

# PSCI 2306 - American State Government: American State Government (Sub II- July 07 to Aug 22)

Summer 2025 Syllabus, Section 780, CRN 52262

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## Instructor Information

**James A Norris, PhD ACUE**

Associate Professor of Political Science

Email: jnorris@tamiu.edu

Office: AIC 335

Office Hours:

T, W, R 11:00 AM - 1:00 PM

Office Phone: 3262607

Use Blackboard message to get ahold of me (preferred)

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## Times and Location

Does Not Meet Face-to-Face

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## Course Description

Analysis of state and local government in the United States, with particular emphasis upon the State of Texas. History of state governments; state constitutions; the role of the individual pertaining to the rights and liberties in participation in government; political parties, pressure groups, and the franchised. The state legislature, the governor and state administration, state court system, county municipal organization, and current problems of local 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

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## Additional Course Information

### Preparation

**Reading the Textbook:** Students need to carefully read and analyze the assigned chapters. Please remember that for each hour in class, students are expected to spend 2-3 hours of study outside of class, and students need to read the assigned materials thoughtfully if they wish to do well in the course.

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. I will often lecture on the same material as the textbooks, but that 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?

You should set aside a weekly time when you can visit the course for at least an hour as a part of your regular schedule. At the beginning of the semester you will be assigned a user name and a password [your TAMIU student email account name and password]. You will need to keep these in a safe place, because they are required to log into the course in Blackboard.

1. The Calendar: Please refer to the course calendar in Blackboard often. It will show when [Module] Discussions are due [they are required], when quizzes are open, and when exams are open and due [12 hours on a single designated day window]
2. This course requires each student to log into the course's Blackboard site almost every 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 you will be responsible on exams for all the material in the chapter, even if the Blackboard presentation does not cover all the chapter's material. Lastly, in preparation for the exam read the chapter(s) again
4. Chapter Discussion: For every other chapter/module I will initiate a class discussion based upon a subject from the chapter. We will conduct these within the Blackboard Discussion Area. Each student is required to read the on-going discussion about every week, and each student is required to contribute to each and every discussion. In addition, each student is required to contribute 1 peer response. That is, respond to one other student's 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 comments to the discussion, type out anything from a few sentences to a paragraph (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 course. Each discussion is worth 1 point.
5. AI Policy: Students are allowed to utilize AI to do research and find information for their discussion posts and exam essays. You may not, however, use more than 20% of the information generated by AI in their responses. Turnitin can check for the proportion of AI content just as it does for plagiarism. Any response with more than 20% nonhuman content will not be accepted and given a zero.
6. You will also take part in an occasional discussion of 5 Texas political news items through the Blackboard Discussion Area. These also require you to respond to one other student's post.
7. We will have four exams during the course: three mid-term exams and a final exam. You will take these online. This means an exam every week after the first week! The exams have two parts: a multiple-choice part and a separate essay [but this is more of a take-home writing assignment].
8. The textbook contains a glossary of terms with definitions, please use it.
9. Link to online study aid from the book's publisher. (<https://edge.sagepub.com/collier6e>)

## Student Learning Outcomes

### Course Objectives

The purpose of this course is to provide students with a basic understanding of Texas government and politics. The Texas Constitution, the political system, governmental institutions, the electorate, and Texas in the federal system will be studied in depth. In addition, we will examine the interaction between the dominant Anglo culture and other important ethnic groups in the state. We will also discuss salient policy questions and contemporary concerns.

### Upon successful completion of this course, each student will:

1. Students will be able to identify and discuss the environmental and historical context of Texas politics and government.
2. Students will be able to discuss and interpret the foundations, development, and features of the Texas Constitution of 1876.
3. Students will be able to discuss and interpret how interest groups and political parties serve as institutions to connect people to Texas state government.
4. Students will be able to discuss and compare how political values, attitudes, and behaviors are learned, organized, and expressed.
5. Students will be able to classify and discuss the barriers to political participation, types of elections, and factors that affect election outcomes in the Texas political system.

