



Course Syllabus
UNIV 1301 First Year Seminar (FYS)
Texas A&M University-San Antonio | Fall 2024

Instructor/Professor: Dr. Ripsimé Bledsoe

Class Time/Room: 2-3:15 | MADLA 254

Office (student) hours: By appointment

Email: rbledsoe@tamusa.edu

Peer Leader: Mauricio Cervantes | mcervanteso@tamusa.edu

Course Description (from the A&M-SA Course Catalog)

This course is designed to assist first-year students in adjusting to university expectations through enhancing quantitative reasoning skills and acquiring essential skills for academic success.

Course Overview

This course is designed to assist first-year students in adjusting to university expectations, acquiring essential academic success skills, and exploring different career paths. The course focuses on accessing university resources, and developing self-awareness, agency, and personal responsibility. Students will also become active members of the campus community.

Text (provided by A&M-SA):

My First Vote by the Brennan Center for Justice:

<https://www.brennancenter.org/our-work/research-reports/my-first-vote>

Course Promises

This course makes a set of promises to you (assuming you fulfill the expectations below). By the end of the semester, you should be able to:

1. Exhibit growth in self-awareness, agency, and personal responsibility
2. Demonstrate knowledge and skills in quantitative reasoning
3. Adapt and apply appropriate academic strategies to courses and learning experiences
4. Identify and apply strategies to effectively manage time and priorities
5. Identify relevant academic policies, processes, and resources relevant to your academic success
6. Develop goal-setting strategies to enhance academic and career readiness.

Course Expectations

This course will only fulfill these promises if you promise the following in return:

Attend classes. This course will rely largely on class content and discussion. For this format to succeed, you must be present AND on time. You will earn an absence if you arrive after the instructor has already taken roll. Excessive tardiness can lead to substantial grade loss. You will receive points for attendance and many in and out of class assignments will be contingent on



information from class. To earn full participation points, you must attend class and actively participate. ***You may miss up to four classes. Five absences may result in you being dropped from the course. The 4 absences may include quarantine and/or isolation for COVID-19 or any other illness or unforeseen issues. If you need to miss more than 4 days due to extracurricular activities, communication must be provided by your organization's coach or advisor/sponsor.***

To be attentive and participate in class. I expect all students to actively participate during class both verbally and nonverbally. Participation does not simply mean speaking, although that is essential. I realize there are a variety of ways students can participate (e.g., following discussions with your eyes and ears, asking questions, sharing, reading, writing, individual reflection, presenting, collaboration). I hope that you will strive to stretch yourselves beyond your existing ways of learning and comfort zone. I encourage you to contribute thoughtful comments and questions, as well as to listen carefully to your peers' contributions and respectfully respond to others' comments. The success of our mutual learning from one another depends upon preparation and active participation in all aspects of the course. **Be mindful of excessive phone as it disrupts your and others' learning in class and will work heavily against your overall participation grade. I expect all phones to be in bags and off desks. You are free to leave the room for any necessary phone use. You will lose significant points in overall participation grade if there is regular cell phone use in class.**

To complete required assignments in a timely manner. Assignments provide you with both informal and formal opportunities to articulate your responses to the issues and topics we will discuss. You will get the most out of the course if you turn in your work on time. All late assignments will receive a zero. **Extensions require at least a full day's advance notice prior to due dates and approval from me.** The majority of assignments in this class will be submitted in written form (reflections or responses to questions). It is vital that you follow basic grammar rules in order to get full credit for assignments. No matter how short or long the response, make sure you check for grammar and standards of academic writing. All responses are a reflection of you and are intended to prepare you for academic and professional writing.

Laptops and supplies. It is expected that you attend class with the necessary materials to engage in class. Each student should bring something to write with and write on to each class for notetaking and other activities. It is also highly recommended that each student regularly brings a laptop to class for projects and access to Blackboard/Digication. The library also has laptops that can be borrowed for a few hours with a school ID. It is up to the student to make sure the materials are with them prior to class. If you have any concerns or are unable to adhere to this policy, please do not hesitate to discuss with your instructor for a timely solution.

Assignments, Presentations and Quizzes

To be successful in this course you are expected to complete all assignments on time. Assignments must be submitted to the correct location to be considered on time. Assignments will be graded based on quantity and quality with rubrics for each assignment provided in Blackboard.



