

Health & Society (SOCI 3312.600)

Texas A&M San Antonio, Fall 2025

Mondays & Wednesdays (2:00-3:15pm), Online Synchronous

Instructor: Dr. Sarah Pollock
spollock@tamusa.edu

Office Hours: email to schedule an appt
Mon & Wed 3:30-5pm (virtual)
Thurs 12:30-1:30pm (virtual or in person)

This syllabus contains policies and expectations I have established for this course. Please read the entire syllabus carefully and refer to it regularly throughout the semester.

Course Description

Health and medicine are often thought to be under the realm of medical professionals: medical doctors, nurses, pharmacists, etc. In a visit to a primary care physician, the typical social history questions that the doctor asks include whether the patient smokes, drinks, uses recreational drugs, and has any STIs. Some doctors may also inquire about the patient's living conditions, occupation, and marital status, although many doctors are pressured by the hospital system they work for to see many patients in a day, and this leaves little room for further social history questioning. However, there are many other social factors that are important for determining health and disease. The overarching goal of this course is to give you an understanding of the social aspects of health in the United States. We will examine the social causes and patterns of health, and you will gain an understanding of how factors such as socioeconomic status, race and ethnicity, gender, and marital status influence health outcomes. We will also consider the role of the health care system, the social behaviors of doctors and patients, and the future of medical care in the U.S.

Pedagogical Approach

I am here to facilitate you getting the most out of our course. I will prioritize supporting you compassionately as we navigate the semester while simultaneously maintaining high standards and expectations. In that light, please communicate with me regularly about any barriers you are facing and how we can work together to achieve what you want to accomplish.

Let's build a community of learners! This class uses an **active, team-based learning approach**. Active learning shifts the dynamic of the classroom from one where I lecture and you passively learn, to one where you are expected to actively engage with the course material and focus on how it can be applied to enhance your sociological understanding of society and social issues. Team-based learning facilitates the development of skills such as collaboration, creativity, critical thinking, and communication (these are 21st century skills that are necessary regardless of what you end up doing after college). This means that you will be assigned to a team with which you will work throughout the semester on in-class activities and assignments. Team-based learning enhances learning and accountability, enhances the quality of class discussion, and fosters student collaboration and integration. Students in team-based learning classes say they get a lot more out of the course and develop lasting friendships.

Course Catalogue Description

This course surveys the social determinants and consequences of health and disease in the United States. It moves beyond a biological perspective to understand how disparities across different social statuses, such as social class, race and ethnicity, and gender, impact health outcomes. Students will be introduced to key theories of health and illness and study the social organization of the U.S. health system. This course fulfills a requirement for the Bachelor's of Science in Sociology degree.

Prerequisite(s): SOCI 1301 or SOCI 1306 or ENGL 1302. TSI Restriction(s): Reading, Math, and Writing

Course Objectives

Upon successful completion of the course, you should be able to:

- Explain how different social statuses operate as social determinants of health and how they can impact a person's health status and health care
- Identify how health behaviors are socially influenced
- Analyze and evaluate the social organization and functions of U.S. health care
- Critically read and discuss scholarly work in the field of medical sociology

Required Readings and Materials

Required Readings

You do not need to buy any books for this class. All readings and course materials will be available on Blackboard.

Required readings and materials are indicated on Blackboard under the week they are due. You should plan to finish the assigned material (readings, videos, etc.) early in the week so that you are able to complete the assignments. Be prepared to critically discuss topics addressed in the material in relation to the lectures and be able to accurately explain the materials' main points. I recommend taking notes as you read/watch and have them available to help you participate in discussion and activities.

We will be reading both secondary sources as well as original works. Original works (such as research articles) often take more time and effort to read, so it is a good idea to plan ahead and give yourself plenty of time for reading. You can expect approximately 30-60 pages of reading per week.

Required Videos

Video links will be posted on Blackboard.

Class Notes

I post our class PowerPoint slides on Blackboard under the corresponding week. I recommend that you use a printed or electronic copy to facilitate your notetaking.

Teams

Team-based learning shifts the dynamic of the classroom from one where I lecture and you passively learn, to one where you all work together in teams to actively learn the materials. Team-based learning facilitates the development of skills such as collaboration, creativity, critical thinking, and communication (these are 21st century skills that are necessary regardless of what you end up doing after college!).

