

SOCI 3301 - Research Methods in Social Sci: Res Methods in Social Sci-WIN (F13- Feb 05 to May 14)

Spring 2026 Syllabus, Section 262, CRN 28542

Instructor Information

Sung Hwan Joo

Assistant Professor, Department of Social Sciences

Email: sunghwan.joo@tamiu.edu

Office: Academic Innovation Center (AIC) 337

Office Hours:

Tue./Thu. 10:30-12:00

Office Phone: (956)326-2601

** e-mail is the BEST method of contact

Times and Location

TR 4:25pm-6pm in Bullock Hall 207

Course Description

An introduction to the scientific method as applied to social science research. Topics include research methods, research designs, the analysis of data, and basic computer techniques. This course is interchangeable with CRIJ 3301 and PSCI 3301. Prerequisites: Junior or Senior Standing and consent of COAS Advisor.

Social Sciences Department, College of Arts & Sciences

WIN-Designation

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

Additional Course Information

Statement of Accommodation and Special Needs

If you have a disability (e.g., visual impairment, hearing impairment, physical impairment, communication disorder, and/or specific learning disability, etc.) which may influence your performance in this course, you must meet with the Disability Services for Students (DSS) to arrange for reasonable accommodations to ensure an equitable opportunity to meet all the requirements of this course. If you require accommodations due to disability, please email DSS at disabilityservices@tamiu.edu or visit their campus location: Student Center 124. You will be provided an Accommodation Form indicating your accommodation needs for the Semester. Please present this form to me as soon as possible to ensure your accommodation needs are discussed, agreed upon, and provided.

Course Structure

This course is organized in a weekly format that aligns with the semester calendar. Each week will include in-class lectures, discussions, and activities designed to support your understanding of the course materials.

To supplement the face-to-face sessions, course materials will be posted on Blackboard, including weekly outcomes, required readings, assignments, and any additional resources. Students are expected to review these resources regularly and complete all assigned tasks by the posted deadlines.

Presentation slides and other supporting documents will be uploaded to Blackboard as needed. Class participation and engagement during scheduled meeting times are vital to succeeding in this course, and information covered in lectures and discussions will appear in assignments and exams.

Learning Activities

A variety of learning activities are designed to support the course objectives and build a community of learners. Learning activities for the modules include the following:

1. Reading textbook assignments
2. Reading other articles as assigned
3. Attending lectures and viewing other assigned videos
4. Completing the assignments
5. Studying for your exams
6. Completing quizzes and exams
7. Asking questions when you do not understand

Course Policies

Participation Policy

Students are expected to read this syllabus in its entirety and ask if there are any questions or concerns well before any assignments are due.

Students are expected to participate in the Blackboard learning environment actively and to complete all assignments in a timely manner. Infrequent and inconsistent participation and work completion will reduce the benefits that may be obtained from the course, as well as lead to a lower grade.

Active participation in the course includes regularly checking and reading your email, as well as accessing the course on Blackboard. I will post all messages as announcements on Blackboard, which will also be emailed directly to you.

Active participation also includes reaching out to me if you have any questions, concerns, or problems with the course. I will work with you to help you succeed in the course.

Make-Up Policy

Assignments are due by 11:59 PM (CDT) on the indicated due date (see the Course Schedule). It is expected that students will complete all assigned readings and assignments by the respective due date.

There will be no opportunity for making up missed assignments of any kind unless a student has made arrangements – in writing/email – with me prior to the due date of the assignment. Please note that any makeup quizzes/exams/assignments may be entirely essay and application questions.

The entire semester's schedule has been provided for you in the Course Schedule. Please plan your semester accordingly.

Electronic Communication / Email Policy

I can be reached via email and will try to respond within 24 hours (it may be longer during the weekend). Email is the best and quickest way to reach me. Calling my office phone will result in a delayed response. If you need to speak with me, we can set up an online meeting.

Students are required to use a Texas A&M International University email address for all academic activities. The purpose of this policy relates to issues of confidentiality and security and to ensure receipt of information from the Texas A&M International University and your individual college. Failure to check your TAMU email will not constitute a failure of communication on the part of the university, this college, or this program.

All email communication must have a subject line indicating the course name and/or course number. Additionally, all email communication must begin with "Dr. Joo," and end with your first and last names. This is a courtesy that you should follow for all your academic and professional emails.

It is important to understand how to interact with one another online, sometimes called netiquette. A good rule of thumb is to write nothing online that you wouldn't be willing to say in person. You can read more about the rules of netiquette (<http://www.albion.com/netiquette/corerules.html>) here.

