COMM 3322 - Public Relations

Fall 2026 Syllabus, Section 180, CRN 19496

Instructor Information

Di Mu
Assistant Professor
Email: di.mu@tamiu.edu
Office: AIC 363
Office Hours:
MW 4-6 pm (in-person or virtual) AND by appointment.
Office Phone: 956-326-2540
You're welcome to stop by during office hours- no appointment needed. You can also schedule an appointment with me using the link available in Blackboard. If you don't see a listed time that fits your schedule, please don't hesitate to email me, and we'll find a time that works.

Times and Location

Does Not Meet Face-to-Face

Course Description

An introduction to communication between corporations, smaller businesses, non-profit organizations and government and human service agencies and their internal and external publics with particular attention to the uses of media. The course simulates public relations and management situations using case studies.
Psychology & Communication Department, College of Arts & Sciences

Additional Course Information

My Commitment
I aim to create a learning environment that supports a range of thoughts, perspectives, and experiences. I also understand that broader challenges, such as economic disparity, public health issues, or personal well-being concerns, may impact the conditions necessary for you to succeed. My commitment is to be there for you and help you meet the learning objectives of this course. Please do not hesitate to come and talk with me if you have any questions or encounter any challenges.

I will generally respond to Blackboard messages and emails within 24 hours during the week, but please allow 48 hours for a reply. If the email is about an individual question, **please include COMM 3322 in the subject line**. If the email is about the group project, please include COMM 3322 and the group number in the subject line. You also need to copy all team members in your email or Blackboard messages. Additionally, you should check your Blackboard messages and emails regularly. I generally do not respond to messages or emails during the weekend, nor is it expected that you will respond over the weekend.

Course Structure
This is an online asynchronous course, which means we will not meet at a scheduled class time each week. However, asynchronous does not mean "wait until the last minute." The course is organized on a weekly schedule, and you are expected to stay engaged with the readings, videos, activities, discussions, quizzes, and assignments throughout the semester.

Each week, you will work through assigned materials in Sage Vantage, an interactive learning platform. Vantage houses all of our textbook content, reading activities, and chapter quizzes. For details on how to register and access the platform, please check the "Let's Get Started" module on Blackboard.

In addition, I will post a short weekly mini-lecture video on Blackboard to highlight key ideas for the week and share additional context and examples that may go beyond the textbook. Please note that the content covered in these videos may also appear on exams.

Please also note that our readings may not always follow the textbook's chapter order. To make sure you are completing the correct readings each week, please refer to the detailed course schedule in this syllabus and the weekly modules on Blackboard.

To keep things simple and predictable, we will follow the same schedule every week: our week starts on Monday, and all of your weekly readings, Vantage activities, quizzes, and discussion posts are **due by Sunday at 11:59 p.m.**

Weekly Routine (Due Sundays)

- Over the course of 12 lecture weeks, we will cover 14 chapters. During Weeks 1 and 2, we will cover two chapters per week. For the rest of the semester, we will focus on one chapter per week.
- Weekly Vantage Activities: Each week, there will be one required Vantage activity, which will be linked in the weekly Blackboard module and graded for completion. You will also see additional interactive activities in Vantage. These are optional, but I strongly encourage you to try them. They can be very helpful for reviewing key concepts, checking your understanding, and reflecting on what you are learning (my personal favorite is the critical thinking checks).
- Chapter Quizzes: At the end of each chapter, you will complete a 15-question quiz built directly into Vantage.

Discussions, Exams, and Projects

- We will have six graded discussions throughout the semester. Your initial discussion posts will be due on Sundays, and your peer responses will be due by Wednesday of the following week, giving you a few days to read and respond thoughtfully to your classmates' posts.
- We will also have a Midterm Exam on the Monday of Week 7 (Oct 5), and a Final Exam on the Monday of Week 15 (Nov 30).
- Finally, we have two major milestones: a Midterm Project and a Final Project. In the PR industry, teamwork is key, so both of these projects will be completed in groups. All other assignments in the course are individual work.

