HORT / SOCR 424
Topics in Organic Agriculture
Spring 2014

Catalog Statement
Examination of issues specific to organic food production systems, marketing and policy.

Learning Objectives
Examine current issues and assumptions within the organic agriculture industry. Specifically, to understand the policy, environment, and economic climates that influences the evolution of the industry.

Course Specifics
This is a 3-credit spring semester course (even years only). Class will meet on Monday and Wednesday from 12:30-1:45pm in the Plant Sciences Building room W 212.

Instructors
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Course Materials
Instructors will choose and distribute readings appropriate to course content. No textbook is required for this course. All readings will be available on RamCT. Please be sure that you check RamCT email often or link another email account to the RamCT account so you can stay informed.

Prerequisites
HORT 100 or SOCR 100, HORT/SOCR 171, SOCR 240, AREC 202, and AREC 328 or AREC 428.

This course will be taught through guest lectures, student presentations and synthesis discussions. All students are encouraged to utilize the course assignments to develop their own style of teaching.

Grading
Active Class Participation 10%
Chalk Talk 10%
Working Outline 10%
Project lit review 15%
Project presentation 30%
Educational Tool 15%
Final Exam 10%
Chalk Talks
A ‘chalk talk’ is a brief (5-7 minute) informal presentation on a broad topic that represents public assumption about organic agriculture. This includes 3 stated public assumptions on the topic and a deeper look at one of those assumptions including 2-3 supporting facts. An example chalk talk will be presented during the first lecture and student talks may be modeled from this one. After each chalk talk the class will discuss any refutable points that should be noted as well as other assumptions that should be added to the list for the main topic. **Topics assigned during the first class period.**

Working Outline
After students complete their chalk talk and classroom discussion they will be responsible for completing and handing in a ‘working outline’ that illustrates the breadth of their research and the points noted in class. See RamCT for example of a chalk talk working outline.

Semester Project
Students choose one of the chalk talks/working outlines presented in the course for the topic of their semester project. See RamCT for grading rubric and more details.

**First ½- Literature Review**
- 500-600 word summary of the findings. 90% fact collection 10% critique & discussion of referenced papers.
- 3 graphic or tabular representations of data presented in the literature, with explanation of how they are relevant to the topic (**This will most likely be something you create versus copy from an article**).
- One referenced interview with a professional on the topic
- 8 peer reviewed journal articles cited within the text and as a reference list (APA style).

**Second ½- Presentation**
- ~20 min presentation of literature review and critique (PowerPoint)

Educational Tool
Students will develop an educational tool (fact sheet, brochure, bulletin, poster, video, etc.) that will be discussed with the class. The educational tool should be geared to inform the general public about your findings that support or refute your basic assumption.

Guest Lectures
Throughout the semester many guest lecturers will discuss topics being researched for semester projects. Students will be asked to read supplemental materials provided by instructors to prepare for the topics presented by guest lecturers.