No part of this course (including but not limited to lecture materials, online discussion posts, assignments, or exams) is to be posted to any online or offline platform without the written permission of the instructor.

Academic Integrity Policy

Academic dishonesty and misconduct, as defined by Texas A&M International University, will not be tolerated.

Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, falsifying work (e.g., fabricating/altering research data), cheating (e.g., copying others' work) and plagiarism (e.g., submitting another's published work without properly crediting the author; submitting a student's own work used in a previous course).

Students are expected to abide by the TAMIU Code of Conduct. Any academic dishonesty or misconduct (regardless of the intent of the student) will be reported and dealt with pursuant to TAMIU policy.

It is the policy of the professor to assign a failing grade on the assignment for an initial violation and then in the course for any subsequent violations of the TAMIU Code of Conduct.

Please see the following links for more details: TAMIU's Academic Integrity page (<https://www.tamiau.edu/handbook/article-07.shtml>) and TAMIU's Student Code of Conduct page (<https://www.tamiau.edu/handbook/article-06.shtml>).

Course Changes Policy

This syllabus serves as a general plan for the course. While every effort will be made to follow the schedule as written, the instructor reserves the right to make changes in response to circumstances that may arise or to better meet course objectives. Any changes will be communicated promptly via email and/or Blackboard, and students are responsible for staying updated on such announcements.

Professor's Responsibility Policy

As a student, you should expect that I will do everything I can (within the boundaries of my position as faculty) to ensure that you succeed in the course.

1. You should expect weekly interaction with me via in-class announcements and emails.
2. You should expect your assignments to be graded within about a week after submission.
3. You should expect a response to emails and questions posted to the Course Q&A Board within about 48 hours.
4. You should expect to be notified via Blackboard and/or email of any changes to the course.

Please always feel free to reach out to me if you have any questions or concerns about the course.

The "I've read the syllabus in its entirety" Policy

As a reward for reading this syllabus in its entirety, students can obtain two bonus points on the first exam. (The bonus points will be added to the Part 1 score.)

To obtain the bonus points, students must first read the syllabus in its entirety and then post the title of their favorite book, movie, music, or video game (or all four!) to the "I've read the syllabus in its entirety" discussion board on Blackboard Ultra by the end of the second module (i.e., Sunday by 11:59 pm CDT).

For the sake of transparency, and since I am making you folks choose, my favorite book is the Robert Langdon series, like *Angels and Demons* by Dan Brown, my favorite movie is Lilo & Stitch (only an animation version), and my favorite video game is probably Starcraft (Civilization V would be up there as well).

I wish all of you a successful and safe semester!

Student Learning Outcomes

- CO1: Students will be able to demonstrate critical thinking and analytical writing skills involved in social science research methods.
- CO2: Students will be able to develop research questions, variables, and hypotheses based on their own research interests in the social science field.
- CO3: Students will be able to explain and analyze the validity and reliability in measurement and research design in social science.
- CO4: Students will be able to develop literature review table to critically evaluate research in social science fields.
- CO5: Students will be able to design surveys or other appropriate instruments to collect data for their own research interests.
- CO6: Students will be able to apply the appropriate research methods in practices in social science field to solve real-world problems.

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	Research Methods in the Social Sciences. (8th edition)	Frankfort-Nachmias, Nachmias and DeWaard	978-1-4292-3300-2

Grading Criteria

[Final Grade Breakdown]

1. **Exams (2):** 25%
2. **Final Exam:** 20% (Includes a written component of at least 20%)
3. **Writing Assignment 1:** 15% (Sections 1 & 2)
4. **Writing Assignment 2:** 15% (Section 3 & Final Proposal)
5. **Chapter Quizzes:** 10% (Two lowest grades will be dropped)
6. **In-Class Activities & Professionalism:** 10%
7. **Virtual Individual Presentation:** 5% (8-minute video recording)

GRADE	PERCENTAGE
A	91-100
B	80-90.9
C	70-79.9
D	60-69.9
F	Below 60

Open Boilerplate

Participation/Attendance:

Students must attend this class on time. While attendance is not officially assessed as a standalone grade, it is intrinsically linked to your "In-Class Activities & Professionalism" score (10%). If you cannot attend the class on time, you must notify the professor of your absence. Please check your student handbook and the most updated university policy for acceptable reasons for an absence. You are responsible for providing satisfactory evidence within seven calendar days of your absence and return to class. Late attendance will be recorded within 15 minutes after the regular class time starts; after 15 minutes, it is not considered as total attendance, and three instances of late attendance will be regarded as one absence. In some weeks, we will have in-class exercises, and grades will be offered for these activities. Since this is a face-to-face course, lectures will not be recorded or delivered online. If you miss a class, the best way to catch up is by reading the textbook and slides and borrowing notes from classmates.