Assignments will be mainly submitted in Blackboard with a couple posted on a platform called Digication. Throughout the semester, you will reflect on various assignments, class activities and discussions. Through writing and visuals, you will demonstrate what you have achieved from actively participating in the FYS course.

Presentations will be in class and be individual or as a group. The final career presentations will be at the end of the semester and utilize the content from the career project.

Quizzes will be completed at home. They will be related to content from a class topic. You are free to use notes from class.

Grade Breakdown

Assignments & Quizzes

200 Points (20%)

- CliftonStrengths Reflection (20 points)
- Motivation, Beliefs, & Mindset Quiz (20 points)
- GPA Reflection (20 points)
- Focus 2 Completion + Reflection (20 points)
- Academic Investment Quiz (20 points)
- Living Wage Analysis Reflection (20 points)
- Résumé/Cover Letter Draft (20 points)
- Learning Cycle Quiz (20 points)
- Mental Frameworks Quiz; (20 points)
- AI Syllabus Activity (20 points)

Attendance & Participation

250 Points (25%)

- Attendance & Class Participation (100 Points): 10 points off for each day missed after 4 absences
- Attendance Responses (50 points)
- Peer Leader Meeting + Brief Summary (50 Points)
- Faculty Meeting (50 points)

Projects & Presentations

550 points (55%)

- Time Management Project (Digication) 100 points
- Career Awareness & Development Semester Project (Digication) 200 Points
- My Story-Digication & Group Presentation (50 points)
- Passport to Success (150 Points)
- AI project (50 points)

Grading Scale:

900 – 1000 points = A

800 – 899 points = B

700 – 799 points = C

600 – 699 points = D



0 – 599 points = F

Extra Credit Opportunities

Workshop quizzes (4 total for 10 points each) will be counted as extra credit. There will also be TWO opportunities for extra credit provided to you later in the semester. One will be a chance to make up any missed assignment (quizzes not included) where you received a zero grade. The second will be for a video/notetaking opportunity about student success. They will be provided to you on Blackboard with a strict window of time for completion. These are meant to “lift” your grade and not “save” your grade. It is important to complete required work in a timely manner throughout the semester.

Student Support and Services

Academic Accommodations for Persons with Disabilities: Texas A&M University-San Antonio is committed to providing all students with reasonable access to learning opportunities and accommodations in accordance with The Americans with Disabilities Act, as amended, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. If you experience barriers to your education due to a disability or think you may have a disability, Disability Support Services is located in the Central Academic Building, Suite 210. You can also contact us via phone at (210) 784-1335, visit us <https://www.tamusa.edu/Disability-Support-Services/index.html> or email us at dss@tamusa.edu. Disabilities may include, but are not limited to, attentional, learning, mental health, sensory, physical, or chronic health conditions. All students are encouraged to discuss their disability-related needs with Disability Support Services and their instructors as soon as possible.

Academic Learning Center: The Academic Learning Center provides free course-based tutoring to all currently enrolled students at Texas A&M University-San Antonio. Students wishing to work with a tutor can make appointments through the Brainfuse online tutoring platform. Brainfuse can be accessed in the *Tools* section of Blackboard. You can contact the Academic Learning Center by emailing tutoring@tamusa.edu, calling (210) 784-1307, or visiting the Central Academic Building, room 202.

Technical Support

Students who need assistance accessing student emails, Blackboard, resetting password, or any other technology issues may contact Campus IT helpdesk:

ITS location: Central Academic Building (CAB) Room 233

Hours/Days of Operation: Monday -Thursday 7:30 am -8pm; Fridays at 8am -5pm

ITS Helpdesk phone: 210-784-4357

<https://www.tamusa.edu/information-technology-services/index.html>

Counseling Resources: As a college student, there may be times when personal stressors interfere with your academic performance and negatively impact your daily functioning. If you are experiencing emotional difficulties or mental health concerns, support is available to you

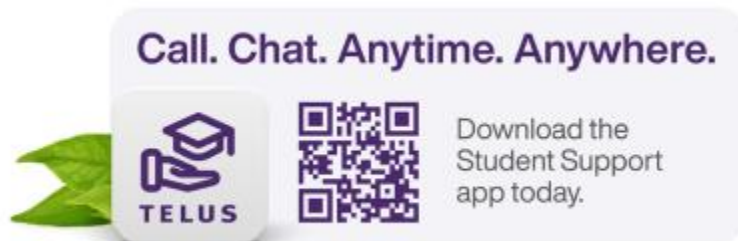


through the Student Counseling Center (SCC). To schedule an appointment, call 210-784-1331 or visit Madla 120.

