

## SOCI 4390 - Domestic Violence

### Fall 2024 Syllabus, Section 101, CRN 14502

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### Instructor Information

**Pamela Neumann, Ph.D. in Sociology**  
Assistant Professor of Sociology  
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Office: AIC 321  
Office Hours:  
Mondays 2-4pm  
Wednesdays 1-3pm

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### Times and Location

MWF 10:50am-11:45am in Western Hemispheric Trade Ctr 116

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### Course Description

Analysis of theory and research on the prevalence of domestic violence and its patterns and dynamics. An examination of preventative education and interventions for offenders and victims. Special focus will be placed upon multicultural populations.  
Social Sciences Department, College of Arts & Sciences

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### Additional Course Information

Domestic violence is one of the most pervasive problems plaguing our world. In this course we will seek to unravel the causes and consequences of this violence, as well as assess the effectiveness of different kinds of strategies used to prevent and punish it. We will look at the different methods that sociologists use to study domestic violence, both qualitative and quantitative, and assess their strengths and weaknesses. We will also analyze dominant theoretical frameworks and concepts used to explain the prevalence of domestic violence (particularly focusing on feminist theory as well as structural/cultural approaches). We will evaluate the usefulness of these frameworks through a series of case studies inside and outside the United States. Finally, we will examine how different institutions (shelters, police, courts, perpetrator intervention programs) respond to domestic violence.

**Format:** Classes will consist of a combination of lecture, discussion, films, or other interactive activities intended to facilitate deeper engagement with the subject matter. I expect students to come to class having read the assigned reading. You will get much more out of class time if you do - and show respect for your peers as well.

**Please keep in mind that domestic violence can be a sensitive topic for many people.** The videos and readings assigned in this course may be difficult to read/watch, particularly for those who may have experienced some form of violence in the past. If at any time you need emotional or psychological support, there are resources at TAMIU and in the Laredo community that can help. I have listed some of these resources below. Please contact me if you need additional assistance accessing these resources. I ask all students to be mindful of the different experiences present in our course community when speaking and writing in class discussions and online forums. We can engage in critical thinking while also displaying empathy for each other.

- TAMIU Student Counseling Services (STC 128) <https://www.tamiu.edu/counseling/>
- SCAN: <https://www.scan-inc.org/>
- PILLAR: <https://www.pillarstrong.org/mental-health-services>
- City of Laredo Health Dept: <https://mentalhealthtx.org/facilities/city-of-laredo-health-department-city-of-laredo-health-department/>

**Attendance & Exam Policy:** Attendance is expected and class participation is worth 10% of your final grade. When rates of community transmission of COVID-19 are high, mask-wearing is encouraged regardless of vaccination status. Participation points are not awarded simply for showing up

– I expect verbal and written engagement in activities/ discussion during class time. I do not give make-up exams or quizzes except in cases of absences excused under university policy (e.g. religious holidays, death/illness in one’s immediate family, athletic travel, legal proceedings, mandatory interviews for jobs/internships). Absences for COVID-19 related reasons will be excused. Documentation for excused absences is required. If there is a personal or family emergency that may affect your attendance, please inform me as soon as possible. More than 6 unexcused absences will mean that students are subject to earning a failing grade. Students who miss work due to excused absences should contact me to make alternative arrangements for making up assignments. Powerpoints for my lectures will be posted before each class (depending on the format of some classes, there may not be a powerpoint). Students who miss a class should also try to get notes from a peer, as not everything covered in class will necessarily be on the slides (e.g. discussion).

**Communication/Office Hours:** My preferred method of communication is email (I prefer you use my TAMIU email – messages sent via Blackboard may take me longer to respond to.) I generally check email during business hours (8am-5pm), since like each of you, I have many other responsibilities in addition to this course. If you do not receive a response after 24 hours, feel free to follow up to make sure I received your message. Messages that include the course name/number and some description of the question/concern in the subject line are likely to receive more prompt attention. If at any time you are having difficulty with the material in this class, I encourage you to visit me during my office hours or set up a virtual appointment.

