

# Adjunct Faculty Handbook



## College of Arts and Sciences Texas A&M International University

Last Revised: Jun 2020



## TEXAS A&M INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY

A Member of The Texas A&M University System

College of Arts and Sciences

Dear Adjunct Professors:

Thank you for choosing to teach in the College of Arts & Sciences at Texas A&M International University. It is imperative that our students receive a first-rate education at TAMIU and you play an important role in helping us achieve this goal!

The Adjunct Faculty Handbook is designed to help clarify the rules and procedures of our college and our university so that you are able to perform your job as effectively and efficiently as possible. Please study the handbook. If anything is unclear or ambiguous, please do not hesitate to ask Dr. Lynne Manganaro, Associate Dean, for clarification. And if you encounter situations during the semester which are not addressed in the handbook -- as is almost inevitable -- please contact her or your department chair for guidance. You should also plan to attend the adjunct faculty meeting each semester, which is conducted by Dr. Manganaro. At that meeting you will be updated on any changes to procedures or policies and discuss with you issues affecting our students and faculty.

Again, thank you for your sustained contributions to the College of Arts & Sciences and have a great semester!

--Dr. Claudia San Miguel  
Dean of the College of Arts & Sciences

## **Introduction**

Adjunct faculty play a significant role in the University, bringing together expertise in numerous disciplines which enrich our students' academic experience. Adjuncts provide us with a critical linkage with the community and, often, are able to share professional insights that link scholarship with practice. Because many adjunct faculty are involved with activities outside of the University, it becomes all too easy for them to be left out of the loop concerning the University's organizational changes, including new policies. In part, this set of guidelines is intended to integrate the adjunct faculty into the broader University community. It is also intended as a guide for everyday needs, issues and problems. Remember that the Chair of your department is your best resource. Never hesitate to ask the Chair for help with any problem you encounter. Feel free to ask other faculty for help whenever necessary.

### ✓ **Getting Started at Texas A&M International University**

#### **TAMIU OneCard:**

The TAMIU OneCard is our official Identification Card for students, faculty, and staff. To get one, you should visit the TAMIU OneCard Center (Zaffirini Success Center, Room 131) to have your picture taken and obtain your card. You must provide proof of your identity, such as a driver's license or passport. For more information about the TAMIU OneCard, visit <http://www.tamtu.edu/onecard/>. For faculty residing outside Laredo, you do not need an identification card.

#### **Email Accounts:**

Adjunct faculty are required to have a University email account. This account is provided free of charge after your Human Resources processing is completed.

*Note:* Virtually all official business at the university is conducted via e-mail. You should check your TAMIU email regularly; it is suggested that this occur at least once per week during a semester. You can access your TAMIU email at <https://mail.tamtu.edu/> or via Uconnect. You should also provide your department with another valid email address for contact purposes as well as a phone number.

*Note:* Your TAMIU email will be disabled if you are not teaching the following semester.

#### **TAMIU Website:**

The University website, <http://www.tamtu.edu>, contains detailed information about the university. Familiarize yourself with the website; it will help you to answer questions from students and to understand the resources available to both faculty and students on campus.

**IMPORTANT:** TAMIU information about events, activities and online service connection disruptions are disseminated via **Uconnect** (the link is located in the upper right hand corner of the University website). Use your TAMIU username and password to connect to this system and to validate your class rosters, and post your midterm and final grades.

#### **Class Rosters:**

The State of Texas requires all faculty to certify their class rosters after the 12<sup>th</sup> Census Day. The University Registrar will notify all faculty via email after the 12<sup>th</sup>

day and provide the deadline for roster certification. It is imperative that you complete this task in a timely manner. The roster certification link can be accessed via Uconnect and requires an additional login, but the same credentials are used.

### **Dusty Alert:**

Emergency messages to faculty, staff, and students are sent via “Dusty Alert,” a text-message distribution system. If a catastrophe or a weather closing occurs on campus, you will be notified immediately of it and given instructions via “Dusty Alert.” You must sign up for it, however.

Encourage your students to sign-up for it as well. See the TAMIU webpage for details.

