



**ANSC 3312**  
**Current Issues in Agriculture**  
Spring 2015



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**Instructor**

Christopher M. Estep, PhD  
Assistant Professor  
Office: 108 RAS  
Phone: 432-837-8210; Cell: 979-224-6013  
Email: cestepp@sulross.edu  
Office Hours: M,W,F 9:00am – 11:00am  
Or by appointment

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**Time and Location**

TR 9:30am – 10:45am – 135 RAS

**Course Description**

This course is designed to educate students about major issues in the food, agricultural, and natural resource sciences and to expose students to a variety of methods used to effectively communicate, inform, and influence decisions made about these issues.

**Course Objectives**

At the completion of the course, the learner will be able to:

1. Describe current contentious issues in the food, agricultural, and natural resource sciences.
2. Recognize and differentiate facts, fiction, and opinion.
3. Facilitate consensus building and conflict management relating to contentious issues in the food, agricultural, and natural resource sciences.
4. Critically analyze the evidence pertaining to current issues in the food, agricultural, and natural resource sciences.

**TEA AFNR Educator Standards**

Standard I. The AFNR teacher understands the scope of agriculture...

Standard V. The AFNR teacher understands animal science and animal food processing and applies principles and methods used in animal care, production, and management.

Standard VII. The AFNR teacher has a basic understanding of emerging technologies and understands the use of information technologies in the AFNR industries.

**(ANSC) Program Learning Outcomes:**

Student will demonstrate that he/she is able to:

1. Recognize and be able to utilize animal breeds from a variety of domestic species
2. Comprehend the role of nutrition in the production of food animals
3. Understand the processes involved in producing meat products from a variety of domestic food animals
4. Select breeding animals using genetic information

**(NRM) Program Learning Outcomes**

Student will demonstrate that he/she is able to:

1. Identify species of wildland plants and wildlife common to the western United States and describe their natural history.
2. Demonstrate knowledge of the elements of an ecosystem.
3. Communicate about natural resources and conservation both verbally and in writing.
4. Conduct range and wildlife inventories in a team setting.

Apply knowledge about elements of an ecosystem into an appropriate conservation management plan.

### **Required Texts**

Course readings will be assigned by the instructor.

## **DESCRIPTION OF COURSE ASSIGNMENTS**

### **Speaker Reflections (20pts X 10 = 200pts)**

Following each guest speaker's presentation, you will reflect on the issue and the content provided by the speaker and write a three paragraph reflection. The reflection should not only include content that you learned, but also your view/opinion on the issue and how the information that was presented strengthened or altered your viewpoint.

Reflections will be due the Tuesday following each speaker's presentation. There will be 10 reflections turned in and each reflection is worth 20 pts. There will be 12 speakers total, so you will have two speakers for which you do not have to write a reflection; you may choose which two.

Remember, this reflection is not a recap of the presentation. In other words, do not say, "The speaker said this..." This reflection exercise is designed to get you to critically evaluate the speaker and their evidence, determine whether you agree with the speaker's opinion/viewpoint and why, and develop your own conclusions. Grading will be based on thoughtful reflection that addresses the questions below and writing mechanics (grammar/punctuation/spelling). To write your reflections, please use the following points to guide you:

#### ***Paragraph 1 – Analysis***

- Describe the important components of the issue.
- Provide a description of the speaker's use of facts, opinions, and assumptions.
- Logically indicate how you could support the speaker's conclusions.
- Logically indicate how you could oppose the speaker's conclusions.
- Describe the relevant components of the speaker's arguments.
- Describe the irrelevant components of the speaker's arguments.

#### ***Paragraph 2 – Evaluation***

- Describe the credibility of the facts, opinions, and assumptions used by the speaker.
- Describe how you think people would accept the conclusions made by the speaker.
- Describe questions or objections you think people might have to the conclusions made by the speaker.
- Provide supplementary evidence that you think might strengthen the speaker's case.
- Describe how you think the speaker's conclusions might affect the future of the agricultural industry.
- Identify the logical strength of the speaker's case.

#### ***Paragraph 3 – Inference***

- Describe your judgment (do you agree/disagree) based on the information provided by the speaker.
- Describe your reasoning that led you to your conclusion.
- Identify the criteria you used to lead you to your conclusion.
- Describe any possible alternative conclusions to consider.
- Indicate any specific implications that might result from your conclusion.
- Provide recommendations or plans to gather more information based on your conclusion.

