

UNIV 1301.01C First Year Seminar (FYS)
Texas A&M University-San Antonio
Fall 2026

Instructor: Dr. Victoria Barbosa Olivo

Peer Leader: Nevaeh

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Office Location: Patriots' Casa 206

Drop-in Hours: Wednesdays, 10:00 – 11:00 AM

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COURSE INFORMATION

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 critical thinking and 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.

Credit Hours: 3

Course Modality: Traditional in-person. Meets fully in person at the scheduled time and location.

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 critical thinking and 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 MATERIALS

Required Textbook

Required readings for this course are all available via Blackboard at no cost.

Blackboard. This course will be utilizing Blackboard. All students will need access to the online platform and are expected to use the platform regularly. To learn more about how to access Blackboard, students can visit this [website](#).

Please let the instructor know immediately if you are having trouble accessing Blackboard.

ACTIVITIES AND GRADING

Ongoing Class Notes	40%
Ongoing Research Journal	40%
Final Poster	10%
Final Presentation	5%
PL Meeting	5%
Total	100%

Grading Scale:

Percentage	Grade
90 – 100%	A
80 – 89%	B
70 – 79%	C
60 – 69%	D
<60%	F

COURSE EXPECTATIONS

Office Hours: While students can stop by my office at any time, I cannot guarantee I will be available. Students who schedule an appointment will be prioritized.

Email Address: Students can email me at volivo@tamusa.edu or on Blackboard at any time. During the week, you can expect a response within 24 hours. If a student messages after 5 PM, I will respond the following day. Students who message after 5 PM on a Friday will get a response Monday morning/afternoon.

EXPECTATIONS FOR ALL COURSE MATERIALS & EMAIL COMMUNICATION

All course materials submitted for grading and corresponding emails with your instructor and peer leader must be organized. You must use proper grammar and include your name, course day, and time.

TIMELINESS/LATE WORK POLICY

Any and all late work must be approved by the instructor. Therefore, students wanting to submit late work must get it approved by the instructor via email or in person. All late work will have a point penalty. See the table below for specifics:

Class Assignments	
Assignment Due Date	Up to 100%
Up to 1 week after the assignment is due	Up to 90%
Up to 2 weeks after the assignment is due	Up to 80%
Up to 3 weeks after the assignment is due	Up to 70%

Passport to Success (Component #1 & #2) and Midterm Late Work Policy	
Assignment Due Date	Up to 100%
Up to 72 hours after the assignment is due	Up to 90%
Up to 1 week after the assignment is due	Up to 80%
Up to 2 weeks after the assignment is due	Up to 70%

Final Materials and Passport to Success (Component #3)	
Assignment Due Date	Up to 100%
Up to 24 hours after the assignment is due	Up to 90%
Up to 48 hours after the assignment is due	Up to 80%
Up to 72 hours after the assignment is due	Up to 70%

Additionally, students who submit assignments incorrectly and/or need to resubmit their assignments will be considered late and subject to the penalties listed above.

After Dec 6, no late work or resubmissions will be accepted.

EXTENSIONS

Extensions are granted at the instructor's sole discretion. Extensions will be granted only during class time. Students must ask for an extension in person. If any extension is granted, the student will not receive a late penalty. Late penalties will be enforced if the student does not honor the extension deadline.

ATTENDANCE

You are expected to come to class having closely read any assigned readings or completed any assessments requested of you and ready to engage in class discussion. To do this, you must be present in class. If you must be absent from class, or if a prior commitment will affect your ability to arrive on time or requires you to leave early, notify me in advance of the class. If you miss a class, you will be responsible for the material covered and any handouts distributed during that class session.

Late/make-up work for in-class assignments must be approved by the instructor.

Additionally, you may miss up to four classes without penalty. Five or more absences will result in a grade deduction from your final grade or being dropped from the course. See the penalty policy below.

