



COMM 3309 - Special Topics in Comm: Mis- and Disinformation in the Age of Social Media and AI-WIN (SSII - July 06 to Aug 06)

Summer 2026 Syllabus, Section 480, CRN 53042

Instructor Information

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Office: ACB2 332 RELIS Campus

Office Hours:

Tuesdays and Thursdays 1:00 PM – 3:00 PM (CST) via MS Teams, and by appointment. Email me to arrange a meeting link.

Office Phone: 9793173464

Times and Location

Does Not Meet Face-to-Face

Course Description

Examines different communications topics including research underpinnings and everyday applications. May be repeated for credit when topic changes.

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

This writing-intensive course explores how false and misleading information is created, spread, and amplified through social media and AI. By analyzing real-world cases, from historical wartime propaganda to modern threats like deepfakes and coordinated influence campaigns, students will learn to evaluate evidence and critique the social and political effects of misinformation. A sequence of regular writing assignments prepares students to think clearly, write with care, and assess information critically in our evolving media environment.

The course moves from the foundations of falsehood in historical propaganda, through the platform mechanics and influencer dynamics that shape today's algorithmic publics, into the emerging frontier of generative AI, deepfakes, and personality-based political microtargeting, and concludes with the interventions and policies proposed to rebuild democratic resilience.

COURSE MODALITY

This is a fully online, asynchronous course. There are no scheduled class meetings, no synchronous video sessions, and no oral presentations. All course engagement is facilitated through the TAMIU Blackboard learning management system. Weekly modules open on Mondays at 12:01 AM CST and close on Sundays at 11:59 PM CST, except Week 5, which ends Thursday, August 6. Because this is a five-week summer term, the pace is intensive. Plan to dedicate approximately 18 to 22 hours per week to readings, writing assignments, and discussions.



HOW THIS COURSE WORKS

Each week is organized as a module on the course site. A typical weekly rhythm looks like this:

- **Begin:** Read both assigned readings and review the posted materials early in the week.
- **Apply:** Work on that week's writing assignment, whether an analytical memo, the case study, or the final paper.
- **Submit:** Submit your major deliverable by the end-of-week deadline (Sunday at 11:59 PM CST).

All work is individual. There is no group work and no oral presentation in this course. Your analysis is researched, reasoned, and written entirely on your own, and your culminating deliverable is a professionally written research essay. Work ahead whenever possible, especially on the Final Synthesis Paper, because each assignment builds toward it and the term is short.

COURSE POLICIES

ASYNCHRONOUS ENGAGEMENT POLICY

While this course is asynchronous and does not require you to log in at specific hours, it is not a "self-paced" course. It has rigid weekly milestones. Deadlines are absolute, mirror professional agency expectations, and are strictly enforced. You are expected to log into Blackboard a minimum of four times per week to monitor announcements, review instructor feedback, and complete discussion requirements.

LATE WORK POLICY

Meeting deadlines is essential in public relations, and it is essential in this course, especially given the compressed five-week schedule. Assignments are due at the date and time posted on the course site. Late work is accepted up to 48 hours after the deadline with a penalty of 10 percent per 24-hour period. Work submitted more than 48 hours late will not be accepted and will receive a zero. Because each campaign assignment feeds the next, falling behind is difficult to recover from. Submit on time and reach out early if you anticipate a problem.

MAKE-UP AND EXTENSION POLICY

Extensions are granted only for documented emergencies, such as a serious illness or a family emergency, and only when you contact me as soon as reasonably possible. Routine scheduling conflicts, technology problems, and workload from other courses do not qualify. When an emergency is documented and approved, we will agree on a revised deadline in writing.

COMMUNICATION POLICY

Professional communication is a core skill in public relations, and I expect it in this course. When you email me, use your TAMIU account, begin the subject line with "COMM 3323," state your purpose clearly, sign with your full name, and proofread before sending. I am glad to help, so please reach out early when questions or difficulties arise rather than waiting until a deadline has passed. Official announcements will be posted on the course site and sent to your TAMIU email, so check both daily.

NETIQUETTE AND ONLINE CONDUCT

Our online space functions as a professional environment. Treat classmates and the instructor with courtesy and respect, write clearly and proofread, disagree thoughtfully and without personal attacks, and protect the privacy of others. Be mindful that tone is harder to read online, so aim for clarity and professionalism in every post and message. Conduct that is disrespectful, harassing, or disruptive is not acceptable and will be addressed under university policy.

