HIST 5355 - Sem in the History of Religion

Fall 2026 Syllabus, Section 161, CRN 19385

Instructor Information

Dr. Asli Berktay
Email: asligul.berktay@tamiu.edu
Office: AIC 387
Office Hours:
Mondays: 2 to 4pm, and by email appointment
(Please make sure to always make an appointment, even for regular office hours.)

Times and Location

W 6pm-8:45pm in Pellegrino Hall 115

Course Description

Additional Course Information

The course will begin by discussing the life story of the Buddha, the doctrinal foundations of his ground-breaking religious and social movement, and daily life in early monastic communities. We will then proceed to examine Buddhism's spread to East Asia, its encounter with the philosophical and religious traditions of Daoism and Confucianism, and the new Buddhist schools that emerged in China, Japan, and the Himalayas, such as Pure Land, Chan/Zen, and Vajrayana Buddhism.

As religious identity in Asia is often fluid and non-sectarian in nature, we will not investigate Buddhism in isolation. Instead, we will adopt a chronological and geographical approach, examining the spread of Buddhist ideas and practices across Asia and the results that have ensued from these encounters.

Later in the semester, we will move on to exploring themes in Buddhist ethics. Some of these will be more specific, such as the history of meditative and tantric practices, while others will be more general, such as the relationship between humans and the natural world, and the tension between Buddhism and violence. We will also study a small number of fundamental Buddhist scriptures in depth in order to better understand the different themes that are at the heart of Buddhist teachings. We will conclude the course by discussing the role of Buddhism in the modern world, its enduring relevance in East Asia, and its growing popularity around the globe.

Course Expectations:

· Students should **carefully consult the attached University Course Policies** on classroom behavior, copyright restrictions, plagiarism, cheating, students with disabilities, incompletes, and independent study courses.

· **Attendance is mandatory** and will be consequential to your grade. Accordingly, it will be taken during each class session. You should also make sure **to arrive on time**. Excessive tardiness will have similar consequences to non-attendance. If you enter the classroom more than 15 minutes late, **I will ask you to leave and mark you as absent during that class session**.

· **Cell phone use of any kind is not allowed under any circumstances**, and you will be asked to leave the classroom immediately if you are seen using one. You will also be marked as not having attended that class session. Rather than paying attention to non-class related technology, please focus on **taking proper notes** during lectures, workshops, and discussion sessions.

- **No late work will be accepted**, and a grade penalty will be applied (reduction of a full letter grade for each day, including assignments submitted later than the specified time on the due date). If you need an extension, you must specifically ask me for one, and to present a valid reason. (A valid reason requires an explanation: "For personal reasons," for example, does NOT constitute an explanation.)
- **No make-ups will be given without a written medical excuse or legitimate family emergency.**
- Only those **students with a written medical excuse will be granted an incomplete**. Students who are unable to meet this requirement should withdraw. Students who discontinue attending class, without formally withdrawing, will receive a failing grade.
- **The use of AI is not allowed in this class under any circumstances**, and will directly result in an F in the course. Additionally, the instructor will immediately report the offense as per university policies. Please keep in mind that this includes the use of Grammarly, which by now also uses AI.
- **The same rules that are stated for AI use are also valid for all other forms of plagiarism and cheating, and none will be tolerated.** All offenses will be immediately reported and will result in an F in the course.
- If you have any special circumstances, other than those already registered with the Office of Student Counseling and Disability Services, it is your responsibility to inform the instructor at the beginning of the semester, or as soon as the said circumstances come into being. These can include personal and family matters, as well as health-related difficulties.
- **You are always encouraged to make an appointment to meet with the instructor during office hours.** Be sure to always email the instructor to set up a meeting; do not simply drop by her office. Before or after class is not a suitable time for asking questions or otherwise talking to the instructor.

· **When you send an email to the instructor during the week, you can expect an answer within 24 to 48 hours**. The instructor has no responsibility to reply to emails sent over the weekend. Please make sure to not wait until the last moment to email the instructor.