The following rubric will be used to evaluate your speaker reflections:

	<b>Points</b>
Clearly & effectively responds to assignment and questions.	
Demonstrated thorough understanding and interpretation of the speaker and issue.	
Exceptionally developed reflective thoughts supported by a variety of relevant facts, examples, & illustrations from the speaker and other sources.	
Clarity, organization & structure very evident.	
Correct grammar, word usage, spelling, and punctuation.	
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>

### **Issues Briefing Guide & Presentation**

The objective of this assignment is to give you the opportunity to translate information on one of the issues covered in the course into a more understandable form, which can be used by your classmates to grasp the issue. Your target audience for the briefing guide will be your fellow students in this class.

You will be assigned one of the issues in class to research. Be prepared to lead a discussion the class period prior to the speaker's presentation. **You must provide enough copies of the issues briefing guide for each person in the class (students and instructor).**

Your grade on this assignment will be divided up into two parts: the briefing guide and the presentation. For the presentation you will simply present the pertinent information to your classmates the class period (Tuesday) before the scheduled speaker. The criteria for the briefing guide paper are as follows:

- 2-3 page single-spaced typed
- Layout is up to you, but it must be easy to follow. However, most important is the content.
- Find objective sources of information on the topic – this will be the basis of your issues briefing guide.
- You may include relevant research, which could be general background research that adds to the understanding of the issue and its relevance.
- You must use at least 5 sources and properly cite them. Your reference page does not count toward the page requirement. Cite using APA style. Information on how to use APA can be found at <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/>
- Use bullets and lists to present complex information.
- Use proper grammar and punctuation.
- Sections
  - Describe the Issue and its history.
  - Identify the stakeholders and their views
  - Works Cited

### **Exams**

Exams will cover any material taught in class, as well as any information presented by the guest speakers.

### **Participation, Attendance, and other assignments**

A high degree of engagement is expected and will contribute to your learning as an active

participant. This includes interacting with the instructor, speakers, and other students, completing outside of class assignments and readings, and being prepared to participate in class discussions. This class is the beginning of your journey to becoming a professional. Evidence of professionalism includes attendance, collegial attitude, participation, and punctuality.

Course Assignments	Points
Speaker Reflections (10 x 20pts each)	200
Issues Briefing Guide	125
Issues Briefing Guide Presentation	25
Exams (2 X 150)	300
Attendance/participation	50

### **Grading Scale**

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

### **Attendance and Make-up Exams and Assignments**

Students' class attendance and participation are required. All assignments must be turned in at the beginning of class on the due date. No emailed assignments will be accepted and no work will be accepted past the deadline set by the syllabus unless noted by the instructor. No consideration of extending a due date will be considered on the day an assignment is due, students should contact the instructor if they are expecting to be unable to meet a deadline. All late assignments will be assessed a 10% deduction for each day they are late; no assignments will be accepted after 10 days.

Any time instruction is missed, for any reason, it will count as an absence. College approved field trips, and competitive and leadership development events (with prior instructor approval) are considered legitimate and with proper documentation will not be considered an absence. Seeking an extended deadline due to the above mentioned absences should be arranged before missing the course meeting. In case of emergencies, arrangements for completing assignments should be made immediately upon return to campus. Missing an examination for an unexcused absence will result in a grade of zero on the exam.

### **Use of technology during instruction**

This class is part of your journey to becoming a professional, and the use of personal cell phones, iPads, computers, and other electronic devices can distract learning for all individuals and create an unprofessional environment. However, electronic devices can also be powerful tools to be used in the learning process. Therefore, the use of electronic devices for class purposes, such as note-taking and internet searches is allowed. But, remember that you are now a professional and will be required to act accordingly. So, if you choose to use electronic devices in the classroom, please do so in a professional manner.

### **Academic Honesty**

On all work submitted for credit by students at the university, the following pledge is either required or implied: **"On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment."**

As members of a learning community, all should strive to be honest in all endeavors. A fundamental principle is that the whole process of learning and pursuit of knowledge is diminished by cheating, plagiarism and other acts of academic dishonesty. In addition, every dishonest act in the academic environment affects other students adversely, from the skewing of the grading curve to giving unfair

advantage for honors or for professional or graduate school admission. Therefore, the university will take severe action against dishonest students. Similarly, measures will be taken against faculty, staff and administrators who practice dishonest or demeaning behavior.

