



BIOL 2415 - Microbiology for Allied Health

Fall 2025 Syllabus, Section 101, CRN 16301

Instructor Information

Ruvini Pathirana

Assistant Professor of Microbiology

Email: ruvini.pathirana@tamiu.edu

Office: LBV 379C

Office Hours:

Office Hours:

Mon Wed 1000 AM – 1200 PM (may be subject to change with notification)

* Note that the office hours (student hours) are walk-ins. No appointments are needed to meet me during the designated student hours, and they are on a first-come, first-served basis.

I have an open-door policy, so feel free to stop by. If my door is closed, I am likely to be in another teaching session, meeting, or busy with research. You may have to return at another time.

If you need to meet outside the student hours, please email ruvini.pathirana@tamiu.edu to schedule an appointment.

=====

Office Phone: 956-326-2584

Times and Location

MWF 8:30am-9:25am in Academic Innovation Center 126

Course Description

Clinically oriented overview of basic medical microbiology. Topics discussed include cell structure and function, microbial growth and its control, immunology, and genetics. Carries no credit for biology majors. Lecture/laboratory. Laboratory fee applicable. Must be taken concurrently with BIOL 2015. Prerequisite: Consult School of Nursing.

Biology&Chemistry Department, College of Arts & Sciences

Additional Course Information

This course will serve as an introduction to the field of Microbiology for non-biology major students in Allied Health. Here, we primarily focus on the basic principles of microbiology and provide a clinically oriented overview of basic medical microbiology to prepare you for a career in the healthcare industry. During this course, we will discuss the diversity of the microbial world, basic microbial cell structure, growth and control, disease-causing microorganisms, how they infect humans, and how humans defend themselves against infections.

This course must be taken concurrently with its laboratory component, BIOL 2015: Microbiology Laboratory for Allied Health.

COURSE POLICY

"Honesty is the Best Policy"

It is not my intention to make your life difficult, but as the instructor for this course, I have high expectations for you to fulfill your dream of becoming a competent and compassionate nurse who provides person-centered care (to achieve nursing competency). Please read this section at least twice, as it contains answers to most of your FAQs. Feel free to reach out to me with any questions.

It is my intention that everyone in the class feels safe and prepared to participate fully. As a result, we will create classroom norms during our first class meeting.

This is a large class in which more than 240 students are registered (as of 8/22/25). Therefore, we might encounter challenges both in and out of the classroom. Your professional behavior in the classroom is highly valued. Please avoid unnecessary small talk with your peers during the lecture and pay respect to your classmates in and out of class.

The Blackboard discussion board is available to connect with your peers and instructor. I encourage you to make connections with peers for a shared learning experience. Be punctual for the classroom to get the most out of this. Please refer to the classroom behavior in the attached COAS policy and the TAMIU Student Handbook. Please let me know if you have any concerns regarding disturbing behaviors or discrimination issues in the classroom.

At TAMIU, we are dedicated to a fair and unbiased decision-making process that values mutual respect and personal accountability (TAMIU Office of Student Conduct and Community Engagement).

Refer to your Student Handbook (<https://www.tamtu.edu/handbook/>) for more information on the rights and responsibilities of all students enrolled at this institution.

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@tamtu.edu, 956.326.2857, or via the anonymous electronic reporting website, ReportIt, at www.tamtu.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.

ATTENDANCE:

TAMIU views class attendance as an individual student responsibility. Attendance is vital to understanding the materials and succeeding in the course, which is why active participation is graded. Class attendance/participation will be monitored through the Top Hat application anytime during the class, so punctuality is important. Being late to class may be counted as an absence, or you may lose points for participation. In other words, being late is NOT AN EXCUSE to override the course grading policy.

I understand that life events happen unexpectedly that might keep you from attending class. If you are absent for more than THREE lecture classes, you need to provide absence excuses (TAMIU Student Health Services or a doctor's note from a healthcare facility in the USA) within THREE days from your first absence day. If you are absent for more than THREE lecture classes, you will lose points for active participation, which will eventually affect your final grades.

* If anyone in the class gets caught cheating in attendance, the participation (including attendance) grade (10%) for the whole class will be nullified, and 10% will be added to your final exam grade.