6. Students will be able to classify, discuss, and compare the structure, functions, and operations of the major institutions of state government in Texas.

## Important Dates

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

## Textbooks

Group	Title	Author	ISBN
Required	Lone Star Politics: Tradition and Transformation in Texas, 8th Ed.	Ken Collier, Steven Galatas, and Julie Harrelson-Stephens	9781071875629

## Other Course Materials

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

### 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 weekday, MTWH.
- Respond to Discussions by the corresponding deadline.
  - One initial discussion response to the prompt, plus two comments in response to other students' discussion responses.
  - Responses are not required on the Meet and Greet Discussion nor for Texas News #5.
- 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 emails within **two business days**.
- Grade assignments within **six 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 unadministered 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. Generally, one for each textbook chapter. These are a part of the grading/ evaluation process. Quizzes will be open for two to three [2] days. This means you must log-on at least every day. For each quiz you have two chances. That is to say, that you may take each quiz twice, if you wish, and the higher grade will apply. Therefore, always take each quiz twice.

## Exams and Make-Ups

Exams will be multiple choice with one [separate] essay question. These will be opened in the Blackboard course for a limited time (12 hours). You MUST take the exam sometime during the designated twelve hour period. If you miss the deadline you have missed the exam and will earn a ZERO (0). The online exams are multiple choice with one Take home writing assignment [essay]. The multiple choice part is timed. You have 1 hour and 15 minutes for each mid-term exam and 2 hours for the final exam. The essay is not timed at all but it has a due-date and time. Exam make-ups are generally NOT allowed, but I will review each request for a make-up.

## Online Student Study Aid

<https://edge.sagepub.com/collier6e> This includes extra quizzes, eFlashcards, and videos. This reference is also linked in each chapter module.

## Grading Criteria

Your final grade in this course will be determined in the following manner:

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

## Discussion Grading Rubrics

All discussions are worth a maximum of 10 points. Grades may fall between the scores listed below.

**1 point:** Student comment is on subject and fully answers the discussion prompt with an example and/or mention of the significance or importance for the study of Texas government. Student has also commented on two other students' comments.

**0.8 points:** student comment is on subject and almost fully answers the discussion prompt, but may lack an example and/or mention of the significance or importance for the study of Texas government. Student has also commented on two other students' comments, or the student's post complies with the 5-point criteria, but the student only commented on one other student's post.

**0.6 points:** Student comment is on subject and answers the discussion prompt but incompletely and lacks an example and/or mention of the significance or importance for the study of Texas government. Student has also commented on one other student's comments. Or the student discussion post complies with the 1-point criteria, and the student did not comment on any other students' posts.

**0.4 points:** Student comment is on subject but incompletely and uses poor grammar and spelling. Student has not also commented on any other student' comments.

**0.2 points:** Student comment is present, but is off the subject or of extremely poor quality. Student has not also commented on any other student' comments.

**0 points:** No attempt to respond.

## Essay Exam Question Rubric

Exam essays should be at least 3 paragraphs, with an introduction, a body, and a conclusion.

**5 points:** Student correctly and thoroughly answer the essay prompt, provides an explanation of the significance for Texas state government and provides an example; and then explains. **The student cites at least two sources; one of these may be the textbook [or perhaps ought to be the textbook].**

**4 points:** Student correctly and thoroughly answer the essay prompt, provides an explanation of the significance for Texas state government and provides an example, but their explanation is not solid. The student cites at least one source, which may be the course textbook.

**3 points:** Student correctly answers the essay prompt, but does not provide an example and/or mention of the significance or importance for the study of Texas government. Or student does provide a valid example and/or mention of the significance or importance for the study of Texas government, but the essay response is incorrect. No references are cited.

