



FESA 4314, **Public Safety Leadership and Ethics**, Spring 2026, CRN 23548
Fire and Emergency Services Administration Program, College of Business

Course Syllabus

CLASS MODALITY: Online Asynchronous

CLASS DURATION: January 20, 2026 – May 12, 2026

INSTRUCTOR: Chris Watson, Adjunct Professor
Tel: 512-762-8024 cell phone
E-Mail: cdwatson@tamusa.edu
Student emails will receive a reply within two business days.

COURSE WEBSITE: <https://tamusa.blackboard.com/>

CATALOG COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course will introduce students to a variety of issues within the context of leadership. Through an assortment of learning methodologies such as written case studies, video case analysis, and interactive learning processes, the student will not only study leadership but also ethics. This course will be presented to an integrated group of students from public safety professions. A focus of this course is to provide public safety members with a greater understanding and appreciation of the concerns and issues involving leadership and ethics, which exist within the realm of public safety leadership. Further, it is the goal of this course for each student to exercise effective leadership in all aspects of life.

PREREQUISITES: None - This class is intended for BAAS-FESA students. Others may attend with approval of their respective school or department.

STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

1. Understand the role of the fire officer in the context of leadership, ethics, and values.
2. Understand and identify the fire officer's role and responsibility to exercise leadership in the community.
3. Through a process of personal growth, understand and apply leadership principles in their personal, family, community, and professional lives.

4. Develop confidence in their ability to exercise leadership, as delegators, conflict managers, team-builders, coaches, and strategic thinkers.
5. Develop a broader view of the cultural and political dynamics of organizations
6. Recognize their ability to develop relationships in the context of exercising leadership and have a positive impact on individuals and organizations.
7. Understand the significance of shared vision and communication in effective leadership.
8. Recognize the process, importance, risks, and rewards of ethical, principle-centered decision making.
9. Expand their insight into the importance of maintaining ethics while meeting the challenges of leadership in the public safety field.
10. Understand the importance of integration and collaboration among all stakeholders, public and private, to meet the challenges of leadership in the public safety field.

REQUIRED MATERIALS:

- **TEXT:** SAGE Vantage for Northouse/Leadership: 10th edition. Digital ISBN 978-1-0719-5761-5
- **BLACKBOARD:** Connect to <http://tamusa.blackboard.com>. All course material will be made available in Blackboard and all course work will be submitted in Blackboard.
- **TIME:** You are expected to spend 5-10 hours per week for the course.

GRADING POLICY: The final course grade will be based on your performance on the quizzes, exams, assignments and class participation using the following weights:

Vantage Text Completion	15%
Chapter Quizzes	20%
Final Research Paper	20%
Discussions	15%
Assignments (Case Studies)	30%

The final letter grades will be assigned as follows: Above 90% ⇒ A; 80 – 89% ⇒ B; 70 – 79% ⇒ C; 60 – 69% ⇒ D; Below 60% ⇒ F.

VANTAGE COMPLETION: This course requires the use of SAGE Vantage, an online learning environment that includes access to the entire text and integrated assignments, including multimedia activities, concept-based knowledge checks, and end of chapter reading quizzes. **Completion of coursework in Vantage will make up 15% of your overall course grade.** Use the provided links in Blackboard, to access SAGE Vantage.

CHAPTER QUIZZES: There will be a chapter quiz for each chapter in SAGE Vantage. Questions will emphasize understanding and applications of concepts and topics covered in the chapter. There will be fifteen questions for each quiz randomly selected from a bank of questions. Each chapter quiz may be taken a second time, the best grade will be recorded. (Different questions will be randomly selected.) Chapter quizzes must be completed by the due date. **NO CREDIT will be**

given for Chapter Quizzes submitted late. All Chapter quizzes are available in Vantage from the beginning of the semester which will allow students to work ahead if needed.

ASSIGNMENTS: There will be several case study assignments during the semester. The objective of these assignments is to analyze and apply the learned leadership concepts specifically to the fire and emergency services. Details of the assignments will be provided in Blackboard. **Ten points will be deducted from assignments submitted after the deadline.**

RESEARCH PAPER: Due to the online format of this class, the final assignment will be a research-based paper. The purpose of the research paper is to demonstrate mastery of the course learning objectives. Specific requirements and the grading rubric for the research paper will be presented in Blackboard. Ten points will be deducted from research papers submitted after the deadline.

