



PSCI 2305 - American National Government: American National Government (Sub I- May 19 to July 05)

Summer 2025 Syllabus, Section 680, CRN 52454

Instructor Information

Alfonso R. Vergaray
Assistant Professor
Email: alfonso.vergaray@tamiu.edu
Office: Online / Virtual
Office Hours:
By Appointment

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

On weekly journal assignments students have the option of using an LLM (e.g., ChatGPT, Google Gemini), or writing a reflective essay, to complete that assignment. Refer to blackboard for detailed instructions.

On exams and quizzes you are not permitted to use LLMs or any other type of AI assistance.

Be mindful that academic dishonesty, in any form, is never permitted. Carefully read the plagiarism section below.

Student Learning Outcomes

Ideally, at the conclusion of this course, you will be able to demonstrate a greater understanding of through objective exams and written essays:

- The interaction between politics and government.
- The structure and institutions of American government.
- The political process in the United States and other democratic societies.
- The role of individuals and civil society groups (such as political parties and interest groups) in influencing government behavior.
- Key events that shaped the rights and liberties of all American citizens.



Important Dates

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

Textbooks

Group	Title	Author	ISBN
	See Below		

Other Course Materials

Textbook

We are using a free on-line OpenStax textbook. Readings are available in weekly course modules on Blackboard.

Krutz, Glen, et al. 2021 American Government. Rice University (<https://openstax.org/details/books/american-government-3e/?Book%20details>) OpenStax. ISBN: 978-1-947172-65-4

There are audio versions of the chapter at the following link:

Click here for Open Audio (<https://openaudio.us/american-government-3e/>)

Respondus LockDown Browser (Free) and Monitor (\$15 fee) Requirement

This course requires using LockDown Browser for quizzes and Respondus Monitor (webcam) for online exams. The webcam can be built into your computer or can be the type that plugs in with a USB cable.

Watch this short video to get a basic understanding of what LockDown Browser and Respondus Monitor (the webcam feature) are. A student Quick Start Guide (PDF) is also available.

<https://www.tamiu.edu/distance/technology/respondus-ldb-and-monitor.shtml>

Grading Criteria

Assignment	Percentage
Exam 1 MC	20%
Final Exam MC & Essay	30%
Discussion Participation	30%

(highest 12 out of 13 discussions)

End-of-Chapter Quizzes	20%
------------------------	-----

(highest 12 out of 13 quizzes)

Total	100%
-------	------

GRADE	PERCENTAGE
A	91-100
B	80-90.9
C	70-79.9



D	60-69.9
F	Below 60

Additional

Preparation

Reading at the college-level requires you to:

Take notes (or highlight) the major points;

- Write down questions or concerns;
- Summarize important paragraphs or sections;
- Be sure to define all key terms [these are highlighted in the text, defined in the textbook's, margins and listed at the end of each chapter, plus also defined in the end-of-book glossary]
- There are also practice test/quiz questions at the end of each chapter. You should carefully review these before you attempt the chapter quiz.

Readings

Readings are assigned to supplement the "lectures," not to replace them. The online lectures add some new material, but are often intended to reinforce the readings or act as a review; this does not absolve students from reading the textbooks. You will be expected to integrate lecture and reading material on the exams in a thoughtful manner. If you are having trouble understanding the readings, please come talk to me in my office.

How does the course work?

If you are planning to take this course you must be self-motivated. Because there is no classroom to report to every other day it is all too easy to allow yourself to inadvertently fall behind and become discouraged. Therefore, you should set aside a weekly time when you can visit the course for at least a two-hour period as a part of your regular schedule.

1. Course Schedule / Assignments / Due Dates: Please refer to the Course Schedule / Assignments / Due Dates document in Blackboard often. It will show when [Module] Discussions are open for comment [they are required], when quizzes are open [2-day window], and when exams are open.

2. This course requires each student to log into the course's Blackboard site at least every other day, but you can do this at any time you wish at any hour of the day or night (except for the times when the university computer or the Blackboard is being worked on). Please remember (especially if you are a night person) that I may not actually be physically present when you log into the course!

3. You are expected to read the appropriate chapters in the textbook as you progress through the course. Read each chapter thoroughly and read each chapter a minimum of three times. Skim the chapter before you review each chapter's online presentation to get an idea about the subject matter about to be presented. Then after you have reviewed the online presentation read the chapter more seriously and thoroughly, taking notes or at least highlighting. Remember, that on exams you will be responsible for all the material in the chapter, even if the presentation does not cover all the chapter's material. Lastly, in preparation for the exam read the chapter(s) again

4. Chapter Discussion: Each student is required to post one discussion for each chapter, 13 total. In addition, each student is required to contribute one peer responses per chapter. That is, respond to one other students' initial discussion responses with additional comments. It is NOT enough to say "I agree," or "good comment." What should I contribute, you may be asking? Add your own reflections/criticisms/thoughts to the discussion, type out anything from a paragraph to a few paragraphs (this is all that's required – you may do more). Perhaps you read a similar article in another newspaper or magazine and want to tell the class how the information presented is different or the same. Perhaps you read an editorial of political commentary on the subject–tell



us about it. This also means that everyone should read all of the discussions, questions, comments, and responses. Discussions are a graded component of the online course. Each discussion is worth 100 points. Can you submit this work late? See the late policy below.