**2 points:** Student makes a good faith effort, but more than ½ is missing. No references are cited.

**0 points:** No attempt or response is wholly incorrect.

## How Your Assignments Are Weighed in the Gradebook

ASSIGNMENT	VALUE
Exam 1MC	10%
Exam 1 Essay	5%
Exam 2MC	10%
Exam 2 Essay	5%
Exam 3MC	10%
Exam 3 Essay	5%
Final ExamMC	20%
Final Exam Essay	10%
Discussions	10%
Chapter Quizzes	18%
Lowest Quizzes Dropped	-3%
Total	100%

## Schedule of Topics and Assignments

Week of	Agenda/Topic	Reading(s)	Due
7/7	Course Introduction Texas Background Texas State Constitution and Federalism	Chapter 1 Chapter 1 Chapter 2	Quiz 1 and Discussion #1 Due July 9 at 11:59 pm Quiz 2 and Discussion #3 Due July 13 at 11:59 PM
7/14	Texas State Legislature Texas State Legislature continued Exam 1MC and Exam 1 Essay These are both Blackboard online assignments	Chapter 3 to page 87 Chapter 3 from page 87 to the end Covers Chapters 1 - 3	Quiz 3 and Texas News Discussion #1 Due July 16 at 11:59 PM Quiz 4 Due July 18 at 11:59 Pm No Discussion this time. Exam 1: Both parts due by 11:59 pm on July 20.



7/21	Texas Governor Texas Bureacracy Exam 2MC and Exam 2 Essay	Chapter 4 Chapter 5 Covers Chapters 4 & 5	Quiz 5B and Texas News Discussion #2 Due July 23 at 11:59 PM Quiz 6 Due July 25 at 11:59 PM No Discussion this time. Both parts of Exam 2 due by 11:59 pm July 27
7/28	Texas Judicial System Texas Style Justice	Chapter 6 Chapter 6	Quiz 7 and Texas News Discussion #3 Due by 11:59 PM on July 30 Quiz 8 and Discussion #9 Due at 11:59 Pm on August 3
8/4	Elections in Texas Elections in Texas continued Exam 3MC and Exam 3 Essay	Chapter 8 Chapter 8 Covers Chapters 6 & 8	Quiz 9 and Texas News Discussion #4 Due by 11:59 PM August 8 Both parts of Exam 3 are due by 11:59 PM August 10
8/11	Texas Political Parties Interest Groups	Chapter 9 Chapter 10	Quiz 10 Due bi 11:59 PM August 13 No Discussion this time. Quiz 11 and Discussion #12 Due by 11:59 PM August 17
8/18	Local Governments in Texas Fiscal Policy in Texas	Chapter 11 Chapter 12 Final Exam is on Friday 22 August	Quiz 12 Due by August 19 at 11:59 PM No Discussion this time. Quiz 13 Due by August 21 at 11:59 PM Both parts of Final Exam are due by11:59 pm on 22 August Texas News Discussion #5 (optional) Due by 11:59 Pm on August 22

## 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. **Empirical and Quantitative Skills (EQS)** - manipulation and analysis of numerical data or observable facts resulting in informed conclusions
4. **Teamwork (TW)** - ability to consider different points of view and to work effectively with others to support a shared purpose or goal
5. **Social Responsibility (SR)** - intercultural competence, knowledge of civic responsibility, and the ability to engage effectively in regional, national, and global communities
6. **Personal Responsibility (PR)** - ability to connect choices, actions and consequences to ethical decision-making

## University/College Policies

Please see the University Policies below.

### COVID-19 Related Policies

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

### Required Class Attendance

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

- Participation in an authorized University activity.
- Death or major illness in a student's immediate family.
- Illness of a dependent family member.
- Participation in legal proceedings or administrative procedures that require a student's presence.

- Religious holy day.
- Illness that is too severe or contagious for the student to attend class.
- Required participation in military duties.
- Mandatory admission interviews for professional or graduate school which cannot be rescheduled.