**Food and Housing Security:** When students face challenges securing adequate food or housing, learning can become more difficult. If you find yourself in this situation, one helpful resource is Dusty’s Food Pantry <https://www.tamui.edu/foodpantry/> . If you feel comfortable, please let me know about your situation and I will do what I can to connect you with other resources.

**Kid-Friendly Classes:** As a parent, I am aware of the challenges of balancing family and educational opportunities and responsibilities. I never want any of my students to feel like they must choose between the two. This classroom is open to students’ children when you have difficulty securing childcare (If your child is ill, please do not bring them to class. Your absence will be excused). Please bring something age appropriate for your child to do during class, and if you can, notify me ahead of time that they will join us. In this situation, I ask that you also sit near the door to avoid potential disruptions should you need to leave the room to attend to any of your child’s needs. Together we can help cultivate a fully inclusive classroom.

**A Note about the Reading:** Our readings are a mixture of textbook chapters and peer reviewed academic articles. Some of these research articles may be more difficult than others to digest. Don’t wait until the last minute to try to read them; give yourself adequate time. But also, do not worry if you do not understand every concept or idea mentioned in a particular article. If there are words that are unfamiliar, I recommend using the internet to find a definition or other description. During class we will work together to ensure we all have a working understanding of the main points of every reading so that you can be successful on the exams and other assignments

## Student Learning Outcomes

- Describe the main theoretical approaches for understanding domestic violence
- Compare and contrast the main methods used to study domestic violence
- Explain how race, class, gender, and sexuality impact the incidence and impact of domestic violence
- Apply structural and cultural approaches to concrete cases of domestic violence inside and outside the U.S.
- Evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of different prevention and punishment strategies related to domestic violence (e.g. victim services, criminal justice system, etc)

## Important Dates

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

## Textbooks

Group	Title	Author	ISBN
Required	Social Dynamics of Family Violence (3rd edition)	Hattery and Smith	978-1138326057

## Other Course Materials

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

## Grading Criteria

Grades will be calculated as indicated below. I do not round (e.g. an 89.9 is a B). Grades will not be changed except in the case of a computational error. If you are concerned about your grade, it's better to discuss it with me sooner rather than later.

I will accept late work until the last day of class, but any work submitted more than 3 days late will be subject to a minimum one letter grade deduction. No assignments will be accepted after the last day of class.

**Extra Credit:** I will announce extra credit opportunities throughout the semester via Blackboard. Typically, these opportunities will involve proof of attendance at a campus or community event (virtual or in-person, when applicable) and a short reflection on what you learned and how it relates to course content (1 page). No extra credit will be accepted after the last day of class.

**A Note About AI:** I am aware that there are now AI resources (like Chat GPT) that students sometimes turn to for assistance with writing assignments. I consider the use of these resources to generate text for any written work submitted for a grade in this course to be academic dishonesty. Work that is found to have an over 50% likelihood of AI use will receive a failing grade.

GRADE	PERCENTAGE
A	90-100
B	80-89.9
C	70-79.9
D	60-69.9
F	Below 60

## Assessment

Your learning in this class will be assessed as follows:

**15% Participation** (course attendance, verbal & written engagement): Participation points are earned not only by showing up to class, but by active engagement in class discussion, individual & group reflection activities. Some written reflection activities will take place during class and others will be asynchronous via Blackboard. All will count toward your participation grade.

**15% Quizzes.** There will be 6 quizzes in this class (your top 5 scores will count toward your grade). These are designed to help you stay on track with the reading and make sure you are understanding the material. Quiz dates are noted in the schedule below.

**40% Exams.** There will be two exams in this course, a midterm (October 2) and a final (December 6). Both will consist of a combination of multiple choice and short answer questions. A review sheet will be provided prior to each exam.

**30% Short essays (2):** Each essay should be 3-4 pages double-spaced and go beyond summarizing/ describing to incorporate your own original thoughts and perspectives on the question(s). Essays should be uploaded to Blackboard by midnight on the day they are due.