### **Blackboard:**

The Course Management System (CMS) used by the university is Blackboard. Some of you may already be familiar with it or have used comparable systems like Angel or Compass. You can access Blackboard directly at <https://tamiu.blackboard.com>. Adjunct faculty are strongly encouraged to use Blackboard to communicate with students; post the syllabus, upload any instructional support materials, such as lecture slides, videos; and post grades. Blackboard contains many other useful features designed to enhance student learning. Once you log into the system you can view what is available in the Faculty Support tab (located in the upper right hand portion of the screen). Course content can also be copied from one semester to the next. Contact the Blackboard support personnel at 326-2310 or send an email to [learning@tamiu.edu](mailto:learning@tamiu.edu) for assistance. If you experience a problem after normal business hours, they are on call 24/7 and will respond to your request for assistance as soon as possible.

### **Your Department:**

Your department Chair is your resource for any questions you may have or problems related to your class. A list of department chairs with contact information is provided below. You will find the departmental Staff Assistant invaluable in helping you with routine needs. Contact the Staff Assistant for any supplies you may need such as chalk and whiteboard markers as these are not normally maintained in the classrooms. The photocopying policy (exams and quizzes) varies by department, so contact the Staff Assistant and/or Chair. Keep in mind that faculty members (as the instructor of record) are ultimately responsible for ensuring testing materials are available when exams and quizzes are scheduled, so plan accordingly. Your department will also supply adjuncts with a mailbox. Please check it at least once a week for important information, desk copies of textbooks, etc.







## **Parking Permits:**

General parking is now free on campus. If you wish to purchase a Reserved parking permit, then you can purchase a parking permit at the Bursar's Office located at the University Student Success Center (USC). The permits are self-adhesive stickers that must be adhered to the bottom right-hand corner (passenger side) of the windshield, and are sold per vehicle (see picture below). Permits are sold to faculty and full-time staff. After Sept. 15<sup>th</sup>, Reserved Permits may be sold to graduate students and seniors on a first-come, first-served basis, if available, at full cost. There are no upgrades. Motorcycle permits are also available, at an additional cost, and permit holders may park in any designated motorcycle space. Persons purchasing a permit must fill out a Vehicle Form each time a permit is purchased, no exceptions. You can find the vehicle permit form at: <http://www.tamtu.edu/adminis/police/documents/14-15Vehicleform.pdf>. Prices are subject to change from year to year.

Note: Vehicles parked in Reserved Parking without the proper permit or prior authorization from the Police Department will be automatically booted and ticketed.



Please visit the TAMIU Police Department webpage to see all the rules and regulations regarding parking at the University. A pamphlet providing an overview of TAMIU's Parking Services is available at the Student Information Desk, Bursars Office, and Registrar's Office (all in the Zaffarini University Success Center), and the Student Information Desk in the Student Center. You may also call 956.326.2100, email [dispatcher@tamtu.edu](mailto:dispatcher@tamtu.edu) or visit their offices in the Sue and Radcliffe Killam Library 005 (Basement) for more information.



TAMIU Planetarium

## Preparing for Class

### **Book Orders:**

All textbook orders must be placed with the University bookstore by the departmental Staff Assistant. In most cases, departments will order books prior to engaging an adjunct to teach a class and adjuncts are expected to use these preordered texts. If time permits, an adjunct will be able to select the book(s) to be ordered.

### **Desk Copies:**

Your department will usually provide you with a desk copy of your textbook to be used during the class. If there is no departmental copy available, the departmental Staff Assistant will order one from the publisher or the adjunct might order the text him or herself. Check with your Staff Assistant to see how your department handles desk copies.

### **Killam Library:**

You may place material on reserve for your students by taking it to the Killam Library reserve desk. You will have to tell the library how long the material can be checked out and indicate any other restrictions on its use. NOTE: You must pick up all reserve materials at the end of the semester.

### **Teaching a Class:**

The following, adopted from the *TAMU Faculty Handbook*, applies to all faculty, including adjuncts.

Texas A&M International University is committed to excellence in instruction, a concern for students, and the integrity of the institution. As such, all teaching faculty are expected to:

1. Provide a syllabus in order to inform students in writing the goals and requirements of each course, the nature of the course content and the methods of evaluation to be employed (see below).
2. Meet classes as scheduled. Never cancel class unless you have a legitimate emergency, and always notify the department office if you must cancel a class. With timely notice, the department may be able to locate a substitute or provide students with a suitable alternative assignment. If an alternative instructor or assignment cannot be provided, then the department must have time to post a notice in the classroom so that students will know that the class has been cancelled.
3. Meet the class on time and, except on rare occasions, do not dismiss classes early.
4. Educate students so as to meet course objectives.
5. Maintain competence in teaching fields.
6. Be professional in conduct and show respect for students. Do not use inappropriate language and ensure a safe learning environment for all students.