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

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

In the classroom, students are expected to listen attentively, participate respectfully, and adhere to established rules. Behavior that interferes with the class lecture may result in disciplinary action, ensuring a productive and respectful learning environment for everyone. Any disputes over academic matters should be addressed calmly and constructively, ideally during designated times such as office hours or after class. If a student does not agree with a decision, they can request a meeting with the instructor to discuss their concerns in more detail. Should further resolution be needed, the student may escalate the matter to the department head or use formal grievance procedures as outlined in the sections below. (please refer to Student Handbook Article 4 (<https://www.tamiau.edu/handbook/article-04.shtml>)).

## 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 Student Handbook (<https://www.tamiau.edu/handbook/index.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 SafeZone (<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 Disability Services for Students located in Student Center 124. 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 Office of Disability Services for Students.

For accommodations or assistance with disabilities, contact the Disability Coordinator, Karla Pedraza, at [karla.pedraza@tamiu.edu](mailto:karla.pedraza@tamiu.edu), call 956.326.2763, or visit Student Center 124.

## 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: [Student Handbook \(https://www.tamiu.edu/handbook/index.shtml\)](https://www.tamiu.edu/handbook/index.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. Students who experience or observe alleged or suspected discrimination due to their pregnant/parenting status, should report to 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, *Report It*, at <https://www.tamiu.edu/reportit> (<https://www.tamiu.edu/reportit/index.shtml>).

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 Compliance (Lorissa M. Cortez, [lorissam.cortez@tamiu.edu](mailto:lorissam.cortez@tamiu.edu)) can assist the student and professor in working out the reasonable accommodation. For other questions or concerns regarding Title IX compliance related to pregnant/parenting students, contact the Title IX Coordinator. In the event that a student needs 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 LOAs 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*.

For parenting-related rights, accommodations, and resources, contact the Parenting Liaison, Mayra Hernandez, at [mghernandez@tamiu.edu](mailto:mghernandez@tamiu.edu), call 956.326.2265, or visit Student Center 226.

For pregnancy-related rights, accommodations, and resources, contact the TIX Coordinator, Lorissa Cortez, at [lorissam.cortez@tamiu.edu](mailto:lorissam.cortez@tamiu.edu), call 956.326.2857, or visit Killam Library 159.

## 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@tamiu.edu](mailto:TitleIX@tamiu.edu), 956.326.2857, via the anonymous electronic reporting website, *ReportIt* (<https://www.tamiu.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

*[The ITALICIZED INFORMATION BELOW is where you are to ADD your course information. **Please don't forget to remove these instructions and all ITALICIZED content.**]*

### **Regular and Substantive Interaction (Note to Instructors):**

*The U.S. Department of Education (ED) has issued Regular and Substantive Interaction: Background, Concerns, and Guiding Principles which went into effect on July 1, 2021. Under the new regulations, the U.S. Department of Education requires that all online courses and programs for which students may use Title IV funds (federal financial aid) include regular and substantive interaction between students and their instructors. This ruling applies to both synchronous and asynchronous courses, with the primary focus being asynchronous courses. The Department of Education has the authority to audit courses and programs at institutions, like Texas A&M International University, with online offerings.*

*Be sure that your course provides for regular and substantive interaction between faculty and students, students and students, and students and content. (C-RAC, OSCQR, QM, SACSCOC, SC)*

- 1. Regular and substantive instructor-to-student expectations and predictable/scheduled interactions and feedback are present, appropriate for the course length and structure, and are easy to find. (OSCQR, SACSCOC, SC)*
- 2. Expectations for all course interactions (instructor to student, student to student, student to instructor) are clearly stated and modeled in all course interactions/communication channels. (OSCQR, SACSCOC, SC)*

**Be sure to add clear statements on your syllabi about these instructor-to-student expectations.**

Visit for additional guidance on including Regular and Substantive Interaction: <https://www.tamiu.edu/distance/faculty/regular-and-substantive-interaction.shtml>