· **You are required to regularly and carefully read the course emails that the instructor sends through Blackboard**. I communicate regularly by email regarding class updates, changes in the schedule or in the required readings, due assignments, etc. **As soon as an email is sent, you are responsible for all the information that it contains, in the same manner that you are required to properly read the syllabus and all assignment instructions.** ("I did not see the email in time" or "your email went to my other folder" are NOT legitimate excuses.)

· **When the instructor emails you, you are required to answer as promptly as possible**. **Similarly, when the instructor asks you to schedule an office hours meeting, you will need to respond and schedule the meeting immediately.**

· **Along these lines, ALL students who have previously not taken a class with me will be required to meet with me in person over the first two weeks of the semester.** All others will also be required to meet with me in the weeks that follow.

- **Further, you should always use a professional tone when communicating with your professors via email (as well as in person).** Please make sure to use complete sentences, proper spelling, and correct punctuation, grammar, and capitalization throughout. Use a formal form of address: Start the email with "Dear Dr. Berktay," and finish the email with, "Sincerely, Your Name" or "Best, Your Name." Please include your course number in all emails, ensure the subject line is clear and informative, and ask any questions clearly and directly, providing as much context as you can. I will not respond to emails that do not include a subject, greeting, signature, and/or reference to your course ("HIST 4394" or "Buddhism"); do not explicitly ask a question or otherwise seek guidance ("I won't be in class today"); ask questions that can be answered by simply reading the syllabus ("When is the midterm?" or "When is the paper due?"); ask me to provide feedback on assignments via email—I hold office hours to provide this type of assistance, so make sure to work ahead and come to class/office hours with questions; or ask some variation of the question "Did I miss anything important?"— the answer will always be "yes." I only spend class time on topics and activities that I consider to be important.

· **Please also note that I do not check Blackboard messages, so email me to get in touch with me.**

· **Written work is graded both objectively and subjectively**. A well-written and thought-out answer will always earn more points than a simply correct one. This approach also takes into account that different individuals have distinct styles of analysis and writing. Although this is not an English course, the quality of your writing matters. Therefore, you are highly encouraged to seek assistance from the TAMIU Writing Center.

IMPORTANT DATES:

In-class bi-weekly quizzes: Sept 9, Sept 23, Oct 7, Oct 21, Nov 4

Midterm paper: 11.59pm on Sunday, Oct 3

Proposal and annotated bibliography for research paper: 11.59pm on Sunday, Oct 25

Optional revised midterm paper: 11.59pm on Sunday, Nov 1

Two-page reflection essay: 11.59pm on Sunday, Nov 15

First draft of research paper: 11.59pm on Sunday, Nov 22

Individual in-class presentations on research paper: Wednesday, Nov 18

Revised research paper: 11.59pm on Wednesday, Dec 4

- **This syllabus is subject to change. The instructor reserves the right to amend this syllabus as she sees fit.**

Student Learning Outcomes

1. Evaluate different aspects of Eastern history through the close reading of primary sources.

2. Analyze historical narratives relating to Eastern history.

3. Critique secondary source arguments related to Eastern history.

4. Construct a clear, coherent, and succinc research project about Eastern history.

5. Review the role of the Eastern hemisphere within global history.

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	Peter Harvey	An Introduction to Buddhist Ethics: Foundations, Values, and Issues	
Required	Matthew T. Kapstein	Tibetan Buddhism: A Very Short Introduction	
Required	Charles Prebish and Damien Keown	Introducing Buddhism	

Grading Criteria

Grading and Assignments:

Attendance, Reading, and Participation - 15%

Regular attendance, active participation, and preparation for class are essential parts of the learning experience. The participation grade will be based on oral contributions, group work, and regular attendance.

Please keep in mind that although there is not a lot of required reading for this class, you may find the assigned readings difficult. Make sure to give yourself enough time to go over the readings more than once if necessary.