Communication Plan

- I will post announcements and updates on Blackboard. Check Blackboard multiples times a week.
- Email is the best way to get in touch with me (spollock@tamusa.edu). I try to reply within 48 hours of receiving email, although it may take me longer on the weekends and holidays.
- Please use your university email address and specify which course you are taking with me.
- Reach out with questions or concerns: communication is key! I'm happy to chat after class and/or to find a time that works for both our schedules to set up an appointment with you.

Pace of Course

- This course is a 3-credit course. Therefore, you should plan to dedicate at least 2.5 hours per week to class meetings and at least 4 hours per week to reading and working on assignments. You may need to set aside additional time for coursework.
- What does that mean for you? The following tips can help you be successful:
 - If possible, try to organize your schedule and other obligations so that you have dedicated blocks of time reserved to work on our coursework.
 - Use a reliable system for keeping track of course responsibilities (both suggested and required due dates) such as a planner/calendar, reminders on your phone, to do lists, etc.
 - Plan your time so that you can complete readings and assignments before the deadlines and ask questions well ahead of due dates.
 - Spread your work out over multiple days so that you aren't doing everything last minute; this strategy is helpful for managing stress and will improve the quality of your work.
 - Communicate with me immediately if you are having trouble with the pace of the course so that we can work together to figure out a solution.

Graded Components

Components	Percentage	Letter Grade Calculation*
Reaction Statements	40	A = 100 to 90
Project Module Assignments	25	B = 89.9 to 80
Project Poster	15	C = 79.9 to 70
Engagement (contributions to class discussion, in-class activities, team contributions, attendance, etc.)	20	D = 69.9 to 60
Total	100	F = Below 60

** I do not round up grades or negotiate grades at the end of the semester.*

“How will I be assessed in this course?”*

This course focuses on qualitative rather than quantitative assessment. I will provide feedback on your assignments in the form of comments, questions, and suggestions to engage your work rather than simply evaluate it.

Some assignments will be only be evaluated for completion. In the gradebook, I will mark your work as “credit,” “incomplete/partial credit,” or “not submitted” instead of assigning a score, letter grade, or percentage to each assignment that you submit. “Credit” means that you have satisfied most or all of the assignment requirements. If you receive an “incomplete/partial credit” you should review the instructions and any feedback and then make adjustments for the next assignment (do not resubmit your work).

The intent of this approach to evaluation is to center the learning process, the development of critical thinking and skills that are meaningful and useful to your career, and the practice of self-assessment, rather than on grades. Although you will get a final grade at the end of the term, it will be based on a combination of factors including your progress over the course of the semester, consistency and/or improvement in the quality of your work, responsiveness to feedback, and your self-assessments.

Note: If this process causes more anxiety than it alleviates, please feel free to set up a meeting with me to discuss your progress in the course to date. If you are worried about your grade, your best strategy should be to join the discussions, do the reading, and thoroughly complete all components of the assignments. I intend for this course to be a “busywork-free zone.” If an assignment does not feel productive, we can find ways to modify, remix, or repurpose the instructions.

*This description is modified from Stommel, Jesse. 2020. “How to Ungrade.” Pp. 25-41 in *UNgrading: Why Rating Students Undermines Learning (and What to Do Instead)*, edited by Susan D. Blum. Morgantown: West Virginia University Press.

Reaction Statements

Purpose: Reaction Statements are an opportunity to demonstrate your critical engagement with the course material from the assigned week(s), apply ideas beyond the class, and reflect on your learning.

Instructions: Over the course of the semester, you are responsible for completing Reaction Statements and posting them on Blackboard. Further instructions and prompts will be posted on Blackboard.

Evaluation: Some Reaction Statements will be evaluated for completion (credit/partial credit/not submitted), while others will be evaluated for a letter grade. The evaluation method will be indicated on Blackboard in the assignment instructions.

Project

Over the course of the semester, you will research and analyze a topic related to health. I will provide a list of possible topics to choose from and there will be a Blackboard Team Discussion Board for each topic. Select one topic/Team Discussion Board to work on for the entire semester.

You will produce an analysis of the topic in small segments due throughout the semester (the Module Assignments described below) that will culminate in a Project Team Poster (described below). One objective of the project is to apply the sociological concepts and ideas we are learning about health to

make sense of things happening in the “real world.” A second objective of the project is to develop your research, analysis, and communication skills.

