CRIJ 4390 - Undergrad Research in CRIJ

Fall 2026 Syllabus, Section 190, CRN 19064

Instructor Information

Brittany Hood
Email: brittany.hood@tamiu.edu
Office Hours:
Tues 1230-2 (in-person), Wednesday 10-12 (in-person), Saturday 12-1 (virtual), and by appointment

Times and Location

Does Not Meet Face-to-Face

Course Description

Student Learning Outcomes

Course Learning Objectives:

1. Formulate a research question or problem statement grounded in criminal justice theory and existing scholarship.

2. Analyze and synthesize scholarly literature to develop a coherent theoretical framework and justify the research focus.

3. Apply appropriate research methods to collect, code, and/or analyze data relevant to the research question.

4. Communicate research processes and findings in a professional format, demonstrating clear argumentation, methodological rigor, and evidence-based implications.

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
	Readings provided by instructor in Blackboard and found as part of literature review		

Other Course Materials

Additional readings and other assigned materials are listed in the itinerary. These are intended to provide guidance to students in writing about qualitative research and refining their academic skills.

Most weeks, students will engage with scholarly research through their own readings based on the individually assigned literature review topics.

Grading Criteria

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

Open Boilerplate

Contacting the Instructor

I can be most easily reached via email. Due to FERPA and to protect your confidentiality, you should only contact Instructors through your university email address.

Students are strongly encouraged to make an appointment if you are struggling or wish to discuss the material. Please do not wait until the end of the term to reach out—timely communication allows us to help you more effectively.

Messages should be written in a professional tone, beginning with a salutation (e.g., *Dear Dr. Hood)* and concluding with your name and course so I can easily identify you. I will answer most messages within 48 hours (responses may take longer on weekends). If I have not replied after 72 hours, please feel free to follow up.

Respectful Interaction

Qualitative research requires collaboration amongst multiple people who come from various backgrounds with different lived experiences. Therefore, students are encouraged (and expected) to contribute to team discussions. Throughout the semester, we should be able to disagree and debate important issues without resorting to ridicule, insults, or harassment. This expectation applies both to student interactions with one another and to my interactions with you.

Because we will be discussing sensitive topics related to the criminal justice system, please remain polite, constructive, and respectful. Everyone's opinion should be valued.

Writing Expectations

This course is designed to teach students to examine, code, and summarize in-depth interviews in the form of a final paper and a conference poster.

All submissions must reflect a high standard of professional academic writing, which includes:

- Clear and concise expression
- Correct spelling and grammar
- Proper APA 7 citations where necessary

Your ability to express ideas effectively and adhere to academic writing standards will significantly affect your grade. This course aims to expand your knowledge of criminal justice while refining your writing skills, which are essential in any professional field.

Writing Support
TAMIU's Writing Center (Cowart Hall, Room 2013) offers free, tailored writing assistance for brainstorming, planning, drafting, revising, and editing. I strongly encourage you to take advantage of this resource. For more information, visit: TAMIU Writing Center FAQ (https://www.tamiu.edu/uc/writingcenter/FAQS.shtml).

We will also review your writing as part of providing feedback on your drafts (see Itinerary below). However, you are encouraged to send other drafts to your professor for additional feedback either in person or virtually—please contact your professor to set up an appointment.

Technology Use

Technology can enhance learning outcomes, and we may use specific applications in class. If you need access to a laptop—or a better laptop than the one you currently use—contact TAMIU OIT to inquire about a laptop loan.

Academic Integrity

All work submitted must be your own. Academic dishonesty or plagiarism will result in penalties in accordance with TAMIU's Academic Honesty guidelines. This includes:

- Submitting work completed for another course (self-plagiarism)
- Using pre-made papers or assignments from the internet or other sources
- Failing to properly cite sources

All written assignments will be checked using plagiarism detection software. Save your money and submit your own work.

Citation Requirement
Citations must be provided where needed, using APA 7 format. If you are unsure about proper citation practices, consult Purdue OWL, ask me, or refer to class discussions. Students who violate these rules may receive penalties up to and including a failing grade for the assignment or course.