### **Syllabus:**

You must give students a written syllabus for each class you teach. You may attach it to your course shell within the "*Blackboard*" system so that students may download and print a copy, or you may give them a hardcopy the first week of class. If it is the first time that you have taught a particular course or if you are making major changes to a course that you have taught in the past, your department chair must review the syllabus before you distribute it to students.

Before you begin creating your syllabus you will need the current Academic Calendar and the Final Exam Schedule. Depending on the department, this information may be emailed to faculty prior to the beginning of the Fall term. The Academic Calendar (<http://www.tamtu.edu/adminis/avpaa/ucc/calendar.shtml>) provides important information such as drop and withdrawal dates, grading due dates, and observed holidays such as Thanksgiving and Christmas break as well as Spring break. The University does not always observe a holiday. For example, classes meet on Labor Day even though the local school districts may not, so it is important to carefully read the Academic Calendar. During a regular 15-week semester, faculty should not establish assignment deadlines during these “no class” periods. However, if you are teaching a sub-term (7.5 weeks), then this does not apply. The Final Examination schedule (<http://www.tamtu.edu/registrar/finalexamschedule.shtml>) outlines the days and times when the final examination for your particular class will be held. In some circumstances, the final exam may be held at a different time from when your class normally starts, so be mindful of the exam start times.

The syllabus must contain the following essential elements:

- ✓ Course title and a general description of the course.
- ✓ Textbooks used in the class and if they are required or suggested. All books must have full identifying information including the ISBN (author, title, edition, publisher, year, ISBN).
- ✓ Student Learning Outcomes– (what the student is expected to know or be able to do by the end of the class). Check this website for information about writing student learning outcomes: <http://www.tamtu.edu/adminis/iep/pdf/TAMTU-IE-Practitioners-Manual.pdf>
- ✓ General Description of Major Course Assignments (Exams, Papers, Presentations, etc.). If the course is a WIN (writing intensive class) then additional information may need to be required.
- ✓ Grade Weights and Evaluation Criteria for Course Assignments (this might include a rubric for how you evaluate term papers or other writing assignments). If an extra credit assignment is provided, please create a separate grading category for it.
- ✓ Important dates for the semester. Final exams are given during a final examination period and faculty cannot deviate from their authorized time to give a final exam. In addition, final exams cannot be given during the reading day when students have a break between the last day of classes and start of the final examination period.
- ✓ Daily schedule of Readings, Activities, & Assignments.
- ✓ Attendance policy for the class. In general, students should not receive “credit” for attending class but can receive a grade for work performed within a class setting (participation). Note: if a student fails a course, then a faculty member might be asked to indicate the last day that the student attended the class.
- ✓ Additional policies that relate to the course and course grades, such as a late work policy or an extra credit policy (this should not be more than a few points towards a final grade in the course).
- ✓ Contact information: your name and how you can be contacted. In some departments the phone number provided will be the same number as the department administrative assistant, so check with your respective departments. Many adjunct faculty prefer to be emailed within the Blackboard course shell so that student contact is not lost or deleted. If you have an alternative e-mail address, or prefer using the TAMTU email address then please indicate this on your syllabus. For email contacts, indicate if you are/are not available at nights and weekends; responding to students should be between 24 and 36 hours (or what is reasonable given the nature of the class). Adjuncts teaching face to face classes also should specify the times when they are available for conferences (generally 15 minutes



before and 15 minutes after each class). Adjuncts teaching online may wish to have virtual conferences. The Blackboard support personnel can set up a virtual meeting room for online courses. The Adobe Connect software includes a chat function similar to Skype.

- ✓ Mandatory COAS statements regarding academic integrity, plagiarism, and students with special needs. A copy of these statements is found at the end of this document. You may also get a copy from your department administrative assistant or chair. Any updates to the COAS policies will be emailed to faculty prior to the start of classes. Please ensure that you have the most recent version of the COAS policies in your course syllabus.

NOTE: H.B.1 requires the University to post all syllabi on the TAMIU website at least one week prior to the beginning of each term (to include Wintermester, Maymester, and the three Summer terms). Provide an electronic copy of the syllabus to the department's administrative assistant; the syllabus can be attached in an email message. The University is required to post all syllabi and Curriculum Vitae of instructors on the TAMIU Website. It is very important that these materials are sent prior to the beginning of class in order to help us comply with the law.

