



**HIED 670 Cultivating Belonging in Higher Education
Spring 2026**

Professor's Information

Instructor:	Leslie Ekpe, Ph.D.
Office Hours:	Please make an appointment.
University Email Address:	Leslie.ekpe@etamuc.edu
Preferred Form of Communication:	Email.
Communication Response Time:	24-48 hours during the weekdays. I may not be able to respond during the weekends.

Course Information

Materials – Textbooks, Readings, Supplementary Readings

Textbook(s) Requirement	No textbook required.
Software Required:	None
Optional Texts and/or Materials	All supplemental reading or video materials are available online at no charge to students.

Course Objective

This course offers a historical and contemporary exploration of the ways colleges and universities strive to cultivate both strong interpersonal connections and a deep sense of belonging among their stakeholders (faculty, staff, students, and alumni). It examines the institutional frameworks, programs, and initiatives designed to foster social integration, peer relationships, and a feeling of being valued and included within the campus community. The course analyzes effective practices for addressing academic and societal challenges and for

leveraging opportunities to build environments where all stakeholders feel connected, supported, and integral to the higher education experience.

Course Contents

This course has six learning components (with the term paper as its seventh unit), each with its own discussion forum and writing assignment.

- **Unit 1: Understanding Belonging**
- **Unit 2: Identity & Campus Climate**
- **Unit 3: Student Experiences**
- **Unit 4: Institutional Responsibility**
- **Unit 5: Equity, Justice, & Access**
- **Unit 6: Assessment and Research**
- **Unit 7: Epilogue, Due Date for Term Paper is May 4, 2026**

Your performances in Units 1 to 4 will constitute 80% of your grade. Your final term paper would constitute the remaining 20% of your final grade.

If you received an average weighted score of 79% or less, you would get a grade of "C." A score between 80% to 89% will earn you a grade of "B," and any score 90% or higher will earn you the highest grade of "A."

Interaction with Instructor Statement

Please email me at Leslie.ekpe@etamu.edu. I will reply to email messages within 48 hours, except on weekends and holidays. Use your ETAMU email only and include an appropriate message title when communicating with me.

COURSE AND UNIVERSITY PROCEDURES/POLICIES

Course Specific Procedures/Policies

Respect Differing Views

As with all graduate-level classes, this course deals with common and differing ideas and opinions. Please always be scholarly, courteous, fair-minded, and respectful of each other's opinions, particularly in disagreement situations. Always be a good listener, attempting to understand other people's rationale, perspective, and beliefs. Any discourtesy and lack of respect will not be tolerated.

Academic Honesty

Academic integrity is of utmost importance in academia. Acts of academic misconduct and plagiarism are considered egregious matters that will severely jeopardize your career as a student. Plagiarism, depending on severity, will result in a failing grade for either that particular assignment or the entire course. Work produced, whether in part or in whole, from assignments for other courses will not be accepted for credit and will be considered a form of

plagiarism. I expect all assignments for this course to be creative and an honest representation of your scholarly work. If the evidence is clear that you have committed academic misconduct, including plagiarism, a formal charge will be filed against you following university policy. At my discretion as the course instructor, if the misconduct is not intentional, I can decide whether a particular assignment may be rewritten and resubmitted for a maximum grade of 70% of the original total, subject to other stipulations, including participation in an academic misconduct workshop.

Here are some valuable resources about academic integrity:

- [Plagiarism Tutorial](#), Indiana State University, 2016, 26 mins.
- [Avoiding Plagiarism: Writing with Integrity](#), TAMU College Station, 2015, 35 mins.
- [Nine Things You Should Already Know About Plagiarism](#), University of Oklahoma, no date.
- [10 Types of Plagiarism, 2012, 4 mins](#)

Writing Center

Students are encouraged to visit the A&M-Commerce [Writing Center](#) and other locations for writing assistance. Graduate students, especially at the doctoral level, are expected to have a high level of writing ability and skills. Also, as the instructor for this class, I will be providing helpful writing guidance and advice. You should also consult your faculty advisor for any assistance you need.

Syllabus Change Policy

The syllabus is a guide. Circumstances and events, such as student progress, may necessitate that the instructor modify the syllabus during the semester. Any changes made to the syllabus will be announced in advance.

TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS

All course sections offered by East Texas A&M University have a corresponding course shell in the myLeo Online Learning Management System (LMS). Below are the technical requirements.

LMS Requirements:

<https://community.brightspace.com/s/article/Brightspace-Platform-Requirements>

LMS Browser Support:

https://documentation.brightspace.com/EN/brightspace/requirements/all/browser_support.htm

Zoom Video Conferencing Tool

https://inside.tamuc.edu/campuslife/CampusServices/CITESupportCenter/Zoom_Account.aspx?source=universalmenu

ACCESS AND NAVIGATION

Students will need their campus-wide ID (CWID) and password to log into the course. If students do not know their CWID or have forgotten their password, contact the Center for IT Excellence (CITE) at 903.468.6000 or helpdesk@tamuc.edu.

Note: Personal computer and internet connection problems do not excuse the requirement to complete all coursework in a timely and satisfactory manner. Each student needs to have a backup method to deal with these inevitable problems. These methods might include the availability of a backup PC at home or work, the temporary use of a computer at a friend's home, the local library, office service companies, Starbucks, a TAMUC campus open computer lab, etc.

COMMUNICATION AND SUPPORT

If students have any questions or are having difficulties with the course material, please contact their instructor.

