



AREC 428 – Agricultural Business Management Fall 2020

Lead Instructor: Dr. Alessandro Bonanno
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Office Hours: Wednesday 1 pm - 3 pm or by appointment.
Office Hours will be held in **MS Teams** or **Skype**
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Co-instructor: Mackenzie Gill; Email: Mackenzie.Gill@colostate.edu
Office Hours: Tuesday and Thursday 3 pm – 5 pm

Class Meeting time and (virtual) location

The course will have a mix of synchronous lectures and discussion sections taking place from 11:00 AM to 12:15 PM Tuesday / Thursday, and asynchronous material that will be posted on Canvas and made available at specific dates. All lectures will take place on **MS Teams**; video recordings of all lectures will be posted on Canvas.

Course Description

This course is designed to integrate skills and competencies from the agribusiness management curriculum into a cohesive decision-making system that includes marketing, financial, and strategic 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

Required Textbook

Barnard, Akridge, Dooley, Foltz, and Yeager. Agribusiness Management. 5th Edition. Routledge. New York, NY. 2016 ISBN: 978-1138891937

- Electronic versions of the book are available for rent or purchase

Additional reading materials will be provided electronically on the course page on Canvas.

Learning Outcomes

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 an actual 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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These outcomes will contribute directly to those of the Agribusiness Management curriculum:

- **Professional Development skills:** successful students will refine their awareness of agribusiness management issues; through their interactions with a capstone business they will improve their understanding of what professional expectations and conduct are.
- **Technical Competence:** successful students in this course will demonstrate the ability to appropriately formulate and solve analytical problems, identifying and gathering appropriate data, and employing appropriate methods and to analyze those problems.
- **Problem-solving Skills:** students must formulate and solve a real-world problem through the development of the feasibility analysis.
- **Communication Skills:** through the writing of their business prospectus and feasibility analysis, and the related presentations, proficient students will have the ability to communicate findings, critically and analytically, at a professional level.
- **Leadership:** through teamwork, peer evaluations and interactions with the capstone business, successful students will show leadership qualities to leverage the other competencies acquired in this course, and in the Agribusiness Curriculum.

Grades

Grades will be assigned on a 100 points basis, with scores that are divided as follows:

Capstone Project - Team Effort (50 % of the score)

Team Assignments (6 x 40 point - lowest score dropped)	200
Business Prospectus (Written Report)	100
Feasibility Analysis (Written Report)	100
Presentations (50 points x 2)	100

Individual Performance (50 % of the score)

Exams (150 points x 2)	300
Individual Problem Sets (10 points x 10)	100
<u>Peer evaluations (50 points x 3 - lowest score dropped)</u>	<u>100</u>
Total	1000

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%.

Capstone Project - Team Effort (500 points - 50 % of final grade)

Assignments (200 points): There will be 6 TEAM assignments, worth 40 points each (i.e. each assignment will count for 4% of the final grade). The assignment with the lowest grade will be dropped (your team will receive grades only for the five assignments with the highest grades).

Assignments are due by 11:00 a.m., following the schedule indicated in the course calendar.

Note: each assignment is due ONE WEEK after it has been assigned, except for Assignment 4.

The goal of each assignment will be that of completing one part of the capstone project (Business prospectus / feasibility analysis), thus it will require you to gather information from your capstone business. Any feedback received must be incorporated in your final documents (i.e. Business Prospectus / Feasibility Analysis Report).

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It is every group's responsibility to: 1) complete the work timely (do not wait until the last day to start working on the assignments), 2) verify that you have access to all the necessary information to complete the assignment; and 3) have access to the necessary software to complete your work. 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 the deadlines will result in a 0 grade for that assignment. Make up assignments will ONLY be allowed if extenuating circumstances apply: the students/groups must contact the instructor in advance.

Business Prospectus Report (100 points): Each group must identify and connect with an agribusiness firm and analyze thoroughly all its components, including marketing strategy; core competences of the managements / ownership; mission / vision of the business; organizational structure; financial situation / strategy; short and long-term goals of the business. Each group will also propose and analyze alternatives to improve the business operations and performance (see below). Additional information will be available on Canvas.

Feasibility Analysis Report (100 points): This component of the capstone project consists of a rigorous quantitative analysis of the alternatives identified during the development of the business prospectus. While an outline of this analysis should be included as an appendix to the business prospectus, the analysis, methods, and results will be thoroughly illustrated in a separate document. Preliminary results will be discussed in a presentation during the last week of classes. Additional information will be available on Canvas.

