

DEPARTMENT OF CRIMINOLOGY AND POLITICAL SCIENCE

College of Arts and Sciences

Texas A&M University-San Antonio

Phone: 210-784-2205 (Chair)

Web: <https://www.tamusa.edu/academics/college-of-arts-and-sciences/criminology-political-science/index.html>

**CRIM 5301 – Advanced Criminological Theory
Spring Semester 2026**

**Section 600, CRN: 24048
Asynchronous, Online**

Syllabus

Instructor: Dr. James O'Berry, Ph.D.

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Office Phone: 210-784-2673

Office Hours: 9:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. Mondays and Wednesdays, and by appointment

Note Regarding Office Hours: Office hours are for **YOU**, the student. These are times when I am guaranteed (unless I state otherwise, like if I have to cancel them for the day) to be physically in my office and available to you. These are times when you can drop in (no appointment necessary) to ask or discuss anything with me face-to-face. You can use this time to ask me anything about class or to talk about other things you want to discuss in general. When I am not meeting with students during this time, I do work on other things, but this does not mean you will be interrupting anything if you stop by. These are not the only times I am available, as I check and respond to my email all day, every day, and I can also meet over video call (by appointment) during times when I am not normally in the office. If you have any questions about any of this, please talk to me!

TEXT:

Piquero, A. (2016). *The handbook of criminological theory*. West Sussex, UK: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

This textbook is available for free digitally via the University Library's website.

Link: <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/tamsa/detail.action?docID=4035968>

eBook Page (in case the link does not work):

<https://tamusa.on.worldcat.org/oclc/908287065>

Citations for other necessary readings will be identified, and students will seek these readings out themselves.

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course explores classic and contemporary theoretical perspectives on the etiology of crime and empirical support for those perspectives. Theory development and criteria for judging criminological theories are discussed. Correlates of crime and crime typologies are also examined.

COURSE PREREQUISITES: N/A

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

Knowledge – Students should be able to define the role of theory in the field of criminal justice and criminology, properly apply theories, accurately cite sources they use in their work in APA style, and recall both foundational and advanced concepts pertaining to criminological theory and course concepts.

Comprehension – Students should be able to describe complex criminological theories and discuss their strengths and weaknesses. They should also be able to accurately and thoroughly apply said theories to various types and occurrences of crime in a way that shows deep understanding.

Application – Students should be able to apply course concepts to various elements of crime and criminal justice. They should be able to apply the elements of the course to detailed and well-researched essay assignments as well as class discussions.

Analysis – Students should be able to analyze various scientific and theoretical perspectives on the causes of crime while critically evaluating said perspectives regarding what evidence supports or refutes them.

Evaluation – Students should be able to evaluate the veracity and logical rigor of various criminological theories. They should be able to craft and defend arguments for why certain theories may be better or worse at explaining criminological phenomena than other competing explanations. These arguments should be expressed both in more casual, discussion-based formats, as well as in professional, well-written essays rooted in empiricism.

Synthesis – Students should be able to create well-structured and logically argued cases for how different criminological theories can be used to explain or interpret various kinds of crimes and crime events. They should also be able to apply this to examples chosen by themselves in papers that combine intellectual creativity with scientific rigor and knowledge.

Note: The instructor is not solely responsible for assuring students meet these outcomes. It requires effort and input from the students as well. Students are solely responsible for managing their enrollment status in a course and must withdraw on their own. Therefore, not showing up for class does not automatically constitute a withdrawal.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Students can earn up to a total of 100 possible points for the semester. In this case, the students' final percentage grades are equivalent to the number of points they earn throughout the course.

Response Papers (8 points each; Total = 56% or 56 points):

Response Papers will be assigned as dictated in the schedule. These papers will require the student to engage with that week's required readings and to bring in additional scholarly information as necessary. Each Response Paper will have the same prompt, which will be addressed each week they are assigned, which follows:

Response papers should be approximately 1000 words in length and should begin with a brief introduction to the week's topic and a summary of the required materials. The remainder of the paper should focus on discussing and responding to one or more of the main themes of the required materials as identified by the students. Such responses should not simply be about agreeing or disagreeing with the information. Instead, students should express deep thought and consideration of the topic. Students may address specific aspects of the information, such as the consequences of the scientific findings and arguments presented, any debates between differing perspectives as presented in the materials, policy ramifications, potential future research, etc. In doing this, students should locate and cite additional scientific, peer-reviewed research as necessary. While students are expected to present a thorough understanding of and thought regarding the required readings, creativity in how they respond to them in their papers is encouraged.

