsibility (PR)** - ability to connect choices, actions and consequences to ethical decision-making

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)

TAMU 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).

TAMU Honor Code: Plagiarism and Cheating

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

TAMU 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 TAMU Honor Code requires that you report any such instances of cheating.
- **Student Right of Appeal:** Faculty will notify students immediately via the student's TAMU 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 TAMU 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.tamiu.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.tamiu.edu/studentaffairs/StudentHandbook1.shtml> (<http://www.tamiu.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@tamiu.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.tamiu.edu/reportit> (<https://www.tamiu.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@tamiu.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.

Distance Education Courses

Technology Requirements:

This course is taught entirely online. Everything you need for the course is self-contained on the Blackboard Course Management System. All file types will open inside of the Blackboard system (Adobe Presenter, PDF, Microsoft Office products, podcasts, video clips, and web links). If your home computer cannot access these files because it is outdated or you do not have access to a computer that is capable, you should consider dropping the class until you resolve your access issues. **If you experience any problems with Blackboard you need to contact the OIT Help Desk (956.326.2310 or elearning@tamiu.edu), not the instructor.** If I, as the instructor, need to be involved, the student, Blackboard staff, and I will coordinate and correct the situation. Firefox is the preferred browser, so if you experience problems using Internet Explorer, Safari, Chrome, or what not, then consider switching to Firefox.

NOTE: Blackboard has completed significant system upgrades. I am learning the class interface along with you. I may err in setting clocks, timing, etc. Do not hesitate to notify me with any access concerns via Blackboard's email system first. If I do not respond within 24 hours, please contact me via Outlook. However, I do ask that you be patient and follow Netiquette guidelines. Please feel free to contact TAMIU's Blackboard representatives as well. No student need not go to TAMIU administrators to complain about not having an immediate response from me upon notification.

Learning Approach:

My responsibilities as an educator are to set the direction of the course, to provide resource materials and lay a foundation for understanding, to facilitate a positive learning climate, to hold students accountable for their learning, and to provide support and encouragement for student learning and growth. My expectations concerning your responsibilities as a student are: to prepare and actively participate in the class, to promptly complete course assignments, to use the opportunity to build your understanding and skills, and to contribute to the learning experience in the class. The lectures that I provide for each topic are meant to either enhance your understanding of or expand upon some of the major points of interest; they are not full summaries of the material. Your writing will be graded on analytical thoroughness, application of class material, and integration of relevant sources, theories, and findings, and relevance of answers to the questions posed. In other words, rambling, disconnected opinions and vague references to sources will not be sufficient in a discussion or essay question.

Course Format:

In Course Content link you will find the course material organized by unit. Each unit contains all the materials you need to complete the required unit tasks. Please take a moment to familiarize yourself with the setup. Lectures either expand upon or supplement the material presented in the assigned readings. You are responsible for all required readings, even if they are not directly covered in the lecture. I will be monitoring the Q & A Forum and checking Course Messages for student communications. Assignment of grades will be available in a reasonable amount of time and posted on Blackboard. It is your responsibility to monitor your progress in the class via My Grades and be cognizant of the due dates and any last minute class announcements. If you have any questions concerning the course, please contact me ASAP via Course Messages.

Late Assignment Policy:

The due dates for all assignments are specified in the syllabus as well as the Task List for each unit.

If a student anticipates his or her assignment will be submitted significantly beyond the deadline, the student is required to contact me as soon as possible to request an extension. Extensions will be time restricted to an agreed upon time. If the situation is a result of an illness, a doctor's note or notification from a TAMIU official is required. If this becomes a habitual situation, I will discuss my concerns with the individual student to explore options to assist the student to submit their work on time.

In most cases, students have faced significant challenges and request extensions. While I may understand the situation, it can be unfair to classmates and me who are and have remained on task who also face challenges. One needs to be aware that if grades are reported periodically throughout the term. Should you face such situations, you will be asked to contact TAMIU's Student Services Department who will work with you and me to verify your needs and help us determine how much time you need to complete the work or if you should reconsider taking the course at a time when these situations have dissipated.

Instructor Communication: I will be available for Virtual Office Hours in the Online Meeting Room link (located in the Course Menu) if we establish one. In addition, private ONLINE appointments can be made. I will try to respond to emails within a 24-to-36-hour period and assignments will be provided

with feedback (grades and/or comments) within a few days after submission. See the first page on contacting me for emergency and nonemergency situations.

Academic Services and Resources: All TAMU Academic Services and Resources used to provide you with the tools to be a successful student are available for you in Blackboard. You will find the Student Resources link listed under Course Tools.

The Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in the Classroom

During my Christmas, 2023 break, I completed an AI course offered by TAMU and Auburn University.

We all use AI when we text or send an email. We may use editing programs that are embedded in Word, Google documents, etc. AI is here to stay. But there are downfalls.

First, AI programs do not, at this time, include information from 2022 to date. Secondly, AI may write information but it is not always contextually correct. The more you know the subject, the better your questions will be and the better AI can assist you. AI can assist you but it cannot THINK for you. But if you do not know the subject matter, AI can be, and often is, contextually incorrect. Furthermore, online educational programs such as Blackboard, Safe Assign, etc. are upgrading to detect AI usage and is evidence of academic misconduct.

The information shared below came from my AI training course.

AI assistance in the Context of Academic Misconduct

The generative writing programs like ChatGPT on education and the understanding of authorship is evolving. Misconduct is a broader concept, at least as far as authorship is concerned. It can be framed as a question of intent. Misconduct is present in academic work wherever a non-trivial role of AI assistance has not been disclosed as required.

This will require interpretation by the professor and online detection systems. In practice, this will require interpretation using the following questions: 1) On what grounds do we call this misconduct; 2) In what ways can AI lead to misconduct; 3) What justifies the implied need for disclosure; 4) What is trivial and non-trivial; and 5) Can we detect the misconduct?

Misconduct is a violation of a standard. A standard is an expectation of behavior that is held by some community, and it can refer to actions (not a lie) or to values that might be expressed through such actions (truth). A violation is an act that contravenes a standard. It need not be intentional, though the absence of intent may be considered to lessen the degree of the misconduct. In that case, one's actions may be seen as negligent, to fail on the implied responsibility to know about and to understand the standard.

Academic Misconduct violates academic integrity, a community standard. It is the pivot around which this discussion revolves. It would not be a standard at all if it would not define academic norms. It would not be a standard if it would not also contain their justification. Norms must be justified and decreed at will.

Academic Integrity as it Applies to AI

The academy as a whole rests upon one commitment: to pursue truth. It is a commitment that entails honesty, responsibility, and transparency. We commit to pursue it. Truth may not be complete but we strive for it. Academy's entire reason is to be curious, to go further, to progress. This is why we conduct research, creatively think, and seek out new questions. AI cannot think for you.

There is a commitment to personal integrity and standards. Plagiarism exists if one relies upon AI to answer questions and the person who is cheated the most is the person who committed the act. In short, when one cheats, one cheats him or herself. One devalues one's self, one's knowledge, one's work value, one's authority, and one cannot formulate a valid argument.

Using programs like Chat GPT, Grammarly, etc. to help generate ideas, edit papers, etc. is not plagiarism per se. To generate a response to a question is plagiarism.