



CRIJ 1301 - Intro to Criminal Justice

Fall 2026 Syllabus, Section 181, CRN 17977

Instructor Information

Flor Mayela Hernandez, MS/MLS

Email: flor.hernandez@tamiu.edu

Office: PLG 204G

Office Hours:

Tuesdays/Thursdays 9:30 AM - 11:30 AM by appointment only

Office Phone: 956-326-2667

Virtual appointments available upon request.

Times and Location

Does Not Meet Face-to-Face

Course Description

An overview of the criminal justice system, with a focus on decision points and administrative practices in police, criminal court, and correctional bureaucracies. The historical evolution of criminal justice agencies is covered along with basic criminal procedures.

Social Sciences Department, College of Arts & Sciences

Student Learning Outcomes

- 1). Describe the significant historical developments of the American criminal justice system.
- 2). Explain the stages of the criminal justice process, including arrest, prosecution, sentencing, and correctional practices
- 3). Identify and explain the roles and responsibilities of key courtroom actors, including judges, prosecutors, defense attorneys, and juries.
- 4). Identify special populations within the American correctional system and describe the challenges associated with managing these populations.

Important Dates

Visit the Academic Calendar ([tamiu.edu](https://www.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 Criminal Justice: Practice and Process	Peak	9781071890899



Other Course Materials

Textbook

- Peak, K.J., & Herold, T.D. (2024). Introduction to Criminal Justice: Practice and Process (5th ed.). Los Angeles, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc.
- Obtaining a hard copy of the course textbook is optional, but highly recommended.

Other Resources

SAGE Vantage online subscription. [Required]

Required films:

- Bailey, S. (Producer) & Affleck, B. (Director). (2007). Gone baby gone. [Motion Picture]. USA: Miramax Films.
- Hoblit, G. (1996). Primal Fear. [Motion Picture]. Paramount Pictures.

The films are necessary to complete writing assignments. Both films are made available by the instructor.

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

Course Structure

- This course is an online course accessed via Blackboard. It is very important that you log into your Blackboard at least once a day in order to be up to speed with the course. If you ever encounter issues with your Blackboard connection, contact TAMU's instructional technology and distance education services at <https://www.tamtu.edu/distance/> or at 956-326-2792.
- Each week our course will consist of a learning module. Modules (weekly folders) open every Monday at 5 AM and remain open for the remainder of the semester. Each module will include the chapter's learning objectives, tasks (with due dates) and any other resource needed to successfully complete the module. A breakdown of the discussions, assignments, and other activities is available under the grading and evaluation section below.
- **Course modules** consist of a variety of online activities that include discussion boards, chapter assignments, textbook activities, and writing assignments. Students are encouraged to participate in the weekly virtual sessions. Session time and day will be posted under the week one folder. Recordings of the virtual sessions are available under the Virtual Meeting Space link. Students are highly encouraged to ask questions, respond to classmates, and utilize all the tools made available to them so that their online experience can be as beneficial as possible. With that said, I expect all students to respect their classmates and instructor as we exchange ideas and opinions even when disagreement exists.
- **Discussions** are assigned and completed via the Blackboard Discussion Forums. The discussion topics derive from chapter readings and/or from supplemental material provided to you. Discussions are posted under the Blackboard Discussion Board link. Discussions and chapter assignments open at 5 AM on Monday and close on Sundays at 10 PM (Central).
- **Writing Assignments:** The purpose of the writing assignments is to help the students develop clear and concise written work. There will be two mandatory writing assignments, along with an optional one. The third (optional) writing assignment is an extra credit opportunity. The writing assignment instructions are under the weekly module folder the week the assignment is to be assigned (refer to the tentative course schedule). Writing assignments are graded on content, grammar & mechanics, and APA format. Upon completion, all writing assignments are submitted via a Turnitin Assignment link. Turnitin Assignment links are available under the module of the week the assignment is due. Emailed assignments will not be accepted or graded.
- **Group Presentation:** Students will prepare, submit, and present a presentation. The presentation will test communication skills, writing, creativity, and APA proficiency. This presentation will assess the ability to analyze and interpret the most important aspects of a Supreme Court case and the impact of its decision. Instructions and presentation schedule will be posted under the corresponding learning module.
- **Extra Credit Activities:** Extra credit opportunities are available throughout the semester at the discretion of the instructor.
- **Unit Assessments:** The three-unit assessments will consist of multiple-choice questions. The length and points per question for each exam will vary. To access the unit exams, you must have purchased and installed the Respondus lockdown browser with the camera. The assessment links to these exams are found under their own respective folder under the Content menu link.
- **Final Exam:** The comprehensive final exam will consist of 100 multiple-choice questions from chapters 1–12 worth one point each. To help students prepare for the examination, a study guide will be available via Blackboard to the students on or around the second to last week of the



semester. Each multiple-choice question is worth one point. Students will have 3.0 hours to complete the final exam, on the assigned date. Please refer to the tentative schedule for exact dates.