Use the Team Discussion Board as a collaborative space to share resources and information about the research topic, to ask and answer questions, and to provide and receive feedback. Although you will be working on the same (or a similar) topic as other students in your team, you will write your own Module Assignments. Therefore, collaboration will benefit you, but the assessment of your Module Assignments is independent. The Project Team Poster will be collaborative.

Project Module Assignments

For each Project Module Assignment, I will post a Discussion Board with a set of prompts to which you will respond based on your analysis of data, scholarly journal articles, and other sources of information on your research topic. You will post Module Assignments on your Team Discussion Board so that you and your teammates can share resources and information about your topic, even though each of you will submit individual assignments.

Your responses to the Module Assignment prompts should be thorough, supported by evidence from the course material (readings, videos, etc.) and by evidence from your own research on the topic you have selected to analyze for the semester. Edit your work to correct grammar, spelling, and clarity issues before posting.

Project Team Poster

You will collaborate with your team members to compile a Project Team Poster due at the end of the semester. The poster will be based on the information from each of your Module Assignments. Therefore, the more thorough your work is throughout the semester, the less you will have to do when revising and editing your Poster at the end of the semester!

Additional instructions, a template, and the rubric will be posted on Blackboard. You also will provide an assessment of your contributions and those of your team members to ensure accountability for a fair distribution of labor.

Submission Policy

Submit all your work on Blackboard. It is your responsibility to ensure that your work is submitted successfully before the deadline. I value the skill of timely communication and prioritize flexibility in response to what life throws at us: therefore, please get in touch with me asap if you need an extension. I do not provide credit for late assignments unless you receive email permission from me before the due date or within 24 hours following it. If you receive written permission from me to submit late work, I may deduct 10% per day or mark your work as partial credit. If late work becomes a pattern, extensions will no longer be provided.

Attendance and Engagement

We will be meeting **virtually** on Zoom **twice per week** on **Mondays and Wednesdays from 2:00-3:15pm**. A link to the meetings will be posted on Blackboard. These meetings are required: I will be taking attendance.

Do not schedule work during our class meeting time. If you are unable to attend a meeting (internet issues, family obligations, emergencies, etc.), you do not need to show me documentation for your absence, but I encourage you to communicate with me beforehand or within 24 hours of the missed virtual meeting. I may require you to set up a virtual one-on-one meeting with me at another time. Although I do not excuse absences, one or two missed meetings will not have a significant impact on your grade. However, **a pattern of failure to attend and/or participate in class meetings will have consequences for your course grade**; missing more than half of the class meetings (either by lack of attendance or participation) will automatically result in failing the course.

Engagement during our virtual class meetings means being attentive and engaged, respecting your peers and professor, and contributing substantively to class and team discussions. The more involvement and differing opinions raised in class, the better! If you feel that a perspective or position is not being adequately addressed, you are encouraged to introduce it as a topic for an academic discussion. Keep in mind that the purpose of this class is to learn about and apply a critical, academic, sociological perspective.

To receive full credit for engagement, you must join the virtual class meeting on time and stay for the entire meeting, regularly participate in discussion and activities, pay attention, and demonstrate your engagement with the readings and the subject matter. If, for any reason, you are hesitant to speak up or participate using the microphone or chat feature in meetings, please discuss this with me at the *beginning* of the semester. To strengthen the sense that we belong to a community of learners, I expect you to have your video turned on and to contribute to the class discussion through both your microphone as well as the chat.

Engagement on Team Discussion Boards means that you post by the due date, write substantive responses that address the prompts, demonstrate your familiarity with and understanding of the readings, and edit posts for spelling/grammar/clarity. Replying with substantive feedback (such as recommendations) to team members' posts is strongly encouraged.

Course Outline

(subject to adjustment)

Week 1 (starting 8/25) Introduction to the Sociological Study of Health and Illness

Required Reading:

- Syllabus
- Berkman (2004) article

Assignments:

- Sign up for one Team Discussion Board based on the topic that most interests you

Week 2 (starting 9/1) Health Behaviors and Social Determinants of Health

No classes on Mon 9/1

Required Reading:

- Mason (2023) Introduction

Assignments:

- Reaction Statement 1 due Fri 9/5 by 11:59pm

Week 3 (starting 9/8) Theorizing about Health and Illness

Required Reading:

- Phelan, Link, and Tehranifar (2010) article

Assignments:

- Work on Module 1: Epidemiology

Week 4 (starting 9/15) Social Construction of Illness and Seeking Health Care

Required Reading:

