
Sustainability and Diversity in Ranch Business: AGB 4301

Sul Ross State University
Syllabus: Online Spring 2026



INSTRUCTOR

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COURSE MEETING TIMES

Online anytime with no formal meeting times; please log in to Blackboard for all information

COMMUNICATION EXPECTATIONS AND OFFICE HOURS

Please use the **Blackboard Message Center** for issues related to the Online S&D Blackboard (Bb) course, its contents or activities. I will get a notification and will check it each weekday. I will respond within 24 hours during the work week. If you reach out during the weekend, I will respond as soon as possible, but please expect a delayed response. Web meetings are available on M 2:00-4:00; and Tuesday 2:00-4:00 with drop in office hours; Other times by appointment. If you can't reach me, Lonora can add you to my calendar. She can be reached at lhunt@sulross.edu, 432 837 8201 or in RAS 101.

Please use the **Blackboard Help Desk** for issues related to technical problems with BB.

TEXT BOOK AND LIBRARY

No Text is required for the class. All readings and links to material will be provided within the Blackboard course.

Libraries

The Bryan Wildenthal Memorial Library in Alpine offers FREE resources and services to the entire SRSU community. Access and borrow books, articles, and more by visiting the library's website, library.sulross.edu/. Off-campus access requires logging in with your Lobold and password. Librarians are a tremendous resource for your coursework and can be reached in person, by email (srsulibrary@sulross.edu), or by phone (432-837-8123).

No matter where you are based, public libraries and many academic and special libraries welcome the general public into their spaces for study. SRSU TexShare Cardholders can access additional services and resources at various libraries across Texas. Learn more about the TexShare program by visiting library.sulross.edu/find-and-borrow/texshare/ or ask a librarian by emailing srsulibrary@sulross.edu.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Welcome to Sustainability and Diversity in Ranch Business! This course introduces and develops the idea of sustainability and diversity within the framework of a farming and ranching business. Emphasis will be placed on how sustainability practices and diversity within business can mediate market risks and increase overall income and long term rangeland and economic health.

COURSE STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will be expected to develop the following knowledge throughout the course.

- Students will learn to compare and contrast agricultural operations with a single enterprise vs. those with multiple enterprises
- Students will identify market forces, economies, and risk that support or hinder sustainability and diversity in agricultural operations
- Students will incorporate these ideas into effective communication on how and why sustainability and diversity within an operation can drive increased economic stability

PROGRAM STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES AND MARKETABLE SKILLS

The graduating student will be able to demonstrate that he/she is able to:

- Students will demonstrate basic skills of analyzing and interpreting research-based information;
- Students will apply critical thinking skills.
- Students will demonstrate the ability to communicate through written, spoken and graphic media.

Students will be expected to develop the following general marketable skills throughout the course.

- Students demonstrate understanding of the implications of new information for both current and future problem-solving and decision-making;
- Students use logic and reasoning to identify the strengths and weaknesses of alternative solutions, conclusions and approaches to problems;
- Students identify complex problems and review related information to develop and evaluate options and implement solutions

ADA STATEMENT

SRSU Accessibility Services. Sul Ross State University (SRSU) is committed to equal access in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1973. It is SRSU policy to provide reasonable accommodations to students with documented disabilities. It is the student's responsibility to initiate a request each semester for each class. Students seeking accessibility/accommodations services must contact SRSU's Accessibility Services Director at 432-837-8203 or email Ronnie.harris@sulross.edu. The office is located on the first floor of

Ferguson Hall, room 112, and our mailing address is P.O. Box C122, Sul Ross State University, Alpine, Texas, 79832.

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

All full-time and part-time students are responsible for familiarizing themselves with the Student Handbook and the Undergraduate & Graduate Catalog and for abiding by the University rules and regulations. Additionally, students are responsible for checking their Sul Ross email as an official form of communication from the university. Every student is expected to obey all federal, state and local laws and is expected to familiarize themselves with the requirements of such laws.

DISTANCE EDUCATION STATEMENT

Students enrolled in distance education courses have equal access to the university's academic support services, such as library resources, online databases, and instructional technology support. For more information about accessing these resources, visit the SRSU website.