Presentations (100 points – one grade for each group): There will be **two** presentations; each presentation will be worth 50 points. One presentation illustrating the features of the business (business prospectus), and one for the feasibility analysis (See course calendar for intervals of dates available for each presentation). Not all group members will be asked to speak, although all members must attend the presentations. All presentations will take place in MS Teams and will be recorded and made available to other students in the class. Students will be invited to participate as audience to all presentations, however attendance is not mandatory. Presentations will be recorded. Business casual attire is recommended for all presentations. Additional information will be available on Canvas.

Individual Effort (500 points - 50 % of final grade)

Tests (300 points; 2 tests worth 150 points each): The tests will be available online (Canvas) during times specified in the course calendar. Specifically, you will have a four-business day window to take the exam. If you have conflicts with the times proposed, please contact the instructors. Make-up tests will be considered only 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).

Each exam will last a maximum of 75 minutes. Each exam will be set up as a Canvas “Quiz”. Please make sure that you take the exam at a time where you can spend 75 minutes uninterruptedly in front of your computer. Each exam will consist of multiple-choice questions, short answers, and problems. The exams are closed book, closed notes: the use of calculators and calculators only will

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be allowed during these two tests (you are not allowed to use phones, smartphone, tablets or other devices that can be connected to the internet as calculator). Note that the second test **will not** be comprehensive; this course does not have a final exam during finals' week.

Exams will be self-proctored using *Respondus Lockdown Browser*. Respondus will use your computer's webcam to record you while working on your exam, ensuring that you respect the exam rules. Videos will be available to inspect, as well as a report of your activities during the exam. If the computer / device you intend to use for your exam does not have a webcam, if you have experienced software issues with Respondus in the past, or for any other issue, other accommodations can be arranged. A Respondus practice quiz will be available before the first Exam. Once again: **you MUST turn off and store your cellular phone before each test – no cell-phone use will be allowed during the tests.**

Individual Assignments (100 points; 10 quizzes, worth 10 points each): There will be one assignment for each of the course modules, and it will cover concepts and content that you will be expected to know for the exams. Individual Assignments (IA) will be set up as Canvas Quizzes. You will have one week to complete each IA. There will be no “retake” for any of the IAs: the “Late Assignment Policy” discussed in the “Team Assignments” section above applies to IAs.

Peer evaluations (100 points): peer evaluations will be used to deter *free riding* behavior during the development of the capstone project. You will be asked to evaluate yourself and each of your teammates. There will be 3 peer evaluations, worth 50 points each, assessing the contribution to:

- Assignments 1, 2, 3, Business Prospectus "Check In"
- Assignments 4, 6, Business prospectus and first presentation
- Assignment 5, Feasibility analysis presentation and Feasibility Analysis report

The peer evaluation with the lowest score will be dropped. More details will follow.

- Example: Assume your team has 4 people. In your first peer evaluation you received the following scores: 50; 45; 40; 45 – the average score for the first peer evaluation is $45=(50+45+40+45)/4$. Assume the other peer evaluation scores are 47 and 41. The lowest average score (41) is dropped and the two highest average scores will be added to give a cumulative peer evaluation score of $92=45+47$.

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). Please silence your microphone and other electronic devices during live lectures.

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Important information for Students: All students should fill out a student-specific symptom checker each day before coming to class (<https://covidrecovery.colostate.edu/daily-symptom-checker/>). In addition, please utilize the symptom checker to report symptoms, if you have a positive test, or exposed to a known COVID contact. If you know or believe you have been exposed or are symptomatic, it is important for the health of yourself and others that you report it through this checker. You will not be in trouble or penalized in any way for reporting. If you report symptoms or a positive test, you will receive immediate instructions on what to do and CSU's Public Health Office will be notified. Once notified, that office will contact you and most likely conduct contact tracing, initiate any necessary public health requirements and/or recommendations and notify you if you need to take any steps. For the latest information about the University's response, please visit the **CSU COVID-19 site** (<https://covidrecovery.colostate.edu/>).

Other Resources:

Library Help: Renae Watson is the librarian supporting this course. Contact her for assistance at renae.watson@colostate.edu / ph. 970-491-5338. See her research guide at libguides.colostate.edu/agriculture. Additionally, the CSU Libraries Help Desk provides both research (ph. 970-491-1841) and technical (ph. 970-491-7276) support. These services are free for all CSU students and can be extremely helpful as you prepare your final project.

Academic Integrity and Principles of Community. This course will adhere to the Academic Integrity Policy {Section 1.6} of the Colorado State University General Catalog, the Student Conduct Code, and University Principles of Community.

