CRIJ 4321 - Senior Pro-Seminar-WIN

Fall 2026 Syllabus, Section 181, CRN 18955

Instructor Information

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Office Hours:
Tuesdays 10-1 and by appointment

Times and Location

Does Not Meet Face-to-Face

Course Description

This course is an intensive seminar that allows students to critically examine issues relevant to the police, courts, and correctional systems in the U.S. It is a writing intensive course in which students will apply research skills and submit a literature review. Students also participate in review sessions related to core topical areas in criminal justice. Prerequisite: CRIJ 3301 or equivalent and CRIJ 4325, both with a grade of "C" or better, Senior Standing, and consent of COAS Advisor.
Social Sciences Department, College of Arts & Sciences

WIN-Designation

This course is designated as a writing-intensive (WIN) course. In this course, writing will not only be the subject of study, but it will also serve as a method of learning. Students will learn how communication in written, oral, and visual forms change according to purpose and genre. Brainstorming, drafting, revising, and peer-workshopping are integrated into the course curriculum and are the required components of this writing-intensive course. The final Research Paper is the designated assignment for WIN assessment.

Additional Course Information

LATE WORK POLICY

Late assignments will not be accepted without prior approval from the instructor. In the event that late work is accepted, based on instructor discretion, 10% of the maximum amount of points available will be deducted for each day that the assignment is late.

MAKE-UP EXAMS AND ASSIGNMENTS
I understand that things may occur during the semester causing you to submit an assignment late. Reasons for late submission of assignments may include serious illness, serious family emergencies, and serious weather conditions (e.g., lengthy power outages). Please email me through official University email if you have a conflict with any of the due dates and notify me as soon as possible of any emergencies that may affect your work in this course. Documentation may be required to substantiate absences and/or delayed submissions.

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

EMAIL & EMAIL ETIQUETTE

Blackboard is the best way to contact me. I check my Blackboard often and should respond to you within 3 business days. Please identify yourself and include a subject and greeting in all email correspondence.

In this class our official mode of communication is through Blackboard. All communication between student and instructor and between student and student should be respectful and professional. Class rosters list TAMIU email addresses rather than external email addresses, and all official class communications will be sent only to the TAMIU email addresses. Students are responsible for checking their TAMIU email accounts regularly.

- Professional email exchanges include an opening salutation (e.g., "Hello Professor Mercado"), an introduction (e.g., "My name is Firstname Lastname and I am in your Criminology course"), content/question, and closing salutation (e.g., "Best, Firstname Lastname"). Proper grammar and sentence structure is also expected. In addition, I can tell when your phone autocorrects your words and you send me a messy email. Please review your email prior to hitting "Send". Lastly, if your email to me sounds like a text message to your friend, do not expect me to respond. Respect is crucial.
- Check Email & Blackboard Course Messages Regularly (at least once a day) for Course Correspondence. Important information regarding the course schedule and grades will be posted to Blackboard and/or messages through the Blackboard Course Messages.
- I will not respond to emails sent through private accounts (e.g. gmail, yahoo). Students must use TAMIU email for all class communication.

Artificial Intelligence (A.I.) Policy

All submitted work must represent the student's original ideas, critical thinking, and academic effort. Students must disclose any use of AI tools in their work, including the nature and extent of the assistance provided.

Acceptable Use of AI Tools

Students may use AI tools in the following ways, provided they adhere to disclosure requirements:

- Idea Generation: Brainstorming topics, themes, or arguments.
- Grammar and Syntax: Correcting spelling, grammar, punctuation, and basic sentence structure.
- Organization Suggestions: Receiving general guidance on structuring paragraphs or organizing ideas.
- Fact Checking: Verifying dates, definitions, or other factual information (students are responsible for ensuring AI-provided facts are accurate).

Unacceptable Use of AI Tools

The following uses of AI tools are prohibited and may constitute academic misconduct:

- Submitting AI-generated text as the student's own work without proper attribution or acknowledgment.
- Using AI to generate entire essays, paragraphs, or other substantial portions of the assignment.
- Relying on AI to formulate original arguments, critical analysis, or insights.
- Copying AI-generated responses verbatim without significant revision or integration of personal understanding.
- Using AI tools to bypass learning objectives, such as critical thinking, research skills, and writing development.

Disclosure and Attribution

If AI tools are used, students must include a brief statement at the end of their essay (e.g., "This essay was reviewed using Grammarly for grammar corrections" or "ChatGPT was used to brainstorm ideas for this essay"). Failure to disclose AI usage may result in penalties as outlined in the institution's academic integrity policies.

