COMM 2305 - Rhetoric of Popular Culture: Rhetoric of Pop Culture-WIN

Spring 2026 Syllabus, Section 201, CRN 28104

Instructor Information

Stephanie Mancha
Email: stephanie.mancha@tamiu.edu
Office Hours:
By appointment only

Times and Location

MWF 10:50am-11:45am in Bullock Hall 201

Course Description

The course explores the intersection of rhetorical theory and media imagery. Examines the rhetorical significance of multiple popular mediums of cultural exchange including: television programming, music, film, advertisement, and social media.
Psychology & Communication 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

WRITING INTENSIVE (WIN) COURSE EXPECTATIONS

This course is designated as Writing Intensive (WIN), meaning writing is central to both your learning and evaluation. You will write regularly throughout the semester, completing weekly discussion posts (250-350 words) that encourage informal but thoughtful engagement with course concepts. Your final will be a research paper (8-10 pages) that you will develop through multiple stages. The research paper process includes submitting a topic proposal, an annotated bibliography, a first draft, and a second draft before producing your final polished paper. This multi-draft approach is essential to WIN courses—you will receive detailed feedback at each stage and have opportunities for revision, allowing you to improve both your argument and your writing.

You are responsible for being aware of all assignment due dates and submitting work on time. Plan ahead and manage your workload throughout the semester—writing takes time, be sure to schedule accordingly.

Participation: Because this is a communication course, students will be expected to contribute to class discussions and take part in in-class exercises. Participation, along with attendance, counts for 5% of your grade It is up to all of us to create an open and welcoming environment that will enable such participation. Please be respectful of your peers and your instructor.

Attendance: Your attendance counts for 5% of your grade and will be recorded at every class meeting. If you must miss class, please notify me in advance.

Late Work Policy: This is a **Writing Intensive (WIN)** course in which written assignments are central to learning, discussion, and assessment. Because evaluating written work requires significant time and planning, **late work will not be accepted** unless the student has an **appropriate and documented excuse** (e.g., illness, family emergency, or university-approved activity).

Students should communicate with the instructor as soon as possible if unforeseen circumstances arise. Timely submission of work ensures fairness to all students and allows the instructor to provide meaningful feedback in a reasonable timeframe.

Blackboard: I will post all course materials on Blackboard. It is your responsibility to check this site daily for updates and read all materials I post. Please have your email and Blackboard apps on your personal devices. Turning on notifications is highly encouraged to keep up to date with the class.

Course Structure: The course is structured around six thematic units that progress from foundational concepts to complex applications of rhetorical theory. You will complete weekly discussion posts (250-350 words) provide opportunities for informal engagement with course materials and current media examples. You will also respond to two student posts (100-150 words each). Your final is a research paper (8-10 pages) that is developed through multiple stages. The schedule includes in-class workshop days where you'll participate in peer review and receive individualized guidance.

File Submission Guidelines: To ensure smooth, timely grading, students are asked to submit assignments in an approved file format. Accepted submission formats include DOCX, PDF, PPTX, TXT, RTF, ODT, HTML, and ZIP files containing approved materials. Submissions that do not follow these guidelines may be considered incomplete. **Links to Google Docs or other cloud-based documents will not be accepted.** Students may write directly in Blackboard if that option is available; however, it is strongly recommended that work be drafted in a separate program (such as Microsoft Word) and saved before submission in case of connectivity or system issues.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) Use Policy: The use of AI tools in this course is permitted for specific, limited purposes that support your learning and writing process, but **all written work must be your own**. You are allowed to use tools like Grammarly, Microsoft Editor, or similar grammar and spell-check software to identify and correct mechanical errors in your writing. You may also use AI tools for preliminary brainstorming, generating topic ideas, or organizing your initial thoughts about an assignment. However, you are strictly prohibited from using AI to complete entire assignments, write substantial portions of your required work, or generate content that you submit as your own. AI tools cannot replace your critical thinking, personal analysis, or individual voice in analytical papers—these are essential components of your learning in this course.

Specifically, AI may NOT be used for:

- Completing entire assignments or having AI write paragraphs, sections, or drafts that you submit as your own work
- Taking exams, quizzes, or discussion posts without explicit instructor permission
- Replacing critical thinking, original analysis, or personal reflection in your papers
- Generating content for your final research paper beyond the brainstorming stage

Program Learning Outcomes

PLO 1. Students will develop critical thinking skills to evaluate theories and approaches to selected media and communication problems.

PLO 2. Students will effectively communicate oral, written, and audiovisual messages addressing communication-related issues and/or problems.

PLO 3. Students will apply communication knowledge and skills in professional settings to improve communication processes and outcomes.

Student Learning Outcomes

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

- Apply rhetorical theory to analyze contemporary popular culture texts
- Conduct in-depth rhetorical analyses using discipline-specific methodologies
- Develop arguments supported by scholarly research and textual evidence
- Produce clear, well-organized academic writing through multiple drafts and revisions
- Critically evaluate how television programming, music, film, advertisement, and social media operate rhetorically in digital culture

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
Optional	Rhetoric in Popular Culture	Brummett, Barry	

Other Course Materials

Additional reading and video materials will be uploaded to Blackboard

Grading Criteria

WEEKLY DISCUSSION POSTS & PEER RESPONSES

Each week, you will write one discussion post (250-350 words) that applies course concepts to current popular culture examples. Posts are typically **due on Fridays by 11:59 PM**. After submitting your post, you must respond to **at least two classmates** with thoughtful feedback (100-150 words each). Peer responses are typically **due on Mondays by 11:59 PM**. These posts help you practice rhetorical analysis in a low-stakes environment while engaging with your peers' ideas.