All mental health services provided by the SCC are free and confidential (as the law allows). The Student Counseling Center provides brief individual and group therapy, crisis intervention, consultation, case management, and prevention services. For more information on SCC services visit tamusa.edu/studentcounseling

Crisis support is available 24/7 by calling the SCC at 210-784-1331 (after-hours select option '2').

Additionally, the TELUS Student Support App provides a variety of mental health resources to including support for in the moment distress, an anonymous peer to peer support network, mental health screenings, podcasts, and articles to improve your mental wellbeing.



Emergency Preparedness: JagE Alert is Texas A&M University-San Antonio's mass notification. In the event of an emergency, such as inclement weather, students, staff and faculty, who are registered, will have the option to receive a text message, email with instructions and updates. To register or update your information visit: <https://tamusa.bbcportal.com/>.

More information about Emergency Operations Plan and the Emergency Action Plan can be found here: <https://www.tamusa.edu/about-us/emergency-management/>.

Download the SafeZone App (<https://safezoneapp.com/>) for emergencies or call (210) 784-1911. Non-Emergency (210) 784-1900.

Financial Aid and Verification of Attendance: According to the following federal regulation, 34 CFR 668.21: U.S. Department of Education (DoE) Title IV regulation, a student can only receive Title IV funds based on Title IV eligibility criteria which include class attendance. If Title IV funds are disbursed to ineligible students (including students who fail to begin attendance), the institution must return these funds to the U.S. DoE within 30 days of becoming aware that the student will not or has not begun attendance. Faculty will provide the Office of Financial Aid with an electronic notification if a student has not attended the first week of class. Any student receiving federal financial aid who does not attend the first week of class will have their aid terminated and returned to the DoE. Please note that any student who stops attending at any time during the semester may also need to return a portion of their federal aid.

Meeting Basic Needs: Any student who has difficulty affording groceries or accessing sufficient food to eat every day or who lacks a safe and stable place to live, and believes this may affect their performance in the course, is urged to submit a CARE referral (<https://www.tamusa.edu/university-policies/Student-Rights-and-Responsibilities/file-a->



[report.html](#)) for support. Furthermore, please notify the professor if you are comfortable in doing so. This will enable them to direct you to available resources.

Military Affairs: Veterans and active-duty military personnel are welcomed and encouraged to visit the Office of Military Affairs for any question involving federal or state VA Education Benefits. Visit the Patriots' Casa building, room 202, or to contact the Office of Military Affairs with any questions at military.va@tamusa.edu or (210)784-1397.

Writing, Language, and Digital Composing Center: Tutors work with students to develop reading skills, prepare oral presentations, and plan, draft, and revise their written assignments. Our language tutors support students enrolled in Spanish courses and students composing in Spanish for any assignment. Our digital studio tutors support students working on digital projects such as eportfolios, class presentations, or other digital multimedia projects. Students can schedule appointments through JagWire under the Student Services tab. Click on "Writing, Language, and Digital Composing Center" to make your appointment. The Center offers face-to-face, synchronous online, and asynchronous digital appointments. More information about what services we offer, how to make an appointment, and how to access your appointment can be found on our website at <https://www.tamusa.edu/academics/>.

University Policies

Academic Integrity: Each student in this course is expected to abide by the Texas A&M University-San Antonio Code of Academic Integrity. Any work submitted by a student in this course for academic credit will be the student's own work. University students are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with the highest standards of academic honesty. You are encouraged to study together and to discuss information and concepts covered in the lecture and the sections with other students. Should copying or other forms of misconduct occur, both the student who copies the work from another student and the student who gave the material to be copied would both automatically receive a zero for the assignment. Penalty for violation of this Code can also be extended to include failure of the course and University disciplinary action

Artificial Intelligence (AI) Statement:

Writing, reflection, and critical thinking skills are essential learning outcomes of the First-Year Seminar. Developing strong competencies in these areas will prepare you for future academic, personal, and workplace success. However, we acknowledge the growing and innovative use of generative artificial intelligence models (ChatGPT, Microsoft Copilot, Claude, image generation, etc.) as powerful tools for learning, creativity and future careers. We also understand that generative AI tools bring exciting possibilities along with ethical challenges. Should you choose to utilize ANY AI tools, we emphasize the importance of upholding academic integrity and responsible AI usage through proper documentation. Your faculty is committed to supporting your learning journey and will share course guidelines and provide structured assignments to maximize learning while reducing risks. Please ask your faculty for clarification if you need additional clarification about utilizing any AI tools.