LECTURE:

The lecture notes will be uploaded onto Blackboard prior to class. Attendance is highly recommended to receive supplementary printed materials, participate in pop-up quizzes, and receive any extra (bonus) point activities. All official correspondence occurs via Blackboard, and it is the student's responsibility to follow the Blackboard course and the Top Hat application to stay up to date with course announcements and activities.

Before each class:

* Students are encouraged to read the assigned textbook chapter and review prior class notes.

* Bring a printed copy of the lecture notes OR a composition book to write notes.

Taking good notes in class is an important part of academic success at the college level. Actively taking notes during class can help you focus and better understand the main concepts. Good note-taking will improve your active listening, comprehension of material, and retention. Taking notes on synchronous and asynchronous material will help you better remember what you hear and see.

* Be prepared to come at least 5 minutes early to prepare for the learning mode. Any announcements about exams, quizzes, and group assignments will be made at the beginning of the class and will not be repeated for tardy students.

* Active participation is expected in the classroom environment, and students may not record classroom lectures, discussions, and/or activities without the instructor's advanced written permission or via TAMIU Disability Services for Students (DSS). The recordings of the lectures may be available upon prior request (with a valid excuse for absence) via Echo360 on Blackboard.

LAB:

The laboratory component for this course is offered through *BIOL 2015: Microbiology Laboratory for Allied Health* course, and you **MUST** take it concurrently. To pass this course, you must pass the laboratory course, which accounts for 20% of the final grade. See the grading policy. Please refer to the BIOL 2015 laboratory syllabus or ask your laboratory instructor for more details.

QUIZZES:

When quizzes are given, they will be given during the first 15 minutes of the class OR online using the Blackboard platform. There will be 6 quizzes offered throughout the course. Only the four highest quiz scores out of 6 will account for the final grade, and the two lowest quiz scores will be dropped. There will be **no make-up quizzes**, and a grade of zero will be assigned for a missed quiz.

EXAMS:

There will be THREE class examinations and ONE final comprehensive examination. The exams will be either paper-based or online via Blackboard. Students will be informed which chapters/topics will be covered in each examination. The examination format will include multiple-choice questions, short written answer questions, and possibly an essay question for case studies. Students who are late for an examination will not be provided extra time to complete the examination.

Absences from an examination will only be allowed under special circumstances, and proper excuses must be provided. Excused absences include university-sanctioned activities, extreme illness, or other extenuating circumstances. If the absence is anticipated before the examination, an arrangement for a make-up examination is required. For other absences, the student must notify me ASAP and arrange a makeup examination. Suppose a student has not contacted me within THREE days after the missed examination (EXCEPT for the final comprehensive exam. WHY? see below). In that case, a grade of zero will be entered in the grade book for that particular examination.

FINAL COMPREHENSIVE EXAM: The final exam is scheduled towards the end of the semester. BIOL 2415's **Final exam will be on December 08, 2025**, and the TAMIU final exam period ends on the following day, so it is highly unlikely you will get a chance to do a makeup exam. Make sure you stay healthy and plan your schedule accordingly so that you do not miss your final exam.

Please refer to the Student Handbook for details: Appendix A. Attendance Rule for acceptable documents for excused absences (<https://www.tamtu.edu/handbook/article-13.shtml/>).

ONLINE CLASS ACTIVITIES:

We will be using online platforms like Top Hat, Blackboard, etc., for in-class activities, quizzes, and exams throughout the course. **You are required to bring your devices (laptop/ iPad/tablet, etc.) with good internet/Wi-Fi reception. It is your responsibility to maintain your device in good condition, and any technical defaults are NOT an excuse for a make-up quiz/exam/attendance, etc.** Please go to OIT to solve your technical issues and ask for additional support via OIT or the Computer labs.

For online exams, you must have BOTH Respondus Lockdown Monitor and Respondus Lockdown Browser together with your laptop/desktop/iPad equipped with a webcam.