- Conrad and Barker (2010) article

Assignments:

- Module 1: Epidemiology due Sat 9/20 by 11:59pm

Week 5 (starting 9/22) Social Construction of Illness and Seeking Health Care

Required Reading:

- Mason (2023) Chapter 1

Assignments:

- Reaction Statement 2 due Fri 9/26 by 11:59pm

Week 6 (starting 9/29) Health and Inequality: Part 1

Required Reading:

- Marmot (2004) article
- Mason (2023) Chapter 6

Assignments:

- Reaction Statement 3 due Fri 10/3 by 11:59pm

Week 7 (starting 10/6) Health and Inequality: Part 2

Required Reading (pick one):

- Rieker and Bird (2005) article
- Fredriksen-Goldsen, Simoni, Kim, Lehavot, Walters, Yang, Hoy-Ellis, and Muraco (2014) article

Assignments:

- Work on Reaction Statement 4
- Work on Module 2

Week 8 (starting 10/13) Health and Inequality: Part 2, cont.

Required Reading:

- Mason (2023) Chapter 2

Assignments:

- Reaction Statement 4 due Fri 10/17 by 11:59pm
- Work on Module 2

Week 9 (starting 10/20) Health and Inequality: Part 3

Required Reading:

- Williams and Sternthal (2010)

Assignments:

- Module 2: Determinants of Health due Sat 10/25 by 11:59pm
- Work on Reaction Statement 5

Week 10 (starting 10/27): Social Organization of the U.S. Health System

Required Reading:

- Carrillo (2024) Introduction
- Carrillo (2024) Chapter 4

Assignments:

- Reaction Statement 5 due Sat 11/1 by 11:59pm

Week 11 (starting 11/3): Mental Health

Required Reading:

- Grummt (2024) article
- AND one of the following options posted on Blackboard

Assignments:

- Work on Module 3

Week 12 (starting 11/10): Social Relationships and Health

Required Reading:

- Umberson and Karas Montez (2010) article

Assignments:

- Module 3: Policy due Sat 11/15 by 11:59pm

Week 13 (starting 11/17): Social Stress and Health

Required Reading:

- Carr and Umberson (2013) article

Assignments:

- Reaction Statement 6 due Fri 11/21 by 11:59pm
- Work on Project Poster with your teammates

Week 14 (starting 11/24) Care Reform & Policy in the U.S.

No classes on Wed 11/26

Required Reading:

- Butkus, Rapp, Cooney, and Engel (2020) article

Assignments:

- Work on Project Team Poster with your teammates
- Work on Self-Reflection and Teammate Contributions Assessment

Week 15 (starting 12/1): Conclusions

Required Reading:

- Mason (2023) Conclusion

Assignments:

- Work on Project Team Poster with your teammates
- Work on Self-Reflection and Teammate Contributions Assessment

Final Exams Week

Assignments:

- Project Team Poster due (tbd)
- Teammate Contributions Assessment due (tbd)
- Self-Reflection due (tbd)

Class Policies

Controversial Subject Matter

Student participation and class discussion are highly valued and encouraged. We will be exploring several potentially sensitive topics such as prejudice, discrimination, stereotypes, violence, and so forth. Mutual respect is key in this class. **I will not tolerate disrespect** under any circumstance. I ask that everyone is respectful of other people's comments and questions even if you disagree. It is crucial for all of us to work together to create an environment in which we can discuss social issues in a non-judgmental way. If you find a comment that I or another student makes to be insensitive or disrespectful, please speak up and explain your thoughts or feelings in a civil manner or discuss the issue with me in private.

I expect everyone to come to class with an open mind. You are encouraged to raise alternative viewpoints. However, you will be asked to think critically about your (and your classmates') world view, beliefs, and biases in an academic manner. You will be evaluated on your ability to explain and analyze various perspectives regardless of whether or not you think they are accurate. Keep in mind that the goal of a college education is to learn about different perspectives, how to analyze them academically according to a particular discipline's approach, and how to make arguments supported by scholarly evidence. Rather than dictating what you should think, this course is aimed to enhance your ability to think critically.

Active engagement is highly encouraged and rewarded. I will exercise my responsibility to manage the discussions so that ideas and argument can proceed in an orderly fashion. If you are having difficulty with participating or feel intimidated in any way, please come and see me early in the semester and we can work together to find a solution.

