

# UNIV 1302 - Signature Course: Train Like a Jedi, Think Like a Maverick

## Spring 2026 Syllabus, Section 212, CRN 27993

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### Instructor Information

**Marcus Antonius Ynalvez**  
Professor of Sociology  
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Office Hours:  
Tuesdays, Thursdays 3-4 PM; Virtual or In-Person  
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### Times and Location

TR 1:15pm-2:35pm in Bullock Hall 104

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### Course Description

This course builds on UNIV 1201 by expanding student focus from self-awareness to global awareness. Designed to introduce undergraduates to in-depth analysis from an interdisciplinary perspective, students will explore community issues through a problem-based approach. This course will foster community engagement by integrating University and other relevant resources. Prerequisite: Successful completion or concurrent enrollment in UNIV 1201.

University College Department, University College

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### Additional Course Information

#### Scope and Overall Objective

What do Jedi Masters, Sith Lords, and Top Gun instructors have in common? They train legends.

This signature course examines the *sociology of elite training and mentorship* through two of pop culture's most electrifying worlds: the Star Wars universe and the Top Gun series. From the disciplined serenity of Jedi training to the seductive intensity of Sith apprenticeship and the high-octane rigor of U.S. naval aviator schooling, students will explore how greatness is constructed, challenged, and transmitted.

Drawing on classical and contemporary sociological theory, including (but not limited to) Weber, Marx, Pareto, Mosca, Michels, and Merton, students will analyze how institutions, rituals, ideologies, and relationships shape elite individuals. Core themes include charisma, deviance, hierarchy, identity formation, and the mentor-protégé bond. Case studies span Obi-Wan and Anakin's tragic arc, Yoda's mentorship of Luke, Maverick's rebellious pedagogy, and Phoenix's rise in Top Gun: Maverick.

Through critical engagement with film, theory, and culture, students will investigate how societies define excellence and how individuals navigate, resist, or transform elite systems. Whether you are drawn to the light, the dark, or the danger zone, this course offers a thrilling launchpad for your intellectual journey at TAMIU.

No prior knowledge of sociology or films is required; only curiosity, courage, and a willingness to question the path to excellence and quality performance.

#### Marketable Skills (Skills Important in the Contemporary Workplace)

1. Strategic Analysis of High-Performance Systems

Students learn to break down how elite entities (in the military, sports, corporate settings, and creative industries) train, evaluate, and elevate top performers – a skill directly applicable to leadership, human resources, program design, and organizational strategy.

## 2. Power Dynamics and Leadership Insight

Students gain the ability to identify charisma, influence, hierarchy, and deviance in real teams and institutions – essential for navigating workplace politics, leading groups, and understanding how decisions get made.

## 3. Story Driven Communication and Persuasive Presentation

Students practice turning complex ideas into clear, engaging narratives using film, theory, and case studies – a highly transferable skill for marketing, teaching, public speaking, consulting, and professional writing.

## 4. Designing Effective Mentorship and Training Models

Students learn how to build mentorship structures and training plans grounded in evidence and theory – valuable for coaching, onboarding, supervision, education, and leadership development.

### **Course Expectations**

Students are expected to attend all class meetings and participate actively in discussions, activities, and collaborative analysis. UNIV 1302 is an in-person course and is designed to be highly interactive. Our exploration of elite training, mentorship, charisma, and institutional power requires dialogue – not passive absorption. My role will be both instructor and moderator, guiding the conversation and discussion while creating space for multiple voices, interpretations, and perspectives.

The “flow of information and ideas” in this course will be multi-directional. This reflects the realities of contemporary global society, where communication technologies amplify multiple voices and reshape how knowledge circulates. In this class, students are not merely recipients of information; they are co-interpreters of film, theory, and culture.

Students are expected to complete assigned readings and viewings before class and arrive prepared to engage. I firmly believe that learning is reciprocal: students learn from instructors, and instructors learn from students. This mutual exchange is essential if we are to move beyond memorizing concepts and instead generate new insights, synthesize ideas, and challenge assumptions.

Because societies evolve, so must our understanding of social processes. This course invites students to be dynamic rather than static, proactive rather than passive – not simply “being,” but continually “becoming” more reflective and thoughtful, analytical, and responsibly aware participants in the world.