PROFESSIONALISM IN WRITTEN WORK

Every document submitted must reflect the standard expected of a senior public relations professional. All assignments must be typed, double-spaced, formatted with standard one-inch margins, and written in 12-point Times New Roman or Calibri font. Writing mechanics count. Points will be automatically deducted for spelling errors, syntax flaws, punctuation mistakes, and poor formatting.

GRADE APPEAL POLICY (24/7 RULE)

If you wish to query or appeal a grade received on an assignment, you must strictly follow the 24/7 rule:

- Wait a minimum of 24 hours after the grade is published to review all inline instructor comments thoroughly.
- Initiate the appeal in writing via email no later than 7 calendar days after the grade was posted. Your appeal must be a professionally written argument citing specific syllabus criteria to justify why the assessment warrants a regrade.

After 7 days, the grade is permanently locked and no further discussions or retroactive adjustments will occur. Grade negotiation or mercy point requests at the end of the term will not be considered.



ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Academic honesty is required of every student. Cheating, plagiarism, unauthorized collaboration, fabrication of data, and submitting another person's work as your own are violations of academic integrity and may result in a failing grade on the assignment or in the course, as well as referral for disciplinary action. Everything you submit must be your own original work, and all sources, including ideas, data, quotations, and images, must be properly cited. Students are responsible for knowing and following the standards described in the TAMIU Student Handbook and the university's academic integrity policy. If you are unsure whether something is permitted, ask me before you submit.

GENERATIVE ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE POLICY

Generative artificial intelligence tools are now part of professional communication practice, and learning to use them ethically and transparently is a legitimate part of your education. In this course, you may use generative AI tools for limited support tasks such as brainstorming topic ideas, checking grammar, or summarizing your own notes, provided you meet two conditions. First, the analysis, research, strategy, judgment, and writing in your campaign proposal must be substantially your own; AI may assist, but it may not author your work. Second, you must disclose your use of AI by adding a brief note at the end of any assignment that describes which tool you used and how you used it.

Presenting AI-generated content as your own original work, without disclosure, is a violation of academic integrity and will be treated as such. Be aware that AI tools can produce inaccurate information, fabricated sources, and unoriginal phrasing, so you are fully responsible for the accuracy, originality, and quality of everything you submit. If you have any doubt about appropriate use, ask me first.

Program Learning Outcomes

PLO 1. Critical Thinking: Graduates of the program will be able to evaluate and apply theories and approaches to solve complex communication problems.

PLO 2. Analytical Inquiry: Graduates of the program will be able to explore appropriate data, tools, or techniques to draw informed, evidence-based conclusions within communication fields.

PLO 3. Communicative Fluency: Graduates of the program will be able to communicate effectively and with high fluency in oral, written, and mediated professional contexts.

PLO 4. Applied and Collaborative Learning: Graduates of the program will be able to collaborate effectively in teams and integrate communication knowledge with practical experiences to address community or industry communication needs.

Student Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Differentiate between misinformation, disinformation, and malinformation, tracing their evolution from historical propaganda to modern digital campaigns.
2. Analyze how algorithmic architectures and social media influencer authenticity shape digital publics and accelerate the spread of unverified information.
3. Critique the intersection of generative AI and psychological persuasion, specifically how political microtargeting leverages personality traits to manipulate digital audiences.
4. Evaluate digital evidence and articulate well-reasoned, written arguments regarding the social and political consequences of a degraded information ecosystem.
5. Assess proposed technological, regulatory, and educational interventions against mis- and disinformation, weighing their documented effectiveness, practical limitations, and ethical implications for democratic resilience.

Important Dates

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

Other Course Materials

No Textbook Purchase Required

There is no required textbook for this course, and there is nothing to purchase. Each week, the required readings will be posted in the corresponding weekly module on Blackboard.



Grading Criteria

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

Assignments and Major Deliverables

As a writing-intensive (WIN) course designed for an asynchronous format, all assessments prioritize individual critical thinking, drafting, and written analysis. There are no group projects and no live presentations in this course. All work is completed and submitted individually via the Blackboard Assignment Portal. Full rubrics for every assignment are provided on Blackboard.

Weekly Analytical Memos (4 at 100 points each = 400 points)

Four 500-word analytical essays responding to the week's readings and case material, submitted in Weeks 1, 2, 3, and 4. These are not summaries. Each memo makes a focused argument that applies the week's concepts to a specific case, question, or problem, with an emphasis on clear argumentation and evidence evaluation. Each memo must cite both of that week's assigned readings in APA 7th edition format. Memo prompts are posted at the start of each week.