Furthermore, to earn full credit for the Professionalism component, students must adhere to professional communication standards. All email correspondence must be professional and begin with "Dr. Joo" as the formal address. Professionalism also includes meeting all deadlines for writing assignments and the virtual 8-minute presentation. You may use your electronic devices during the class; however, if they are not correctly used for the class, they will not be allowed in some cases. Based on the university's policy, makeup options are only provided for acceptable reasons, and this policy will be implemented strictly during this semester.

Online Quizzes:

There will be a quiz on most of the chapters to ensure students are reading the textbook and assessing their knowledge of basic concepts. Quizzes will be delivered through Blackboard, consisting of 10 questions with a 20-minute time limit. You are permitted to use your textbook during the quiz.

Each quiz will open for 48 hours once we finish a chapter. Please note that late submissions will be recorded as ZERO. To account for unexpected circumstances or technical difficulties, the two (2) lowest quiz grades will be dropped at the end of the semester.

** If you encounter any technology issues while taking a quiz, please contact OIT for assistance immediately.

Writing Assignments:

To ensure the successful development of a research proposal, this course follows a three-step milestone process.

Research Topic and Question

Students must select a research topic related to their major and submit a formal research question for approval. This preliminary step ensures that the topic is manageable and scientifically sound. This initial draft is due on **February 26, 2026**, through the Blackboard Discussion Board.

Writing Assignment I – Literature Review

Building upon the approved research question from Step 1, students will conduct a comprehensive literature review. This assignment requires finding ten (10) peer-reviewed journal articles and summarizing them to establish the foundation of the research. An assignment example and rubric will be provided on Blackboard. You must use Microsoft Word for this assignment and submit it via Blackboard by **March 26, 2026**.

Writing Assignment II – Research Proposal

The final assignment is a complete research proposal that integrates the introduction, background, research questions, literature review (Section 2), and a detailed methodology plan (Section 3). This assignment must be processed through the Turnitin system on Blackboard. Only assignments with a similarity index of less than 30% will be accepted for grading. Even if the threshold is met, the project remains subject to further scrutiny for originality. More instructions and rubrics will be provided on Blackboard. This final proposal is due on **April 23, 2026**.

Examinations:

There will be three (3) examinations: two (2) during the semester and a final exam. In accordance with TAMU College of Arts & Sciences policy, the final exam will be comprehensive and include a written component comprising at least 20% of the grade. All exams are open-book, and study guides will be provided beforehand. Please note that make-up examinations will be granted only under extreme, documented circumstances and are subject to instructor approval. If a make-up exam is approved, it will be administered at the TAMU Testing Center. Otherwise, all exams are to be taken in the classroom.

Presentation:

For the final project, each student will record a **virtual individual presentation**. Students must submit an **8-minute video recording** that concisely presents their final research proposal after the submission of Writing Assignment II. This format allows you to present your research design and findings in a professional manner. Detailed instructions regarding recording tools and submission links on Blackboard will be provided later in the semester. This presentation submission is due **April 30, 2026**.

Academic Honesty

Plagiarism and cheating are NOT acceptable in this course. Please check the university's policy, which is attached at the end of this syllabus. Please read it carefully. If any specious behaviors happen, the professor will use the university's policy to make a fair judgment. You are responsible for the consequences.

In this class, there are several writing assignments. Please use APA citation style to avoid plagiarism in the writing assignments. Please use the APA's seventh edition of the manual as guidance. TAMU writing center has excellent resources for the APA style.

Based on school policy, this course does not fully allow students to use an AI generator (i.e., ChatGPT) for anything, mainly writing work. Asking good questions is necessary, but not for this class with AI. I will give the instructions, and out of that, this will be considered Plagiarism. Since many AI detectors can identify AI-generating works, if they detect students, they should meet the instructions, which would be reported to the School Council as academic dishonesty and critically influence the record under the school policy. No excuses will accommodate it. Please do all the work yourself, and you can read the school policy in the last section of the syllabus.

Course Structure

This is a face-to-face course. Students are expected to read assigned chapters and complete all tasks on time. While electronic devices (laptops/tablets) are permitted for class-related activities, they are strictly prohibited during exams. Please be aware that using devices for non-class purposes (texting, social media, etc.) will hinder your learning and may result in poor academic performance. As a WIN-designated course, students will engage in an intensive, multi-stage research project. Success in this course requires active engagement with the instructor and diligent adherence to the writing milestones.