Student Hours (Office Hours)
When: Mondays & Wednesdays, 4 p.m. - 6 p.m.
Where: In-person in my office (AIC 363) or virtually via Teams [link here (https://teams.microsoft.com/meet/231914109237434?p=mtY6yA0lCk5nmSPmmJ)]

While you might traditionally know these as "office hours," I prefer to call them Student Hours because this time is reserved entirely for you! I am here to support you as you succeed in this course and work toward your academic and professional goals.

You are welcome to use Student Hours for any questions related to the course, including course materials, assignments, discussion posts, project directions, exams, or feedback on your work. You can also come by to talk about your interests in public relations, career questions, graduate school, research, or anything else you would like guidance on.

During Student Hours, I will usually be physically present on campus in my office. If you are on campus, please feel free to drop by- no appointment is needed.

If you prefer to reserve a specific time, you are also welcome to book an appointment with me using this link: [link here (https://bit.ly/3UyAmas)]. You may also email me to schedule a meeting. I am happy to meet either in person, virtually, or over a phone call. Please indicate your preferred meeting format when booking the appointment.

If the scheduled Student Hours do not work for you, don't worry. Please send me an email or Blackboard message, and we will find another time that works for both of us.

Student Expectations
I have high expectations for your performance and success in this class. I know many of you are concerned about your GPAs, but I encourage you to focus more on the material you are learning rather than on the grades you are earning. This learning-centered approach to class material will likely increase your grades in this course. Additionally, adhering to the following reading, writing, and research expectations will enhance your success in this course.

Reading Expectations. Please complete the assigned chapters and weekly activities by the stated deadlines. Each week, I will also post a short video that highlights the main topics for the week and provides additional context or information beyond the textbook.

In this online course, the readings and weekly videos provide the foundation for our activities, discussions, quizzes, and assignments. Staying on track with both will help you understand the course material, participate meaningfully in online discussions, and complete your work successfully.

Please note that our readings may not always follow the textbook chapter order. Be sure to refer to the detailed course schedule in this syllabus for the assigned readings each week. You can also find the corresponding links to each chapter in the weekly modules on Blackboard.

Weekly videos will be posted on Monday, and the assigned readings and activities should be completed by the end of Sunday each week.

Writing Expectations. Writing quality is part of effective communication. I expect your writing to be clear, organized, and easy to follow, and frequent errors may affect your grade. Please take time to proofread your work for spelling, grammar, and punctuation before submitting it. These details help make sure your ideas come through clearly and accurately.

Research Expectations. Please remember that websites (and AI-generated content) often contain errors. Some of the most incisive and important information can only be found in books and academic journals. It is recommended that you visit https://www.tamiu.edu/library/ to find out more information about how to utilize the resources available to you.

Late Work Policy
Students are expected to submit all assignments by the posted deadlines. Meeting deadlines is an important part of professional communication and public relations work, so please plan ahead and keep track of due dates.

Late assignments will receive a **10% deduction per day** after the deadline. **Work submitted more than 7 days past the deadline will not be accepted**. If you experience an emergency or serious situation that may affect your ability to submit work on time, please contact me as soon as possible.

Academic Integrity and AI Use
In this course, you are encouraged to explore the use of artificial intelligence (AI) tools, such as ChatGPT for brainstorming and research ideas, and Grammarly for grammar support. However, the use of these tools must follow principles of academic integrity and responsible scholarship.

Why this matters:

- AI-generated content may not be considered original work. Because AI models are trained on existing texts without citing their sources, turning in AI-generated work without acknowledgment is considered automated plagiarism.
- AI can be wrong, misleading, or incomplete. Students are responsible for fact-checking and ensuring their work meets academic standards.
- AI tools contain built-in biases that reflect the data they were trained on. Always use critical thinking and supplement AI-generated content with scholarly sources.

Ultimately, your assignments must demonstrate your own learning, analysis, and voice. AI should supplement, not replace, your original contributions.

Please Do:

- Be transparent about how you used AI tools, clearly indicating what work is your original contribution.
- Appropriately acknowledge and cite any use of generative AI tools following APA Style guidelines (https://apastyle.apa.org/blog/how-to-cite-chatgpt), including specifying the version of the tool used. For example: OpenAI. (2026). "[insert your prompt]" ChatGPT (GPT-5) [Large language model]. https://chat.openai.com/ (See the example at the bottom of this section.)
- Failure to provide proper attribution will be treated as plagiarism.