It is important to adhere to the syllabus as you go through the semester, particularly in assessing grades. This is your "contract" with the student so be very clear about what is required in terms of assignments and other assessment instruments (i.e. quizzes and exams). Many professors include a "disclaimer" such as "Any changes from the schedule in this syllabus will be announced in class or posted on-line in *Blackboard*." It is your responsibility to announce changes (such as alteration of an exam date) in a timely fashion to allow students to prepare properly. If you announce a change in class, send an announcement via Blackboard course messages as well. This will avoid problems with students who happen to miss that particular class. Remember that you must distribute the syllabus to students on the first class day or post it within Blackboard on the first day that the class meets.

### **Common Syllabus and Core Curriculum Classes:**

Unless you are teaching a class with a common syllabus, adjunct faculty do not have to use the same one as those of other faculty. But, it must contain the essential elements noted above. The department staff assistant has copies of syllabi from past semesters which may serve as a guide for constructing a strong syllabus. If you would like to see an example of a current syllabus as a guide when constructing your syllabus, please contact your Staff Assistant or department Chair.

If you are teaching a core curriculum class, then you are required to have your syllabus meet the requirements set by the university and governing board in order to achieve set learning outcomes for the course. In 2014-2015, the core curriculum classes were modified: many adjunct faculty teach these lower division core classes and are thus responsible for meeting state and university requirements.

If you are not sure if your class is a required core curriculum class please talk with your department chair or consult the TAMIU website that lists all these courses: <http://www.tamtu.edu/adminis/avpaa/ucc/2014%20Core%20Curr%20Docs.html>.

Important Notice: Core curriculum courses have a common syllabus in order to achieve stated learning outcomes. Your syllabus must include these learning outcomes. In addition, to assess the level of achievement TAMIU students obtain in

the core curriculum courses, your class may be selected for assessment. The selected courses are chosen randomly, so you may not know if your course or some of your students' materials will be part of the assessment. It is important for you to align your course to the stated requirements whether your class or one of your course sections and students are part of the university assessment. See: common syllabi for core classes:

<http://www.tamtu.edu/adminis/avpaa/ucc/2014%20Core%20Curr%20Docs.html>

In addition, if your class and a random sample of your course student's materials are selected for assessment, you may be required by your department chair to assist with completing the assessment. It will be important for you to become familiar with the assessment rubric. This rubric can be found at:

<http://www.tamtu.edu/adminis/iep/RubricLink.shtml>.

Your department chair, or an assigned department faculty member, will help you with understanding the rubrics, and how to keep materials which will become the artifacts of the course assessment.

### **Your Classroom:**

Your class is assigned a room in line with enrollment, and it may be changed on the first day or two as enrollment fluctuates. Check your classroom assignment just before you teach to make sure that you know the proper location. If you need a different location to accommodate your teaching needs, you cannot change classrooms on your own. Room changes are done through the Registrar's office. Send an email to your Staff Assistant or department chair to request a room change and it will be passed on to the Registrar's office. If they can accommodate your request, the department will inform you of the room change. Your staff assistant will place a sign on the room in case of change, directing students to the new location. Moving a class informally can cause many scheduling difficulties.

Ask for help with your classroom needs. In general, classrooms are supposed to be unlocked before class. If you find the door locked, call the University Police Department (326-2100) so that an officer can unlock the door. If the problem recurs, report it to your chair. Report any problems with temperature, lighting, and equipment to your departmental Staff Assistant who will contact Physical Plant about the problem. Supplies like chalk and whiteboard markers are provided by the department office and it is wise to take such items with you.

### **Technology Support in the Classroom:**

For audio/visual equipment or equipment malfunctions, contact the Office of Information Technology (OIT) at 326-2017. AV support is available until 10:00 p.m. A phone is provided in most classrooms so that you can call for assistance. Try and come to class 10 minutes before it starts so that you can logon to the computer and set up the overhead projection or set up other equipment needs. Some classrooms have "Smart podiums" in Bullock Hall, Canseco Hall, and Pellegrino Hall rooms which can provide interactive digital display for Power Point presentations, internet images (like those posted on *Blackboard*), and DVD films. An Elmo is also available for projecting images from books or handouts. If you need equipment, the department staff assistant can place an order for you, equipment orders should be completed at least two days in advance of need. If you experience problems with the classroom computer or projection screen call 326-2310.