* The materials I make available to you are my intellectual property. You are welcome to use the notes and recordings that I provide for your own personal use. Posting my lecture notes, slides, quizzes, exams, answer keys, or lecture recordings to ANY website outside of TAMIU without my written permission is a violation of the academic integrity code. This includes all note-sharing websites, including CourseHero, Studyblue.com, Google Docs, etc. **Any student caught sharing my intellectual property (lecture notes, slides, quizzes, exams, lecture recordings, etc.) will be charged with a breach of academic integrity.**

STUDENT HOURS:

Please see the top of page 1 for student (office) hours. I have an open-door policy, so you can stop by anytime. Meeting time can also be arranged by appointment in person, OR (under certain circumstances only) virtually on Blackboard in Virtual Meeting Space.

The second preferred contact method will be by email (at ruvini.pathirana@tamtu.edu).

*** Students must be aware that email communication does not replace face-to-face communication (i.e., meetings during office hours or by appointment). Students must plan their communication with the instructor accordingly and leave enough time to respond.

*** Students should not expect immediate responses around assignment due dates or exam dates. Failure to leave a reasonable amount of time for an instructor to reply constitutes a failure of the student's obligation. Students should be aware that faculty (professors, instructors, lecturers, etc.) receive a very high volume of emails daily. Faculty typically teach more than one course while involving other academic activities such as research and/or service.

*** All student emails will be answered within **THREE business days** of receiving the email. Send a courtesy reminder if you do not receive a response email after three days. Emails received over the weekend will be responded to on the following Monday or sooner if possible.

*** To help prioritize emails, include the course code and a short subject line in each email. Do not forget to mention your name (First and last name) and TAMU student number in the signature line.

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI) USE POLICY

There will be assignments that need substantial amount of idea generation and writing essay type answers. Writing is integral to thinking. It is also hard. Part of treating others with respect is giving appropriate credit for ideas and scholarly work. Therefore, the use of prompt-based generative tools like ChatGPT or CodePilot (and many more) **IS NOT PERMITTED** in this course to generate new content. All work you submit must be your own.

Why?

- I understand that learning to use AI responsibly and ethically is an important skill in today's society. However, improper, irresponsible, and unethical use of AI can have significant negative impacts on individuals, organizations, and society as a whole. This may end up unintentional violation of academic integrity and sanctions that may lead to a zero for the assignment to an F for the course.
- Beware that use of AI may also stifle your independent thinking and creativity. While we are on a learning curve as students or educators, we will use the opportunity to improve our analytical thinking and critical thinking through our own efforts to build up transferrable skills so we can prepare better for a professional career.
- You should also note that the material generated by these generative AI programs may be inaccurate, incomplete, incoherent, or otherwise problematic. This vulnerability in AI generative text is because it can inadvertently (or intentionally) perpetuate existing biases present in the data it is trained on. Although it may augment the human decision-making process, it is not a replacement.
- You are free to use spell check, grammar check, and synonym identification tools such as Grammarly, ProWritingAid, MS Word, etc. to enhance the clarity and readability of your writeup.
- In any case of suspicion, the instructor reserves the right to request an oral explanation of the write-up/answers and additional supportive assignments. In failure to do so will result a zero grade.

CELL PHONE USE:

Please mute cell phones or turn them off during lectures. As a courtesy to your instructor and fellow students, limit cell phone use to emergencies and, if needed, excuse yourself from the classroom. Under no circumstances should a cell phone be used during an examination.

CLASS HEALTHCARE POLICY:

To exploit the relevance of current microbiology education to nursing practice and the health and well-being of allied health professionals, this class also has a healthcare policy. During this course, you will learn the importance of basic hygienic practices to prevent infectious diseases like cold, flu, and COVID-19, as well as monkeypox in patient care. Significant restrictions are still in place after the COVID-19 pandemic, especially in healthcare places like hospitals, doctors' offices, or clinics, with the emergence of new virus variants during pandemics or small disease outbreaks such as subvariants of the SARS-CoV-2 virus or influenza.