- **AI Policy:** You may use AI tools in a limited and supportive role for this course. AI tools may not be used to generate, draft, and write any amount of the submitted work. All of your work must be original work and reflect your own analysis and understanding. Acceptable uses of AI include brainstorming ideas, clarifying key concepts, and organizing/outlining thoughts as part of the pre-writing process. Students are encouraged to use grammar and spelling checkers. Please include a brief acknowledgement in your reference page describing how the tool was used. Please be aware that failing to follow this policy may result in a violation of academic integrity standards.

Email Communication and Etiquette

To help maintain a healthy work-life balance while ensuring timely communication, I respond to student emails between 8:00 a.m. and 10:00 p.m. Emails received outside of these hours will be answered during the next communication window.

Please allow up to 24 hours on weekdays for a response. Emails sent on weekends or university holidays may require additional time, and I will respond as soon as possible during normal communication hours. If your question is related to an assignment deadline, please avoid waiting until the last minute to contact me, as I may not be available to respond immediately before the deadline.

When communicating with your instructor or classmates, please practice professional email etiquette. Include a clear subject line, use an appropriate greeting, write in a respectful and courteous tone, identify yourself and the course if necessary, and proofread your message before sending. Avoid using text-message abbreviations, excessive capitalization, or informal language. Professional communication is an important skill that supports a respectful and productive learning environment.

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 (<http://www.tamtu.edu/distance/students/knowledge-and-skills.shtml>). Additional skills required for this course include knowing how to use Turnitin (<http://www.tamtu.edu/distance/technology/turnitin.shtml>).

Required Basic Skills

- Using internet browsers and logging into the course at least once a day.
- Analyzing, downloading, saving, opening, and printing material found online.
- Composing e-mail/course messages and attaching documents.
- Posting to a discussion forum and responding to classmates.
- Submitting assignments to a drop box.
- Writing and editing with a word processor, such as Notepad, MS Word, etc.
- Completing online assessments using Respondus Lockdown browser.

Required Digital Literacy Skills

- Using online libraries and databases to locate and gather necessary information.
- Properly citing information sources using the APA format.
- Preparing a digital presentation using PowerPoint.

Grading Criteria

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



Open Boilerplate

ASSIGNMENT Breakdown	VALUE
Vantage	10%
Discussions	10%
WA #1	10%
Oral Presentation	15%
Unit Exams	20%
Final Exam	20%
WA #2	15%

Schedule of Topics and Assignments

Week of	Agenda/Topic	Reading(s)	Due
8/24	Week 1	Syllabus Course Introduction	Complete the Start Here items Watch 'Welcome' presentation Virtual Session Tuesdays 10 AM - 10:30 AM Visit the weekly folder for due dates.
8/31	Week 2	Ch.1: Fundamentals of Criminal Justice	
9/7	Week 3	Ch. 2: Foundations of Law & Crime: Nature, Elements, & Measurements	
9/14	Week 4	Ch. 3: Theories of Criminality & Crime	
9/21	Week 5	Ch. 4: Ethical Essentials	
9/28	Week 6	Ch. 5: Police Organization	
10/5	Week 7	Ch. 6: Police at Work	
10/12	Week 8	Ch. 7: Policing Methods & Challenges	
10/19	Week 9	Ch. 8: Expounding the Constitution: Laws of Arrest, Search, & Seizure	
10/26	Week 10	Ch. 8 Continued	
11/2	Week 11	Ch. 9: Court Organization	
11/9	Week 12	Ch. 10: The Bench & the Bar	
11/16	Week 13	Ch. 11: Court Methods & Challenges	
11/23	Week 14	Ch. 12: Prisons & Jails Thanksgiving Holidays: Nov. 26-28	
11/30	Week 15	Presentations/Review	
12/7	Final Exam	The final exam will be completed online using Respondus Lockdown with webcam.	Opens Wednesday, December 2nd-Closes Thursday December 3rd

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. **Teamwork (TW)** - ability to consider different points of view and to work effectively with others to support a shared purpose or goal
4. **Personal Responsibility (PR)** - ability to connect choices, actions and consequences to ethical decision-making



University/College Policies

Please see the University Policies below.

COVID-19 Related Policies

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

Required Class Attendance

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

- Participation in an authorized University activity.
- Death or major illness in a student's immediate family.
- Illness of a dependent family member.
- Participation in legal proceedings or administrative procedures that require a student's presence.
- Religious holy day.
- Illness that is too severe or contagious for the student to attend class.
- Required participation in military duties.
- Mandatory admission interviews for professional or graduate school which cannot be rescheduled.

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

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

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.tamtu.edu/handbook/article-04.shtml>)).