### Instructor’s Note

- Learning is a lifelong process. I do not claim to know everything – I make mistakes, I revise, I learn. What I can promise is that I will guide you, challenge you, and support your growth.
- Elite training – whether Jedi, Sith, or Top Gun – is not about perfection. It is about continuous retooling, staying relevant, and refusing to be marginalized by complacency.
- Bring your curiosity, your energy, and your willingness to think boldly. If you do that, you will thrive.

### **Course Pedagogical Materials**

Reading materials in the form of peer-reviewed journal articles will be provided and uploaded onto Blackboard, our course management software. Selected quality YouTube reels pertaining to Star Wars episodes 1-6 and Top Gun (1986) and Top Gun: Maverick (2022) will be provided.

**Reminders and Instructor’s Note:** To succeed in this class, students *should attend all lectures* and keep up with understanding assigned materials. As a final reminder, this course places an extremely high premium on 1) academic honesty, 2) determination and passion, 3) analytical thinking, 4) the ability to apply concepts and principles learned in class to real-life situations and problems, 4) high performance and competency, and 5) honesty.

The instructor reserves the right to make adjustments to the syllabus when such changes are pedagogically appropriate or necessary due to unforeseen circumstances. Any modifications will be communicated to students in a timely manner through official class announcements and updated course materials. All changes will be implemented in a manner that preserves the quality of instruction and upholds the course’s commitment to student success, ensuring that academic standards and learning outcomes remain fully supported.

**Important Note About Sociology as an Academic Discipline:** This course is sociological in its basis and foundation. Sociology is a field that examines how societies function, how institutions shape behavior, and how individuals and groups experience social life. Because sociology seeks to

understand the full range of human experiences, students will encounter topics that may include inequality, family structures, religion, social conflict, stigma, deviance, and other forms of social dimensions and forces.

These topics are approached **from an academic and analytical perspective**, not from a standpoint of advocacy or personal persuasion. The goal is to help students:

- understand how social systems operate
- analyze evidence and scholarly arguments
- think critically about how institutions shape opportunities and constraints
- engage respectfully with multiple perspectives

Students are not required nor encouraged to agree with any particular viewpoint. Instead, they are encouraged to practice intellectual openness, evidence-based reasoning, and respectful dialogue, which are essential skills in the social sciences and in a democratic society.

In this classroom, discussion is guided by:

- academic standards
- scholarly research
- analytical, intellectual, and applied-oriented thinking
- respect for differing viewpoints
- a commitment to civil and constructive engagement

Sociology courses often address sensitive or complex issues, and students are expected to participate in these discussions thoughtfully, professionally, and grounded in the course materials.

**Artificial Intelligence (AI) Use Policy:** AI is a reality of the digital age; it is a social fact and will be part of everyday life. That said, its nature, architecture, use, and engagement are recognized and valued, but will need to be contextualized to ensure independent learning, critical thinking, and original creativity and discovery. In this Signature Course, the use, engagement, and treatment of AI (e.g., Grammarly, MS Co-Pilot, ChatGPT, Google Gemini, etc.) will depend on the set rules of expected behavior for a particular assignment, homework, activity, or assessment. Note that there will be assignments, homework, recitation sessions, and quizzes that will allow you to use and utilize AI but do note that there will also be instances when AI will not be permitted. Neither the midterm nor the final examinations will allow you to access and use AI. These examinations will be in-class, paper-based, and will not allow you to access the internet or any form of digital signaling, transacting, or communicating (e.g., cellular data use). AI is a permutation of existing knowledge and information (permuted knowledge) gathered logically together to respond to a prompt; academic training, on the other hand, challenges students to develop their own original, creative, and transformational knowledge and syntheses (synthesized knowledge).

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## Program Learning Outcomes

1. Think critically and creatively by utilizing skills such as innovation, inquiry, analysis, evaluation, and synthesis of information (CT).
2. Consider different points of view to work effectively with others to support a shared purpose or goal (TW).

## Student Learning Outcomes

1. Define, elaborate, and innovate on foundational sociological concepts and principles related to elite training using classical, contemporary, and emergent sociological theories.
2. Describe, analyze, and explain how institutions and structures, rituals and ideologies, and mentor-mentee relationships across contexts (academic, military, music, sports, etc.) shape elite training.
3. Apply sociological concepts, principles, and theories (e.g., Weber, Marx, Pareto, Mosca, Michels, etc.) to analyze, evaluate, innovate and improve elite training systems.