NOTE: Guidance for how to cite large language models, like ChatGPT, can be found here <https://apastyle.apa.org/blog/how-to-cite-chatgpt>

Financial Aid and Verification of Attendance: According to the following federal regulation, 34 CFR 668.21: U.S. Department of Education (DoE) Title IV regulation, a student can only receive Title IV funds based on Title IV eligibility criteria which include class attendance. If Title IV funds are disbursed to ineligible students (including students who fail to begin attendance), the institution must return these funds to the U.S. DoE within 30 days of becoming aware that the student will not or has not begun attendance. Faculty will provide the Office of Financial Aid with an electronic notification if a student has not attended the first week of class. Any student receiving federal financial aid who does not attend the first week of class will have their aid terminated and returned to the DoE. Please note that any student who stops attending at any time during the semester may also need to return a portion of their federal aid.

Religious Observances: Texas A&M University-San Antonio recognizes the diversity of faiths represented among the campus community and protects the rights of students, faculty, and staff to observe religious holidays according to their tradition. Under the policy, students are provided an opportunity to make up any examination, study, or course work requirements that may be missed due to a religious observance provided they notify their instructors before the end of the second week of classes for regular session classes.

Respect for Diversity: We understand that our students represent diverse backgrounds and perspectives. When we are equity-minded, we are aware of differences and inequalities and are willing to discuss them so we can act to resolve them. The University is committed to building cultural competencies, or the attitudes, skills, and knowledge that enable individuals and organizations to acknowledge cultural differences and incorporate these differences in working with people from diverse cultures. Respecting and accepting people different than you is vital to your success in the class, on campus, and as a future professional in the global community. While working together to build this community we ask all members to:

- Share their unique experiences, values, and beliefs.
- Be open to the views of others.
- Honor the uniqueness of their colleagues.
- Value each other's opinions and communicate respectfully.
- Keep confidential discussions that the community has of a personal (or professional) nature.
- Use this opportunity together to discuss ways in which we can create an inclusive environment in this course and across the A&M-San Antonio community.

The Six-Drop Rule: Students are subject to the requirements of Senate Bill (SB) 1231 passed by the Texas Legislature in 2007. SB 1231 limits students to a maximum of six (6) non-punitive course drops (i.e., courses a student chooses to drop) during their undergraduate careers. A non-punitive drop does not affect the student's GPA. However, course drops that exceed the maximum allowed by SB 1231 will be treated as "F" grades and will impact the student's GPA.



Statement of Harassment and Discrimination: Texas A&M University-San Antonio is committed to the fundamental principles of academic freedom, equal opportunity, and human dignity. To fulfill its multiple missions as an institution of higher learning, A&M-San Antonio encourages a climate that values and nurtures collegiality and the uniqueness of the individual within our state, nation, and world. All decisions and actions involving students and employees should be based on applicable law and individual merit. Texas A&M University-San Antonio, in accordance with applicable federal and state law, prohibits discrimination, including harassment, on the basis of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, or pregnancy/parenting status. Individuals who believe they have experienced harassment or discrimination prohibited by this statement are encouraged to contact the appropriate offices within their respective units. Texas A&M University-San Antonio faculty are committed to providing a safe learning environment for all students and for the university as a whole. If you have experienced any form of sex- or gender-based discrimination or harassment, including sexual assault, sexual harassment, domestic or dating violence, or stalking, know that help and support are available. A&M-San Antonio's Title IX Coordinator can support those impacted by such conduct in navigating campus life, accessing health and counseling services, providing academic and housing accommodations, and more. The university strongly encourages all students to report any such incidents to the Title IX Coordinator. Please be aware that all A&M-San Antonio employees (other than those designated as confidential resources such as counselors and trained victim advocates) are required to report information about such discrimination and harassment to the university. This means that if you tell a faculty member about a situation of sexual harassment, sexual violence, or other related misconduct, the faculty member must share that information with the university's Title IX Coordinator (titleix@tamusa.edu, 210-784-2061, CAB 439K). If you wish to speak to a confidential employee who does not have this reporting requirement, you can contact the Student Counseling Center at (210) 784-1331 or visit them in Madla 120.