Faculty Responsibility

Faculty will clarify assignment expectations and specify when AI tool use is allowed or prohibited. Faculty may use AI-detection tools to verify the originality of student submissions.

Consequences for Misuse

Violations of this policy will be handled according to the TAMIU's academic integrity guidelines and may result in consequences ranging from reduced grades to more significant disciplinary action, depending on the severity of the infraction.

Program Learning Outcomes

Issues to be specifically examined include social structural explanations of crime and effects of crime on communities. Criminological theories, analyses of criminal justice systems, and policy implications for communities will also be covered in the course. Additionally, students will explore empirical research in criminal justice and social deviance by reading and assessing scholarly literature in the field. This course is writing intensive (WIN) and also reading/research-intensive. Students are required to read all course material, skillfully conduct research, submit a research paper

comprised of several sections, provide comprehensive essay responses to exam questions, and present the findings of their research papers to the class in order to complete requirements for this course.

Student Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of this course students should be able to:

1. The student will examine contemporary issues in the field of criminal justice in the context of communities and crime, such as

a. the intersection of crime and inequality in American life

b. historical and contemporary criminological theories on crime in communities

c. perspectives on criminal justice issues and the law including policing, courts, and corrections

d. constraints in policy making within communities

2. The student will appraise knowledge of the discipline through reading professional literature.

3. The student will synthesize scholarly research in the field by skillfully conducting research in electronic databases (e.g. JSTOR, EBSCO, PROQUEST, ACADEMIC SEARCH COMPLETE, ACADEMIC UNIVERSE).

4. The student will demonstrate the ability to write formally and professionally about key issues in criminal justice.

5. The student will present the findings of their research into a specific topic chosen by them toward the end of the semester.

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	Criminology: The Core (7th ed.).	Siegel, L. J.	9781337557719
Optional	Understanding Social Problems (11th ed.)	Mooney, L. A., Clever, M., & Willigen, M. V.	9780357507421

Grading Criteria

Evaluation of Student Learning

At the completion of this course, you will receive a letter grade reflecting your performance in this course. Letter grades (Depending on the school scale) will be computed for each of the above items based on the number of points earned. Be aware that your final point total will recalibrated to fit the 100 point scale shown below. Your point total is then converted to a letter grade according to the following scale:

Course Weight Distribution

Quizzes: 20%

Discussions: 10%

Midterm: 20%

Term Paper (split into several individual parts): 20%

Presentation: 10%

Final: 20%

TOTAL: 100%

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

Schedule of Topics and Assignments

Week of	Agenda/Topic	Reading(s)	Due
8/24	Week 1	Read Chapter 1	Student Introductions (Mandatory) (Not graded) Module 1 Quiz
8/31	Week 2	Read Chapter 2	Term Paper: Research Topic/Question Module 2 Quiz
9/7	Week 3	Read Chapter 3	Module 3 Quiz
9/14	Week 4	Read Chapter 4	Term Paper: Introduction Module 4 Quiz
9/21	Week 5	Read Chapter 5	Term Paper: Subtopic 1 Week 5 Discussion
9/28	Week 6	Read Chapter 6	Term Paper: Subtopic 2 Midterm Exam
10/5	Week 7	Read Chapter 7	Module 7 Quiz
10/12	Week 8	Read Chapter 8	Term Paper: Subtopic 3 Module 8 Quiz
10/19	Week 9	Read Chapter 8	Term Paper: Conclusion Module 9 Quiz
10/26	Week 10	Read Chapter 10	Term Presentation
11/2	Week 11	Read Chapter 11	Module 11 Quiz
11/9	Week 12	Read Chapter 12	Module 12 Discussion Board
11/16	Week 13	Read Chapter 13	Module 13 Quiz
11/23	Thanksgiving Break		
11/30	Week 14	Read Chapter 14	Module 14 Quiz
12/7	Finals Week		Final Exam

University/College Policies

Please see the University Policies below.

COVID-19 Related Policies

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

Required Class Attendance

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

- Participation in an authorized University activity.
- Death or major illness in a student's immediate family.
- Illness of a dependent family member.

- Participation in legal proceedings or administrative procedures that require a student's presence.
- Religious holy day.
- Illness that is too severe or contagious for the student to attend class.
- Required participation in military duties.
- Mandatory admission interviews for professional or graduate school which cannot be rescheduled.