## Important Dates

Visit the Academic Calendar ([tamui.edu](https://www.tamui.edu)) (<https://www.tamui.edu/academiccalendar/>) page to view the term's important dates.

## Other Course Materials

Reading materials in the form of peer-reviewed journal articles will be provided and uploaded onto Blackboard, our course management software. Film reels/clips (quality summary reels from You Tube) and the films (Top Gun and Top Gun: Maverick) will be provided by the instructor.

## Grading Criteria

Success in this course requires consistent engagement, disciplined preparation, and a willingness to think analytically and critically about elite training, mentorship, institutional power, etc. Like the worlds we study – the Jedi Order, the Sith, and the U.S. Navy Fighter Weapons School – excellence is cultivated through practice, discipline, reflection, and commitment.

The student completing the course with the highest numeric grade will receive the "**TOP GUN: MAVERICK AWARD**," while the student with the second-highest numeric grade will receive the "**TOP GUN: ICEMAN AWARD**". The student with the highest grade in the TVP will receive the "**ANAKIN SKYWALKER BLUE LIGHT SABER AWARD**."

Your grade will be based on the following components:

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### 1. Midterm Examination – 15%

A combination of multiple-choice and short essay questions assessing your ability to integrate:

- Classical elite theorists (Marx, Weber, Pareto, Mosca, Michels, etc.)
- Contemporary elite scholarship (from journal articles)
- Film and reel analysis/synopsis (Star Wars Episodes I–VI, Top Gun, Top Gun Maverick)

The midterm assesses how well you understand core concepts and how effectively you can apply theoretical knowledge to film case studies, as well as to real-world issues, social challenges, and workplace situations.

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### 2. Final Examination – 20%

A comprehensive assessment covering the entire course.

Includes:

- Multiple-choice questions
- Short essays
- One integrative analysis question connecting theory, film, and one of the assigned peer-reviewed articles
- The final examination is comprehensive and will cover all materials and topics from start to finish of the semester.

The final exam evaluates your development throughout the semester, as well as your capacity to integrate complex concepts and apply them to practical scenarios, societal challenges, and professional environments.

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### 3. Quizzes & Assignments – 15%

Short, frequent assessments designed to reinforce reading comprehension and theoretical application.

These may include:

- In-class quizzes
- Take-home reflections
- Oral mini-explanations
- Short analytic memos
- Assignments

- NOTE: Each of these can and cannot involve the use of artificial intelligence (AI); the use of AI will depend on the rules of engagement for each element. In other words, there will be assignments and/or quizzes that will allow you to access AI, and there will be others that will not.

Policies:

- No make#up quizzes
- If we complete 10 or more quizzes, the two lowest are dropped
- If fewer than 10, one lowest is dropped
- Late assignments lose 2.5 points per day

These tasks keep you sharp, consistent, and engaged – the academic equivalent of flight drills or lightsaber practice.

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#### 4. Technical Analysis Video Project (TVP) – 25%

A signature assignment modeled after elite performance evaluations. Each student will produce a 6#minute video#recorded technical analysis of a randomly assigned, not#covered#in#class peer#reviewed article on elite training, performance, or institutional power. The TVP will be evaluated using the [critical thinking rubric](#) below (**NOTE:** The rubric is visible in the draft SYL version but may not be visible in the published version. If this is the case, then a copy of the rubric will also be published in Blackboard):

Requirements:

- You must be visible, seen, and heard throughout the video
- The analysis must:
  - Summarize the article's core argument
  - Identify its theoretical lineage and two core concepts germane to the sociology of elite training
  - Connect it to at least one film/reel from the course
  - Offer a critical insight or extension (2 strengths, why these are strengths, 2 weaknesses, why these are weaknesses, and recommendations to overcome these weaknesses?)
- Videos are submitted digitally via the submission portal that will be created and housed in UNIV 1302 212 Blackboard course shell.
- Detailed mechanics and rubric will be provided after the midterm exams.

This project mirrors real#world elite evaluation: clarity, precision, and intellectual composure under pressure.