### **Student Support Services:**

The University provides a wide range of services providing support for student learning. The one that may be most useful to you is the **Writing Center** (<http://www.tamtu.edu/uc/writingcenter/index.shtml>). They will assist students in identifying and correcting their mistakes. They also have the capability to accept online submissions, which may be useful for those who are teaching online courses. Writing Center staff will not re-write student assignments. Their goal is to create more independent writers. Writing Center staff are also available for in-class presentations and workshops. The topics include: Avoiding Plagiarism; The Writing Process; How to Write as a Group; MLA Format and Documentation; APA Format and Documentation; Chicago/Turabian Format and Documentation; Council of Science Editors Format and Documentation; Developing Introductions; Developing Thesis Statements; Developing Conclusions; Proofreading & Editing; Annotated Bibliographies; Abstracts; How to Write Literature Reviews; How to Form a Research Question; Sentence Variety Techniques; Grammar & Punctuation; Cutting Clutter/Eliminating Wordiness; Rhetorical Analysis; Review Essays; Literary Analysis & Literary Elements; Logical Fallacies; and Identifying Scholarly Sources.

Another important student service is the **Office of Disability for Students**. Students cannot directly request special accommodation from their professor. They must first visit the Office of Disability for Students for evaluation and formal certification. If eligible, the student will hand deliver a confidential letter from the Office to the faculty member. If you are teaching an online course, the Office will communicate with the faculty member via TAMTU email. According to federal law, all requests for reasonable accommodation must be met by the faculty member. If you receive a request for accommodation and have questions about how to meet them, contact your department chair.

### **FAMILY EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS AND PRIVACY ACT (FERPA):**

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) (20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99) is a Federal law that protects the privacy of student education records. The law applies to all schools that receive funds under an applicable program of the U.S. Department of Education.

FERPA gives parents certain rights with respect to their children's education records. These rights transfer to the student when he or she reaches the age of 18 or attends a school beyond the high school level. Students to whom the rights have transferred are "eligible students."

- Parents or eligible students have the right to inspect and review the student's education records maintained by the school. Schools are not required to provide copies of records unless, for reasons such as great distance, it is impossible for parents or eligible students to review the records. Schools may charge a fee for copies.
- Parents or eligible students have the right to request that a school correct records which they believe to be inaccurate or misleading. If the school decides not to amend the record, the parent or eligible student then has the right to a formal hearing. After the hearing, if the school still decides not to amend the record, the parent or eligible student has the right to place a statement with the record setting forth his or her view about the contested information.

- Generally, schools must have written permission from the parent or eligible student in order to release any information from a student's education record. However, FERPA allows schools to disclose those records, without consent, to the following parties or under the following conditions (34 CFR § 99.31):
  - ✓ School officials with legitimate educational interest;
  - ✓ Other schools to which a student is transferring;
  - ✓ Specified officials for audit or evaluation purposes;
  - ✓ Appropriate parties in connection with financial aid to a student;
  - ✓ Organizations conducting certain studies for or on behalf of the school;
  - ✓ Accrediting organizations;
  - ✓ To comply with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena;
  - ✓ Appropriate officials in cases of health and safety emergencies; and
  - ✓ State and local authorities, within a juvenile justice system, pursuant to specific State law.

Schools may disclose, without consent, "directory" information such as a student's name, address, telephone number, date and place of birth, honors and awards, and dates of attendance. However, schools must tell parents and eligible students about directory information and allow parents and eligible students a reasonable amount of time to request that the school not disclose directory information about them. Schools must notify parents and eligible students annually of their rights under FERPA. The actual means of notification (special letter, inclusion in a PTA bulletin, student handbook, or newspaper article) is left to the discretion of each school.

For additional information, you may call 1-800-USA-LEARN (1-800-872-5327) (voice). Individuals who use TDD may call 1-800-437-0833.

Or you may contact us at the following address:

Family Policy Compliance Office  
 U.S. Department of Education  
 400 Maryland Avenue, SW  
 Washington, D.C. 20202-8520  
 Source: ED.Gov US Department of Education Website  
<http://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/ferpa/index.html>

### **Academic Integrity:**

As an adjunct professor in the College of Arts and Sciences, you are required to include a statement on academic integrity in your syllabus. (This is part of the required statements found at the end of this document). In the interests of fairness to all honest students who work hard for their grades and in the interest of the academic integrity of TAMIU grades and degrees, you must take this topic seriously, and you must not ignore violations. It is important that students understand that cheating, copying, plagiarizing, and similar acts of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated.