DISCUSSIONS/CLASS PARTICIPATION:

There will be several discussions during the semester. The discussions topics are designed for student-to-student learning. Below are guidelines for the discussions:

1. Do not only respond to the initial questions for the discussion, but rather carry on a dialogue with your classmates as well. This is a discussion, not just a question and answer session. It is one of the items that make a good online course and establishes community. If you only respond to the question, it makes our discussion more of an "exam" rather than a dialogue.
2. Do not get caught up in "winning" the debate. We are here to learn the material, to discuss matters of importance with others, and to enjoy learning.
3. Read all postings from your classmates. We can all learn from each other's perspectives and experiences.
4. When you reply to a post, don't just say "I agree." Give the person or person's name you are agreeing with, a brief, sentence or two, summaries of what they said you are agreeing with, and then your views. You might also consider changing the subject line to reflect your posts. Make it easy for us to figure out who you are talking to and what you are talking about.
5. If you express an opinion, support it with material from our readings. When you quote, summarize, or paraphrase from the text be sure to give the page number(s).
6. Three posts is the bare minimum—one originating with you and two responses to posting from classmates. You should plan on posting on more than one or even two days in order to allow yourself to stay involved with the class.
7. Remember to check back on your thread to see what questions have been asked of you. Answering questions posted for you **is required**.
8. All posts must be completed during the week of the discussion. Late posts do not count and thus a poor grade may be recorded. Discussion grades will be posted after the discussion week has ended.
9. If you do not participate in our class discussions you will be institutionally dropped from the course. If you are unable to participate in the online discussions, then you should withdraw from the course.

CLASS ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION: The class is delivered entirely online. Students are required to participate in weekly discussions. These discussions enhance learning and provide

opportunity for fellow students to interact and participate with other students. Students are responsible for the materials covered in class. Class participation is highly encouraged as it makes class more interesting and enhances the learning experience. Students are strongly encouraged to ask questions and participate in class discussions and problem solving. Good attendance and participation will be rewarded when final grades are assigned.

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI) POLICY: AI can be used for initial research, idea generation, etc. No Use of generative AI is permitted for final assignment submissions. All work submitted by students will be generated by the students themselves, working individually. Students should not have another person/entity do the writing of any portion of an assignment for them, which includes hiring a person or a company to write assignments and/or using artificial intelligence (AI) tools like ChatGPT. Submission of any AI-generated content in this course qualifies as academic dishonesty and violates Texas A&M-San Antonio's standards of academic integrity.

PRELIMINARY SCHEDULE:

MODULE 1		
Week 1	Chapter 1	Introductions
Week 2	Chapter 2	Discussion
Week 3	Chapter 3	Discussion
Week 4	Chapter 4	Module 1 Case Study
MODULE 2		
Week 5	Chapter 5	Discussion
Week 6	Chapter 6	Discussion
Week 7	Chapter 7	Discussion
Week 8	Chapter 8	Module 2 Case Study
MODULE 3		
Week 9	Chapter 9	Discussion
Week 10	Chapter 10	Discussion
Week 11	Chapter 11	Discussion
Week 12	Chapter 12	Module 3 Case Study
MODULE 4		
Week 13	Chapter 13	Discussion
Week 14	Chapter 14	Discussion
Week 15	Chapter 15	Discussion
Week 16	Chapter 16	Final Research Paper

Drop Policy

You may drop the course with an automatic grade of W on or before the date listed in the academic calendar at www.tamusa.edu. The last date to drop a course, or withdraw from the University is also indicated in the academic calendar on the university website (www.tamusa.edu). If you wish to drop the class, you must submit the necessary paperwork to the proper authority. Students dropping a course are subject to all conditions listed in the university catalog.

