

***School of Arts, Media, & Communication***



TEXAS A&M  
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**SAMC**  
SCHOOL OF ARTS, MEDIA, & COMMUNICATION

***Adjunct Faculty Handbook***  
***Revised 08/2024***

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## **Introduction**

Welcome to the School of Arts, Media, & Communication at Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi! This document provides adjunct faculty with information for successful teaching. It contains general information regarding procedures such as ordering textbooks, getting your keys, receiving mail, and getting ID cards; it spells out School expectations for adjunct faculty; and it provides a basic summary of good practices in teaching. We hope that you may find it useful. Always remember that department chairs and department faculty can be great resources for any questions and concerns that you may have.

## **Procedures**

### Office

In cases where space allows for adjunct faculty to be provided offices, adjunct faculty members may be assigned space where they may meet with students or leave materials. If such office space is available, your department chair will discuss your office assignment with you.

### Keys

When adjunct faculty require access to locked teaching spaces or offices, your department chair will request that keys be made for you. You must sign for and pick these up at the University Police Department (UPD). Be sure to bring your ID card (see below). Adjunct faculty must return keys to UPD if they are not scheduled to teach in the next long semester. A return receipt must be requested by the adjunct and a copy given to the supervisor/department chair. There is a charge for replacing lost keys.

### Mail

Each department has a mailroom with mailboxes for all faculty. Please check your mailbox regularly since important information and memoranda are distributed through the faculty mailboxes.

### ID Cards

University identification cards for faculty, staff, and students are issued by the SandDollar\$ Office located in the University Center. You must provide a picture ID and a copy of your letter of appointment in order to be issued a SandDollar\$ card. This card is required to use the library and to access other University services. SandDollar\$ cards are provided without charge to faculty.

### Library

Adjunct faculty have complete access to the resources in the library. Use your SandDollar\$ card to check out or reserve books.

## Hours

During the year, the University hours are 8:00 to 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday. Adjunct faculty are not expected to maintain regular office hours. However, we encourage part-time faculty to make themselves available to students before and/or after class.

## Phones

The School may provide adjunct instructors with a voice mailbox, accessible from both on and off-campus, so that students can leave voice mail messages. Your department's Administrative Associate will inform you of what your department has set up for you. PIN numbers required for access to long-distance calling are not issued to adjunct faculty. To call off campus, first dial 9.

## Pay

Adjunct faculty should fill out Human Resources paperwork with the department Administrative Associate. Direct deposit is required for all University employees. Pay dates fall on the first of each month or on the next working day after the first. If adjunct faculty have questions, they should contact the SAMC Business Coordinator.

## Parking

To park on campus, faculty must obtain parking permits by going to the TAMUCC Parking Portal on the UPD website. Adjuncts working less than 50% FTE (i.e. teaching only 1 or 2 courses in a long semester) will have their permit cost covered by the Center for Faculty Excellence (CFE).

## University Identification Number (UIN)

For some of the things listed above you will need your UIN to set up some of these services. You will be able to get your UIN from your department's Administrative Associate or HR.

## Banner "A" Number

To access your courses in Canvas or S.A.I.L., you will need your "A" number. This can be obtained by your contacting your department's Administrative Associate.

## **Before the Semester Begins**

### Contracts

Part-time faculty receive contingency contracts. This means that in the event of low enrollment (fewer than 15 students in a lower-division undergraduate class, fewer than 12 students in an upper-division undergraduate class, and fewer than 7 in a graduate class), the course may be canceled. Department chairs, of course, do their best to avoid having to cancel a class.

### Courses

Adjunct faculty may be asked to teach lower division courses, or upper division classes in their areas of specialty. Faculty should work closely with the department chair and the full-time faculty in the department on course design and requirements. If faculty are teaching multi-section courses, they should make sure their learning goals and objectives are closely aligned with those of others teaching in that rotation.

### Textbooks

Several months before the start of the semester, faculty will receive an email from their Administrative Associates informing them of the deadline to submit book orders. Book orders are done online through the University bookstore's website, which can be connected to through S.A.I.L. Faculty should work closely with the department chair and department faculty on the textbook selection. Most publishers make it fairly easy to order examination or desk copies of textbooks through their websites, but if you have trouble with this, please notify your department chair.

### Course Syllabus

The syllabus is an important part of every college class. A good syllabus explains to students the expectations and procedures for the class. A clearly written and complete syllabus can prevent many problems. Faculty should distribute (this should be done primarily through our LMS, but paper copies may be distributed in addition if preferred) and explain the syllabus to the class at the first class meeting or, in the case of an asynchronous online class, spotlight it for students on the first day of the term.