Students will also be evaluated on the proper use of the APA7 citation style. Students should properly cite ALL required materials each week, both in text and in a References page at the end of their Response papers. For APA7 in-text citation and References page guidance, I suggest the Purdue Online Writing Lab's information on APA7 style.

Discussion Boards (5 points each; Total = 40% or 40 points):

On weeks when Discussion Boards are assigned, students will be expected to make an initial discussion post of approximately 500 words. After their initial post, students will be expected to respond to at least two other classmates' posts in at least 100 words. These responses should not be simple agreements or disagreements but should focus on engaging with and arguing for or against the perspective presented by the other students. These initial posts and responses should, at all times, be respectful. Aggression, insults, accusations, and other

unprofessional or inappropriate conduct will not be tolerated. Anything of this kind will be met with a warning the first time it does (assuming it is not severe enough to warrant involving the university). Repeated offenses after this first warning will result in students receiving a grade of 0 on any assignments in which they engage in this conduct.

Given the subject of this class, we will be addressing and discussing what are, at times, sensitive and controversial subjects. Discussion regarding these topics should remain appropriate and professional at all times.

The prompts for each discussion board will be released at the start of each week they are assigned.

Students are expected to use proper in-text citations per APA7, but a formal References section is not necessary.

Reflection Paper (4% or 4 points):

The reflection paper is a straightforward final assignment meant to help students think about what they learned in the class while also giving them the opportunity to offer feedback regarding the course itself. This paper should be roughly two double-spaced pages. Students should generally recount what they learned from the class, their favorite subject addressed and/or reading, what their most and least favorite discussion board was and why, and anything they thought worked really well for the course, as well as anything they think could be improved on in future versions of the course.

All assignments must be turned in to the instructor during class time or via Blackboard as instructed. Projects will be evaluated based on a grading rubric that focuses mainly on content, APA7 formatting, and grammar.

Grading Policy:

Grades will be computed in the following manner:

Response Papers	56%
Discussion Boards	40%
Reflection Paper	4%
Total	100%

Grade Distribution:

90-100% = A
80 - 89% = B
70 - 79% = C
60 - 69% = D
60% or below = F

Important Dates:

January 20: Classes begin

February 4: Census Day

March 9-14: Spring Break

April 3: University Study Day – No Classes

April 17: Last day to drop with an automatic grade of “W”

May 4: Last day of scheduled classes

May 5: University Study Day – No Classes

May 6-12: Final Exam Week

Accessible resource: The complete academic calendar is available online:

<https://www.tamusa.edu/academics/academic-calendar/index.html>.

ADDITIONAL CLASS POLICIES

Check Blackboard every day for any cancellations, updates, assignment links, etc.

If a student misses class for any reason, it is up to the student to work with a classmate to obtain any notes, instructions, etc., that are missed. The instructor will **not** go over all the material again simply because you missed class and will not provide lecture materials beyond the PowerPoint slides shown in class.

No cell phones, iPads, MP3 players, etc., are allowed in class. In general, laptops are permitted for note-taking (and even recommended for in-class workdays), but I ask that you sit in the back of the room during lecture if you plan to use a laptop to minimize distractions for other students. Additionally, taking hand-written notes is strongly encouraged as research suggests that this is a much more effective means of note-taking than using a computer. All other devices should be put on silent or vibrate and left stored away. If you have an important call or text you need to answer, quietly step out of class and do so. If you know that you will be anticipating an important call for whatever reason, please let me know at the start of class. If your device is repeatedly a distraction for your classmates, you will be asked to leave the class for the day.

All students are expected to follow Texas A&M University-San Antonio's Student Code of Conduct at all times. Frequent or disruptive side conversations will not be tolerated and will result in you being asked to leave the class for the day.

All students must treat other students and the instructor with respect at all times. This requirement means no name-calling, threats, insults, general bigotry, or rudeness. Any of this can result in removal from the classroom. The instructor reserves the right to bring issues to the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities if they deem it necessary.

There should be no expectation of extra credit of any kind in this class. If the instructor decides to grant extra credit, this opportunity will be available to the entire class, not particular students. If extra credit is offered at a time when a student is not available

(such as a surprise bonus question on a test the student does not show up for), the student will have missed the opportunity for said extra credit.