Violations of Academic Conduct (Section 14.5 Student Handbook)

As a member in an academic community, students at Texas A&M University-San Antonio are expected to exhibit a high level of honesty and integrity in their pursuit of higher education, be mature, be self-directed and be able to manage their own affairs. Students who are unwilling to abide by these basic expectations will find themselves facing academic and/or disciplinary sanctions. Students are expected to share in the responsibility and authority with faculty and staff to challenge and make known acts that violate the Texas A&M University-San Antonio Code of Conduct. For more information, please visit the Office of Student Rights & Responsibilities website <http://bit.ly/TAMUSASStudentRR>.

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. Academic misconduct includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, prohibited use of artificial intelligence, multiple submissions, collusion, lying and bribery. For more information, refer to the Student Code of Conduct, Article III: Conduct Rules and Regulations. Texas A&M University-San Antonio faculty has the discretion to impose grade penalties as deemed necessary.

Faculty members are required to report such serious breaches of academic honesty to their chair, their dean and the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities. In cases of academic misconduct, students may be subject not only to grade sanctions in courses but to disciplinary action. Grade sanctions may be imposed only by faculty members, but suspension or expulsion may be imposed only by the Vice President for Student Affairs. If a student wishes to appeal the decision of suspension or expulsion due to violations of academic misconduct, they must initiate their appeal as outlined within the Student Code of Conduct. Extenuating circumstances may cause the University to deviate from the defined time frames.

All student term papers and other written assignments are subject to analysis by anti-plagiarism and anti-AI software. Posting of any class work given to student, or solutions, or discussion, on publicly accessible forums, social media, or artificial intelligence is not permissible.

Considering the potential consequences of academic misconduct, it is obviously in students' best interests to avoid even the appearance of such behavior. If a student is unclear whether a specific act might constitute academic misconduct, please she/he should contact the instructor for an assessment of the situation.

IMPORTANT POLICIES AND RESOURCES

University Email Policy and Course Communications: All correspondence between professors and students must occur via University email accounts. You must have your Jaguar email account ready and working. If it is not working, contact the help desk at helpdesk@tamusa.edu or at 210-784-HELP (4357). If you don't hear back within 48 hours, contact them again. They have many requests during the first part of the semester, so you may need to follow up with them.

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 at the website 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 academic accommodations with Disability Support Services and their instructors as soon as possible.

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 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. Online tutoring is also available for after hours and weekend assistance.

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, visit our website, call 210-784-1331 or visit Madla 120 between the hours of 8:00 AM and 5:00 PM.

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. Crisis support is available 24/7/365 by calling the SCC at 210-784-1331 or through the TELUS student support App.

The TELUS Student Support App provides a variety of mental health resources to including 24/7/365 support for in the moment distress, crisis support, 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 system. 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. 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 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.

Jaguar Writing, Language, and Digital Composing Center (WLDCC): The Jaguar Writing Center provides writing support to graduate and undergraduate students in all three colleges as well as faculty and staff. Writing 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. The Writing Center offers face-to-face, synchronous online, and asynchronous digital appointments. Students can schedule appointments with the Writing Center in JagWire under the Student Services tab. Click on “Writing, Language, and Digital Composing Center” to make your appointment. Students wanting to work in realtime with a tutor can schedule an “Online Appointment.” Students wishing to receive asynchronous, written feedback from a tutor can schedule an “eTutoring” appointment. More information about what services we offer, how to make an appointment, and how to access your appointment can be found on our website . The Writing Center can also be reached by emailing writingcenter@tamusa.edu.

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 report for support. Furthermore, please notify the professor if you are comfortable in doing so. This will enable them to direct you to available resources. A food pantry is available on campus; click here for hours and contact information.

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 wide variety 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.

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 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 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. Young Jaguars can support parenting students with daycare if students meet this criteria: (1) must be enrolled in classes at Texas A&M-San Antonio in the current semester, (2) must be Pell eligible or a single parent, (3) child(ren) must be aged 3 to 12-years-old, and (4) child(ren) must be enrolled in Pre-K-3 through 6th grade. For more information, please contact Young Jaguars at youngjaguars@tamusa.edu or call (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, 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, 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

KEY DATES: The complete academic calendar is available on the TAMUSA website: <https://www.tamusa.edu/academics/academic-calendar/current-year/index.html>