TAMU Honor Code: Plagiarism and Cheating

As a TAMU student, you are bound by the TAMU Honor Code to conduct yourself ethically in all your activities as a TAMU student and to report violations of the Honor Code. Please read carefully the Student Handbook Article 7 and Article 10 available at Student Handbook (<https://www.tamtu.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 course is an online course accessed via Blackboard. It is crucial that you log into your Blackboard at least once a day to be up to speed with the course. If you ever encounter issues with your Blackboard connection, contact TAMIU’s instructional technology and distance education services at <https://www.tamiu.edu/distance/> or at 956-326-2792.
- Each week, our course will consist of a learning module. Modules (weekly folders) open every Monday at 5 AM and remain open for the remainder of the semester. Each module will include the chapter’s learning objectives, tasks (with due dates) and any other resources needed to successfully



complete the module. A breakdown of the discussions, assignments, and other activities is available under the grading and evaluation section below.

- Course modules consist of various online activities that include discussion boards, chapter assignments, textbook activities, and writing assignments. Students are encouraged to participate in the weekly virtual sessions. Session time and day will be posted under the week one folder. Recordings of the virtual sessions are available under the Virtual Meeting Space link. Students are highly encouraged to ask questions, respond to classmates, and utilize all the tools made available to them so that their online experience can be as beneficial as possible. With that said, I expect all students to respect their classmates and instructor as we exchange ideas and opinions, even when disagreement exists.

Student-Instructor Communication Policy and Response Time

Office Hours:

Tuesdays/ Thursdays: 9:00 AM – 12:00 PM

Virtual appointments are available upon request.

Web Conferences/Synchronous sessions

Students are welcomed to join weekly virtual sessions every Tuesday from 10:00 AM-10:30 AM. During these sessions, students are encouraged to ask questions about reading material, content, and assignment instructions, for example. Students will be informed via Blackboard course announcements if there were to be any change to these sessions (i.e., time or date). The links and recordings to these sessions will be found under the **Virtual Meeting Space** link in Blackboard.

Course Messages/Emails

Students are required to check their TAMIU e-mail/Blackboard on a regular basis. This method of communication will allow you to receive notifications of changes or updates on course material. Please allow 48 hours to receive a response via email or Blackboard course messages.

Assignments and Assessments

All course work **MUST** be submitted via Blackboard. Email submissions will not be accepted/graded. Please allow at least 5 business days from due date to receive feedback/grades for any submissions.

In this course, you cannot use generative AI to produce responses to discussion questions, chapter assignments, or writing assignments. Your work must come from your thought process, drafting, and research. Necessary references from reliable sources are required for all submitted work. You are welcome to use spell-checkers and grammar-checkers (i.e., Grammarly).

Course Communication Guidelines (Netiquette)

There are course expectations concerning etiquette or how we should treat each other online. It is vital that we consider these values as we communicate with one another. Visit Instructional Technology and Distance Education Services' web page on Netiquette (<http://www.tamtu.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

With distance education courses, it is vital to consider the technology involved 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 when using the learning management system (LMS) of the University.



Additional Hardware. For this class, you will need access to a computer, webcam, microphone, and internet connection. 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.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.

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**.

Required Basic Skills

- Using internet browsers and logging into the course at least once a day.
- Analyzing, downloading, saving, opening, and printing material found online.
- Composing e-mail/course messages and attaching documents.
- Posting to a discussion forum and responding to classmates.
- Submitting assignments to a drop box.
- Writing and editing with a word processor, such as Notepad, MS Word, etc.
- Completing online assessments using Respondus Lockdown browser.

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

Students are welcomed to join weekly virtual sessions every Tuesday from 10:00 AM-10:30 AM. During these sessions, students are encouraged to ask questions about reading material, content, and/or assignment instructions for example. Students will be informed via Blackboard course announcements if there were to be any change to these sessions (i.e. time or date). The links to these sessions will be found under the Virtual Meeting Space link in Blackboard. Please sign into the recurring session at least five minutes before. If you are unable to attend, the recording will be made available after the session has ended and processed. It is not mandatory to join the live session.

Rubrics

The rubrics are posted under the corresponding weekly folder. For example, if a writing assignment is assigned, the rubric will be attached to the assignment instructions.

Late Work Policy

Late work will ONLY be accepted with an acceptable excuse (see COAS policies) and proper documentation.



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

All writing assignments are submitted via a Turnitin Assignment link. Turnitin Assignment links are available under the module of the week the assignment is due. Emailed assignments **will not** be accepted or graded.

Exam Proctoring: Respondus LockDown Browser with Webcam

Respondus LockDown Browser is a locked browser for taking tests in Blackboard Learn. It prevents you from printing, copying, going to another URL, or accessing other applications during a test. If a Blackboard test requires that Respondus LockDown Browser be used, you will not be able to take the test with a standard web browser. Please click the link for more information and instructions on how to install Respondus on your device. <https://www.tamui.edu/distance/technology/respondus-ldb-and-monitor.shtml>. **All exams in this course, including the final exam, will require Respondus Lockdown with webcam.**

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**.

In this course, you cannot use generative AI to produce responses to discussion questions, chapter assignments, or writing assignments. Your work must come from your thought process, drafting, and research. Necessary references from reliable sources are required for all submitted work. You are welcome to use spell-checkers and grammar-checkers (i.e., Grammarly).

Syllabus Subject to Change

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