FINAL RESEARCH PAPER GUIDELINES

Topic: Students will select a contemporary popular culture text, trend, or phenomenon and conduct an in-depth rhetorical analysis that synthesizes what they've learned throughout the course. Students must choose from one of the following media forms for analysis:

- **Television programming** (series, episodes, streaming content)
- **Film** (movies, documentaries, film marketing campaigns)
- **Music** (music videos, albums, artist personas, songs)
- **Advertising** (commercials, sponsored content, brand campaigns)
- **Social media** (TikTok, Instagram, Twitter/X, YouTube, etc.)

At least one of your 3+ course themes must engage with the specific affordances and rhetorical strategies unique to your chosen medium.

Requirements:

- 8-10 pages (double-spaced, 12pt font, Times New Roman, 1" margins) APA format
- Minimum 6 academic sources (scholarly articles, books, reputable media sources)
- Must apply rhetorical theories from Brummett and supplementary readings
- Must include a close analysis of specific examples
- Must demonstrate critical thinking about power, representation, and cultural meaning-making
- Citation style: APA format

Timeline:

- **March 2:** Topic Proposal (1 page describing your chosen text/phenomenon, media form, and which course themes you'll engage)
- **March 27:** Annotated Bibliography (6+ sources with summaries and relevance explanations)
- **April 17:** First Draft (3-4 pages, complete argument with evidence)
- **May 1:** Second Draft (6-8 pages, incorporating feedback)
- **May 8:** Final Paper (8-10 pages, polished and proofread)

Grading Breakdown

- Attendance & Participation: **5%**
- Discussion Posts & Peer Responses: **15%**
- Final Paper Topic Proposal: **10%**
- Annotated Bibliography: **10%**
- Final Paper – Draft #1: **15%**

- Final Paper – Draft #2: **15%**
- Final Paper – Final Draft: **30%**

Total: 100%

A= 91-100%, B=80-90.9%, C= 70-79.9%, D= 60-69.9%, F= 59% and below

NOTE: The instructor maintains the right to change this schedule. It may be changed to accommodate student and/or instructor needs. It is the student's responsibility to follow the provided schedule for assignment due dates and reading assignments. The schedule provided in this syllabus will inform students of the dates, and it is their responsibility to keep up with approaching deadlines. These dates may not always be announced in class, but it does not excuse the student from completing the required reading and assignments.

Schedule of Topics and Assignments

Week of	Agenda/Topic	Reading(s)	Due
1/21	Unit 1: Foundations Syllabus, Introductions, What is Rhetoric?	Chapter 1	
1/26		Continue Chapter 1 & 2 Additional Readings Available on Blackboard	Discussion Post #1 Due Friday @ 11:59 pm
2/2		Continue Chapter 2 Addtional Readings Available On Blackboard	Peer Response #1 due Monday @ 11:59 pm Discussion #2 Due Friday @ 11:59 pm
2/9	Unit 2: Representation & Power	Chapter 3	Peer Response #2 due Monday @ 11:59 pm Discussion #3 Due Friday @ 11:59 pm
2/16		Chapter 4 Additional Materials Available on Blackboard	Peer Response #3 Due Monday @11:59 pm Discussion #4 due Friday @ 11:59 pm
2/23	Unit 3: Identity Construction & Performance	Continue Chapter 4	Peer Response #4 due Monday @ 11:59 pm Discussion #5 due Friday @ 11:59 pm
3/2		Chapter 5	Peer Response #5 due Monday @ 11:59 pm Discussion #6 due Friday @ 11:59 pm Topic Proposal Due March 2 @ 11:59 pm
3/9	SPRING BREAK March 9 - 15		
3/16		Continue Chapter 5	Peer Response #6 due Monday 11:59 pm Discussion #7 due Friday @ 11:59 pm
3/23	Unit 4: Visual Rhetoric, Algorithms, Persuasion & Virality	Additional Material on Blackboard Using Chapter 4 & 5	Peer Response #7 due Monday @ 11:59 pm Discussion #8 due Friday @ 11:59 pm Annotated Bilbliography Due March 27 @ 11:59 pm
3/30		Additional Materials on Blackboard	Peer Response #8 due Monday @11:59 pm Discussion #9 due Friday @ 11:59 pm
4/6		Chapter 3 Additional Materials on Blackboard	Peer Resonse #9 due Monday @ 11:59 pm Discussion #10 due Friday @ 11:59 pm
4/13	Unit 5: Fandom as Rhetorical Community	Continue Chapter 3 & 4 Additional Materials on Blackboard	Peer Response #10 due Monday @ 11:59 pm Discussion #11 due Friday @ 11:59 pm First Draft of Final Paper (3 - 4 pages) Due April 17
4/20		Additional Materials on Blackboard	Peer Resonse #11 due Monday @ 11:59 pm Discussion #12 due Friday @ 11:59 pm
4/27	Unit 6: Nostalgia & Remix Culture + Synthesis		Peer Response #12 due Monday @ 11:59 pm Second Draft of Final Paper (6 - 8 pages) due May 1

5/4	Final Paper (8 - 10 pages) due May 8th @ 11:59 pm

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.