Please DON'T:

- Use AI-based tools for exams.
- Use AI-based tools to cheat on assessments.
- Submit AI-generated work as your own without acknowledgment (this is considered plagiarism).
- Share AI-generated work in ways that misrepresent authorship or violate copyright and intellectual property rights.

Please also note: You may find AI tools useful during the writing process. However, relying solely on AI may limit your independent thinking, creativity, and learning.

If you choose to use AI for an assignment or project, please use it thoughtfully and sparingly. You must cite your use of AI in the assignment and clearly identify the specific parts of the work that were created or revised with AI assistance. Your final submission should always reflect your own academic voice.

OpenAI. (2025, August 22). " Please write a syllabus policy regarding the academic integrity of students using generative AI-based tools." ChatGPT (GPT-5) [Large language model]. https://chat.openai.com/

Note: This part of the syllabus was generated by ChatGPT using the prompt above, modified by the instructor to improve structure and include course-specific details (dos and don'ts), and checked for grammar using ChatGPT.

Grade Discussions
I do not discuss grades or any student record issues via email or Blackboard messages. Please schedule a meeting with me to discuss these matters. If necessary, I may ask you to submit a written petition along with your work in question. The classroom is typically not an appropriate place for these discussions.

Important Dates
First Class Day: Monday, Aug 24
Last Day to Drop Without Record (12th class day): Wednesday, Sep 9
Midterm Exam: Monday, Oct 5
Last Day to Drop or Withdraw: Thursday, Nov 19
Thanksgiving Break: Nov 26-28
Last Class Day: Tuesday, Dec 1
Final Exam: Monday, Nov 30

Program Learning Outcomes

1. **Critical Thinking**: Graduates will develop critical thinking skills to evaluate theories and approaches to selected media and communication problems.
2. **Analytical Inquiry**: Graduates of the program will be able to explore appropriate data, tools, or techniques to draw informed, evidence-based conclusions within communication fields.
3. **Communicative Fluency**: Graduates of the program will be able to communicate effectively and with high fluency in oral, written, and mediated professional contexts.
4. **Applied and Collaborative Learning**: Graduates of the program will be able to collaborate effectively in teams and integrate communication knowledge with practical experiences to address community or industry communication needs.

Student Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

- Understand and explain the fundamental principles and concepts of public relations as a profession.
- Describe the functions and roles of public relations practitioners across various types of organizations.
- Identify and explain the ethical and legal principles that guide professional public relations practice.
- Identify and analyze emerging trends and issues shaping the field of public relations.
- Develop a strategic thinking mindset to identify communication problems and propose appropriate public relations solutions.

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
Required	Sage Vantage: Introduction to Public Relations: Strategic, Digital, and Socially Responsible Communication	Janis Teruggi Page & Lawrence J. Parnell	9781071969922

Other Course Materials

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

Additional readings and mini-lecture videos will be posted on Blackboard.

Grading Criteria

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

Assignments and Points

INDIVIDUAL GRADES (74% of final grade)
Chapter Quizzes (12% of final grade)

Students will complete one short quiz for each textbook chapter through the Sage Vantage online platform . There are 14 quizzes total, and each quiz includes questions based on the assigned textbook content. Each quiz is worth 10 points. The lowest two quiz grades will be dropped at the end of the semester, so only the best 12 quiz scores will count toward the final grade.

Information about Sage Vantage is available in the "Let's Get Started" Blackboard module.

Vantage Activities (6% of final grade)

Each week, you will complete required Vantage Activities connected to the assigned textbook chapter(s). These activities are designed to support your reading and help you understand key concepts. The required Vantage Activity for each week is worth approximately 5 points and should be completed in Sage Vantage as you work through the chapter(s). Links to the required activities will also be available in the corresponding weekly Blackboard modules.

Additional interactive activities in Vantage are optional but highly recommended. They are useful for reviewing key concepts, checking your understanding, and reflecting on what you are learning.

Due dates are listed in both Sage Vantage and Blackboard. Please check both platforms regularly and plan ahead to complete your work on time.

Discussions (36% of final grade)

Students will complete six graded discussion assignments throughout the semester. These discussions are designed to help you apply course concepts, analyze real-world examples, and engage with your peers. Each discussion is worth 60 points (50 for the initial post, 10 for two peer responses).