### Cheating on Exams and Quizzes

If you spot a student cheating on a quiz or exam, collect the paper from the student as discreetly as possible and confront the student in private. Under no circumstances should you humiliate the student, but under no circumstances should you allow cheating to occur without penalty. The student should get a “zero” on the exam or quiz and not be allowed to retake it. Also, you must report the incident to your department chair and the TAMIU Honor Council. The Honor Council records such incidents and makes recommendations to the Provost regarding possible dismissal from the university for repeat offenders. The Honor Council also acts as an appeals board should a student contest an accusation. The best way to deal with cheating is to prevent it. Here are some practices to follow:

- ✓ Require that all cell phones be turned off and put in purses, book-bags, or otherwise out of sight. Texting answers has become a favorite method of cheating. Cell phones with WiFi are also used to look up answers or download them from course materials. Inform students before the exam that if you see them with a cell phone that you will take the exam and they will get a zero, no matter “how innocent” their use of the phone might be. Most students no longer wear watches because they use their cell phones for the time, so you should up-date them on the time left in the exam, or provide a clock at the front of the room. This will eliminate their need to look at the phone for the time left.
- ✓ Spread students out if the space in the room allows it. If the class is large, ask the department to provide you with graduate teaching assistants to help you proctor the test.
- ✓ Create two or more forms of the same exam and distribute them randomly. Using different color paper can help you distinguish one form from another. Make sure that students indicate which form they have on their examination answer sheet.
- ✓ Walk around during the exam. Do not sit at the desk and do not read or grade. Be alert and show that you care about examination integrity.

### Plagiarism

Plagiarism is presenting the words or ideas of someone else as your own. In academic life our “coin of the realm” consists of our ideas and our words expressing them. Those ideas and those words earn us grades, degrees, jobs, and promotions. To steal them for credit at a university is equivalent to stealing money for deposit at a bank. Be sure to explain this carefully to your students. You may find that many freshman/sophomore students do not really understand what plagiarism is and may need guidance in regard to direct quotations, paraphrasing, and citing sources. English teacher or not, you should teach them the correct way to quote material and cite sources, refer them to the Writing Center for additional help, and hold them accountable for submitting work that they themselves have created.

Available free essays and research papers and the ease of copying and pasting the work of others make plagiarism more tempting than ever, but the internet also makes it easier to detect. Use *Turnitin* (available on *Blackboard*) as the place for students to upload their papers; they can check their papers themselves for plagiarism and fix problems before due dates. If you need help, contact [elarning@tamiu.edu](mailto:elarning@tamiu.edu) and persons qualified to assist in your Blackboard shell can help you either set it up or instruct you in how to do it yourself. *Turnitin* also lets you comment on and evaluate papers directly online, and has a “peer review” feature that



allows students to read each other's papers and give advice for revisions. If you do not use *Turnitin*, check for plagiarism by copying suspected "professional quality" phrasing and searching for the phrase through *Google*. *Google* can identify most sources of copied phrasing, but is not as thorough as *Turnitin* which compares a paper against hundreds of thousands of papers, journals and books not on the internet.

If you identify a plagiarized paper, notify your department chair immediately and Report It. The chair will provide you with information about the process for notifying the student and for notifying the Honor Council. In cases of plagiarism that seem intended to deceive rather than to be the product of ignorance – like copying and pasting from another source, not providing quotation marks around copied material, and not citing a source -- students should receive a "F" in the course and notification to the chair and the Honor Council. If the student is a freshman or sophomore and the plagiarism seems to arise more from ignorance of proper techniques for quoting and paraphrasing and documenting sources, the student generally receives a "O" for the assignment and is allowed, after receiving a thorough review of proper documentation techniques, to revise the paper up to a grade of "F" (50%). Junior and senior undergraduates and all graduate students cannot claim ignorance of proper documentation rules. Their cases should be treated as deliberate attempts to deceive.