Bi-weekly quizzes - 15%

You will need to read carefully and consistently all the assigned materials for this class. In order to make sure that you are reading on a regular basis, but also to ascertain your comprehension of different texts and themes, you will be expected to submit your answers to short quizzes that will take place at the beginning of class every two weeks. The quizzes will be based on the readings and lectures of the previous two weeks, and will therefore start in Week 3. There will be 5 quizzes in total, and they are all marked in the course schedule.

Chapter/article presentations – 15%

The graduate students in the class will work in pairs to present on certain readings specified on the syllabus. They will sign up for these presentations beforehand, and will need to carefully read and follow the presentation guidelines uploaded on Blackboard. The instructor may also provide additional instructions as to how different texts and presentations should be approached.

Midterm paper - 15%

You will need to prove your ability to successfully analyze, connect, compare, and contrast different kinds of sources in a 4–5-page analytical essay for which you will receive a clear prompt that will include the specific materials that you will need to put in conversation with one another, as well as

instructions regarding formatting, references, etc. **You will not be permitted to use any outside sources for this assignment**. The midterm paper will be **due on Blackboard by 11.59pm on Sunday, October 3.**

You will have **the option to revise this assignment,** in which case the first draft will only count **as 40% of the final grade for this assignment. If you choose to do so, your revision will be due on Blackboard by 11.59pm on Sunday, November 1.**

Final Research Paper - 35%

Students will need to write a 6-7-page final research paper on a topic connected to the class theme, after discussing it with the instructor. They will also prepare a PPT and present their final paper to their classmates during the last week of class.

This assignment will be scaffolded as follows:

The proposal and annotated bibliography will be due on Blackboard due by 11.59pm on Sunday, October 25 (5%)

The first 4-5-page draft of the research paper will be due on Blackboard by 11.59pm on Sunday, November 22 (10%)

The individual in-class presentation will take place on Wednesday, November 18 (10%)

The revised version of the research paper of 6-7 pages will be due on Blackboard by 11.59pm on Friday, December 4 (the scheduled date for the final exam is December 2, which means you get 2 extra days for this assignment) **(10%).**

N.B. Since this is a scaffolded assignment, students will not be allowed to move on to the next assignment without having completed the previous one(s). None of the assignments listed above are optional.

Reflection essay - 5%

A two-page reflection essay on what you have learned in the course and the ways in which you have revised your understandings of Buddhism in particular, and of world religions in general, will be **due on Blackboard by 11.59pm on Sunday, Nov 15.**

Grading scale:

A 90-100

B 80-89

C 70-79

D 60-69

F 0-59

Schedule of Topics and Assignments

Week of	Agenda/Topic	Reading(s)	Due
8/26	Introduction to the course, the instructor, and the students	The Buddha (dir. David Grubin, 2010)	
9/2	The Religious and Cultural Background of Pre-Buddhism in Northern India	Introducing Buddhism, 3-24; Patrick Olivelle, Upani#ads, 148-156. (Blackboard)	
9/9	The Life of the Buddha and the Doctrinal Foundations of Buddhism	Introducing Buddhism, 25-58; "Setting the Wheel of the Dharma in Motion," The Norton Anthology of World Religions: Buddhism, 177-181 (Blackboard).	Quiz 1
9/16	Early Monastic Communities and the Rise of Mahāyāna Buddhism	Introducing Buddhism, 59-118; "Monks in the Mahāyāna," Buddhist Scriptures, 269-277 (Blackboard); excerpts from the Lotus Sūtra (Blackboard).	

