



ANSC 2312 Current Issues in Agriculture



Instructor

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Time and Location

Online Course

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 critically evaluate contentious issues and effectively communicate, inform, and influence decisions made about these issues. Additionally, this course explores the impacts agricultural issues have on the agricultural industry and society.

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/data pertaining to current issues in the food, agricultural, and natural resource sciences.
5. Synthesize evidence pertaining to current issues in the food, agricultural, and natural resource sciences and draw conclusions based on this evidence.

TEA AFNR Educator Standards

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

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

(ANSC) Student Learning Outcomes:

Student will be able to:

1. Demonstrate the basic skills of interpreting research data gathered in an agricultural context,
2. Apply critical thinking skills to mitigate potential challenges in diverse animal sciences and related agricultural industries, and
3. Demonstrate the ability to communicate through written, spoken, and graphical methods.

Required Texts

Course readings will be assigned by the instructor. They will be made available in class or via the Blackboard course management system.

DESCRIPTION OF COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

Critical Thinking Reflections (35pts X 10 = 350pts)

Following each Issue, you will reflect on the issue and the content provided 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 presented strengthened or altered your viewpoint.

Reflections will be due at the beginning of class the Tuesday following each week's presentations. There will be 10 reflections turned in and each reflection is worth 35 pts. There will be 11 issues total, so you will have one for which you do not have to write a reflection; you may choose which one.

Remember, this reflection is not a recap of the issue presentation. This reflection exercise is designed to get you to critically evaluate the issue, the evidence/data presented, determine your viewpoint on the issue, and develop your own conclusions. Grading will be based on thoughtful reflection addressing the points below and writing mechanics (grammar/punctuation/spelling). To write your reflections, please use the following points to guide you:

Paragraph 1 – Analysis: In this paragraph you will describe the issue and break it down into its various parts and analyze the arguments each side has about the issue.

- Describe differences between facts, opinions, and assumptions each side has about the issue.
- Identify and describe the logic used to support or contest the issue.
- Identify relevant and irrelevant components of each side's arguments.

Paragraph 2 – Evaluation: In this paragraph you will assess the credibility of statements and evidence regarding the issue.

- Describe the credibility of the facts, opinions, and assumptions used by proponents/opponents of this issue.
- Provide supplementary evidence that you think might strengthen the case either for or against this issue.
- Identify possible future implications this issue might have for the future of the agricultural industry based on the evidence you have seen or heard.

Paragraph 3 – Inference/Synthesis: In this paragraph you will compile all of the information you described in earlier paragraphs to form your own conclusions about the issue.

- Describe your conclusions (do you agree/disagree) about the issue based on the evidence provided.
 - State how your reasoning that led you to your conclusion.
 - Identify the criteria you used to lead you to your conclusion.
- Should any possible alternative conclusions be considered?
- Provide recommendations or plans to gather more information based on your conclusion.

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

	Points
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.	
Total	35

speakers. Exams will be take-home (via Blackboard) and will not be multiple-choice. All exam questions will be in essay format and will require you to synthesize and evaluate the information from class. Since these are take-home exams, you will be expected to provide sufficient information and documentation to back up your answers.

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
Critical Thinking Reflections (10 x 35pts each)	350
Exams (2 X 200)	400
Attendance/participation	250

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.

Any time instruction is missed, for any reason, it will count as an absence. College approved field trips, and competitive and leadership development events are considered legitimate and with proper documentation will not be considered an absence. However, it is up to the student to inform the instructor before the absence in the form of a professional email. 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 in this course, 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!

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.

Marketable Skills for Department of Animal Science:

1. Knowledge of techniques and equipment for planting, growing, and harvesting food products (both plant and animal) for consumption, including storage/handling techniques.
2. Knowledge of plant and animal organisms, their tissues, cells, functions, interdependencies, and interactions with each other and the environment.
3. Understanding the implications of new information for both current and future problem solving and decision-making.
4. Using logic and reasoning to identify the strengths and weaknesses of alternative solutions, conclusions or approaches to problems.
5. Identifying complex problems and reviewing related information to develop and evaluate options and implement solutions. Communicating finding in both oral and written form at a level appropriate for the needs of the audience.

Departmental Projected Learning Outcomes:

1. Demonstrate the basic skills of interpreting research data gathered in an agricultural context.
2. Apply critical thinking skills to mitigate potential challenges in diverse animal sciences and related agricultural industries.
3. Develop problem-solving skills, and demonstrate the ability to communicate through written, spoken, and graphical methods.