Student-Instructor Communication Policy and Response Time

Course Messages/Emails

Email is the **BEST** method of contact. All official communication must be professional and begin with "**Dr. Joo**" as the formal address. During workdays (Monday-Friday, 8:00 am to 5:00 pm), I usually reply within 24 hours. During weekends and holidays, please allow up to 48 hours for a response. If you do not hear back within these timeframes, please send a reminder.

Technology Requirements

This course utilizes Blackboard for all materials, quizzes, and assignments. Students must check Blackboard daily for announcements and updates. You will need Microsoft Word and PowerPoint to complete and view course files; these are available for free through your TAMU Office 365 account. If you encounter any technical issues with Blackboard or your account, please contact the OIT Help Desk or Technical Support Services immediately.

Late Work Policy

Late submissions will **NOT** be accepted under any circumstances unless a prior agreement has been made with the instructor. In the case of a documented medical emergency or other extreme extenuating circumstances, as per University Policies, students must provide appropriate evidence within seven calendar days of the deadline. However, even in these cases, you are responsible for contacting the instructor at your earliest convenience to discuss the situation. Without explicit prior approval or valid documented evidence, any late work will automatically receive a grade of ZERO. There will be no exceptions to this rule.

ASSIGNMENT	VALUE
Two Exams	25%
Final Exam	20%
Writing Assignment 1	15%
Writing Assignment 2	15%
Chapter Quizzes (2 lowest will be dropped)	10%
In-Class Activities & Professionalism	10%
Individual Presentation for Final Paper	5%

Schedule of Topics and Assignments

Day	Date	Agenda/Topic	Reading(s)	Due
Thu	2/5	Course Overview / Student Responsibilities / Blackboard Familiarization / Acknowledgement The Scientific Approach		
Tue	2/10	The Scientific Approach	Chapter 1	
Thu	2/12	Conceptual Foundations of Research	Chapter 2	
Tue	2/17	Conceptual Foundations of Research	Chapter 2	
Thu	2/19	Conceptual Foundations of Research	Chapter 2	
Tue	2/24	Conceptual Foundations of Research Elements of Research	Chapter 2 & 3	
Thu	2/26	Elements of Research	Chapter 3	
Tue	3/3	Ethics in Social Science Research	Chapter 4	
Thu	3/5	No Class: ACJS Conference		Step1: Research Topic & Question (03/06)
Tue	3/10	No Class: Spring Break		
Thu	3/12	No Class: Spring Break		
Tue	3/17	Exam 1 Review		
Thu	3/19	Exam 1 (Chapter 1-4)		
Tue	3/24	Research Designs: Experiments Research Designs: Cross-Sectional	Chapter 5 Chapter 6	
Thu	3/26	Measurement	Chapter 7	Writing Assignment I - Literature Review (03/27)
Tue	3/31	Measurement	Chapter 7	
Thu	4/2	Sampling and Sample Designs	Chapter 8	
Tue	4/7	Sampling and Sample Designs	Chapter 8	

Thu	4/9	Survey Research	Chapter 10	
Tue	4/14	Survey Research	Chapter 10	
Thu	4/16	Exam 2 Review		
Tue	4/21	Exam 2 (Chapters 5-8)		
Thu	4/23	Questionnaire Construction	Chapter 11	Writing Assignment II - Final Paper (04/24)
Tue	4/28	Secondary Data and Content Analysis	Chapter 13	
		Data Preparation and Analysis	Chapter 14	
Thu	4/30	Univariate Distribution	Chapter 15	Virtual Presentation (04/30)
		Bivariate Distribution	Chapter 16	
Tue	5/5	Final Exam		

University/College Policies

Please see the University Policies below.

COVID-19 Related Policies

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

Required Class Attendance

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

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

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

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

In the classroom, students are expected to listen attentively, participate respectfully, and adhere to established rules. Behavior that interferes with the class lecture may result in disciplinary action, ensuring a productive and respectful learning environment for everyone. Any disputes over academic matters should be addressed calmly and constructively, ideally during designated times such as office hours or after class. If a student does not agree with a decision, they can request a meeting with the instructor to discuss their concerns in more detail. Should further resolution be needed, the student may escalate the matter to the department head or use formal grievance procedures as outlined in the sections below. (please refer to Student Handbook Article 4 (<https://www.tamui.edu/handbook/article-04.shtml>)).

TAMUI Honor Code: Plagiarism and Cheating

As a TAMUI student, you are bound by the TAMUI Honor Code to conduct yourself ethically in all your activities as a TAMUI 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.tamui.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 \(https://www.tamiu.edu/handbook/index.shtml\)](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.