Final grades are indeed final, and the instructor will **not** negotiate final grades for assignments or the course. The grading scale is quite clear and allows the student to easily track their progress towards their desired grade as the semester goes along. The end of the semester is **not** the time to start worrying about one's grades, especially if a student is involved in athletics or scholarships. All students should work from the start of the semester to ensure that they achieve the grades they want. If you believe there is a genuine error with your grade, please raise the issue professionally and respectfully, and the instructor will be glad to look into it to make sure that everything is correct. Coming to office hours or discussing grades via a virtual meeting is the most efficient way to handle this kind of issue.

This course syllabus provides a general plan for the course and is for planning purposes only. It

is tentative and subject to change at the discretion of the instructor. However, every effort will be made to keep changes to a minimum. In short;

The course syllabus provides a general plan for the course; deviations may be necessary.

Spring Semester Class Schedule

Table: Spring Semester Class Schedule

Date	Topic
Week 1 January 20-25	Introduction Week Discussion Board: Initial posts due by 11:59 PM Friday. Replies due by 11:59 PM Sunday
Week 2 January 26-February 1	What is Criminological Theory, and Why Do We Study it? Discussion Board: Initial posts due by 11:59 PM Friday. Replies due by 11:59 PM Sunday Readings/Videos: Piquero (2016) Chapter 1 Watch lecture video
Week 3 February 2-8	Correlates of Crime and Crime Data Response Paper due by 11:59 PM Sunday Readings/Videos: Piquero (2016) Chapter 2 Watch lecture video
Week 4 February 9-15	Classical, Neoclassical, and Deterrence Theories Response Paper due by 11:59 PM Sunday

Date	Topic
	Readings/Videos: Piquero (2016) Chapter 4 Piquero et al. (2011) Watch lecture video
Week 5 February 16-22	Biological and Biosocial Theory Discussion Board: Initial posts due by 11:59 PM Friday. Replies due by 11:59 PM Sunday Readings/Videos: Piquero (2016) Chapters 5 and 19 Wright and Boisvert (2009) Watch lecture video
Week 6 February 23-March 1	Social Learning and Differential Association Theories Response Paper due by 11:59 PM Sunday Readings/Videos: Piquero (2016) Chapter 12 Watch lecture video
Week 7 March 2-8	Psychological Theories Discussion Board: Initial posts due by 11:59 PM Friday. Replies due by 11:59 PM Sunday Readings/Videos: Moore (2011) Watch lecture video
Week 8 March 9-15	SPRING BREAK NO ASSIGNMENTS
Week 9 March 16-22	Life Course and Developmental Theories Response Paper due by 11:59 PM Sunday Readings/Videos: Piquero (2016) Chapters 6 and 18 Watch lecture video
Week 10 March 23-29	Social Disorganization and Environmental Theories Discussion Board: Initial posts due by 11:59 PM Friday. Replies due by 11:59 PM Sunday Readings/Videos: Piquero (2016) Chapters 7 and 9 Watch lecture videos
Week 11 March 30-April 5	Routine Activities and Situational Theories Response Paper due by 11:59 PM Sunday

Date	Topic
	Readings/Videos: Piquero (2016) Chapter 22 Cohen and Felson (1979) Watch lecture video
Week 12 April 6-12	Anomie, Strain, and Subcultural Theories Discussion Board: Initial posts due by 11:59 PM Friday. Replies due by 11:59 PM Sunday Readings/Videos: Piquero (2016) Chapters 11 and 13 Sadiku (2014) Watch lecture video
Week 13 April 13-19	Control Theories and Neutralization Theory Response Paper due by 11:59 PM Sunday Readings/Videos: Piquero (2016) Chapter 10 Sykes and Matza (1957) Watch lecture video
Week 14 April 20-26	Labeling Theories Discussion Board: Initial posts due by 11:59 PM Friday. Replies due by 11:59 PM Sunday Readings/Videos: Piquero (2016) Chapter 14 Watch lecture video
Week 15 April 27-May 3	Critical Theories Response Paper due by 11:59 PM Sunday Readings: Piquero (2016) Chapter 16 Watch first part of lecture video
Week 16 May 4 (Short Week; will continue into finals week)	Feminist Theory Discussion Board: Initial posts due by 11:59 PM Friday, May 8th. Replies due by 11:59 PM Sunday, May 10th Readings: Piquero (2016) Chapter 15 Griffin (1971) Felson (2006) Watch second part of lecture video
Final Week May 6-12	Reflection Paper due 11:59 PM MAY 12th No Late Submissions Will Be Accepted

University Policies & 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 <https://www.tamusa.edu/Disability-Support-Services/index.html> or email us at dss@tamusa.edu. Disabilities may include, but are not limited to, attentional, learning, mental health, sensory, physical, or chronic health conditions. All students are encouraged to discuss their disability-related needs with Disability Support Services and their instructors as soon as possible.