5. We Need Help! Discussion: This is a special “side” discussion located in every learning module where you may publicly ask questions about the course. This is public because it is likely that others who are, maybe, a bit more shy have the same question. However, if you have a private concern, use the Blackboard message function to ask your question. I will always try to respond within 36 hours [except most Sundays]. These are NOT graded.

6. We will have two exams during the course: one midpoint exam and a final exam. You will take these online.

7. The textbook contains a glossary of terms with definitions, please use it.

Expectations of the Course

Students are expected to:

- Review the “Start Here” materials, but especially this Syllabus.
- Participate and contribute to all the Discussions.
- Review and follow the Course Calendar.
- Log-in at least every other day.
- Respond to Discussions by the corresponding deadline.
 - o One initial discussion response to the prompt, plus two comments in response to other students’ discussion responses.
 - o Responses are not required on the Meet and Greet Discussion.
- Respond to Blackboard Message, if necessary, within 3 days.
- Take Quizzes and Exams by the corresponding deadlines.

The professor will:

- Log-in to the course at least every other day.
- Respond to Blackboard emails within two business days.
- Grade assignments within four days of the assignment deadline.

Academic Honesty

As a member in a community of scholars, students at Texas A&M International University are expected to exhibit honesty and integrity in their pursuit of higher education. Academic integrity is far too valuable for academic dishonesty to be tolerated. Therefore, if someone is unwilling to abide by this very basic expectation, this community of scholars is not a place in which he/she belongs. In its broadest sense, academic dishonesty is any act (completed or attempted) which gives an unfair advantage to the perpetrator. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to:

Plagiarism - Plagiarism is the act of passing off some other person’s ideas, words or works as one’s own.

Plagiarism is literary and intellectual theft.

Cheating - Cheating is an act of deception in which a student misrepresents that he/she has mastered information related to academic exercise.

Examples include:

Copying, without the professor’s authorization, from another student’s test, lab report, computer file, data listing, logs, or any other type of report or academic exercise.

Using unauthorized materials during a test.

Using, buying, selling, stealing, transporting, soliciting, copying or possessing (in whole or part), the contents of

1. An un-administered test,
2. A required assignment, or
3. A past test which has, by the professor, not been allowed to be kept by their students.

4. Taking a test for someone or permitting someone to take a test for you.

This also includes attending class for someone else or allowing someone to attend class for you other than short term situations such as illness and where the professor has been notified by the student of record of said short-term substitution.

Collusion

Collusion is unauthorized collaboration with another person or persons during a test or in the preparation of any type of written work in an academic exercise/setting. If a faculty member suspects a student has committed a breach of academic integrity, that faculty member will make a good faith effort to communicate with that student (in person, phone, e-mail or by letter) about their suspicion and allow the student the opportunity to respond. If after this discussion the faculty member still believes that a breach of academic dishonesty has occurred, the faculty member will prepare a written report to the department chair which will detail the circumstances and include a complete set of copies of the questionable test/paper/ assignment. The report may or may not include a recommended sanction. If, after review of the report, the department chair agrees with the faculty member, this is forwarded to the dean of the respective college and then to the Executive Director of Student Life for possible disciplinary sanctions. A student may not drop a class in which there is an unresolved question of academic dishonesty. Refer to the sections on the Student Conduct Code and Student Conduct Disciplinary Procedures.

Quizzes

There are 13 graded chapter/module quizzes in the course, one for each textbook chapter. These are a part of the grading/ evaluation process. All quizzes are open and available to complete on day one. You may take each quiz twice, if you wish [I do recommend this], and the higher grade will be applied.

Exams and Make-Ups

Your two exams this term will be multiple choice. These will be opened in the Blackboard course for one day. If you miss the deadline you have missed the exam and will earn a ZERO (0). They are timed. You have 2 hours for both exams.

Late Policy

Exams cannot be submitted late. Only in extreme circumstances will you be permitted to take an exam after it has been administered.

You can submit quizzes and discussions up to three days late. You can only receive as high as a 70% for late discussion and quiz submissions. No comments are given for late submissions. Remember, your lowest quiz and discussion grade will be dropped.