Knowing what is happening around community health is very important for pre-nursing students like you as you prepare to enter a professional career in the healthcare industry. We will discuss a few case studies relevant to ongoing infectious disease outbreaks. In the USA, contagious diseases substantially affect health and healthcare resources. During the October 1, 2022, through April 30, 2023 influenza season, CDC preliminary data estimates that influenza was associated with at least 27 million flu illnesses, at least 12 million medical visits, at least 300,00 hospitalizations, and at least 19,000 deaths ([cdc.gov/flu](https://www.cdc.gov/flu)). Be aware of the ongoing outbreaks related to contagious or foodborne diseases as they are essential to maintaining your health and wellness AND ...more importantly, maybe a part of the assessment for this class.

This class also increases your awareness of mandatory hygienic practices for a healthcare worker. Continue to practice routine sanitary measures such as physical distancing and rigorous handwashing, and wear a mask if you are suspicious of having an incubating respiratory bug/infection. The best defense continues to be vaccination and boosters, and you will learn how it protects against targeted infections (SPECIFICITY) and boosts your immune system (MEMORY) under Immunology lectures. Please refer to the TAMU Office of Student Health for any timely health announcements or information to ensure the health and safety of the TAMU community.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:

As members of an academic community, students at Texas A&M International University (TAMU) are expected to exhibit a high level of honesty and integrity in their pursuit of higher education, be mature, self-directed, and able to manage their own affairs. Students unwilling to abide by these basic expectations will face academic and/or disciplinary sanctions.



As students preparing to enter a professional career (Nursing), your focus on professionalism helps you to prepare well ahead for the “real” world. This course aims to provide the foundations of nursing competency for you to become the best in your envisioned career. **Cheating, plagiarism, dishonesty, discrimination, or misbehavior in the classroom will be taken very seriously and reported to the higher authorities. Violation of the TAMIU student code of conduct (<https://www.tamtu.edu/handbook/article-06.shtml/>) can lead to sanctions and penalties.**

** Any changes to the syllabus or course information will be updated on Blackboard.

Student Learning Outcomes

1. Distinguish defining characteristics of microorganisms, including bacteria, viruses, fungi, and parasites.
2. Understand the mechanisms of host-pathogen interaction and transmission during an infection.
3. Describe the unique characteristics of disease-causing microorganisms and their pathogenesis mechanisms.
4. Explain how the human host defends itself against infection by using nonspecific and/or specific immune system responses.
5. Identify different agents and methods for controlling microbial growth and their targets.
6. Understand the mechanisms and pathogenesis of some common bacterial, viral, fungal, and parasitic infections.
7. Understand the value of knowing the etiology of infectious diseases to improve patient health as a nurse practitioner.
8. Gain skills in basic microbiological techniques and follow lab safety rules when working in a microbiological laboratory (See the lab component BIOL 2015).
9. **Acquire an interest in learning more about medical microbiology and apply the knowledge to your future career.**

Important Dates

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

Textbooks

Group	Title	Author	ISBN
Required	Strelkauskas' Microbiology: A Clinical Approach	Fahnert, B., and Lostroh, P.	978-1-003-19167-4

Other Course Materials

To go to the bookstore, **click here** (<https://www.bkstr.com/texasaminternationalstore/home/>).

REQUIRED SOFTWARE:

We will be using the Top Hat (www.tophat.com) application in the class. Direct access to Top Hat is available via Blackboard (see under *Content*). The university offers Top Hat as a FREE app, so no payment is required for this course for this semester.

You can “sign in” to class attendance and submit answers to in-class questions using Apple or Android smartphones and tablets, laptops, or through text messages.

Course Name: Microbiology for Allied Health (Fall 2025)

Join code : 553892

Grading Criteria

Grading Procedure: 80% Lecture (BIOL 2415) + 20% Lab (BIOL 2015)

Lecture (80%):

Assessment	Percent Contribution
Exam 1	12%
Exam 2	12 %
Exam 3	12 %



Final Comprehensive Exam	20 %
Quizzes	14 %
Active Participation	10 %

Participation is calculated based on student active engagement (which displays the learning process) in the classroom via in-class popup quizzes, assignments, discussions, commitment to learning, and professional behavior in and among classmates. In-class popup quizzes will be handled via Top Hat and be graded based on participation and correct answers.

Grading Scheme:

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

GRADES ARE NOT NEGOTIABLE.