Peer responses are a key part of the learning process. To receive full credit, they must be substantive and contribute meaningfully to the conversation. They are due three days after the initial post deadline.

Exams (20% of final grade)

Students will complete a Midterm Exam (Oct 5) and a Final Exam (Nov 30). Each exam is worth 100 points and may include a mix of T/F, multiple-choice, and short-answer questions. Exams will be timed, but they will be open-book and open-note. While you may use your textbook, notes, and all course materials, you may NOT consult with classmates, other people, or AI tools while taking the exam.

Group Grades (26% of final grade)
Midterm Project (13% of final grade)

For the Midterm Project, students will work in groups to complete a PR analysis of either a traditional media source or a social media/influencer account. Groups will examine the source's audience, content, tone, and influence to identify potential PR opportunities. The goal of this project is to understand how PR professionals evaluate media channels to develop targeted strategies. This project is worth 130 points.

Final Project (13% of final grade)

For the Final Project, students will work in groups to analyze a recent PR event. Groups will examine how the situation was communicated by the organization, covered by different media outlets, and discussed on social media. The goal of this project is to help you apply what you have learned from the course content and resources to analyze a complex, real-world PR scenario. This project is worth 130 points.

A Note on Group Work & Peer Evaluations

Group work is designed to help you practice and develop essential skills in collaboration, communication, and project management used in real PR settings. Because teamwork is part of the learning process, everyone is expected to contribute meaningfully and professionally.

While projects are submitted as a team, your final grade is based on your individual contribution. This will be assessed through a confidential peer evaluation survey you will complete after each project. To receive the full group grade, you must maintain an average peer rating of at least 70%. Further details will be provided in the project instructions.

ASSIGNMENT	POINTS
Individual Grades	
Chapter Quizzes (12)	120
Vantage Activities (12)	60
Discussions (6)	360
Exams (2)	200
Group Grades	
Midterm Project	130
Final Project	130
TOTAL	1000

Schedule of Topics and Assignments*

Week of	Agenda/Topic	Reading(s)	Due
8/24	## PART I: Foundations and Core Toolkit ## Public Relations Overview & History	Syllabus & Course Schedule Chs. 1-2	Chapter 1 Quiz & Chapter 2 Quiz + Vantage Activities Discussion 1 – Welcome
8/31	Ethics and Law; Corporate Social Responsibility	Chs. 3-4 Supplementary Reading: PRSA Code of Ethics	Chapter 3 Quiz & Chapter 4 Quiz + Vantage Activities
9/7	Research and Theory	Ch. 5	Chapter 5 Quiz + Vantage Activities Discussion 2 – PR Theory in Everyday Life
9/14	Strategic Thinking and Strategic Communication	Ch. 6	Chapter 6 Quiz + Vantage Activities
9/21	Traditional PR Tactics; Media Relations	Ch. 9	Chapter 9 Quiz + Vantage Activities Discussion 3 – PR Agency Spotlight
9/28	New PR Tactics; Digital and Social Media	Ch. 8	Chapter 8 Quiz + Vantage Activities
10/5	Midterm Exam (Monday, 10/05) Midterm Project (Sunday, 10/11)		Midterm Exam (10/05) Midterm Project (10/11)
10/12	## PART II: Public Relations in Practice ## PR Writing	Ch. 7	Chapter 7 Quiz + Vantage Activities
10/19	Corporate Communication and Reputation Management	Ch. 11	Chapter 11 Quiz + Vantage Activities Discussion 4 – PR Case Analysis
10/26	Internal PR; Employee Relations	Ch. 10	Chapter 10 Quiz + Vantage Activities
11/2	Crisis Communication	Ch. 12	Chapter 12 Quiz + Vantage Activities Discussion 5 – The Court of Social Media
11/9	Nonprofit and Health Communication	Ch. 13	Chapter 13 Quiz + Vantage Activities
11/16	Public Affairs and Political Communications	Ch. 14	Chapter 14 Quiz + Vantage Activities Discussion 6 – Career Opportunity Analysis
11/23	Integrated Marketing Communication HAPPY THANKSGIVING!	Supplemental readings on Blackboard	
11/30	Final Exam (Monday, 11/30) Final Project (Friday, 12/04)		Final Exam (11/30) Final Project (12/04)
12/7	*Course schedule subject to change		

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.tamiu.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.tamiu.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, 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)).

