



AREC 428 – Agricultural Business Management Fall 2015

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Drop-ins (B327 Clark or on Skype) are also welcome!

TA: Ryan Shepler
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Office Hours: Monday / Wednesday 10 - 11 am Clark B328

Class Meeting time and location

Behavioral Science Building 107; 8:00 to 9:15 AM; Tuesday / Thursday and Online (Echo recordings will be available after the class meetings).

Course Description

This course is designed to integrate skills and competencies from the agricultural economics curriculum into a cohesive decision making system that includes marketing, financial, strategic and human resource management. Students completing the course will have a deeper knowledge of these core skills and a sound understanding of how they interact and influence one another.

Course Prerequisites

AREC 305/EA 305 Enterprise Analysis; AREC 310 Agriculture Marketing

Recommended Text

There is no required textbook for this course; a recommended text (used as source for class notes) is:

Barnard, Akridge, Dooley and Foltz. Agribusiness Management. 4th Edition. Routledge. :New York, NY. 2012 ISBN: 978-0-415-59695-4

Some chapters will be available on e-reserve. A physical copy will be available on reserve from the library. Additional material will be provided electronically on the course page on Canvas.

Learning Objectives

Upon the completion of this course, you will have ...

1. ... applied skills and competencies from the agribusiness curriculum into an integrated decision framework that is applied to a real world business;
2. ... examined the strategic, financial and market position of an existing agribusiness firm, from an internal perspective as well as in the context of the market / chain where it operates;
3. ... identified economic opportunity for an existing agribusiness; proposed and assessed the existence and the feasibility of alternatives with appropriate methods;
4. ... interpreted and communicated the results of your analysis to a broad audience;
5. ... improved your critical thinking ability.

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Grading

Grades will be assigned on a 1000 points basis, with scores that are divided as follows:

Exams (2, 150 points each)	30%
Homework (6; 50 points each)	30%
Business Prospectus (Written Report)	25%
Feasibility Analysis (Written Report)	10%
<u>Presentation</u>	<u>5%</u>
Total	100%

Tentatively, final grades will be assigned according to the following scheme: A = 94-100%; A- = 90 – 93%; B+ = 88 – 89%; B = 84-87%; B- = 80–83%; C+ = 78–79%, C = 74-77%; C- = 70-73% D= 60-69%; F = <60%.

Individual effort (600 points)

Assignments (300 points): There will be 6 assignments, worth 50 points each (i.e. each assignment will count for 5% of the final grade). Assignments are due by 8:00 a.m., following the schedule indicated in the course calendar. Note: each assignment is due ONE WEEK after it has been assigned. The questions of most assignments will be closely related to the content of your group project(s). Assignments will be submitted via Canvas. It is every student’s responsibility to: 1) complete your work timely (it is advisable that you do not wait until the last day to start working on each assignment), 2) verify that you have access to the necessary software to complete your work, 3) ensure that you have access to a working internet connection, and 4) use a browser compatible with Canvas. Late assignments will be accepted with a 33% daily penalty. This means that missing the deadline will automatically result in a 33% penalty; submitting the assignment two days late will result in a 66% penalty; assignments submitted later than 48 hours after their deadlines will not be graded. Make up assignments will ONLY be allowed if extenuating circumstances apply: the student must contact the instructor in advance.

Tests (300 points; 2 tests worth 150 points each): The tests will be held in class or available online for the on-line f the course in dates as specified in the course calendar. Each exam will last a maximum of 75 minutes. The second test will not be comprehensive; this course will not have a final exam during finals’ week. Each exam will consist of multiple choice questions, short answers, and problems. The exams are designed to be closed book, closed notes: the use of calculators and calculators only will be allowed during these two tests (no cell phones, smartphone, tablets or other devices that can be connected to the internet). Make-up tests will only be given for students who have contacted the instructor before the day of the exam and have a legitimate and verifiable excuse (see “Note on attendance policy” below). Once again: you will be asked to turn off and store your cellular phone before each test – no cell-phone use will be allowed during the tests. If you use your cell phone during any of the tests may result in you being asked to leave the room. Make up exams will only be allowed if extenuating circumstances apply: the student must contact the instructor in advance.