Students should correspond using Sul Ross email accounts and submit online assignments through Blackboard, which requires a secure login. Students enrolled in distance education courses at Sul Ross are expected to adhere to all policies pertaining to academic honesty and appropriate student conduct, as described in the student handbook. Students in web-based courses must maintain appropriate equipment and software, according to the needs and requirements of the course, as outlined on the SRSU website. Directions for filing a student complaint are located in the student handbook.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Students in this class are expected to demonstrate scholarly behavior and academic honesty in the use of intellectual property. Students should submit work that is their own and avoid the temptation to engage in behaviors that violate academic integrity, such as turning in work as original that was used in whole or part for another course and/or professor; turning in another person's work as one's own; copying from professional works or internet sites without citation; collaborating on a course assignment, examination, or quiz when collaboration is forbidden. Students should also avoid using open AI sources *unless permission is expressly given* for an assignment or course. Violations of academic integrity can result in failing assignments, failing a class, and/or more serious university consequences. These behaviors also erode the value of college degrees and higher education overall.

"The University expects all students to engage in all academic pursuits in a manner that is beyond reproach and to maintain complete honesty and integrity in the academic experiences both in and out of their classroom. The University may initiate disciplinary proceedings against a student accused of any form of academic dishonesty, including but not limited to, cheating on an examination or other academic work, plagiarism, collusion, and the abuse of resource materials." —SRSU Student Handbook

Do your own work and use your own words! I am interested in what YOU know and think not what your friend/parent/computer tell you about a topic!

CLASSROOM ETIQUETTE, ATTENDANCE, & ASSIGNMENT MAKEUP POLICY

An advantage to taking an online course is a level of anonymity, which gives students the freedom to share opinions without feeling intimidated. Regardless of how bold you may feel, don't forget that a real person is on the receiving end of your emails, messages, and/or postings. Because written language can be misinterpreted, review your message and make sure it conveys precisely what you mean to say before you click 'Send' or 'Submit.'

All of the discussion assignments in this class will be in a social media format. You will be creating a post and commenting on the posts of others. Disruptive or intimidating behavior will not be tolerated. Disruptive behavior is defined as anything that prevents students from learning and/or prevents the professor from teaching. Especially in discussion forums, participants must be courteous and respectful. No trolls!!

To respectfully disagree and share your viewpoint and expertise without contempt is a life skill that will serve you well in the future. You have the right and should probe, oppose and disagree with others (including me), but you should do so diplomatically without resorting to tactics of intimidation, harassment, or personal attack. My personal philosophy is **“Question Everything!”** I want the class environment to encourage communication, discovery, and critical reasoning.

Attendance Policy

Log in to Class! Much of what we will be learning and discussing is not in a textbook. We are going to be developing skills about analyzing and thinking about problems and this is best accomplished with some group discussion as well as personal analysis. Because the class is interactive with your classmates, you can't just do it all in a week.

Assignment Make Up Policy

Turn work in on time! If you have a specific circumstance that prevents you from submitting an assignment on time, reach out as soon as possible. If you have a valid reason, you can submit work late. No work will be accepted more than 2 weeks late or after grades for that assignment have posted.

GRADES & DETERMINING YOUR COURSE GRADE

The Bb Grade Center defaults to Calculate as a Running Total. I will set up the final grade column so that you can see your current average. If you quit submitting work, your grade will fall. The grade shown is not final until all grades are entered. If at any point in the semester you want to gauge your progress, an easy way for you to calculate a projected grade is to divide the number of points you have earned by the total number of points available in the course. This will give you your grade as it stands at a particular moment in the semester (or at least a rough estimate), and then you can calculate out the possibilities for the final grade by projecting various possible grades for the remaining assignments. This information will ultimately help you evaluate your current grade and predict future outcomes.

Discussion Board Video Posts and responses	200 points
Midterm Project	100 point
Final Project	100 points

Grade assignment: <60 = F; 60-69 = D; 70-79 = C; 80-89 = B; 90-100 = A;

SCHEDULE

Tentative Course Outline:

Week #	Date	Topic
1	Jan 14-18	Introduction and Syllabus
2	Jan 19-25	Definitions
3	Jan 26-Feb 1	Monocultures and American Food
4	Feb 2-8	From Comfort Food to Experiential Dining
5	Feb 9-15	The Slow Food Movement
6	Feb 16-22	The Local Food Movement
7	Feb 23-Mar 1	Natural System Ecological Diversity
8	Mar 2-8	On-Farm/Ranch Ecological Diversity
9	Mar 9-15	Spring Break
10	Mar 16-22	Mid Term Project Due
11	Mar 23-29	Sustainable vs Regenerative vs Organic
12	Mar 30-Apr 5	Regenerative Agriculture: Introduction
13	Apr 6-12	Regenerative Agriculture: Diversification
14	Apr 13-19	Diversity of Funding Streams
15	Apr 20-26	Diversity of Business Entities
16	Apr 27-29	Course Summary and wrap up for Final Project
17	May 6th	Final project