For more information on plagiarism, refer to the College of Arts & Sciences policies at the end of this syllabus.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) Policy

In this course, you will be engaged in collaborative, original research. To protect the integrity of the project and ensure that you develop essential academic and professional skills, the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools is **strictly limited** and subject to the following guidelines:

1. Permitted AI Uses
Students may use AI tools (e.g., ChatGPT, Bing Chat, Claude, Grammarly, etc.) **only** for:

- Grammar and spelling correction
- Improving clarity of sentence structure and organization
- Generating or refining topic sentences and transition sentences
- Identifying possible structural improvements in writing
- Limited brainstorming for ideas or questions to explore (not generating written content to submit)

Any use of AI must be acknowledged in a brief note at the end of the submission (e.g., *"Used Grammarly for grammar and punctuation check"*).

2. Prohibited AI Uses
Students **may not**:

- Submit any text written entirely or partially by AI as their own work
- Use AI to draft, rewrite, or paraphrase large portions of assignments or the final paper
- Use AI to generate literature reviews, findings, or policy implication sections
- Upload, summarize, or analyze **any** project data (including interview transcripts, codebooks, or participant information) into AI tools under any circumstances
- Use AI to complete assignments, coding tasks, or poster content beyond the limited editing support described above

3. Academic Integrity
All submitted work must be your own original writing. Violations of this policy—including submitting AI-generated material or uploading project data into AI systems—will be treated as **academic misconduct**, reported to the appropriate university authority, and may result in an automatic **F** for the course.

4. Detection and Verification
All graded submissions may be scanned with AI-detection tools at the professor's discretion. If AI use beyond the permitted scope is suspected, you will be required to meet (virtually or in person) within two business days to discuss your work. Failure to attend this meeting, without a university-approved excuse, or confirmation that prohibited AI use occurred will result in an **automatic F** for the course.

5. Questions
If you are unsure whether your intended use of AI is acceptable, ask your professor before proceeding.

Policy adapted from AI syllabus statements at UT-Austin, Texas A&M University, and Boston University.

Missed & Late Assignments: It is important to keep up with the material and the assignments, especially when working as a team. Therefore, late assignments will not be accepted without a university-approved absence. **In the event you miss an exam due to a university-approved absence or emergency, please contact us with documentation within 24 hours of missing the exam or assignment, so we can identify how to make up for the missed work.** The instructor reserves the right to modify assignments as needed for make-up work. The only exceptions to this rule are those listed in the College of Arts & Sciences Policies located at the end of this syllabus.

COURSE STRUCTURE AND ASSIGNMENTS

Blackboard

I will use Blackboard throughout the semester to post additional readings, information, handouts, and other useful articles. Please check the website regularly as I will also utilize the announcements frequently to provide reminders on upcoming assignments and events.

Readings & Other Assigned Resources

Students are required to complete the readings or any other assigned videos, and resources, **prior to the start of class** on the day on which they are assigned. Reading prior to class will allow the student to better grasp the material and enhance individual participation.

Assignments

All assignments build toward our collaborative research project and final deliverable. Most are interconnected—missing one assignment can impact your ability to complete later work and affects team progress.

1. Annotated Bibliography (100 points total)

Part 1 (50 pts) — Due Week 5 (9/21): - 15 instructor-provided sources organized by your assigned themes - 250–300 word annotation per source - Formative feedback provided

Part 2 (50 pts) — Due Week 11 (11/9) with Final Paper: - 8–10 additional sources you identified through independent research - 250–300 word annotation per source - Combined with Part 1 for final Bibliography (23–25 sources total)

See grading rubric on Blackboard.

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2. Findings Drafts and Final Findings Paper (200 points total)

Before Week 1 (8/24): Meet with Dr. Hood to identify your assigned themes and relevant variables.

Assignment: Analyze your assigned themes by examining the data and codebook. Identify which variables answer which research questions. You may have coding tasks assigned as part of this work.

Checkpoint 1 – Draft 1 (Week 3; 9/7) — Formative Feedback: - Submit analysis of Theme 1 (~3–5 pages) - No points assigned; written feedback provided

Checkpoint 2 – Draft 2 (Week 5; 9/21) — 50 pts: - Submit analysis of Theme 2 (~3–5 pages) - Graded; feedback provided

Final Submission (Week 7; 10/5) — 100 pts + 50 pts = 150 pts total: - Submit complete Findings Paper incorporating all feedback (~6–10 pages) - Graded

Each draft receives written instructor feedback to address before your next submission.