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 may be asked to affirm *the following statement at the start of your exams*: "I have

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not given, received, or used any unauthorized assistance." Consider reviewing further information on [Academic Integrity](#)

In this course we will also strive to follow and extend Colorado State's **University's Principles of Community**, and welcome spirited discussion, lively debate and pursuit of knowledge in a manner that respects each of us as individuals. The Principles of Community support the Colorado State University mission and vision of access, research, teaching, service and engagement. A collaborative and vibrant community is a foundation for learning, critical inquiry, and discovery. Therefore, each member of the CSU community has a responsibility to uphold these principles when engaging with one another and acting on behalf of the University.

- **Inclusion**: We create and nurture inclusive environments and welcome, value and affirm all members of our community, including their various identities, skills, ideas, talents and contributions.
- **Integrity**: We are accountable for our actions and will act ethically and honestly in all our interactions.
- **Respect**: We honor the inherent dignity of all people within an environment where we are committed to freedom of expression, critical discourse, and the advancement of knowledge.
- **Service**: We are responsible, individually and collectively, to give of our time, talents, and resources to promote the well-being of each other and the development of our local, regional, and global communities.
- **Social Justice**: We have the right to be treated and the responsibility to treat others with fairness and equity, the duty to challenge prejudice, and to uphold the laws, policies and procedures that promote justice in all respects.

Title IX: Sexual Assault, Sexual Violence, Sexual Harassment:

CSU's Discrimination, Harassment, Sexual Harassment, Sexual Misconduct, Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, Stalking, and Retaliation policy designates faculty and employees of the University as "Responsible Employees." This designation is consistent with federal law and guidance, and requires faculty to report information regarding students who may have experienced any form of sexual harassment, sexual misconduct, relationship violence, stalking or retaliation. This includes information shared with faculty in person, electronic communications or in class assignments. As "Responsible Employees," faculty may refer students to campus resources (see below), together with informing the Office of Support and Safety Assessment to help ensure student safety and welfare. Information regarding sexual harassment, sexual misconduct, relationship violence, stalking and retaliation is treated with the greatest degree of confidentiality possible while also ensuring student and campus safety.

Any student who may be the victim of sexual harassment, sexual misconduct, relationship violence, stalking or retaliation is encouraged to report to CSU through one or more of the following resources:

- Emergency Response 911
- Deputy Title IX Coordinator/Office of Support and Safety Assessment (970) 491-1350
- Colorado State University Police Department (non-emergency) (970) 491-6425

Please Visit: <http://oeo.colostate.edu/title-ix-sexual-assault> for more information.

Need Help? Rams Take Care of Rams

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Reach out and ask for help if you or someone you know is having a difficult time. Always feel free to come and talk to me; I will always make myself available to help connect you with any resources you need. CSU is a community that cares for you. If you are struggling with drugs or alcohol and/or experiencing depression, anxiety, overwhelming stress or thoughts of hurting yourself or others please know there is help available. Counseling Services has trained professionals who can help. Contact 970-491-6053 or go to <http://health.colostate.edu>. If you are concerned about a friend or peer, tell someone by calling 970-491-1350 (or visit <http://safety.colostate.edu/tell-someone.aspx>) to discuss your concerns with a professional who can discreetly connect the distressed individual with the proper resources.

Canvas Email System Utilization

Using the University's systems or networks for personal gain; for example, by selling access to your eID or to university systems or networks, or by performing work for profit with university resources (e.g. selling your notes or promoting a personal agenda) in a manner not authorized by the University is strictly forbidden within the CSU Code of Conduct and also CSU's policy for Acceptable Use for Computing and Networking Resources. All cases of this type of code violation will be reported to the Office of Conflict Resolution and Case Management and dealt with following CSU legal counsel guidance.

Reasonable Accommodations for students with disability or chronic health conditions

Students who will need accommodations in this class due to a disability or chronic health condition, should discuss their individual needs with the instructor. Any accommodation must be discussed in a timely manner prior to implementation, a verifying accommodation letter from [Resources for Disabled Students](#) is required before any accommodation is provided

Mental Health Need Help? CSU is a community that cares for you. If you are struggling with drugs or alcohol and/or experiencing depression, anxiety, overwhelming stress or thoughts of hurting yourself or others please know there is help available. Counseling Services has trained professionals who can help. Contact 970.491.6053 or go to <http://health.colostate.edu>. If you are concerned about a friend or peer, tell someone at by calling 970.491.1350 to discuss your concerns with a professional who can discreetly connect the distressed individual with the proper resources (<http://supportandsafety.colostate.edu/tellsomeone>). Rams take care of Rams. Reach out and ask for help if you or someone you know is having a difficult time.