• **Essay #1:** Pick a recent newspaper article and/or radio/TV clip that discusses domestic violence and analyze its content (recent means anything from 2020 to the present). Your analytical focus may vary depending on the kind of news story you choose, but here are some potential questions to consider in your essay: How are victims/perpetrators portrayed? What theoretical perspectives on the causes of domestic violence do you see reflected in the article? What information about domestic violence is provided and what information is missing? Whose voices are included and whose voices are absent? Your essay should incorporate at least two concepts covered in class/readings. **(due 10/18)**

• **Essay #2:** Pick a current law or policy related to domestic violence, explain it, and analyze its advantages and disadvantages. You can choose a local, state or federal law/policy. When thinking about advantages/disadvantages, think about how the law/policy impacts victims and/or perpetrators, how it relates to the main causes of DV discussed in this class, what its unintended consequences are/might be, or anything else you think is relevant. Your essay should incorporate at least two concepts covered in class/readings. **(due 11/22)**

## Schedule of Topics and Assignments

Day	Date	Agenda/Topic	Reading(s)	Due
Mon	8/26	Intro to the Class		
Wed	8/28	Theoretical Foundations	Hattery and Smith, Chapter 1	
Fri	8/30	Historical Background	Hattery and Smith, Chapter 2	
Mon	9/2	Theories about DV	Hattery and Smith, Chapter 3	Quiz #1
Wed	9/4	Methods for Studying DV	Hattery and Smith, Chapter 4	
Fri	9/6	Current Events Forum	TBA	
Mon	9/9	Black women and DV	Richie, B. (2012). <i>The Problem of Male Violence against Black Women in Arrested Justice: Black Women, Violence and America's Prison Nation</i> (ebook).	
Wed	9/11	Latina women and DV	Vidales, G.T. (2010). <i>Arrested Justice: The Multifaceted Plight of Immigrant Latinas who Faced Domestic Violence</i> . <i>Journal of Family Violence</i> 25, 533–544.	Quiz #2
Fri	9/13	Asian women and DV	Ahmad-Stout, F., Nath, S. R., Khoury, N. M., & Huang, H. (2021). <i>Experiences of intimate partner violence: Findings from interviews with South Asian women in the United States</i> . <i>Journal of Interpersonal Violence</i> , 36(3-4), 1941-1964.	
Mon	9/16	Child Abuse	Hattery and Smith, Chapter 6	
Wed	9/18	Child Abuse	Hattery and Smith, Chapter 8	
Fri	9/20	Current Events Forum	TBA	Quiz #3
Mon	9/23	The Economy and IPV	Hattery and Smith, Chapter 9	
Wed	9/25	The Economy and IPV	Shoener, <i>The Price of Safety</i> Chapter 1 (ebook)	
Fri	9/27	The Economy and IPV	Shoener, <i>The Price of Safety</i> , Chapter 4 (ebook)	
Mon	9/30	Review for Exam #1	N/A	
Wed	10/2	Exam #1		Exam #1
Fri	10/4	Film (TBA)		
Mon	10/7	Cultural Factors and IPV	Hattery and Smith, Chapter 10	
Wed	10/9	Masculinities and IPV	Mullaney, Jamie L. (2007). <i>Telling it like a man: Masculinities and battering men's accounts of their violence</i> . <i>Men and Masculinities</i> 10:222-47	
Fri	10/11	Masculinities and IPV	Durfee, A. (2011). "I'm Not a Victim, She's an Abuser" <i>Masculinity, Victimization, and Protection Orders</i> . <i>Gender &amp; Society</i> , 25(3), 316-334	Quiz #4
Mon	10/14	Religion and IPV	Hattery and Smith, Chapter 11	
Wed	10/16	Religion and IPV	Gezinski, L. B., Gonzalez-Pons, K. M., & Rogers, M. M. (2019). "Praying does not stop his fist from hitting my face": religion and intimate partner violence from the perspective of survivors and service providers. <i>Journal of Family Issues</i> .	
Fri	10/18	Class does not meet - Dr. Neumann at a conference		Essay #1 Due
Mon	10/21	DV and Sexual Minority Groups	Hattery and Smith, Chapter 13	