Influence Campaign Case Study (250 points)

A four-page midterm paper, due at the end of Week 3, deconstructing a specific historical or modern disinformation campaign of your choosing. Your case study must identify the campaign's agents and their motivations, the tactics and message strategies employed, and the platform mechanics or media structures that enabled its spread, applying the frameworks from Weeks 1 through 3. If your campaign involves synthetic media or AI-generated content, address the liar's dividend dimension.

Final Synthesis Paper (350 points)

An eight to ten-page research essay, due Thursday, August 6, 2026, by 11:59 PM CST, the final day of the term. The paper explores the societal impact of AI-generated misinformation and requires a critical assessment of proposed regulatory or technological interventions.

Your paper must develop an integrated, essay-style argument, not a series of disconnected sections, that accomplishes the following:

Impact analysis: A research-grounded assessment of how AI-generated misinformation, including synthetic media, LLM-generated content, and personality-targeted messaging, affects the social and political information ecosystem.

Case grounding: At least one developed case example anchoring the argument in a real campaign or incident; you are encouraged to build on your midterm case study.

Mechanism synthesis: An explanation of the psychological and algorithmic mechanisms, drawn from across the five weeks, that make AI-generated misinformation effective.

Intervention assessment: A critical evaluation of at least two proposed regulatory or technological interventions, weighing documented effectiveness, limitations, and ethical implications; you are encouraged to develop this from Memo 4.

Reasoned position: Your own defended conclusion about what a realistic path toward democratic resilience looks like.

The paper must draw on at least ten credible sources, including at least six peer-reviewed academic sources and at least three assigned course readings, cited in APA 7th edition format. Because the Final Synthesis Paper is evaluated in part on writing development across the term, it should visibly incorporate the instructor feedback you received on your memos and case study. Begin drafting no later than Week 3; Week 5 is four days long and cannot absorb a paper started from scratch.

ASSIGNMENT	VALUE
Weekly Analytical Memos (4 at 100 points each)	400
Influence Campaign Case Study	250
Final Synthesis Paper	350
Total	1000



Schedule of Topics and Assignments

Week of	Agenda/Topic	Reading(s)	Due
7/6	The Foundations of Falsehood: From Propaganda to the Digital Age	Wardle & Derakhshan (2017), Exec. Summary, Intro, & Part 1 Posetti & Matthews (2018)	Analytical Memo 1
7/13	Algorithmic Publics and Influencer Authenticity: Platform Mechanics and Digital Communities	Vosoughi, Roy, & Aral (2018) Cotter (2019)	Analytical Memo 2
7/20	Deepfakes and Generative AI: Synthetic Realities and Media Manipulation	Chesney & Citron (2019), Parts I–II Goldstein et al. (2023), Exec. Summary & Sections 1–3 The short SIFT protocol (Caulfield, 2019) for the Case Study verification component	Analytical Memo 3; Influence Campaign Case Study
7/27	Political Microtargeting and Personality Fit: Targeting the Mind	Matz, Kosinski, Nave, & Stillwell (2017) Hackenburg & Margetts (2024)	Analytical Memo 4
8/3	Interventions, Policy, and Digital Literacy: Countermeasures and Democratic Resilience	Bateman & Jackson (2024), Exec. Summary & selected chapter Kozyreva et al. (2024)	Final Synthesis Paper

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.

TAMUI 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 TAMUI 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.

Distance Education Courses

Online Courses and On-Campus Meetings

Texas Administrative Code (TAC), Title 19, Part 1, Chapter 2, Subchapter J, Section 2.202 ([https://texreg.sos.state.tx.us/public/readtac\\$ext.TacPage?sl=R&app=9&p_dir=&p_rloc=&p_tloc=&p_ploc=&pg=1&p_tac=&ti=19&pt=1&ch=2&rl=202](https://texreg.sos.state.tx.us/public/readtac$ext.TacPage?sl=R&app=9&p_dir=&p_rloc=&p_tloc=&p_ploc=&pg=1&p_tac=&ti=19&pt=1&ch=2&rl=202)), defines distance education as the formal educational process that occurs when students and instructors are not in the same physical setting for the majority (more than 50%) of instruction. Distance education includes hybrid and 100% online courses and programs as defined by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB):

- **Hybrid Course** - A distance education course in which more than 50 percent but less than 100 percent of instructional activity takes place when the student(s) and instructor(s) are in separate physical locations.
- **100-Percent Online Course** - A distance education course in which 100 percent of instructional activity takes place when the student(s) and instructor(s) are in separate physical locations. **Requirements for on-campus or in-person orientation, testing, academic support services, internships/fieldwork, or other non-instructional activities do not exclude a course from this category.**

In this online course, be sure to confirm what in-person meetings may be required of you (if applicable).