Grading will be done according to a rubric transparently to assess your subject knowledge and skills. If you have any concerns about your class performance that could affect your grade, meet me in person to discuss study tips, time management strategies, and subject matters.

IMPORTANT: Grades will NOT be discussed through emails or phone requests. **All questions and concerns regarding your grades should be brought in person ON or BEFORE noon (12:00 PM) on November 26, 2025, the reading day.**

Schedule of Topics and Assignments

Day	Date	Agenda/Topic	Reading(s)	Due
Mon	8/25	Syllabus & Course Policy Introduction to Microbiology	Chapter 01	
Wed	8/27	Microbiology & Its Relevance to Health Care Biomolecules	Chapter 01 Chapter 02	
Fri	8/29	Host-Pathogen Relationship Pathogenicity & Virulence	Chapter 04	
Mon	9/1	Bacteria & The Host Cell	Chapter 04	Assignment 1
Wed	9/3	Requirements for Infection	Chapter 05	
Fri	9/5	Transmission of Infection and the Compromised Host Epidemiology	Chapter 06	
Mon	9/8	Principles of Diseases Emerging & Re-emerging Infectious Diseases	Chapter 07 Chapter 08	QUIZ 01
Wed	9/10	Bacterial Cell Structure	Chapter 09	
Fri	9/12	Bacterial Cell Structure (Contd.)	Chapter 09	
Mon	9/15	EXAM 1		EXAM 1
Wed	9/17	Bacterial Growth	Chapter 10	
Fri	9/19	The Structure & Infection Cycle of Viruses	Chapter 12	
Mon	9/22	Viral Infections	Chapter 13	
Wed	9/24	Parasitic Infections	Chapter 14	Assignment 2
Fri	9/26	Host Defense: The Innate Immune Responses	Chapter 15	QUIZ 02
Mon	9/29	Host Defense: The Innate Immune Responses_Contd.	Chapter 15	



Wed	10/1	Host Defense: The Adaptive Immune Responses	Chapter 16	
Fri	10/3	Host Defense: The Adaptive Immune Responses_Contd.	Chapter 16	Assignment 3
Mon	10/6	Immunological Memory and Vaccines	Chapter 16	
Wed	10/8	Failures of the Immune Responses	Chapter 17	QUIZ 03
Fri	10/10	Review of Immunology Topics	Chapter 15 Chapter 16 Chapter 17	
Mon	10/13	EXAM 2		EXAM 2
Wed	10/15	Control of Microbial Growth	Chapter 18	
Fri	10/17	Control of Microbial Growth_Contd.	Chapter 18	
Mon	10/20	Antimicrobial Drugs	Chapter 19	
Wed	10/22	Antibiotic Resistance	Chapter 20	
Fri	10/24	Diagnosing Infections	Chapter 6	QUIZ 04
Mon	10/27	Infections of the Respiratory System	Chapter 21	
Wed	10/29	Infections of the Respiratory System_Contd.	Chapter 21	
Fri	10/31	Infections of the Digestive System	Chapter 22	
Mon	11/3	Infections of the Digestive System-Contd.	Chapter 22	Assignment 4
Wed	11/5	Infections of the Genitourinary System	Chapter 23	QUIZ 05
Fri	11/7	Infections of the Genitourinary System-Contd	Chapter 23	
Mon	11/10	Infections of the Central Nervous System	Chapter 24	
Wed	11/12	Infections of the Central Nervous System-Contd.	Chapter 24	
Fri	11/14	Infections of the Blood & Lymph	Chapter 25	
Mon	11/17	Review Session		
Wed	11/19	EXAM 3	Chapter 25	EXAM 3
Fri	11/21	Infections of the Skin and Eyes	Chapter 26	Assignment 5
Mon	11/24	FINAL REVIEW_1		QUIZ 06
Wed	11/26	READING DAY (No Classes)		
Fri	11/28	THANKSGIVING HOLIDAYS [(Nov 28 - 30) University Closed]		
Mon	12/1	LAST CLASS DAY (FINAL REVIEW_2)		
Mon	12/8	FINAL EXAM		FINAL EXAM

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.tamtu.edu/scce/studenthandbook.shtml> (<https://www.tamtu.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 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.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.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, 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.