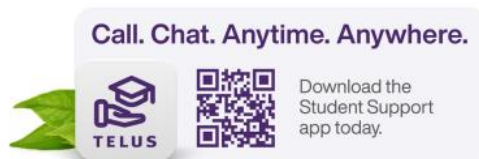
Academic Learning Center: The Academic Learning Center provides free course-based tutoring to all currently enrolled students at Texas A&M University-San Antonio. Students wishing to work with a tutor can make appointments through the Brainfuse online tutoring platform. Brainfuse can be accessed in the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

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 tamusa.edu/studentcounseling

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

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



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

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

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

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

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/academics/>.

Meeting Basic Needs: Any student who has difficulty affording groceries or accessing sufficient food to eat every day or who lacks a safe and stable place to live, and believes this may affect their performance in the course, is urged to submit a CARE referral (<https://www.tamusa.edu/university-policies/Student-Rights-and-Responsibilities/file-a-report.html>) for support. Furthermore, please notify the professor if you are comfortable in doing so. This will enable them to direct you to available resources.

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

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

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

Statement of Harassment and Discrimination: Texas A&M University-San Antonio is committed to the fundamental principles of academic freedom, equal opportunity, and human dignity. To fulfill its multiple missions as an institution of higher learning, A&M-San Antonio encourages a climate that values and nurtures collegiality and the uniqueness of the individual within our state, nation, and world. All decisions and actions involving students and employees should be based on applicable law and individual merit. Texas A&M University-San Antonio, in accordance with applicable federal and state law, prohibits discrimination, including harassment, on the basis of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, or pregnancy/parenting status. Individuals who believe they have experienced harassment or discrimination prohibited by this statement are encouraged to contact the appropriate offices within their respective units.

Texas A&M University-San Antonio faculty are committed to providing a safe learning environment for all students and for the university as a whole. If you have experienced any form of sex- or gender-based discrimination or harassment, including sexual assault, sexual harassment, domestic or dating violence, or stalking, know that help and support are available. A&M-San Antonio's Title IX Coordinator can support those impacted by such conduct in navigating campus life, accessing health and counseling services, providing academic and housing accommodations, and more. The university strongly encourages all students to report any such incidents to the Title IX Coordinator. Please be aware that all A&M-San Antonio employees (other than those designated as confidential resources such as counselors and trained victim advocates) are required to report information about such discrimination and harassment to the university. This means that if you tell a faculty member about a situation of sexual harassment, sexual violence, or other related misconduct, the faculty member must share that information with the university's Title IX Coordinator (titleix@tamusa.edu, 210-784-2061, CAB 439K). If you wish to speak to a confidential employee who does not have this reporting requirement, you can contact the Student Counseling Center at (210) 784-1331 or visit them in Madla 120.

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

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

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

Students' Rights

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

Students' Responsibilities

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

We expect that students will behave in a manner that is dignified, respectful, and courteous to all people, regardless of sex, ethnic/racial origin, religious background, sexual orientation, or disability. Conduct that infringes on the rights of another individual will not be tolerated.

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

AI Policy

There are situations and contexts within this course where you may be asked to use artificial intelligence (AI) tools to explore how they can be used. Outside of those circumstances, you should not use AI tools to generate content (text, video, audio, images) that will end up in any student work (assignments, activities, discussion responses, etc.) that is part of your evaluation in this course. Any student work submitted using AI tools should clearly indicate with attribution what work is the student's work and what part is generated by the AI. In such cases, no more than 25% of the student work should be generated by AI. If any part of this is confusing or uncertain, students should reach out to their instructor for clarification before submitting work for grading. Use of AI-generated content without the instructor's permission and/or proper attribution in this course qualifies as academic dishonesty and violates Texas A&M-San Antonio's standards of academic integrity.