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

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

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

Online Courses and On-Campus Meetings

Texas Administrative Code (TAC), Title 19, Part 1, Chapter 2, Subchapter J, Section 2.202 (https://texreg.sos.state.tx.us/public/readtac$ext.TacPage?sl=R&app=9&p_dir=&p_rloc=&p_tloc=&p_ploc=&pg=1&p_tac=&ti=19&pt=1&ch=2&rl=202), defines distance education as the formal educational process that occurs when students and instructors are not in the same physical setting for the majority (more than 50%) of instruction. Distance education includes hybrid and 100% online courses and programs as defined by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB):

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

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

Course Structure

Student-Instructor Communication Policy and Response Time

Announcements/Course Messages/Emails
Pay attention to all announcements and emails.
Assignments and Assessments
Turnaround time for assignments should be about 1 week. Assessments should give you almost immediate grade.

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. For this class, you will need a computer with a web camera. 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 with 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**.

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.

Proctoring

Respondus LockDown Browser and Respondus Monitor Requirement

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

Watch this short video (http://www.respondus.com/products/lockdown-browser/student-movie.shtml) to get a basic understanding of what LockDown Browser and Respondus Monitor (the webcam feature) are. A student Quick Start Guide (PDF) (https://web.respondus.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/RLDB-Quick-Start-Guide-BbUltra-Student.pdf) is also available.

Download Instructions

Visit TAMIU's Respondus LockDown Browser and Respondus Monitor web page (https://www.tamiu.edu/distance/technology/respondus-ldb-and-monitor.shtml). Scroll down to the section titled 'Installing the Respondus LockDown Browser on Your Device.' Click the appropriate link to download the software needed.

To Access Your Test

1. First, be sure the Respondus LockDown Browser software is fully installed on your computer.
2. Open a regular web browser (Google Chrome, Mozilla Firefox, MS Edge, Safari)
3. Log into Blackboard Learn.
4. Navigate to the course and test.
5. Start your attempt.
6. This will launch the Respondus LockDown Browser software.
7. Complete the Respondus Monitor wizard and begin your test.

Note: You won't be able to access tests with a standard web browser. If this is tried, an error message will indicate that the test requires the use of LockDown Browser. Start LockDown Browser and navigate back to the exam to continue.

Guidelines

When taking an online exam that requires LockDown Browser and a webcam, remember the following guidelines:

- Ensure you're in a location where you won't be interrupted.
- Turn off all other devices (e.g., tablets, phones, and second computers) and place them outside of your reach.
- Before starting the test, know how much time is available for it, and that you've allotted sufficient time to complete it.
- Clear your desk or workspace of all external materials not permitted - books, papers, other devices.
- Remain at your computer for the duration of the test.
- If the computer, Wi-Fi, or location is different than what was used previously with the "Webcam Check" and "System & Network Check" in LockDown Browser, rerun the checks before the exam.
- To produce a good webcam video, do the following:
  - Avoid wearing baseball caps or hats with brims.
  - Ensure your computer or device is on a firm surface (a desk or table). Do NOT have the computer on your lap, a bed, or another surface where the device (or you) is likely to move.
  - If using a built-in webcam, avoid readjusting the tilt of the screen after the webcam setup is complete.
  - Take the exam in a well-lit room but avoid backlighting (such as sitting with your back to a window).
- Remember that LockDown Browser will prevent you from accessing other websites or applications; you will be unable to exit the test until all questions are completed and submitted.

Getting Help

Several resources are available if you encounter problems with LockDown Browser.

- The Windows and Mac versions of LockDown Browser have a "Help Center" button on the toolbar. Use the "System & Network Check" to troubleshoot issues.
- If you have problems downloading, installing, or taking a test with Respondus LockDown Browser, email the TAMIU eLearning Team at elearning@tamiu.edu.

Webcam Checkout for Personal Computer

If students cannot use a personal or borrowed computer with a webcam, they may stop by the Instructional Technology and Distance Education Services office to check out webcams (with built-in microphones). The office is located at **Dr. Billy F. Cowart Hall, Room 208, and is open Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Check-out for a webcam is available** on a first-come, first-served basis. Speak with an eLearning staff member to

check out a camera. Students will sign an Equipment Loaner Agreement, making them responsible for the care of the camera. Webcams checked out must be returned within five business days of the checkout date.

Accessibility and Privacy Statements on Course Technologies

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

Syllabus Subject to Change

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