## Online Courses and On-Campus Meetings

Texas Administrative Code (TAC), Title 19, Part 1, Chapter 2, Subchapter J, Section 2.202 ([https://texreg.sos.state.tx.us/public/readtac\\$ext.TacPage?sl=R&app=9&p\\_dir=&p\\_rloc=&p\\_tloc=&p\\_ploc=&pg=1&p\\_tac=&ti=19&pt=1&ch=2&rl=202](https://texreg.sos.state.tx.us/public/readtac$ext.TacPage?sl=R&app=9&p_dir=&p_rloc=&p_tloc=&p_ploc=&pg=1&p_tac=&ti=19&pt=1&ch=2&rl=202)), defines distance education as the formal educational

process that occurs when students and instructors are not in the same physical setting for the majority (more than 50%) of instruction. Distance education includes hybrid and 100% online courses and programs as defined by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB):

- **Hybrid Course** - A distance education course in which more than 50 percent but less than 100 percent of instructional activity takes place when the student(s) and instructor(s) are in separate physical locations.
- **100-Percent Online Course** - A distance education course in which 100 percent of instructional activity takes place when the student(s) and instructor(s) are in separate physical locations. **Requirements for on-campus or in-person orientation, testing, academic support services, internships/fieldwork, or other non-instructional activities do not exclude a course from this category.**

In this online course, be sure to confirm what in-person meetings may be required of you (if applicable).

## Course Structure

*[Description of how students should approach the course regularly. A description of course menu items and their contents may be found here. The description may also describe how students should approach the materials per lesson/module/week. It should include what type of materials students may encounter, the types of activities and assessments they may see, and other expectations from the students in each module. This section should help the student understand how to navigate the course.]*

## Student-Instructor Communication Policy and Response Time

### Announcements/Course Messages/Emails

*[The instructor must provide information on the type of communication that will be provided to students on a regular basis, including the frequency of this communication (such as "Announcements will be posted regularly on Mondays."). Also, information on the turnaround time for communication from course messages or emails sent to the instructor.]*

### Assignments and Assessments

*[The instructor must list the turnaround time for providing feedback to students on their submissions of an assignment or assessment. Expectations on how students will receive feedback should be listed for each type of assignment.]*

## 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.tamui.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

*[Technology requirements must be listed for the course. Information on how to obtain software for purchase or download should be provided. See the following example. Customize technologies to include those that pertain to your course:]*

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: *[list any additional required hardware here. Additionally, and if applicable, you may use the following statement:]* 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: *[list any additional software required here. Additionally, and if applicable, you may use the following statement:]* TAMIU Students may access online versions of this software through their Dusty Office 365 account at <https://dusty.tamtu.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@tamtu.edu](mailto:elearning@tamtu.edu).

## Minimum Technical Skills Expected

*[The description of the minimal technology skills is linked to OIT's statement of minimal skills. Faculty are required to update statements for additional technological skills from students.]*

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**.

## Web Conferences/Synchronous sessions

*[Instructors that host synchronous virtual meeting sessions should list details on how students will meet with the instructor in this section and whether these meetings are optional or required. Include the frequency of these meetings and a general explanation of the purpose for these sessions.]*

## Rubrics (may be included here and in the Syllabus and Overview in the course)

*[The inclusion of rubrics in the syllabus is usually up to the instructor. If rubrics are not included in the syllabus, this area should convey to students that rubrics are included in the course and will provide an understanding of how they will be assessed on the course's assignments.]*

## Late Work Policy

Instructors should include the policy stating what may or may not be acceptable for late assignments.

## 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.

## Turnitin Policy Or Other Types of Assignments in Other Systems

*[Instructor's policy on assignments held within the Turnitin system.]*

## Proctoring

*[Respondus LockDown Browser/Monitor OR Examity. Contact [elearning@tamtu.edu](mailto:elearning@tamtu.edu) for the syllabus statement and other information.]*

## Accessibility and Privacy Statements on Course Technologies

*[Information on the accessibility and privacy policies of all course technologies must be provided to the students. At TAMIU, the eLearning team has compiled a list of accessibility and privacy statement links on their website. Link to these pages and contact eLearning if any new technologies should be listed on their pages. See the following example. [Customize technologies](#) to include those that pertain to your course:]*

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**.

*In this class, we will utilize: [insert the technologies here].*