Course Structure

This is a fully online, asynchronous course. There are no scheduled class meetings and no required live sessions. You will work through weekly modules on the course site at the times that fit your schedule, within the posted deadlines. Because this is a five-week summer term, the course moves quickly. Plan to spend roughly 18 to 22 hours per week on reading, assignments, and your campaign proposal, which is comparable to the workload of a full-semester three-credit course compressed into five weeks.

Student-Instructor Communication Policy and Response Time

Announcements/Course Messages/Emails

Announcements will be posted regularly on Mondays.

Email Response Time: Within 24 hours on weekdays and 48 hours on weekends. Begin your subject line with "COMM 3309" and include a brief description of your reason for writing.

Assignments and Assessments

I am committed to returning feedback on all submitted work within 72 hours of the deadline, given the compressed five-week schedule where each assignment builds directly on the last. Timely feedback is essential in this course, and you should plan your work on the next assignment only after reviewing the comments returned on the previous one.

Course Communication Guidelines (Netiquette)

There are course expectations concerning etiquette or how we should treat each other online. We must consider these values as we communicate with one another. Visit **Instructional Technology and Distance Education Services' web page on Netiquette** (<http://www.tamiu.edu/distance/students/netiquette.shtml>) for further instruction.

Accommodations/Accessibility Policy

Texas A&M International University seeks to provide reasonable accommodation 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 educational opportunity. It is the student's responsibility to register with the Director of Student Counseling and to contact the faculty member in a timely fashion to arrange for suitable accommodation. For more information, contact the online at **Office of Disability Services for Students (DSS)**,



via phone at 956.326.3086 or by visiting the staff at the Student Center, room 118. A link to the Disabilities Services for Students site has also been included under the "Resources" tab inside the course.

Student Support Resources

The University wishes to have all students succeed in their courses. To provide support to our students, an array of services in the areas of technology support, academic support, student support, and accessibility support may be found at the University. For more information, visit the Instructional Technology and Distance Education Services page on **University Resources and Support Services**.

Computer/Technology Requirements

When participating in distance education courses, it is vital to consider the technology involved in order to have a successful course. Online students will need regular access to a personal computer that runs on a broadband Internet connection.

It is recommended that you meet the technical requirements listed on the Instructional Technology and Distance Education Services' webpage (<https://www.tamui.edu/distance/students/technology-requirements.shtml>) when using the learning management system (LMS) of the University.

Learning Management System (Blackboard)

Students are provided with an orientation (*eLearning (Blackboard) Student Orientation*) and access to guides on how to use the Blackboard LMS. Guides may be available at **Instructional Technology and Distance Education Services' Student eLearning Tutorial Videos page** or by contacting the eLearning team at elearning@tamui.edu.

Minimum Technical Skills Expected

When participating in distance education courses, it is vital to consider the technology involved in order to have a successful course. Students in distance education should have knowledge of basic computer and Internet skills, as mentioned on the **Instructional Technology and Distance Education Services' webpage**.

Technical Support Services

Because of the nature of distance education courses, the Office of Information Technology (OIT) computing and information services are vital to the success of online students. This webpage covers contact information for Distance Education Services (Blackboard Support), the OIT Help Desk, and E-mail support: **Technical Support Services**.

Course Evaluation

At the end of this course, students are encouraged to complete a course evaluation that will be distributed to them via email and through a course link.

Accessibility and Privacy Statements on Course Technologies

At Texas A&M International University, we believe that all students should have equal technology opportunities in the classroom. These technologies/sites may also require user data, such as the creation of a username and password. You may find the accessibility and privacy policies of the technologies used in this class on the following pages: **Accessibility Statements and Privacy Statements**.

Syllabus Change Disclaimer

This syllabus represents the course plan at the start of the term and is subject to change. The instructor reserves the right to adjust readings, assignment prompts, and deadlines as needed, with advance notice provided on the course site and through university email. It is your responsibility to monitor Blackboard and your @dusty.tamui.edu email daily and to remain current with any updates.