Attendance Penalty	
Miss up to 4 classes	No penalty
Missed up to 5 classes	Up to 90%
Missed up to 7 classes	Up to 80%
Missed up to 9 classes	Up to 70% and you may be dropped

TARDINESS/LEAVING CLASS EARLY

It is imperative that students come to class on time and ready to participate. The first time a student is more than 15 minutes tardy, I will send a warning email to the student. After the second time a student is 15 minutes or more late, each subsequent day of tardiness will count as an absence. The same policy applies for students who leave the class early.

CELL PHONES/LAPTOPS/ON CALL

Technology is welcome in class, provided it is being used to take notes or access course materials. Browsing the internet, sending emails, and instant messaging are not permitted during class. Please ensure your cell phone is turned off or set to silent mode. If you are anticipating an interruption, please let me know. I appreciate that emergencies may arise; please do your best to limit disruptions to your peers. You may be asked to leave class if you do not follow the technology policy. Continued use of technology after the instructor or PL instructors' students to put away their devices will result in an absence. If you have disabilities accommodation that allows for technology, please let the instructor know before using technology in class.

ANTI_RECORDING POLICY

To protect student privacy, promote open discussion, and maintain an appropriate learning environment, recording policies for this course are strictly enforced. Students may not audio record, video record, photograph, or otherwise capture any part of class sessions without prior written permission from the instructor. This includes lectures, discussions, peer presentations, in-class activities, and office hours with the instructor or peer leader.

The use of smart glasses (e.g., Meta/Ray-Ban smart glasses or similar wearable devices) is not permitted in class under any circumstances, regardless of whether recording is actively taking place or the device is powered on or off. Students must remove or store these devices before entering the classroom. Recording may only occur if approved in advance by the instructor, and necessary for documented accommodations through disability services. Even in these cases recordings are for personal academic use only. Recordings may not be shared, posted, or distributed.

Unauthorized recording or distribution of course content may violate student privacy rights, breach academic integrity standards and/or result in disciplinary action in accordance with college policies. In addition to being counted absent, failure to comply with this policy may result in removal from class, loss of participation points, referral to student conduct office.

If you have disabilities accommodation that allows for technology, please let the instructor know before using technology in class.

RESPECT FOR CLASS MEMBERS

Students participating in this course are responsible for creating and maintaining an environment conducive to learning. A learning-centered climate strives to be free of distractions, engages all participants in the learning process, and does not demean or dehumanize any person or group. Participants, therefore, will:

- Arrive on time and stay for the entire class duration.
- Refrain from conducting private conversations.
- Refrain from using laptops/iPads for purposes unrelated to the course.
- Refrain from using cell phones (if there is a reason you must have access to your phone, please let me know). If you must answer a phone call, please quietly excuse yourself and return to class when and if possible.
- Use appropriate language and behavior that do not demean or dehumanize any person or group of persons, whether or not such persons are present.
- Show respect for others in the course by engaging in effective listening and providing thoughtful, sensitive responses.
- Contribute to the learning of class members by being prepared for class and actively participating in the course.

Disruptive, disrespectful, or otherwise detrimental behavior in this academic environment will not be tolerated, and students engaging in such behavior will be removed and counted absent. Disruptive students will not be able to return to the class until they have a one-on-one meeting with the professor. What constitutes disruptive behaviors are determined by the instructor.

NAMES AND PRONOUNS

University data systems typically reflect students' legal names and gender identifications. Knowing not all students use these, I will always honor your request to address you using your chosen name and pronouns. Please let me know at any point in the term if either of these changes for you, including if you would like support navigating this change with your peers in the classroom. The Office of Registrar can also help you indicate your gender identity and personal pronouns through Jagwire. Email Registrar@tamusa.edu for more information.

For additional support or resources, please contact the Rainbow PAWS here: RainbowPAWS@tamusa.edu. You can learn more [here](#).