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, 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) 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, 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, 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, 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

Course Structure

This is an online asynchronous course, which means we will not meet at a scheduled class time each week. However, asynchronous does not mean "wait until the last minute." The course is organized on a weekly schedule, and you are expected to stay engaged with the readings, videos, activities, discussions, quizzes, and assignments throughout the semester.

Each week, you will work through assigned materials in Sage Vantage, an interactive learning platform. Vantage houses all of our textbook content, reading activities, and chapter quizzes. For details on how to register and access the platform, please check the "Let's Get Started" module on Blackboard.

In addition, I will post a short weekly mini-lecture video on Blackboard to highlight key ideas for the week and share additional context and examples that may go beyond the textbook. Please note that the content covered in these videos may also appear on exams.

Please also note that our readings may not always follow the textbook's chapter order. To make sure you are completing the correct readings each week, please refer to the detailed course schedule in this syllabus and the weekly modules on Blackboard.

To keep things simple and predictable, we will follow the same schedule every week: our week starts on Monday, and all of your weekly readings, Vantage activities, quizzes, and discussion posts are due by Sunday at 11:59 p.m.

Weekly Routine (Due Sundays)

- Over the course of 12 lecture weeks, we will cover 14 chapters. During Weeks 1 and 2, we will cover two chapters per week. For the rest of the semester, we will focus on one chapter per week.
- Weekly Vantage Activities: Each week, there will be one required Vantage activity, which will be linked in the weekly Blackboard module and graded for completion. You will also see additional interactive activities in Vantage. These are optional, but I strongly encourage you to try them. They can be very helpful for reviewing key concepts, checking your understanding, and reflecting on what you are learning (my personal favorite is the critical thinking checks).
- Chapter Quizzes: At the end of each chapter, you will complete a 15-question quiz built directly into Vantage.

Discussions, Exams, and Projects

- We will have six graded discussions throughout the semester. Your initial discussion posts will be due on Sundays, and your peer responses will be due by Wednesday of the following week, giving you a few days to read and respond thoughtfully to your classmates' posts.
- We will also have a Midterm Exam on the Monday of Week 7 (Oct 5), and a Final Exam on the Monday of Week 15 (Nov 30).
- Finally, we have two major milestones: a Midterm Project and a Final Project. In the PR industry, teamwork is key, so both of these projects will be completed in groups. All other assignments in the course are individual work.

Student-Instructor Communication Policy and Response Time

Announcements/Course Messages/Emails

All the communication will be though Blackboard announcement and university emails. Announcements will be posted regularly on Mondays. If you have any questions or encounter any challenges, please do not hesitate to reach out. I will generally respond to Blackboard messages and emails within 24 hours during the week, but please allow 48 hours for a reply. If the email is about an individual question, please include COMM 3322 in the subject line. If the email is about the group project, please include COMM 3322 and the group number in the subject line. You also need to copy all team members in your email or Blackboard messages. Additionally, you should check your Blackboard messages and emails regularly. I generally do not respond to messages or emails during the weekend, nor is it expected that you will respond over the weekend.

Assignments and Assessments

Grades and feedback will typically be provided within one week after assignments are due. For projects or more complex assignments, please allow up to two weeks after submission. Feedback will be provided through written comments and assignment rubrics on Blackboard. Students are expected to review their grades and feedback regularly and use the feedback to improve future work.

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.tamiu.edu/distance/students/technology-requirements.shtml) when using the learning management system (LMS) of the University.

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. TAMIU Students may access online versions of this software through their Dusty Office 365 account at **https://dusty.tamiu.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@tamiu.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**.

Late Work Policy

Students are expected to submit all assignments by the posted deadlines. Meeting deadlines is an important part of professional communication and public relations work, so please plan ahead and keep track of due dates.

Late assignments will receive a 10% deduction per day after the deadline. Work submitted more than 7 days past the deadline will not be accepted. If you experience an emergency or serious situation that may affect your ability to submit work on time, please contact me as soon as possible.

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.

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**.