

HLTH 3170 – Directed Study/Research

Course Syllabus

Spring 2026, Thurs, 3:00-4:00pm
CAB 351 Suite

Instructor Information

Professor: Monica Schoch-Spana, PhD, CPH

Office: CAB 351E

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Phone: 210-784-2668

Office Hours: Tues, 2:00-4:00pm, and by appointment

Catalog Description

Research Experience in Community Health is aimed at providing an introductory research experience with a Community Health faculty member. Through this experience the student will gain an understanding of how research is conducted outside of a classroom and how the scientific method is actively applied in the specific discipline of the faculty research interests. Students will work on a specified topic with the intent of promoting independent reading, research and study; supplement existing course offerings or subjects not presently covered. Students will become part of the research team and will participate in laboratory or field activities as well as meetings/ discussions. TSI Restriction(s): Reading, Writing, Math

Research Study Topic for Spring 2026

Prompted by the deadly 2025 Texas Hill Country Floods, this research project will investigate the mental health impacts for diverse residents of San Antonio who were not directly affected by events but who live in the city's flood-prone areas and risk future losses. In particular, the project seeks to understand the lived experience of vicarious trauma and its potential motivation for local residents to take actions that reduce their own flood risk at home.

Learning Objectives

Upon successfully completing this course, students will be able to:

- Outline the elements of the research process – i.e., generating questions, reviewing literature, collecting and analyzing data, drafting results, and disseminating findings
- Recount the legal standards and ethical principles relevant to human subject research

Course Texts

- Miller, C. (2021). *West side rising: How San Antonio's 1921 flood devastated a city and sparked a Latino environmental justice movement*. Trinity University Press.

Course Work and Grading Criteria

CITI Training (40 pts, 10%)

Students will complete a series of 3 CITI trainings - <https://about.citiprogram.org/> - in research integrity and ethical conduct including: Introduction to Responsible Conduct of Research, Human Subjects Research – Social & Behavioral Science, and Community-Engaged and Community-Based Participatory Research. Due Date:

Team Meeting Attendance (40 pts, 10%)

Regular attendance at the weekly research team meeting is mandatory.

Field Site Performance (200 pts, 50%)

When in the field, students will follow research protocols while attending to timeliness, appropriate dress, respectful communication, and conscientious of effort. Students will remember that they are representatives of the university, and that their behavior can affect the opportunity for other students to conduct field research in the future.

Journal Keeping (80 pts, 20%)

Students will consistently keep a journal to document research activities, experiences, and self-reflections. Students should come prepared each week to report on your experiences, drawing from their journal entries. Regular prompts to consider in journal keeping are:

- What activities have I been involved in?
- What new insights have I had regarding the conduct of research and/or the understanding of the topics under investigation?

NOTE: Please respect people's privacy and keep confidential information out of the journal.

Poster and/or Conference Presentation (80 pts, 20%)

Students will create a poster to be displayed at the JAGRISE/Student Research Symposium (April 15-17, 2026). Alternately, students will participate in a presentation at the South Central Climate Resilience Forum, to be held in San Antonio, April 15-17, 2026.

Course Grades

Assignments	Percentage	Points Possible
CITI Training	10%	40
Team Meeting Attendance	10%	40
Field Site Performance	50%	200
Journal Keeping	20%	80
Poster	10%	40
Total	100%	400

Scale

A: 400 - 361 B: 360 - 321 C: 320 - 281 D: 280 - 241 F: 240 - 0

Course Calendar

January 22 – Orientation to Course

January 29 – Research Design

Reading: Grant Proposal, “Catastrophic Flooding Impacts on San Antonio, Texas Mental Health and Risk Reduction”

Assignment Due, February 4: CITI Trainings; upload certificates

February 5 – Rapid Research and Ephemeral Data

Reading: Adams, R. M., Evans, C. M., & Peek, L. (2024). Defining, collecting, and sharing perishable disaster data. *Disasters*, 48(1), e12592.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/dis.12592>

February 12 – Flooding in the U.S.

Reading: Walls, M.A., Pesek, & Peterson, D. (2023, September 26). Flooding in the United States 101: Causes, trends, and Impacts. Resources for the Future.
<https://www.rff.org/publications/explainers/flooding-in-the-united-states-101-causes-trends-and-impacts/>

February 19 – Flooding in San Antonio

Reading: Petersen, J. F. (2004). San Antonio: An environmental crossroad on the Texas spring line. In C. Miller (Ed.), *On the border: An environmental history of San Antonio* (pp. 20-22). University of Pittsburgh Press. [on reserve at library]

February 26 – Flooding & Health

Reading: Flores, A. B., Sullivan, J. A., Yu, Y., & Friedrich, H. K. (2024). Health disparities in the aftermath of flood events: A review of physical and mental health outcomes with methodological considerations in the USA. *Current environmental health reports*, 11(2), 238–254. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40572-024-00446-7>