9/23	The Rise of Buddhism in China	Mario Poceski, "Buddhism in Chinese History," The Wiley Blackwell Companion to East and Inner Asian Buddhism, 40-62 (Blackboard); "How a Monk Freed his Mother from Hell," Buddhist Scriptures, 329-334 (Blackboard); excerpts from the Heart Sūtra (Blackboard).	Quiz 2
9/30	The Rise of Buddhism in Japan	Heather Blair, "Buddhism in Japanese History," The Wiley Blackwell Companion to East and Inner Asian Buddhism, 84-103; D.T. Suzuki, "Zen and the Samurai," Zen and Japanese Culture, 61-85.	Midterm paper due on Blackboard by 11.59pm on Sunday, October 3.
10/7	The Rise of Buddhism and Tantric Rituals in Tibet	Readings: Matthew T. Kapstein. Tibetan Buddhism: A Very Short Introduction. Oxford University Press, 2013; Jeffrey Hopkins, "Tantric Buddhism, Degeneration or Enhancement: The Viewpoint of a Tibetan Tradition," Buddhist-Christian Studies, Vol. 10 (1990), 87-96; Christian K. Wedemeyer, "Tropes, Typologies, and Turnarounds: A Brief Genealogy of the Historiography of Tantric Buddhism," History of Religions, Feb., 2001, Vol. 40, No. 3 (Feb., 2001), 223-259.	Quiz 3
10/14	Understanding Buddhist Meditation	Introducing Buddhism, 119-141. Screenings: John Dunne, An Introduction to Buddhist Contemplative Practice; David Germano, The Varieties of Tibetan Buddhist Meditation.	In-class meditation practice
10/21	Utopia and Apocalypse in Buddhism	David Ownby, "Chinese Millenarian Traditions," American Historical Review, 104.5 (1999), 1513-1530; "Avoiding Hell, Gaining Heaven," Buddhist Scriptures, 69-77 (Blackboard); Rolf Scheuermann, "Tibetan Buddhist Dystopian Narratives and their Pedagogical Dimensions," The End(s) of Time(s), 91-114 (Blackboard).	Quiz 4
10/28	The Relationship between Humans and the Natural World in Buddhism Guest lecture by Dr. Jude Galbraith	An Introduction to Buddhist Ethics, 150-186; "Freeing Birds and Fish from Bondage," Buddhist Scriptures, 394-401 (Blackboard). Screening: Summoning the Recluse (dir. Ellen Xu, 2016)	Final research paper proposal and annotated bibliography due on Blackboard by 11.59pm on Sunday, October 25.
11/4	Sacrifice, Self-immolation, and Euthanasia	An Introduction to Buddhist Ethics, 286-310; Thich Nhat Hanh, "In Search of the Enemy of Man," Vietnam: Lotus in a Sea of Fire, 106-108 (Blackboard); Gloria S. Riviera, "The Ultimate Protest: Women Self-Immolate in Tibet," World Affairs, Vol. 175, No. 3 (2012), 69-74 (Blackboard); Tibetan man dies after setting himself on fire outside UN in New York, activists say, The Guardian, 2 July 2026.	Quiz 5 Optional revised midterm paper due on Blackboard by 11.59pm on Sunday, November 1.

11/11	Buddhism in Modern East Asia: Adaptations, Transformations, and Challenges	Clark Chilson, "Buddhists in Modern Japan," Buddhism in the Modern World, 50-68 (Blackboard); Gareth Fisher, "Buddhism in China and Taiwan," Buddhism in the Modern World, 70-88 (Blackboard). Screening: Monk by Blood (dir. Ema Ryan Yamazaki, 2013).	
11/18	Individual presentations on final research papers and wrap-up discussion		Individual presentations on final research papers First draft of final research paper due on Blackboard by 11.59pm on Sunday, November 22.
11/25	The instructor will schedule optional online meetings with students to discuss their research papers on Monday and Tuesday of this week.		First draft of final research paper due on Blackboard by 11.59pm on Sunday, November 22.
12/2			Revised version of the final research paper is due on Blackboard by 11.59pm on Wednesday, December 4 (the scheduled date for the final exam is December 2, which gives you two extra days for this assignment).

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.