ASSESSMENTS AND ASSIGNMENTS

Accepted File formats:

Microsoft Word or Google Docs

Microsoft Excel or Google Sheets

Microsoft PowerPoint or Google Slides

PDF (for any documents + Canva)

While links are accepted, an inaccessible link will count as a missed/late assignment.

On-going Class Notes. Throughout the course, I will provide in-class assignments for students to complete. This includes classroom activities, reflection prompts, and discussion posts. Instructions for in-class assignments will be given during class or posted via Blackboard. All in-class assignments requiring any writing must be well-written and edited before posting. In-class assignments should meet the standards of any other paper at the collegiate level. This means I expect complete sentences, correct grammar, and organization in all papers and discussion posts. Your in-class assignment will need to follow any instructions given in person or on Blackboard. You are required to use paragraphs to help guide readers throughout your paper. You may also use headings and subheadings, but they are not required. Additionally, all files submitted to be graded must have your name, class time and date. A cover letter may be included, but is not necessary. See details on Blackboard.

On-going Researcher Journal.

See details on Blackboard.

Passport to Success Project.

See details on Blackboard.

Final Poster.

See Details on Blackboard.

Final Presentation.

See Details on Blackboard.

PL Meeting

See Details on Blackboard.

IMPORTANT POLICES AND RESOURCES

Academic Accommodations for Individuals 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 [online](#) 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 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.

Counseling/Mental Health 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 their [website](#).

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.

Learn more [here](#).

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 [here](#).

More information about Emergency Operations Plan and the Emergency Action Plan can be found [here](#).

Download the [SafeZone App](#) 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 by the published Census Date (the first week of class). Any student receiving federal financial aid who does not attend prior to the published Census Date (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.

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](#).

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

Office Hours.

All faculty with teaching assignments should include regularly scheduled office hours on each syllabus in addition to "by appointment." Please review your appointment letter for the number of weekly office hours you are expected to set. Regularly scheduled office hours should also be posted outside your office door (where applicable). See page 1 of syllabus for office hour info.

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.

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 with 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.

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 on our campus and within our state, nation, and world. All decisions and actions involving students and employees are to 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, or pregnancy/parenting status. Individuals who believe they have experienced harassment or discrimination prohibited by this statement are encouraged to contact the University's Civil Rights Officer at 210-784-2061 or titleix@tamusa.edu.

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 based on sex, 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 sex-based 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 modifications to pregnant students as would be provided to a student with 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.

Young Jaguars.

Can support parenting students with daycare who meet this criteria: Must be enrolled in classes at TAMUSA in the current semester. Must be Pell eligible or a single parent. They serve children ages 3 to 12-years-old. Children must be enrolled in Pre-K-3 through 6th grade. youngjaguars@tamusa.edu or (210) 784-2636

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 students' 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](#) or visit the resources available in the [OSRR Website](#).

Broader Use of Generative AI Permitted Within Guidelines

Use of artificial intelligence (AI) tools, including ChatGPT, is permitted in this course for students who wish to use them. To adhere to our scholarly values, students must cite any AI-generated material that informed their work (this includes in-text citations and/or use of quotations, and in your reference list). Using an AI tool to generate content without proper attribution qualifies as academic dishonesty and violates Texas A&M-San Antonio's standards of academic integrity.

Important Dates: Fall 2025 Regular 16-Week Session

August 25	First day of class
September 1	Labor Day Holiday – No classes
September 10	Census Date
November 14	Last day to drop with an automatic “W”
November 25	Last day to withdraw from the University
November 26	Study Day – No classes
November 27-29	Thanksgiving Holiday – No classes
December 4	Last day of classes
December 5	Study Day – No classes
December 6-12	Final exams
December 16	Commencement

The [complete academic calendar](#) is available online.

*While I do not anticipate major changes, adjustments to the course schedule, assignments, or policies may become necessary during the semester. I reserve the right to make such changes and will communicate them clearly and as far in advance as possible.