Technical Support

If you are having technical difficulty with any part of Brightspace, please contact Brightspace Technical Support at 1-877-325-7778. Other support options can be found here:

<https://community.brightspace.com/support/s/contactsupport>

Interaction with Instructor Statement

The instructor is available via email, skype or Zoom. Personal concerns involving a private issue, grades, student progress, etc. should be addressed privately to the instructor via private email, zoom or telephone. Instructor's communication response time to emails will, in most instances, be within 24 - 48 hours during the work week.

COURSE AND UNIVERSITY PROCEDURES/POLICIES

Course Specific Procedures/Policies Attendance Policy

Students are expected to "attend class" and actively participate in all course content, assignments, discussions and projects. The instructor will monitor each student's participation activity.

Late Work

Module assignments and/or projects must be submitted within established folders during the open and closing dates. Unless a student has a legitimate excuse, late work will not be accepted. There are circumstances outside one's control that might impact timely submission of assignments, such as jury duty, hospitalization, or a funeral of a family member. In these instances, the student should notify the instructor as soon as possible. Assignments and/or projects not submitted by the deadlines will receive a grade of zero.

Drop Course Policy

Students should take responsibility for dropping themselves from the course according to University policy should it become necessary.

Syllabus Change Policy

The syllabus is a guide. Circumstances and events, such as students' progress, may make it necessary for the instructor to modify the syllabus during the semester. Any changes made to the syllabus will be announced in advance or as soon as the changes have been made.

University Specific Procedures

Student Conduct

All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment. The Code of Student Conduct is described in detail in the [Student Guidebook](#).

<https://inside.tamuc.edu/admissions/registrar/documents/studentGuidebook.pdf>.

Students should also consult the Rules of Netiquette for more information regarding how to interact with students in an online forum: <https://www.britannica.com/topic/netiquette>

TAMUC Attendance

For more information about the attendance policy please visit the [Attendance](#) webpage and [Procedure 13.99.99.R0.01](#).

<http://www.tamuc.edu/admissions/registrar/generalInformation/attendance.aspx>

Academic Integrity

Students at East Texas A&M University are expected to maintain high standards of integrity and honesty in all their scholastic work. For more details and the definition of academic dishonesty see the following procedures:

Graduate Students Academic Integrity Policy and Form

<https://inside.tamuc.edu/aboutus/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/13students/graduate/13.99.99.R0.10.pdf>

[Graduate Student Academic Dishonesty Form](#)

Students with Disabilities – ADA Statement

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If students have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact:

Office of Student Disability Resources and Services

East Texas A&M University

Velma K. Waters Library- Room 162
Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835
Fax (903) 468-8148
Email: studentdisabilityservices@tamuc.edu
Website: [Office of Student Disability Resources and Services](#)

Nondiscrimination Notice

East Texas A&M University will comply in the classroom, and in online courses, with all federal and state laws prohibiting discrimination and related retaliation on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, age, genetic information or veteran status. Further, an environment free from discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression will be maintained.

Campus Concealed Carry Statement

Texas Senate Bill - 11 (Government Code 411.2031, et al.) authorizes the carrying of a concealed handgun in East Texas A&M University buildings only by persons who have been issued and are in possession of a Texas License to Carry a Handgun. Qualified law enforcement officers or those who are otherwise authorized to carry a concealed handgun in the State of Texas are also permitted to do so. Pursuant to Penal Code (PC) 46.035 and East Texas A&M University Rule 34.06.02.R1, license holders may not carry a concealed handgun in restricted locations.

For a list of locations, please refer to the [Carrying Concealed Handguns On Campus](#) document and/or consult campus event organizer.

Web URL:

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/34SafetyOfEmployeesAndStudents/34.06.02.R1.pdf>

Pursuant to PC 46.035, the open carrying of handguns is prohibited on all East Texas A&M University campuses. Report violations to the University Police Department at 903-886-5868 or 9-1-1.

East Texas A&M University Supports Students' Mental Health

The Counseling Center at East Texas A&M University, located in the Halladay Building, Room 203, offers counseling services, educational programming, and connection to community resources for students. Students have 24/7 access to the Counseling Center's crisis assessment services by calling 903-886-5145. For more information regarding Counseling Center events and confidential services, please visit www.tamuc.edu/counsel

Mental Health and Well-Being

The university aims to provide students with essential knowledge and tools to understand and support mental health. As part of our commitment to your well-being, we offer access to Telus Health, a service available 24/7/365 via chat, phone, or webinar. Scan the QR code to download

the app and explore the resources available to you for guidance and support whenever you need it.



<http://telusproduction.com/app/5108.html>

AI use policy

East Texas A&M University acknowledges that there are legitimate uses of Artificial Intelligence, ChatBots, or other software that has the capacity to generate text, or suggest replacements for text beyond individual words, as determined by the instructor of the course. Any use of such software must be documented. Any undocumented use of such software constitutes an instance of academic dishonesty (plagiarism). Individual instructors may disallow entirely the use of such software for individual assignments or for the entire course. Students should be aware of such requirements and follow their instructors' guidelines. If no instructors are provided the student should assume that the use of such software is disallowed. In any case, students are fully responsible for the content of any assignment they submit, regardless of whether they used an AI, in any way. This specifically includes cases in which the AI plagiarized another text or misrepresented sources.

13.99.99.R0.10 Graduate Student Academic Dishonesty