In this increasingly contentious (and litigious) age, a syllabus is a quasi-official contract with students. This contract gives students certain assurances about the course and methods, and it provides faculty members with protection if they become involved in a dispute over a grade or procedure. The syllabus, if clear and fair, is the best defense. Be sure each student is given a syllabus. And, be sure to abide by your stated procedures systematically, impartially, and consistently.

If you are teaching an already established course, your department chair should be able to share one or more recent prior versions of the syllabus for the course.

## The Parts of a Syllabus

Each syllabus should, as a matter of good practice, include the following items.

1. Basic information about the course including:
  - a. Your name
  - b. Course title and number
  - c. Course meeting time and location (when not asynchronous and online)
  - d. Your office phone number (if not applicable, listing a personal number is optional)
  - e. Your office number and building (if not applicable, indicate the office for your department's Administrative Associate)
  - f. Office hours (if applicable)
2. A general description or definition of the course. Please review the description in the catalog for initial information. If special labs, extra meetings, or field trips are a required part of the course, these should be noted early on.
3. A list of student learning outcomes (SLOs). Consult with your department chair: are there common objectives for all sections of this course? Objectives should be specific and measurable. Using Bloom's Taxonomy is useful for helping articulate SLOs in ways that foreground the attainment of crucial skills and knowledge. Avoid vague statements such as "students will understand color theory;" instead, for example, state "know and be able to discuss color theory in writing."
4. A clear discussion of course requirements/graded work. List due dates, grading criteria, and weight assigned to each activity. Please note that the College expects that students in all courses are asked to submit written work. This can take the form of informal or formal writing, such as short essays, reading responses, journals, exams, papers, etc.
5. Your policy on issues including (but not limited to):
  - a. Late work
  - b. Plagiarism (see statements on Academic Honesty and Integrity in University Catalog)
  - c. Missed examinations
  - d. Attendance and tardiness
  - e. Preferred method of scholarly citation
  - f. Assignment redo or makeup options, if available

Each of these policies should be spelled out as clearly as possible. The more explicit you are about your policies, methods, and expectations, the less likely your students will be to appeal on the grounds of lack of information.

6. The required and optional texts for the course and any supplementary materials on reserve in the library.
7. A listing of necessary supplies beyond textbooks in courses where there are such.
8. A course outline, organized by class meeting or topic, indicating relevant reading assignments and significant dates.
9. Any statements and/or links to statements required by the University or School.

Plans change. So, if you modify the course plan or syllabus in any substantive way, be sure to inform the students of the modifications by distributing a syllabus addendum clearly describing the change and announcing the change several times in class.

### Course/Program Assessment

Each program is required to demonstrate how individual courses help achieve broader program goals and objectives. Some courses require that instructors give pre- and post-tests to measure student learning. Others use a portfolio method of assessment. As you construct your syllabus, please discuss with your department chair how the course you are teaching participates in program goals and how student learning in this course is being assessed.

### Computer-Aided Instruction

The University supports instructors' use of Canvas in the classroom. Canvas is a learning management system (LMS) that allows instructors to create online discussion forums, mail systems, and spaces to post information. Please see <http://iol.tamucc.edu/howto.php> for information on how to set up an account, or call the Island online Help Desk at x2692. A trainer is available to help you set up your course as well.



## **When the Semester Begins**

### Class Rolls

Class rosters are available online through S.A.I.L. and Canvas. Please check these rosters in class by calling the names on the roster to make sure that students are attending class or online by having some sort of activity requiring a response within the first week of class.

If students are attending but their names are not on the roster, tell them to go to the Registrar's Office (in the Student Services Center - locally called the "round building") for assistance. If a student's name is on the list but the student is not attending, please keep track of their absent days. You will be prompted by the Registrar's Office on Census Day to go into Faculty Self-Service on S.A.I.L. and notate which students have never attended or stopped attending classes.

### Record Keeping

Please be sure to keep careful and accurate records of all grades assigned for individual assignments, as well as student absences, if attendance is part of your grading. The department can provide grade books for your use, or you can keep records electronically. Grade books or spread sheets must be turned in to the department chair at the end of your contract, to be kept for at least one semester after the completion of the course.

### Failing Grades

Some faculty have asked whether we give the grade of F at A&M-Corpus Christi. The answer is yes. If, in your judgment, the student has gotten little or nothing from the course as measured by papers and/or examinations then it is not only permissible but necessary to give the failing grade.

Also, the student who is registered in the course but simply fails to show up -- or who abandons the class but does not withdraw -- should be failed. On the 12th class day, you can make a notation in S.A.I.L. that the student has never attended (NA) or stopped attending (SA). At the end of the semester, the "NA" or "SA" notation will convert to an F on their transcript.