Grade Boost Opportunity (not required)

You have an opportunity to submit a reflection essay at the end of the semester, due on the day of the final exam date. Your essay should reflect on your experience taking online courses. For example, you might consider addressing the following questions: Is this the first online course you have taken? If so, did the experience meet your expectations? If this is not your first online course, how was it different or the same from previous online courses you have taken? How did ChatGpt and/or Google Gemini impact your experience? And so on. 1 – 2 pages. See the week 5 folder for the dropbox.

This assignment will only help your grade if you a point, or a few points, away from a higher grade. For example, if you have a 79 as your final grade, the grade boost assignment will be used to justify boosting your grade to an 80. If your final grade is a 72, on the other hand, the grade boost assignment will not help boosting your grade. Whether it helps at any other grade point will depend on the overall class grade distribution.

Syllabus Subject to Change

While information and assurances are provided in this course syllabus, it should be understood that content may change in keeping with new research and literature and that events beyond the control of the instructor could occur. Students will be informed via Blackboard of any substantive occurrences that will produce syllabus changes.



Closing Notes to Students

Please remember the following:

- I am always happy to meet with students to discuss their concerns about the course, by appointment. I will be available for most of the semester.
- Students are responsible for keeping track of their grades. The course Blackboard page allows you to check your grades within the course. Don't worry, you and the professor are the only ones who can see your grades. The Blackboard grade-book is sometimes confusing. Ask if in doubt. It often makes you think you are doing much worse [or occasionally much better] than you really are. If there are questions about grades or other problems, it is the student's responsibility to politely let the professor know of these.
- The procedures described in this syllabus are subject to change at the discretion of the instructor. Announcement in class or through the course's Blackboard page is considered sufficient notice
- There will be material on the tests that is not covered in online lectures but is in the textbook.
- It is essential that you read each text carefully and thoroughly. This is a college course and much reading is required. I recommend you read the textbook three times. Skim the assigned chapter before class, then read it thoroughly after class, and last read it again when studying for the exam.
- I want you to do well. Please work hard and read and reread the chapters.

Schedule of Topics and Assignments

Week of	Agenda/Topic	Reading(s)	Due
5/19	Introduction, Syllabus, Meet & Greet, Start	Chapter 1: Government and Democracy and Chapter 2: The Constitution	See Course Schedule / Assignments / Due Dates on Blackboard
5/26		Cont. Chapter 2, & Chapter 3: American Federalism	See Course Schedule / Assignments / Due Dates on Blackboard
6/2		Chapter 4: Rights & Freedoms and Chapter 5: Rights & Liberties	See Course Schedule / Assignments / Due Dates on Blackboard
6/9	Exam 1 on Tuesday, June 10th	Chapter 6: The Politics of Public Opinion & Political Socialization	See Course Schedule / Assignments / Due Dates on Blackboard
6/16		Chapter 7: Voting and Elections, Chapter 8: The Media, and Chapter 9: Political Parties	See Course Schedule / Assignments / Due Dates on Blackboard
6/23		Cont. Chapter 9, Chapter 10: Interest Groups & Lobbying, and Chapter 11: Congress	See Course Schedule / Assignments / Due Dates on Blackboard
6/30	Final Exam on Saturday, July 5th	Chapter 12: The Presidency and Chapter 13: The Courts	See Course Schedule / Assignments / Due Dates on Blackboard

Core Curriculum Learning Outcomes

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. **Social Responsibility (SR)** - intercultural competence, knowledge of civic responsibility, and the ability to engage effectively in regional, national, and global communities
4. **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.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.

TAMIU has penalties for plagiarism and cheating.

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

Use of Work in Two or More Courses

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

AI Policies

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

TAMIU E-Mail and SafeZone

Personal Announcements sent to students through TAMIU E-mail (tamiu.edu or dusty email) are the official means of communicating course and university business with students and faculty –not the U.S. Mail and no other e-mail addresses. Students and faculty must check their TAMIU e-mail accounts regularly, if not daily. Not having seen an important TAMIU e-mail or message from a faculty member, chair, or dean is not accepted as an excuse for failure to take important action.

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

Distance Education Courses

Course Communication Guidelines (Netiquette)

There are course expectations concerning etiquette or how we should treat each other online. We must consider these values as we communicate with one another. Visit **Instructional Technology and Distance Education Services' web page on Netiquette** (<http://www.tamiu.edu/distance/students/netiquette.shtml/>) for further instruction.

Accommodations/Accessibility Policy

Texas A&M International University seeks to provide reasonable accommodation 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 educational opportunity. It is the student's responsibility to register with the Director of Student Counseling and to contact the faculty member in a timely fashion to arrange for suitable accommodation. For more information, contact the online at **Office of Disability Services for Students (DSS)**, via phone at 956.326.3086 or by visiting the staff at the Student Center, room 118. A link to the Disabilities Services for Students site has also been included under the "Resources" tab inside the course.