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Team Effort (400 points)

A significant portion of this course is developing an in-depth analysis of an existing agribusiness. This is a team project, and the team must find information & data to perform necessary strategic, financial and market analysis of their agribusiness, as well as a feasibility study for future perspectives of the business. You will be divided into groups of three – four individuals each and participate actively to the development of the project. You will be responsible to identify a business with whom to work and to interact with the manager(s)/ owner(s) of the business to acquire the necessary information to develop your business plan.

Business Prospectus (250 points): Each group will be asked to identify and connect with an agribusiness and analyze thoroughly all its component, including financial situation / strategy; marketing strategy; core competences of the managements / ownership; mission / vision of the business; organizational structure; short and long-term goals of the business. Each group will also be asked to propose alternatives for further evaluation in the feasibility analysis (see below). Additional information will be distributed as the class proceeds.

Feasibility study (100 points): This component of the capstone project consists in a rigorous quantitative analysis of the alternatives identified during the development of the business prospectus. While a detailed outline of the work performed should be included as an appendix to the business prospectus, its results will be summarized in a specific section of the prospectus and discusses as part of a presentation to students and faculty. Additional information will be distributed as the class proceeds.

NOTE: A draft document outlining your preliminary progress on the business prospectus and the research idea underlying the feasibility study is due on Tuesday, October 6th; the complete business prospectus and the feasibility study reports are due on Tuesday December 8th as indicated in the course calendar. Electronic, as well as hard copies of both documents will be required (both at the intermediate and final stage). Additional information will be provided to you as the class proceeds.

Peer evaluations: your project's grade will depend on the quality of both reports (rubrics will be made available to you) and on your individual contribution to the group's success. In order to deter free riding behavior, we will use a peer evaluation form, which will allow to evaluate yourself and each one of your teammates, assigning a score between 1 and 10. Peer evaluations will take place twice, at an intermediate stage of the project's development, and at the end of the semester. Inadequate participation in the group project, reflected in low intermediate peer evaluation score may result in getting fired from a team and having to develop the capstone project individually. The average final peer evaluation score received, rounded in excess to the closest unit, will be used to weight the project's score of your team, and obtain your individual score.

➤ **Example:** assume your group's cumulative reports score is 300 (out of the 350 points available), and your average peer-review score is 8.3. 8.3 will be approximated to 9 resulting in a weight of 0.9 (9/10). Your score is then obtained multiplying 300 (your group's score) times your weight (0.9). The reports' overall score will be 270 (300*0.9=270).

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Presentations (50 points – one grade for each group): Both the business prospectus and the feasibility study will be presented to the class and faculty for comments. A presentation of the intermediate progress on the business prospectus and of your team idea for the feasibility study is also required (see course calendar). For both presentations business casual attire is required. Not all the members of each group will be asked to speak, although all members must be present during the presentations. Further information will be provided as the class proceeds.

Participation Expectations

Active participation in this course is expected. Besides lecturing, other activities will take place during class meetings, which may include short presentations, quizzes, short case studies, class discussions and critical analyses of relevant news and articles. For these activities to be successful, active participation is necessary.

Successful students spend a minimum of nine hours per week working on assignments, project development, reviewing materials and meeting with the instructor. Free-riding on the group's efforts will not be tolerated; a peer-evaluation system is in place to ensure that lack of participation in group activities is penalized (see above).

Academic Integrity Policy

This course will adhere to the CSU Academic Integrity [Policies and Guiding Principles](#) as found in the General Catalog and the [Student Conduct Code](#).