Pregnant/Parenting Students: Texas A&M-San Antonio does not require a pregnant or parenting student, solely because of that status or issues related to that status, to (1) take a leave of absence or withdraw from their degree or certificate program; (2) limit the student's studies; (3) participate in an alternative program; (4) change the student's major, degree, or certificate program; or (5) refrain from joining or cease participating in any course, activity, or program at the University. The university will provide such reasonable accommodations to pregnant students as would be provided to a student with a temporary medical condition that are related to the health and safety of the student and the student's unborn child. These could include maintaining a safe distance from substances, areas, and activities known to be hazardous to pregnant individuals and their unborn child; excused absences because of illness or medical appointments; modified due dates for assignments; rescheduled tests/exams; taking a leave of absence; and being provided access to instructional materials and video recordings of lectures for excused absences, if these would be provided to any other student with an excused absence. Pregnant/parenting students are encouraged to contact the Title IX Coordinator with any questions or concerns related to their status (titleix@tamusa.edu; 210-784-2061; CAB 439K).



Texas A&M-San Antonio has also designated the Title IX Coordinator as the liaison officer for current or incoming students who are the parent or guardian of a child younger than 18 years of age. The Title IX Coordinator can provide students with information regarding support services and other resources.

Students' Rights and Responsibilities: The following statement of students' rights and responsibilities is intended to reflect the philosophical base upon which University Student Rules are built. This philosophy acknowledges the existence of both rights and responsibilities, which is inherent to an individual not only as a student at Texas A&M University-San Antonio but also as a citizen of this country.

Students' Rights

1. A student shall have the right to participate in a free exchange of ideas, and there shall be no University rule or administrative rule that in any way abridges the rights of freedom of speech, expression, petition and peaceful assembly as set forth in the U.S. Constitution.
2. Each student shall have the right to participate in all areas and activities of the University, free from any form of discrimination, including harassment, on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin, religion, sex, disability, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, and pregnancy/parenting or veteran status in accordance with applicable federal and state laws.
3. A student has the right to personal privacy except as otherwise provided by law, and this will be observed by students and University authorities alike.
4. Each student subject to disciplinary action arising from violations of university student rules shall be assured a fundamentally fair process.

Students' Responsibilities

1. A student has the responsibility to respect the rights and property of others, including other students, the faculty, and administration.
2. A student has the responsibility to be fully acquainted with the published University Student Rules found in the Student Handbook, [Student Code of Conduct](#), on our website, and University Catalog, and to comply with them, as well as with federal, state, and local laws.
3. A student has the responsibility to recognize that student actions reflect upon the individuals involved and upon the entire University community.
4. A student has the responsibility to recognize the University's obligation to provide a safe environment for learning.
5. A student has the responsibility to check their university email for any updates or official university notifications.

We expect that students will behave in a manner that is dignified, respectful, and courteous to all people, regardless of sex, ethnic/racial origin, religious background, sexual orientation, or disability. Conduct that infringes on the rights of another individual will not be tolerated. Students are expected to exhibit a high level of honesty and integrity in their pursuit of higher education. Students engaging in an act that violates the standards of academic integrity will



find themselves facing academic and/or disciplinary sanctions. Academic misconduct is any act, or attempt, which gives an unfair advantage to the student. Additionally, any behavior specifically prohibited by a faculty member in the course syllabus or class discussion may be considered as academic misconduct. For more information on academic misconduct policies and procedures please review the Student Code of Conduct (<https://www.tamusa.edu/university-policies/student-rights-and-responsibilities/documents/Student-Handbook-2022-23.pdf>) or visit the resources available in the OSRR website (<https://www.tamusa.edu/university-policies/student-rights-and-responsibilities/academic-integrity.html>).

University Email Policy and Course Communications: All correspondence between professors and students must occur via university email accounts. You must have Jaguar email account ready and working. If it is not working, contact the help desk at sahelp@tamusa.edu or at 210-784-4357.

This syllabus was created to give students guidance on what may be covered during the semester and will be followed as closely as possible. Please note the instructor for this course reserves the right to make changes to this syllabus at any point during the semester.