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3. Discussion & Policy Paper (150 points) — Due Week 11 (11/9)

Part A – Discussion (3–4 pages): Synthesize your findings from the assigned themes and situate them within the broader literature using instructor-provided articles.

Submit for feedback in Week 7 (10/19).

Part B – Policy Implications (1.5–2 pages): Discuss at least two policy implications directly connected to your findings.

Submit for feedback in Week 8 (10/26).

Final submission of combined parts due Week 11 (11/9) — 150 pts

See rubric on Blackboard.

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4. Final Integrated Paper (150 points) — Due Week 11 (11/9)

Combine your Findings Paper (Week 7) and Discussion & Policy Paper into one cohesive manuscript. Address all instructor feedback.

Your final paper should flow as an integrated narrative (~20–25 pages total).

This includes your final Discussion & Policy Paper (150 pts) and is submitted together with Annotated Bibliography Part 2 on 11/9.

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5. Presentation or Technical Report (200 points) — Due Week 15 (12/7)

Choice of option:

Option A: Conference Presentation - Present your research at a conference (March conference in Orlando, local/regional conference in fall, or campus event) - 10–15 minute presentation with Q&A - Some funding may be available through COAS - Draft due 11/16 (formative feedback)

Option B: Technical Report - Prepare a technical report for dissemination to NameHim stakeholders - ~15–25 pages with executive summary, findings, and policy recommendations - Practitioner-focused language - Draft due 11/16 (formative feedback)

Decision: We will decide at our first meeting (Week 1; 8/24). Additional guidance will follow based on your choice.

Final submission due 12/7 — 200 pts

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6. Participation (150 points) — Ongoing

Active, consistent engagement is essential in this collaborative research course.

Participation includes: - Attending all weekly meetings - Contributing to group coding discussions - Providing constructive peer feedback - Attending presentation rehearsals - Engaging respectfully in class discussions

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GRADING RUBRICS

All grading rubrics are available on the course Blackboard site. Review them before submitting each assignment to understand expectations and evaluation criteria.

SUMMARY: 1000 POSSIBLE POINTS

Itinerary (all assignments due Friday by weekly meeting time unless otherwise noted)

Week of	Agenda/Topic	Reading(s)	Due
8/24	Course Introduction & Theme Assignment	File B - Combined Coding Study Research Questions & Manuscript Draft	Meet with Dr. Hood to identify assigned themes and relevant variables
8/31	Work on Annotated Bibliography Pt. 1 & Findings Theme 1	Instructor-provided readings	Nothing due
9/7	Findings Theme 1	Instructor-provided readings	Submit analysis of Theme 1 (formative feedback)
9/14	Work on Annotated Bibliography Pt. 1 & Findings Theme 2		Nothing due

9/21	Work on Annotated Bibligraphy Part I & Findings Theme 2	Submit analysis of Theme 2 (formative feedback)
9/28	Annotated Bibliography	Annotated Bibliography Part I (15 Instructor-provided sources only)
10/5	Findings Paper (Final)	Submit complete Findings Paper incorporating all feedback
10/12	Work on Annotated Bibliography Pt. 2 & Discussion & Policy Paper (Part A)	Nothing due
10/19	Discussion & Policy Paper (Part A)	Part A – Discussion (3–4 pages) synthesizing findings within literature
10/26	Discussion & Policy Paper (Part B)	Part B – Policy Implications (1.5–2 pages) with at least two recommendations
11/2	work toward final presentation or technical report draft due before Thanksgiving	Nothing due
11/9	Final Integrated Paper & Annotated Bibliography Part II	Combine Findings Paper + Discussion & Policy Paper into one cohesive paper incorporating all feedback Annotated Bibliography Part II (10 Instructor-provided sources only)
11/16	Conference - no class meeting	Draft of Final Presentation or Technical Report (formative feedback)
11/23	Thanksgiving - no class meeting	Eat Turkey!
11/30	TBD	TBD
12/7	Final Due	Final Presentation or Technical Report

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.