Wed	10/23	Gay Men and IPV	Oliffe, J. L., Han, C., Maria, E. S., Lohan, M., Howard, T., Stewart, D. E., & MacMillan, H. (2014). Gay men and intimate partner violence: a gender analysis. <i>Sociology of Health &amp; Illness</i> , 36(4), 564–579.	
Fri	10/25	Lesbian, bi, and trans women and IPV	Hassouneh, Dena and Nancy Glass. (2008). "The Influence of Gender Role Stereotyping on Women's Experiences of Female Same-Sex Intimate Partner Violence." <i>Violence against Women</i> 14(3):310–25. Hereth, J. (2021). "Where is the Safe Haven?" <i>Transgender Women's Experiences of Victimization and Help-Seeking across the Life Course. Feminist criminology</i> , 16(4), 461-479.	
Mon	10/28	Battered Women's Shelters	Fauci, J. E., & Goodman, L. A. (2020). "You don't need nobody else knocking you down": Survivor-mothers' experiences of surveillance in domestic violence shelters. <i>Journal of family violence</i> , 35, 241-254.	Quiz #5
Wed	10/30	Provider Perspectives	Wachter, K., Cook Heffron, L., & Dalpe, J. (2022). "We weren't ready": Provider perspectives on addressing intimate partner violence among refugees and immigrants in the United States. <i>Journal of family violence</i> , 37(2), 235-246.	
Fri	11/1	Guest Speaker	Casa de Misericordia	
Mon	11/4	Policing and DV	Pattavina, A., Hirschel, D., Buzawa, E., Faggiani, D., & Bentley, H. (2007). A Comparison of the Police Response to Heterosexual Versus Same-Sex Intimate Partner Violence. <i>Violence Against Women</i> , 13(4), 374–394.	
Wed	11/6	Policing and DV	Garza, A. D., Franklin, C. A., & Goodson, A. (2022). Police response to Latina immigrant intimate partner violence victims: a qualitative analysis. <i>Journal of interpersonal violence</i> , 37(19-20), NP18784-NP18809.	
Fri	11/8	Guest speaker/ Current Events Forum	TBD	
Mon	11/11	DV and the Legal System	Khaw, L., Bermea, A. M., Hardesty, J. L., Saunders, D., & Whittaker, A. M. (2021). "The system had choked me too": Abused mothers' perceptions of the custody determination process that resulted in negative custody outcomes. <i>Journal of interpersonal violence</i> , 36(9-10), 4310-4334	
Wed	11/13	DV and the Legal System	Durfee, A. (2009). Victim Narratives, Legal Representation, and Domestic Violence Civil Protection Orders. <i>Feminist Criminology</i> , 4(1), 7–31.	Quiz #6
Fri	11/15	Guest Speaker / Current Events Forum	TBD	
Mon	11/18	Batter Intervention Programs	Schrock, D. P., & Padavic, I. (2007). Negotiating Hegemonic Masculinity in a Batterer Intervention Program. <i>Gender &amp; Society</i> , 21(5), 625–649.	
Wed	11/20	Restorative Justice	TBD	
Fri	11/22	Class does not meet		Essay #2 due

Mon	11/25	DV in Global Perspective	Menjívar, C., & Diossa-Jiménez, L. (2023). Blocking the law from within: familyism ideologies as obstacles to legal protections for women in El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua. <i>Latin American research review</i> , 58(3), 501-518.
Wed	11/27	No Class	
Fri	11/29	No Class	
Mon	12/2	Course Wrap-Up/Final Exam Review	
Wed	12/4	No Class	
Fri	12/6	Final Exam	Final Exam
Mon	12/9	No Class	
Wed	12/11	No Class	

## 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.tamiau.edu/scce/studenthandbook.shtml> (<https://www.tamiau.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](mailto: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](mailto: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.