Other Expectations

I expect you to regularly check both Blackboard and your TAMUSA email. This is how I will get in touch with you and it is the best way to get in touch with me.

I also expect that you will use Blackboard to access required readings, to submit your assignments, and to review feedback that I provide on your work. You are responsible for doing so and should contact me in a timely manner (and before assignments are due!) should you have any difficulty. Since this course focuses substantially on writing, failure to turn in writing assignments on time may result in failure of the course.

It is your responsibility to get in touch with me early in the semester if you are struggling in the course or have questions. I am more than happy to work with you, but I cannot do so unless you communicate with me. I expect students to take advantage of my office hours, especially if the material or assignments seem difficult or if you are facing barriers to your success.

The University policy on withdrawal allows students only a limited number of opportunities available to withdraw from courses. It is important for you to understand the financial and academic consequences that may result from course withdrawal.

Syllabus Adjustments

Any modifications to this syllabus will be announced in class and posted on Blackboard. Students are responsible for knowing all in-class announcements and Blackboard announcements/adjustments.

Religious Accommodation

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 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.

If you will be observing any religious holidays this semester which will prevent you from attending a regularly scheduled class or interfere with fulfilling any course requirement, please contact me to make appropriate arrangements within two weeks of the beginning of the semester (or three days before any holidays which fall within the first two weeks of class).

Grades

I maintain course grades on Blackboard and it is possible that I occasionally enter an incorrect grade (i.e., sometimes I make a mistake). Please check the feedback I provide on your assignments and your grades via Blackboard throughout the semester and address any concerns immediately: do not wait until the end of the semester.

University Policies & Resources

Academic Accommodations for Persons with Disabilities

The Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act (ADAAA) of 2008 and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 are federal anti-discrimination statutes that provide comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Title II of the ADAAA and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act require that students with disabilities be guaranteed equal access to the learning environment through the provision of reasonable and appropriate accommodation of their disability. If you have a diagnosed disability that may require an accommodation, please contact Disability Support Services (DSS) for the coordination of services. The phone number for DSS is (210) 784-1335 and email is dss@tamusa.edu.

If you have a disability and need academic accommodations, please provide a letter of accommodation from Disability Support Services early in the semester. I am not able to provide accommodations without verification from DSS.

Academic Dishonesty Policy

Students at Texas A&M University-San Antonio are expected to adhere to the highest standards of academic honesty and integrity. Academic dishonesty for which a student is subject to penalty includes cheating, plagiarism, fabrication, multiple submissions, misrepresentation of academic records, facilitating academic dishonesty, unfair advantage, violating known safety requirements and ethical misconduct. This includes holding other students to the same standards and reporting any incidents of alleged violation of the honesty policy to the instructor involved or, if necessary, to the appropriate academic department head. All students are responsible for being familiar with the Academic Dishonesty Policy, which may be found in the Texas A&M University-San Antonio Student Handbook.

University policy prescribes serious consequences for acts of academic dishonesty including, but not limited to, a grade of 'F' on the particular paper or assignment, a failing grade in the course, or possible expulsion from the University. Considering the potential consequences of academic misconduct, it is obviously in students' best interests to avoid even the appearance of such behavior. If you are ever unclear whether a specific act might constitute academic misconduct, please contact your instructor for an assessment of the situation.

All student written assignments are subject to analysis by anti-plagiarism software.

If you are unsure about what plagiarism is, please take the plagiarism course offered through the university library. Not understanding plagiarism rules will not be accepted as a justification for plagiarized work. Here are the basics:

- Any time you use ideas or information from any other source, you must add a complete citation (including situations in which you do not use the author's words);
- A citation is made up of two parts: the internal citation (also called an in-text citation) at the point in your paper where the idea or information was used and an end citation (also called external citation) in your works cited or references section at the end of your paper. Both must be present to be considered a citation;
- If you use another person's words, they must be cited, they must be in quotation marks, and the internal citation must include a page number if the source is a book or article; and
- A paper that is substantially composed of quotes does not qualify as independent student work and will be treated as plagiarism, even if properly cited.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) Use Policy

This is not a campus-wide policy and only applies to this course. This policy may change, with prior notice, to reflect developments in the technology.

Generative AI tools, such as ChatGPT, may only be used in this course for preparatory activities such as brainstorming, editing text, outlining, etc. Students are responsible for providing proper attribution and full transparency about their use of AI, with the aim of becoming informed digital citizens.