Student Support Resources

The University wishes to have all students succeed in their courses. To provide support to our students, an array of services in the areas of technology support, academic support, student support, and accessibility support may be found at the University. For more information, visit the Instructional Technology and Distance Education Services page on **University Resources and Support Services**.



Computer/Technology Requirements

When participating in distance education courses, it is vital to consider the technology involved in order to have a successful course. Online students will need regular access to a personal computer that runs on a broadband Internet connection.

It is recommended that you meet the technical requirements listed on the Instructional Technology and Distance Education Services' webpage (<https://www.tamui.edu/distance/students/technology-requirements.shtml/>) when using the learning management system (LMS) of the University.

Additional Hardware. For this class, you will need the following additional hardware: Recently purchased laptops may have these built-in web cameras. If you do not have this equipment, it is recommended to purchase a stand-alone webcam, microphone, or a webcam with a built-in microphone from your local electronic store or any online store.

NOTE: Instructional Technology and Distance Education Services may check out available webcams to students on a first-come, first-served basis. To check out a webcam, please stop by Killam Library, Room 259, and request an available webcam.

Additional Software. You will need the following additional software: TAMIU Students may access online versions of this software through their Dusty Office 365 account at <https://dusty.tamui.edu/>. This site also provides students access to download the Microsoft suite for educational use. **See instructions for downloading the Microsoft Office suite.**

Note: Students, if you do not own the required hardware or software or do not have access to the Internet, it will be highly challenging for you to make any progress in this class. However, my goal is to assist you in finding solutions and guide you appropriately most of the required materials can either be found free of charge at TAMIU's library, classrooms, and available computer labs. **Visit Media Services' web page on the availability of on-campus computer labs.** In addition, you may also purchase any of these items at any electronic store.

Learning Management System (Blackboard)

Students are provided with an orientation (*eLearning (Blackboard) Student Orientation*) and access to guides on how to use the Blackboard LMS. Guides may be available at **Instructional Technology and Distance Education Services' Student eLearning Tutorial Videos page** or by contacting the eLearning team at elearning@tamui.edu.

Minimum Technical Skills Expected

When participating in distance education courses, it is vital to consider the technology involved in order to have a successful course. Students in distance education should have knowledge of basic computer and Internet skills, as mentioned on the **Instructional Technology and Distance Education Services' webpage**.

Technical Support Services

Because of the nature of distance education courses, the Office of Information Technology (OIT) computing and information services are vital to the success of online students. This webpage covers contact information for Distance Education Services (Blackboard Support), the OIT Help Desk, and E-mail support: **Technical Support Services**.

Grading Scale/Schema (after Grade Breakdown section)

In determining the final course grade, the following scale is used in percentage or point value.

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

The professor will:

- Log-in to the course at least every other day.
- Respond to Blackboard emails within two business days.
- Grade assignments within four days of the assignment deadline.

Evaluation

See Discussion Board Instructions on Blackboard for details regarding the criteria used to grade discussions. If you ever have a question about your grade, please reach out. I am happy to meet with you to discuss your grades and how to improve.



Late Work Policy

Exams cannot be submitted late. Only in extreme circumstances will you be permitted to take an exam after it has been administered.

You can submit quizzes and discussions up to three days late. You can only receive as high as a 70% for late discussion and quiz submissions. No comments are given for late submissions. That said, you can reach out to me for feedback. Remember, your lowest quiz and discussion grade will be dropped.

Course Evaluation

At the end of this course, students are encouraged to complete a course evaluation that will be distributed to them via email and through a course link.

Proctoring

Respondus LockDown Browser/Monitor is required.

Respondus LockDown Browser (Free) and Monitor (\$15 fee) Requirement

This course requires using LockDown Browser for quizzes and Respondus Monitor (webcam) for online exams. The webcam can be built into your computer or can be the type that plugs in with a USB cable.

Watch this short video to get a basic understanding of what LockDown Browser and Respondus Monitor (the webcam feature) are. A student Quick Start Guide (PDF) is also available.

<https://www.tamui.edu/distance/technology/respondus-ldb-and-monitor.shtml>

Accessibility and Privacy Statements on Course Technologies

At Texas A&M International University, we believe that all students should have equal technology opportunities in the classroom. These technologies/sites may also require user data, such as the creation of a username and password. You may find the accessibility and privacy policies of the technologies used in this class on the following pages: **Accessibility Statements and Privacy Statements**.

Syllabus Subject to Change

While information and assurances are provided in this course syllabus, it should be understood that content may change in keeping with new research and literature and that events beyond the control of the instructor could occur. Students will be informed of any substantive occurrences that will produce syllabus changes.