March 5 – Flooding & Mental Health

Reading: Fernandez, A., Black, J., Jones, M., Wilson, L., Salvador-Carulla, L., Astell-Burt, T., & Black, D. (2015). Flooding and mental health: a systematic mapping review. *PLoS one*, 10(4), e0119929. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0119929>

March 12 – Spring Break

March 19 – Flooding & Mental Health – A Mixed Methods View

Reading: Twiddy, M., Trump, B., & Ramsden, S. (2022). Understanding the long-term impact of flooding on the wellbeing of residents: A mixed methods study. *PLoS one*, 17(9), e0274890. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0274890>

March 26 – Field Sites: River Road Neighborhood

Reading: Statistical Atlas. (2018, September 14). Overview of River Road, San Antonio, Texas. <https://statisticalatlas.com/neighborhood/Texas/San-Antonio/River-Road/Overview>

April 2 – Field Site: Thompson Community

Reading: Statistical Atlas. (2018, September 14). Overview of Thompson Community, San Antonio, Texas. <https://statisticalatlas.com/neighborhood/Texas/San-Antonio/Thompson-Community/Overview>

April 9 – Engaging Communities in Research

Reading: Villarreal, M. (2020). Best Practices for Ethical Post-Disaster Community Outreach and Engagement-CONVERGE Extreme Events Research Check Sheets Series. DesignSafe-CI. <https://doi.org/10.17603/ds2-zekm-9737>

April 16 – Disparities in Flood Impacts & Risk Management

Reading: Miller, C. (2014). Streetscape environmentalism: Floods, social justice, and political power in San Antonio, 1921–1974. *Southwestern historical quarterly* 118(2), 158-177. <https://dx.doi.org/10.1353/swh.2014.0097>.

April 23 – Chronic Risk, Emotion, and Action

Reading: Fothergill, L. J., Disney, A. S., & Wilson, E. E. (2021). A qualitative exploration of the psychological impacts of living with the uncertainty of persistent flood risk. *Public health*, 198, 141–145. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.puhe.2021.07.016>

April 30 – Semester Debrief

Adaptability and Flexibility

Work on this study is contingent on a number of external forces – e.g., IRB review and approval, grant sponsor review, and relationship building with neighborhood sites. Students should be prepared for a degree of uncertainty as the research project evolves in this dynamic context.

Texas A&M University San Antonio Important Policies and Resources



TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY SAN ANTONIO

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 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 accommodation 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.

While tutoring hours may change based on tutor schedules and availability, the current tutoring hours for MATH in the ALC are as follows:

Day of the Week	Appointments Available	Walk-in Tutoring (no appointment needed)
Monday	8:00 AM – 6:00 PM	9:00 AM – 5:00 PM
Tuesday	8:00 AM – 6:00 PM	9:00 AM – 5:00 PM
Wednesday	8:00 AM – 6:00 PM	9:00 AM – 5:00 PM
Thursday	8:00 AM – 6:00 PM	9:00 AM – 5:00 PM
Friday	8:00 AM – 5:00 PM	11:00 AM – 4:00 PM

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 include 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 the [Jag E Alert System website](#). You can access more information about [Emergency Operations Plan and the Emergency Action Plan on our website](#). 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.

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, 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 e-portfolios, 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 real time with a tutor can schedule an **Online Appointment**. Students wishing to receive asynchronous, written feedback from a tutor can schedule an **e-Tutoring appointment**. More information about what services we offer, how to make an appointment, and how to access your appointment can be found on the [Writing Center's 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. The [General's Store is a food pantry](#) that is available on campus as well.

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 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, based on 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. 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 reasonable accommodation for pregnant students as it would be provided to a student with a temporary medical condition that is 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@tamus.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 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.

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](#).

Important Spring 2026 Dates

Dates	Event
January 13	Tuition and Fee Payments deadline
January 19	Marting Luther King Jr. Day – No Classes
January 20	First Day of Class
February 4	Census Date
March 6-23	Midterm grading period
March 9-14	Spring Break
April 3	Study Day – No classes
April 17	Last day to drop with an automatic withdrawal
May 1	Last day to drop a course or withdraw from the university
May 4	Last Day of Classes
May 5	Study Day – No classes
May 6-12	Final Exams
May 19	Commencement

The complete [Academic Calendar](#) as available on our website.

Artificial Intelligence Policy

No Use of Generative AI Permitted [Insert Course Number]

This assumes that all work submitted by students will be generated by the students themselves, working individually or in groups. 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. Use of any AI-generated content in this course qualifies as academic dishonesty and violates Texas A&M-San Antonio's standards of academic integrity.