### **Expectations**

The purpose of this class is to help you become a professional in the agricultural and natural resource sciences. The information and skills you learn in this course are designed to help you develop your expertise and professionalism. Therefore, the activities you will be required to complete work toward achieving this goal. In line with this, there are some expectations that I have of you, and conversely, there are some expectations that you should have of me. The expectations for this course are as follows:

I will expect you to:

- Complete all assignments thoroughly, in a timely manner.
- Attend all classes, unless there are extenuating circumstances, which you should inform me of as soon as possible.
- Be on time for all class sessions and activities
- Look at each assignment as an occasion for you to learn, and make the most of every learning opportunity.
- Be honest and submit your own original work.
- Participate in class discussions and activities; this helps you as well as all of your classmates.
- Enjoy this class!

You can expect me to:

- Provide learning opportunities that advance your knowledge and development in agricultural education.
- Be available before and after class, during office hours, and at other times (I have an open door policy) to provide assistance and answer your questions.
- Be fair in my grading and assessment of your work.
- Provide you with timely, constructive feedback on your work.
- Enjoy this class!

### **About Me**

I grew up in Elgin, Texas where I was a member of my high school FFA chapter. I attended Texas A&M University and received my BS degree in Animal Science. Afterwards, I worked for HEB Grocery Company for 2 years as a meat processor and then for Ruffino Meats as a sausage processing manager. My love of FFA and agricultural education led me to pursue my Master's degree in AgEd at Texas A&M. I was a high school ag teacher at Greenwood High School in Midland, Texas for three years. I then went to the University of Florida to work on my PhD in AgEd.

### **Reasonable Accommodation Statement**

It is the SRSU policy to provide reasonable accommodation to students with disabilities. If you would like to request such accommodations because of physical, mental, or learning disabilities, please contact the ADA coordinator in Student Services: Ferguson 112, 837-8203.

## ANSC 3312 Course Calendar (Subject to change!)

Dates	Topics / Learning Experiences	Readings/ Assignments Due
1/20	Introductions/Syllabus/Professionalism/Guest Speaker Interaction	
1/22	What are Food, Agricultural, and Natural Resource Sciences?	
1/27	Critical thinking – Issues Briefing Guides (draw for topics)	
1/29	Critical thinking – evaluating the evidence	
2/3	Online class session	Video Reflections
2/5	<b>Farm Bill/Ag Policy</b> – <i>Jim Richards</i> – Cornerstone Government Affairs, Washington D.C.	
2/10	Agenda setting and framing	
2/12	<b>Water Quality/Water Quantity</b> – <i>Dr. David Doerfert</i> – Professor, Texas Tech University	
2/17	Agenda Setting and Framing	
2/19	<b>Antibiotic use in livestock</b> – <i>Dr. Nicole Sanchez</i> , Research Animal Scientist, USDA	
2/24	Persuasion	
2/26	<b>Urban/Rural Interface &amp; Land Use</b> – <i>Amy Hays</i> , Emerging Technologies Specialist, TAMU Institute of Renewable Natural Resources	
3/3	<b>Exam 1</b>	
3/5	<b>GM Foods</b> – <i>Dr. Phillip Eppard</i> – Academic Engagement Lead, Monsanto	
3/10	Research Methods and Public Opinion	
3/12	<b>Immigration</b> – <i>Dr. Octavio Ramirez</i> – Professor, Agricultural Economics, University of Georgia <b>contacted</b>	
3/17-19	<b>Spring Break – no classes</b>	
3/24	Research Methods and Public Opinion	
3/26	<b>Messages about Agriculture</b> – <i>Dr. Joy Rumble</i> – Assistant Professor, PIE Center, University of Florida	
3/31	Crisis Communication – What do we do!?	
4/2	<b>Food Safety</b> – <i>Dr. Gary Acuff</i> – Director, Center for Food Safety, TAMU	
4/7	Common Ground/Conflict Management	
4/9	<b>Organic Farming/Small Farms</b> – <i>Dr. Rigoberto Delgado</i> , Delgado Farms, Ft. Hancock <b>contacted</b>	
4/14	Evaluating Media	
4/16	<b>Animal Welfare</b> – <i>Dr. Virginia Elliott</i> – DVM, Assistant Professor, Animal Science Department, SRSU	
4/21	Effectively using social media	
4/23	<b>Climate Change</b> – Dr. Brent McRoberts, Postdoctoral Researcher, TAMU	
4/28	Effectively using social media	
4/30	<b>Confined Animal Feeding Operations (CAFOs)</b> – <i>Kayla Lanford</i> , Communications Manager, TCFA	
5/5	Last day of class – Reflection	