Note that generative AI can produce questionable results, including misinformation, nonexistent references, and bias, and its responses are often bland. When using generative AI, students are responsible for revising its responses to meet the assignment prompts and to be accurate, authentic, and relevant to your unique perspectives and creative thoughts.

For each usage, documentation of the following process is required:

- Cite your prompts to any AI tool that informed your work.
- Cite the AI tool and provide its entire response in quotation marks.
- Edit the AI tool's response to include your own original thoughts and style of writing and to meet the assignment requirements. In other words, you may not submit assignments generated entirely by artificial intelligence.
- Use quotations in your work to any text generated by AI and cite the tool.
- Validate any AI-generated content with reliable references and cite these.

Failure to follow these instructions will be considered academic misconduct and consequences will follow University policies.

When you use generative AI, you are also encouraged to review that tool's "terms of use" with regard to data privacy and raise any concerns with your instructor.

Adapted from Kristopher Purzycki (University of Wisconsin-Green Bay, 18 Jan 2023) (CC BY 4.0) @ Medium.

Academic Learning Center

All currently enrolled students at Texas A&M University-San Antonio can utilize the Academic Learning Center for subject-area tutoring. The Academic Learning Center is an appointment based center where appointments are made through the Navigate platform. Students access Navigate through Jagwire in the Student Services tab. The Center is active on campus outreaching to students to highlight services offered. You can contact the Academic Learning Center by emailing tutoring@tamusa.edu or calling (210)-784-1332. Appointments can also be made through JagWire under the services tab.

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 <http://tamusa.edu/studentcounseling>. Crisis support is available 24/7 by calling the SCC at 210-784-1331.

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 and/or phone call with instructions and updates. To register or update your information visit:

<https://tamusa.bbcportal.com/>

More information about Emergency Preparedness and the Emergency Response Guide can be found here:

<https://www.tamusa.edu/upd/index.html>

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 contact the Dean of Students (DOS@tamusa.edu) for support. Furthermore, please notify the professor if you are comfortable in doing so. This will enable them to provide any resources they may possess.

Military Affairs

Veterans and active-duty military personnel are welcomed and encouraged to communicate, in advance if possible, and special circumstances (e.g., upcoming deployment, drill requirements, disability accommodations). You are also encouraged to visit the Patriots' Casa in-person room 202, or to contact the Office of Military Affairs with any questions at military@tamusa.edu or (210)784-1397.

Statement about Harassment and Discrimination

Texas A&M University-San Antonio is committed to the fundamental principles of academic freedom, equality of 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, diversity, pluralism 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, or gender expression.

If you (or someone you know) has experienced or experiences any of these incidents, know that you are not alone. TAMUSA has staff members trained to support you in navigating campus life, accessing health and counseling services, providing academic and housing accommodations, helping with legal protective orders, and more.

Please be aware that many A&M-San Antonio employees, including all faculty members, are required reporters. This means that if you tell me about a situation involving sexual harassment, sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence, or stalking, I must report the information to the Title IX Coordinator. Although I have to report the situation, you will still have options about how your case will be handled, including whether or not you wish to pursue a formal complaint. If you wish to speak to a confidential employee who does not have this reporting responsibility, you can contact the Student Counseling Center at (210) 784-1331, Modular C. Our goal is to make sure you are aware of the range of options available to you and have access to the resources you need. Additional information about your options is also available at <http://www.tamusa.edu/businessaffairs/titleix/index.html>

If you wish to receive information from a center that is not affiliated with the university, you may want to call the National Sexual Assault Hotline at 1-800-656-4673 (<https://www.rainn.org/>).

Students' Rights and Responsibilities

All students are required to follow all policies and regulations as set forth by The Texas A&M University System. This includes the A&M-San Antonio Student Code of Conduct. For more information, please see the Texas A&M University-San Antonio Student Handbook.

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.

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.tamus.edu or at 210-784-4357. If you don't hear back from them within 48 hours, contact them again. They have a lot of requests during the first part of the semester, so you may need to check up on them. I will distribute course materials, including announcements and updates, via Blackboard, so I encourage you to log-in to that system at least twice per week.

Writing, Language, and Digital Composing Center

The Writing, Language, and Digital Composing Center supports graduate and undergraduate students in all three colleges as well as faculty and staff. 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/student-resources/writing-center/index.html>