- Cheating—includes using unauthorized sources of information and providing or receiving unauthorized assistance on any form of academic work or engaging in any behavior specifically prohibited by the faculty member.
- Plagiarism—includes the copying of language, structure, ideas, or thoughts of another, and representing them as one's own without proper acknowledgment.
- Unauthorized Possession or Disposition of Academic Materials—includes the unauthorized selling or purchasing of examinations or other academic work; stealing another student's work; unauthorized entry to or use of material in a computer file; and using information from or possessing exams that an instructor did not authorize for release to students.
- Falsification—includes any untruth, either verbal or written, in one's academic work.
- Facilitation—includes knowingly assisting another to commit an act of academic misconduct.

At a minimum, violations will result in a grading penalty in this course and a report to the Office of Conflict Resolution and Student Conduct Services.

CSU Honor Pledge

Academic integrity lies at the core of our common goal: to create an intellectually honest and rigorous community. Because academic integrity, and the personal and social integrity of which academic integrity is an integral part, is so central to our mission as students, teachers, scholars, and citizens, I will ask that you affirm the CSU Honor Pledge as part of completing your work in this course. *While you will not be required to affirm the honor pledge, you will be asked to affirm the following statement at the start of your exams:*

"I have not given, received, or used any unauthorized assistance."

Further information about Academic Integrity is available at CSU's [Practicing Academic Integrity](#).



Course Schedule / Schedule of Activities

<i>Date</i>	<i>Topics</i>	<i>Source</i>	<i>Activities – Deadlines</i>
Aug. 25 Tue	Class Intro / Modern Agribusiness Systems The Role of a Manager / Project Intro	BADM ch 1, 2; TBA	Groups to be created Elevator pitches
Aug. 27, Thurs			
Sept. 1, Tue	Managing Relationships in a Supply Chain Supply Chain Analysis Vision, Mission, Core Competences	BADM ch. 15 – TBA	Assignment 1
Sept. 3, Thurs			Groups’ list due In-class discussion
Sept. 8, Tue	Value Plate vs Value Chain analysis SWOT vs TOWS analyses Organizational charts and legal forms	BADM ch 4 TBA	In-class case study Assignment 1 due
Sept. 10, Thurs			Assignment 2 Business identified
Sept. 15, Tue	Strategic Marketing / Market Segmentation Marketing Mix	BADM ch 6, 7	Market segmentation Exercise
Sept. 17, Thurs			Assignment 2 due
Sept. 22, Tue	Marketing Tools	BADM ch 8 TBA	Assignment 3
Sept. 24, Thurs			Class Discussion
Sept. 29, Tue	Review & Discussion / Group Study time / Q & A		Assignment 3 due
Oct. 1, Thurs	Exam I		
Oct. 6, Tue	Presentations (round1)		Draft of project due
Oct. 8, Thurs	Presentations (round2) -Exams Back		
Oct. 13, Tue	Project feedback session		
Oct. 15, Thurs	Review of Financial Statements	BADM ch 9	Lecture
Oct. 20, Tue	Benchmarking, Ratios and Volume Cost Analysis	BADM ch 10,12	In-class case study
Oct. 22, Thurs			Assignment 4
Oct. 27, Tue	Investment Analysis Strategic budgeting / What if analysis	BADM ch 11, 12, 13	In-class case study
Oct. 29, Thurs			Assignment 4 due
Nov. 3, Tue	Risk Management Concepts / Price Risk Management / Contingency Plans	TBA	Assignment 5
Nov. 5, Thurs			Speculation Game
Nov. 10, Tue	Organizational Structure and HR Management	BADM, ch 16, 17	Assignment 5 due Assignment 6
Nov. 12, Thurs			Class Discussion
Nov. 17, Tue	Review session – Group Study time - Q/A		Assignment 6 due
Nov. 19, Thurs	Exam II		
<i>Nov. 24, Tue</i>	<i>Thanksgiving break</i>		
<i>Nov. 26, Thurs</i>			
Dec. 1, Tue	Review & Discussion / Group Study time / Q & A		
Dec. 3, Thurs			
Dec. 8, Tue	Final Presentations and Peer Evaluation (Round 1)		Capstone Projects Due
Dec. 10, Thurs	Final Presentations and Peer Evaluation (Round 2)		