### Testing

Test regularly. Freshmen and sophomores are transitioning from high school to college, and are not used to studying outside of class. Give quizzes over reading assignments and/or call on students to answer questions. Also, try to schedule three to four tests and a final examination. Students become frustrated if an examination covers too much new material; frequent testing helps them absorb material without becoming overwhelmed and stay aware about how they are doing. Put test dates in your syllabi, give ample advance notice if dates change, and give reminders right before the tests. Also, give advice about how much time students should study if they hope to pass, and give study tips if you have them.

*For objective test examinations*, students must bring scantron sheets for scantron-graded portions of the exam. Departments do not supply scantron sheets for student use but will supply them to you to code for grading. Most departments have a scantron machine for grading the test and there are ways for you to find out what percentage of students missed each exam question. Contact your administrative assistant for information regarding the scantron machine.

*For essay questions*, you can request that students bring a blue book (available at the bookstore) to class or use basic lined paper. If you have a large class, you may wish to look inside the books or check their papers to ensure that students have not preloaded the papers with notes or other aides for the exam.

### Final Examinations

Final examinations **must** be given at the date and time scheduled. Changes in date and time for a final examination must be approved by your Chair, the Dean, and the Provost.

Final examinations must be comprehensive, covering all or most semester work. Such an exam allows students to solidify and synthesize what they have learned through the semester. Final exams may not be exams over the last unit studied.

Final exams must have a writing component, which should count for at least 20% of the exam grade. Essay questions help students synthesize knowledge and reflect on what they have learned. Also, the writing component of final examinations documents our emphasis on writing, a commitment we made to the Southern Association of Colleges and Universities as part of our accreditation process.

### **Student Absences:**

The university views class attendance as an individual student responsibility. Students are expected to attend class and to complete all assignments. Put your absence policy in your syllabus. Some professors allow a certain number of absences (one or two) before imposing sanctions; others provide extra credit for perfect attendance. Be sure to follow your policy. It may require taking attendance each day. Absences can be legitimate, of course. According to University policy you may require documentation of the reason for a student's absence.

Acceptable reasons for an absence which cannot affect a student's grade include:

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

If an absence is excused, the instructor must either let the student make up an exam or other work that is missed or provide a satisfactory alternative within 30 calendar days from the date of absence.

### **Faculty Attendance:**

You must attend all scheduled classes, arrive at class on time and, within reason, keep the students for the scheduled time period. This includes the first day of class! If you are ill or must miss class for another reason, tell your Department Chair as early as possible prior to the class.

### **Grades:**

Be sure to follow the grading procedures you establish in your syllabus. Students should be aware at all times of their status in terms of grades. Have a transparent policy so that students are not surprised by their final grades. Tip: You should use the grade book feature on *Blackboard*, students will have access to their grades and their course average at any point in the semester. Contact the Blackboard support staff to set up your gradebooks (326-2310).

Extra credit may be given if **all students have equal opportunity** to take advantage of the extra credit activity. Do not give an individual opportunity for extra credit not given to the whole class.

### **Incompletes:**

The College policy for "Incompletes" includes the following requirements:

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.

**Contact your Department Chair for approval prior to informing a student** that he/she will receive an incomplete grade. Part of the process is developing a plan for class completion after the semester is finished, so it is very important to work this out with your Department Chair in advance.

### **Grade Changes:**

Grades can – and should -- be changed if you have calculated incorrectly. Only in exceptional, rare cases can grades be changed for other reasons. If you must change a grade, fill out a form available from your department Staff Assistant, and attach a separate letter explaining the reason for the change. Grade changes must be approved by the Chair and the Dean of the College, who may ask you for evidence showing the basis for the grade change. It is important to record and retain all grades.

### **Grade Challenges:**

Resist appeals to pass students who have not earned a passing grade and resist pressure to increase a grade for any reason. Your goal is fairness to all students. Students unhappy with their grades, who believe that you have made a mistake or have treated them unfairly have an available appeals process; encourage them to use it. They should first speak with you about the problem and then, if still dissatisfied, with the chair of the department. Remaining steps in the process are in the *Faculty Handbook* (available at [www.tamui.edu/senate](http://www.tamui.edu/senate)) and the *Student Handbook*.

### **Grade Submissions:**

The Registrar will notify you when UONLINE is ready for submission of mid-term and final course grades. Mid-term grades are required for all 1000 and 2000 level courses. You must submit your grades before the deadline; failure to do so holds up all student records. You access your class grades through Uconnect and must submit

the grades before the deadline; check your grades and save them often as you input them. You can modify the grade up until the deadline.