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#### 5. Recitation & Participation – 10%

Active engagement is essential. This course thrives on dialogue, interpretation, and collaborative meaning#making.

Participation includes:

- Contributing to discussions
- Asking thoughtful questions
- Bringing readings and films into conversation
- Demonstrating preparation and curiosity
- Respecting others' perspectives, analyses, and opinions

In elite training environments, presence matters – and so it does here.

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#### 6. Meeting with ACE Mentors – 15%

Six sessions at 30 minutes per session at the Tutoring Center (KLM 110).

**Grading Scale:**



LETTER GRADE	PERCENTAGE
A	90-100
B	80 to less than 90
C	70 to less than 80
D	60 to less than 70
F	Below 60

## Program of Instruction (20 January – 4 May 2026)

Day	Date	Agenda/Topic	Reading(s)	Due
Tue	1/20	Course Syllabus and Foundations of Elite Training Course Launch • Themes: What makes training “elite”? • Reel: Top Gun: Maverick – opening montage	Syllabus Khan, S. R. (2012). The sociology of elites. <i>Annual Review of Sociology</i> , 38, 361–377.	
Thu	1/22	Power, Authority & Institutional Formation • Theory: Max Weber • Reel: Star Wars Episode I – Jedi Temple training		
Tue	1/27	Class, Ideology & Institutional Power • Theory: Karl Marx • Reel: Episode I – Jedi Council deliberation	OPTION 1: Hartmann, M. (2000). Class-specific habitus and elite reproduction. <i>Sociological Review</i> , 48(2), 241–261. OPTION 2: Bukodi, E., & Goldthorpe, J. H. (2023). “The Northern chemist”— Truth behind the stereotype in the British scientific elite? <i>Cultures of Science</i> , 6(3), 300–312.	
Thu	1/29	Circulation of Elites • Theory: Vilfredo Pareto • Film: Top Gun (1986) – classroom drills		
Tue	2/3	Ruling Classes & Power Structures • Theory: Gaetano Mosca • Reel: Episode II – Sith political maneuvering	Useem, M., & Karabel, J. (1986). Pathways to top corporate management. <i>American Sociological Review</i> , 51(2), 184–200.	
Thu	2/5	The Iron Law of Oligarchy • Theory: Robert Michels • Reel: Episode III – Jedi Council rigidity		
Tue	2/10	The Power Elite • Theory: C. Wright Mills • Reel: Top Gun: Maverick – Pentagon briefing	Bourdieu, P. (1996). The state nobility. (Reviews from sociologists)	
Thu	2/12	Elite Settlements & Political Order •		
Tue	2/17	Cultural Capital & Training • Theory: Pierre Bourdieu • Reel: Episode IV – Luke’s early training	Scott, J. (2008). Modes of power and the re conceptualization of elites. <i>Sociological Review</i> , 56(1), 27–43.	
Thu	2/19	Elite Schools & Socialization • Theory: Shamus Khan		
Tue	2/24	Identity Formation in Elite Spaces • Theory: Seymour Martin Lipset • Reel: Episode V – Luke’s identity crisis	Higley, J., & Pakulski, J. (2012). Elite foundations of social theory. <i>Historical Social Research</i> , 37(1), 9–20.	
Thu	2/26	Role Strain & Institutional Demands • Theory: Robert K. Merton		
Tue	3/3	Theory + Film Integration Workshop; preparing for the midterm examination.		
Thu	3/5	MIDTERM EXAMINATION (In-class; paper based; no access to Internet or generative AI)		