## **Expectations from Students**

### Time

At the upper-division level it is not unreasonable to expect students to do between 2 and 3 hours of outside work for each hour in class, or 6 to 9 hours a week for the usual 3 hour class. Assuming a normal reading speed, this means a student could easily read 60-100 pages of common text material each week. The amount depends heavily on the inherent difficulty of the material. The overall time requirement should take into account the amount of time expected on other things like exam preparation and paper writing. It is useful to think through these time demands in advance to avoid creating an excessive workload and so that you can easily respond to questions about demand levels.

### Attendance

Students are responsible for attending classes and for knowing what went on in each class. Missing a class is never an excuse for missing information. Attendance policies differ—some faculty regularly take attendance while others do not, but some departments and/or academic programs may have common attendance policies by which your class should abide. However you ultimately approach this, be sure to outline the policy clearly in your syllabus.

### Disruptions

Disruptive students are rare at A&M-Corpus Christi, but problems can occur. The first step is to try and deal directly with the student, in private if you can arrange it. If that proves ineffective, you can eject a student from a class for being disruptive. Call UPD at x4444 if you and/or your other students feel immediately threatened. In less acute instances, often the department chair and/or other area faculty know about problem students, so if you are having some difficulty, please ask. The Dean of Students Office also has helpful resources.

### Reading Day and Final Exams

Final Exam days have a shifted schedule to allow for meeting times to accommodate longer exams. This can also change class meeting locations in some cases. Be sure to check the Registrar's website to know when and where your course should meet for its final exam. Even if not giving an exam, this time should be used for class for final critiques, presentations, etc.

Just prior to exam week and following the end of regular class meetings in the long semesters, there is a day designated as Reading Day on which faculty should not schedule any additional, even optional, class meetings or assignment due dates/times. Occasionally, a Reading Day may be scheduled in the academic calendar in advance of a holiday in order to allow faculty and students additional travel time and should be treated the same.

### Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities should present you with documentation informing you of any type of special arrangement that they need to succeed. If you need information regarding any of these

arrangements, call Disability Services at x5816. Contact the University Counseling Center (x2703) if you have a student who displays emotional problems or asks for help with them.

### Adding or Dropping a Class

The grade of W will be assigned to any student officially dropping a course by the date stated in the class schedule (end of the tenth week of classes in the fall and the spring semesters and end of the third week during summer sessions). No student is eligible to receive a W without completing the official drop process by this deadline. After the W date listed in the class schedule, a student will not be allowed to drop a course. During the refund period, the Change of Registration Form must be processed by the Business Office before submitting it to the Office of Admissions and Records. A change of section or a change to or from audit is a change of registration and requires that the add/drop process be followed.

### Withdrawal from the University

A student who finds it necessary to withdraw from the University must file a Withdrawal Form in the Office of Admissions and Records. The deadline for withdrawing from the University each semester is noted on the academic calendars maintained on the Registrar's website.

### Incompletes

Incompletes should be given only in cases of extreme need, such as illness during the time of an examination, or emergencies out of the student's control. An incomplete notation may be given to a student who is passing but has not completed a term paper, examination, or other required work for reasons beyond the student's control other than lack of time. Note that students must initiate all requests for Incompletes. Both the student and the instructor must then fill out an Application for Incomplete Grade Notation form and the application must be approved by the department chair. Forms are available in each of the departments.

## **Policies**

### Copyrighted Materials

The following guidelines are not a definitive statement on violations of copyrighted materials. They are intended to give faculty some rules for proper photocopying of material for educational use.

1. A single copy may be made of most copyrighted material when it is used for scholarly research or teaching.
2. Multiple copies may be made for distribution to the students in a class if each copy indicates that it is copyrighted material and it is brief (i.e. less than 250 words if a poem or, if prose, less than 2500 words or 10% of the work) and if the use is spontaneous. Essentially the latter means that the material is necessary for the class and there wasn't time to solicit and receive permission. There can be no more than one instance of such copying in a semester.
3. Teachers cannot repeatedly and in advance make multiple copies of any copyrighted materials. Therefore, they cannot create any sort of anthology without written permission from the holder of all copyrights.

Please be very careful about photocopying. We should be setting a good example for our students. The same admonition applies to copying copyrighted software for computers. The staff will inform you if your request for photocopying violates good practice.

### Missing a Class

Faculty are expected to meet all classes. However, illness or a major emergency may force an absence. In such a case, make alternative arrangements in advance if at all possible. Another faculty member in the discipline may be able to take over. Another option might be to offer a pre-recorded video lecture or alternative assignment via the course LMS. In any case, notify your department chair if you must miss a class.