## University Policies of Importance

### **Human Resources Information**

All adjuncts must complete required forms for the Human Resources Department. This is a legal requirement which we will do as quickly as possible. Every employee is required to fill out an I-9: Employment Eligibility Verification form. Adjuncts who live in the local area will need to come to the HR office to finalize this form. Remote adjuncts need to contact HR for information on how to finalize this form if you reside outside of Laredo. Also, it is important that all faculty complete the various ***on-line trainings*** required by Human Resources. The required on-line trainings are good for two years, with one exception; Information Security and Awareness, which must be completed every year. If you have any problems signing onto the HR training page, contact Human Resources at 326-2362 or your department's Administrative Assistant.

Adjuncts are required to re-apply for their positions every fiscal year, which runs from 1 September to 31 August. For example, if you are teaching in the Fall semester, but do not teach in the Spring semester and you teach during the summer, you do not have to reapply because you are teaching during the fiscal year. If you teach in the Fall and the Spring, you will have to re-apply for the following academic year. The documentation required for re-application varies by department.

### **Equal Opportunity**

Texas A&M International University provides equal opportunity to all employees, students, applicants for employment and the public regardless of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, age, genetic information or veteran status.

### **Discrimination Free Workplace Responsibilities**

All University employees are responsible for ensuring their work and educational environments are free from illegal discrimination, sexual harassment and related retaliation. When alleged or suspected discrimination, sexual harassment or retaliation is experienced or observed by or made known to an adjunct faculty member, the faculty member is required to report that information to the Associate Provost, Dr. Kevin Lindberg, 326-2601 Room 332B, Killam Building [klindberg@tamiu.edu](mailto:klindberg@tamiu.edu).

### **Responsibility of University Employees to Report Fraud, Waste or Abuse**

The responsibility for achieving The Texas A&M University System mission of teaching, research and outreach carries with it the duty to adhere to the highest ethical standards and principles. All employees, including adjunct faculty members, share in the responsibility for promoting an ethical and safe environment. If you have factual information suggestive of fraudulent, wasteful or abusive activities involving the University, one of its employees, students or other affiliates, you are responsible for reporting that information to any of the following individuals or departments: department chair, dean, provost or president; the TAMU police department; or Cathy Smock, Chief Auditor for the Texas A&M University System 979-458-7100. The Texas A&M University System also maintains a hotline that provides a way to anonymously report instances of suspected fraud, waste and abuse. The hotline is operated 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. To make an anonymous complaint using the hotline call 888-501-3850 or to report online go to <https://secure.ethicspoint.com/domain/media/en/gui/20500/index.html>

### **Improper Consensual Relationships (System Policy 08.01.01)**

5.1 “Improper consensual relationship” means a mutually agreeable amorous, romantic, and/or sexual relationship between two employees, between an employee and a student at a member institution or agency, or between an employee and a third party; AND in which one of the individuals has one or more of the following: authority over any term or condition of the other individual’s employment or academic status; or job duties making that individual directly or indirectly responsible for hiring, supervising, evaluating, teaching, coaching, grading or advising the other individual, or providing benefits to or obtaining benefits from the third party, including employment. Relationships not meeting this definition are not covered by this section.

5.2 These relationships may be problematic, even though both parties are willing participants. Improper consensual relationships are characterized by a difference in actual or perceived power that creates potential for any of the following:

- (a) A conflict of interest;
- (b) Allegations that the relationship resulted from coercion, exploitation and/or harassment; or
- (c) Allegations of favoritism and/or unfair treatment.

5.3 If an improper consensual relationship exists, the individual with the hiring, supervisory, evaluative, teaching, coaching, grading or advisory responsibilities, or the employee providing benefits to or obtaining benefits from the third party, must promptly notify his or her immediate supervisor of the relationship and cooperate in making alternative arrangements for hiring, supervising, evaluating, teaching, coaching, grading, advising or providing benefits to or obtaining benefits from the other individual. The individual’s immediate supervisor must ensure that the issue is promptly reported in writing to the



member CEO. The member retains the right to determine if alternative arrangements are possible and, if so, which one(s) are selected.

5.4 An employee's failure to promptly self-report the improper consensual relationship as required by Section 5.3, or an improper consensual relationship that is not remedied through alternative arrangements, may result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

5.5 The employment or supervision of spouses or close relatives is addressed in System Policy 33.03, Nepotism.

**Best of luck in the coming semester!**