Tue	3/10	Talent Development Environments • Theory: Bourdieu + Khan • Reel: Episode V – Yoda & Luke	Henriksen, K., Stambulova, N., & Roessler, K. (2010). Successful talent development. <i>Scandinavian Journal of Medicine &amp; Science in Sports</i> , 20(2), 122–132.
Thu	3/12	The Rocky Road to Mastery • Film: Top Gun: Maverick – simulation failures	
Tue	3/17	What Makes Champions? • Theory: Performance sociology • Reel: Episode VI – Luke’s final confrontation	Güllich, A., Barth, M., Hambrick, D. Z., & Macnamara, B. N. (2025). Recent discoveries on the acquisition of the highest levels of human performance. <i>Science</i> , 390, eadt7790. OPTIONAL: Rees, T., Hardy, L., Güllich, A., Abernethy, B., Côté, J., Woodman, T., et al. (2016). The Great British Medalists Project: A review of current knowledge on the development of the world’s best sporting talent. <i>Sports Medicine</i> , 46, 1041–1058.
Thu	3/19	Super Champions & Almosts • Film: Top Gun (1986) Maverick vs. Iceman	
Tue	3/24	Soldier Athlete Psychology • Theory: Military performance • Reel: Episode II – Clone training	OPTION 1: Meyer, V. M. (2018). Sport psychology for the soldier athlete. <i>Military Medicine</i> , 183(7–8), e270–e277. OPTION 2: Heggeness, M. L., Ginther, D. K., Larenas, M. I., & Carter#Johnson, F. D. (2023). Advancing biomedical science through investments in elite training. <i>PLOS ONE</i> , 18(2), e0272230
Thu	3/26	• Film: Top Gun: Maverick – Mission preparation	
Tue	3/31	Hardiness & Elite Selection • Theory: Stress, resilience, elite screening • Reel: Episode III – Anakin’s trials	OPTION 1: Bartone, P. T., Roland, R. R., Picano, J. J., & Williams, T. J. (2008). Psychological Hardiness predicts Special Forces success. <i>International Journal of Selection and Assessment</i> , 16(1), 78–81. OPTION 2: Givens, M. L., Eklund, K., & Platek, N. (2019). Females engaged in elite training previously only open to males. <i>Military Medicine</i> , 184(S1), 438–442.
Thu	4/2	Cognitive Demands of Elite Performance • Film: Top Gun (1986) – final dogfight	
Tue	4/7	Physiological & Cognitive Demands • Theory: Elite military physiology • Reel: Episode VI – Endor battle	OPTION 1: De Pauw, K., & Roelands, B. (2014). Elite military performance. <i>Journal of Strength and Conditioning Research</i> , 28(11), 3267–3274. OPTION 2: Lester, M., Peeling, P., Girard, O., Reid, M., et al. (2023). Expert perceptions of lower limb activity monitoring in tennis. <i>Journal of Sports Science and Medicine</i> , 22, 133–141. OPTIONAL: Van Cutsem, J., Marcora, S., De Pauw, K. et al. (2017). The Effects of Mental Fatigue on Physical Performance: A Systematic Review. <i>Sports Medicine</i> 47,1569–1588
Thu	4/9	Integrating Physiology & Sociology • Film: Top Gun: Maverick – final mission	



Tue	4/14	Mentorship & Elite Reproduction • Theory: Bourdieu + Khan • Reel: Episode V – Yoda’s pedagogy	Khan, S. R. (2011). Privilege and elite formation. <i>Qualitative Sociology</i> , 34(1), 1–20.
Thu	4/16	Dark Pedagogy & Seductive Apprenticeship • Reel: Episode III – Palpatine & Anakin	
Tue	4/21	Building a Training Model • Workshop: translating theory # practice • Reel: Comparative montage (Jedi/Sith/Navy)	Pattyn, N., Van Cutsem, J., Lacroix, E., et al. (2022). Lessons from special forces. <i>Frontiers in Sports and Active Living</i> , 4, 780767.
Thu	4/23	Mentorship Architecture • TVP development	
Tue	4/28	Integration and review session #1 and TVP development	
Thu	4/30	Integration and review session #2 and TVP development NOTE: TVP due at 11:59 PM 5/1/2026	
Tue	5/5	Reading Day	
Thu	5/7	FINAL EXAMINATION (In-class; paper based; no access to Internet or generative AI)	

## Core Curriculum Learning Outcomes

Core-Curriculum Learning Outcomes:

1. **Critical Thinking Skills (CT)** - creative thinking, innovation, inquiry, and analysis, evaluation and synthesis of information
2. **Teamwork (TW)** - ability to consider different points of view and to work effectively with others to support a shared purpose or goal
3. **Personal Responsibility (PR)** - ability to connect choices, actions and consequences to ethical decision-making

## 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.tamtu.edu/handbook/article-04.shtml>)).

## TAMU Honor Code: Plagiarism and Cheating

As a TAMU student, you are bound by the TAMU Honor Code to conduct yourself ethically in all your activities as a TAMU 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.tamtu.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.

TAMU 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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto: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.