### Cheating and Plagiarism

The best way to handle dishonesty is to prevent it in the first place. This can be done by carefully designing papers and examinations so cheating is very difficult (for example, using two different forms of an answer sheet, or carefully assigning paper topics). Plagiarism can be reduced by meticulously explaining what it is; students may not be fully aware of how we define plagiarism. However, violations can still occur. The instructor has a number of options based largely on the judged severity of the violation. These vary from requiring the offender to retake a test to awarding an "F" in the course.

Keep in mind the following:

- a. Before acting on a suspicion make absolutely sure that the student's actions actually constitute a case of plagiarism.

- b. Before acting, discuss the case with your department chair.
- c. Talk with the student. Be sure they understand what you are doing and why.
- d. If at all possible, avoid confrontational disputes because no one wins these.

If you have reason to believe there is cheating or plagiarism taking place, it is a best practice to consult with your department chair on the appropriate way to proceed.

## **Support Services**

### Media

Library Technology Services provides support for classroom use of film, video, television, and so forth. The Bell Library Media Collection offers a substantial number of films and videos for classroom use. Faculty can place a request to make use of short portions of a video (library-owned or their personal copy) to be placed on reserve in Mediasite. Contact Library Technology Services at [LibraryTechnologyServices@tamucc.edu](mailto:LibraryTechnologyServices@tamucc.edu) for more detailed information regarding this process.

### Administrative Associates

Each department has an Administrative Associate who assists faculty in class preparation. The Admin may be able to help you with duplication, test preparation, phone messages, etc. upon request. If you have questions regarding whether a request for assistance would be proper, please consult the department chair.

### Library

The TAMUCC Bell Library has professional reference librarians who offer library orientations and tours tailored to specific needs. These can be very helpful in certain classes. A week or two is generally sufficient notice. The reference librarians are also available to help faculty locate needed materials.

### Computers

The University supports a wide variety of computer aided instruction. Please discuss your needs with your department chair. If you need help with the computers in your office, call the SAMC Client Technologies Analyst at x3449, or the IT Service Desk at x2692 for assistance. If you need help with the computer in your classroom, call the IT Service Desk as well. For access to a computer account, contact the department's Administrative Associate.

### Supplies

The School will supply necessary paper, pens, grade books, duplication services, and other such materials that are directly used in teaching. If you need something special for a class, you may put in a request with the Administrative Associate.

## Good Teaching

The purpose of this section is to provide very general guidelines for successful teaching. Here are some basic "dos" and "don'ts" (in no particular order).

### DO

- Be prepared for each class. This can be very time consuming, but lack of preparation is often a major factor in poor teaching.
- Be willing to engage in discussion. Discussion may not be appropriate in every class session, but allow and even encourage students to respond occasionally.
- Say, "I don't know" when you don't. Trying to bluff an answer is worse than taking the time to do research and come back with an accurate response.
- Be very clear on what is to be graded and how it is to be graded.
- Return graded papers and tests promptly (usually within a week), as a matter of courtesy. In addition, prompt feedback encourages learning.
- Change pace in a class occasionally by using a movie, video, guest speaker, field trip or some sort of class exercise. Members of the faculty are generally willing to go into another's class to do a "guest appearance".
- Relax and have fun. You'll teach better and students will learn better when the atmosphere is pleasant.

### DON'T

- Spend your time reading to students in class. They can all read.
- Change the rules of the course as you go along. Decide all the basic procedures before the term starts, write them in the syllabus and then stick with them. If you must change something, put it in writing and distribute it to the class by posting the change on Canvas and posting the new syllabus if the change impacts the course in that way. Don't rely on in-class announcements alone.
- Use offensive language unless it is relevant to the material of the course.
- Make assignments that involve any substantial expenditures of money. Some students are on very limited budgets.
- Lecture straight from the textbook. Sometimes it is necessary to cover directly the material in the text because it is difficult or controversial. However, this may lead to less engaging presentations.
- Be rigid and overly formal.

## **At the End of the Semester**

### Final Grades

Final grades are submitted electronically on S.A.I.L. To access S.A.I.L., log on at <http://sail.tamucc.edu>.

### Student Feedback on Instruction

For each course taken, students are asked to complete a feedback survey, which allows students an opportunity to share their perspective on their learning experience. Students will receive an email roughly 3 weeks before the end of the semester with a link to these forms, at which time instructors will also be notified that the feedback period has opened. Shortly after the end of finals, instructors will be able to access the results of these surveys. During annual evaluations, the department chair or program coordinator will also discuss them with you.

### Annual Evaluations

All adjunct faculty receive written annual evaluations from their department chair, program coordinator, or other member of the permanent faculty as designated by the department chair.

Thank you for all that you do for our Islander community!