AG 392 Applied Ethics: *U.S. & World Agriculture* **Dr. Bob Williams**
Course Syllabus **903-886-5350**
Spring 2013 Bob.Williams@tamuc.edu

Text:

There is no specific textbook for this course. Material will come from a variety of sources including scientific and professional journals, publications from governmental agencies, information from agricultural organizations, and guest presenters.

Other documents/handouts will be provided through your university eCollege account.

Student Learning Outcomes:

Upon completion of the course the student will be able to-

1. Develop strategies for critical thinking.
2. Analyze sources of information and:
    a. Discuss relevance to her/his profession.
    b. Distinguish between facts, values, and beliefs.
    c. Determine the credibility of the source.
    d. Recognize limitations of the information.
3. Evaluate the *pros* and *cons* of contemporary issues in food, agriculture, and natural resources.
4. Present contrasting viewpoints in a civil and effective manner.
5. Compose informative and persuasive essays on controversial topics.
6. Collaborate with team members of varied backgrounds, beliefs, and values.
7. Develop and deliver an informative or persuasive speech on an issue relevant to agriculture, food, and/or natural resources.
8. Participate in the *peer review* assessment process.
9. Engage in public debate and discussion in a civil manner.
10. Identify sources of influence in the development of regulations and policies affecting the production, distribution, and management of food, agriculture, and natural resources systems.

Grade Determination:

	Possible Points
Class attendance and participation in class/online discussion	100
Essay on student selected/instructor assigned topic	100
Team presentation over instructor assigned *agricultural or food issue*	100
Position research brief over team presentation topic	100
Prepared note-card speech (2 minutes) over student selected topic	100
Issues in Retrospect Essay (in lieu of final exam)	100

$$\text{Your Grade (\%)} = \frac{\text{Points Earned}}{600} \times 100$$

A = 90-100 B = 80-89 C = 70-79 D = 60-69 F = below 60%

The instructor reserves the right to modify this syllabus during the semester, if needed. The instructor also reserves the right to extend credit for alternative assignments, projects, or presentations.

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Class Attendance and Participation in Discussions

Students are expected to discuss experiences and observations, as well as ask questions. Being in attendance is only part of the learning process. By discussing issues and asking questions, you will reinforce learning through a multi-sensory approach. Your attendance and *effective listening* is also necessary for participation in the *peer review* of the team presentations and individual speeches. Some discussions will be online.

Essay over *Instructor-Approved* Activity

Each student will compose a personal reflective essay consisting of 600-800 words over an experience outside of class but related to course content. Examples of activities will be discussed in class. Some suggestions include:

-Participation in the Farm Bureau Collegiate Ag Discussion
-Visit to the state or federal capital, ag/food/environmental related agencies
-Viewing documentaries related to domestic or global food/agricultural issues
-Reading a book over an ethical issue in food or agriculture
-Hosting a *National Ag Day Event* on campus or in your home community

Team Presentation and Report

Students will be organized into teams of 4-5 by a random selection process. Teams will draw for a topic from a pre-approved set of issues relevant to the course. Each team member will conduct research on the topic and prepare a 2-3 page *Position Research Brief*. Each team member's brief will be used to collectively compose a research paper that presents the *pros* and *cons* of the issue. This research will serve as the basis for a class presentation using multimedia (or other appropriate graphics or models). The presentation will be submitted for peer and instructor review during a regularly scheduled class period. The Texas FFA *Agricultural Issues Forum* Leadership Development Event* format should be used as a guide for the development of the paper and presentation.
* http://www.texasffa.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=CnSdYOLoOLE%3d&tabid=202&mid=570

Prepared Informative or Persuasive Speech

Each student will develop a 2-minute speech on an instructor-approved topic. The student may use the rules for *Texas FFA Extemporaneous Public Speaking* or Texas *University Interscholastic League (UIL) Persuasive or Informative Speaking* guidelines as a suggested format.

***Issues in Retrospect* Essay**

Each student will compose an *in-class* essay that synthesizes the key elements of issues discussed, facts presented, and opinions shared during the course. The professor will provide 5-6 prompts from which the student will respond to 4. Essays will be hand-written in a *Blue Book* during the last regular class meeting.

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Written Assignments and Format

The Position Research Brief, Team Report, and essays should be written in a format compatible with the *American Psychological Association (APA) Manual for Publication*, 6th or latest edition. A synopsis and tutorial on scientific writing, including the use of APA format is available from the Online Writing Lab at Purdue University (http://owl.english.purdue.edu/). Personal face-to-face assistance with editing and format suggestions is available from the on-campus Writing Center at TAMU-Commerce.

Class Syllabus Addendum

Professionalism

Students are expected to attend class and/or laboratory as scheduled. Their participation in class discussion and instructional activities should follow the basic principles of common courtesy and decency. Rude and disruptive behavior, as well as cheating, in any form, will not be tolerated. The use of tobacco products in the classroom, laboratory, or field trip sites is prohibited. Inappropriate conduct will not be tolerated. Failure to comply with instructor's guidelines may result in suspension from class for the remainder of the day's instruction. Repeat offenses may result in additional consequences.

Reasonable Accommodations

Requests from students with disabilities for reasonable accommodations must go through the Academic Support Committee. For more information, contact Coordinator of Disability Services at 903/886-5835.

Office Hours

The following office hours are the official times that I will be available for drop-in student consultation. I have an open door policy and will try to assist students any time that I am available. However, occasionally the professorial demands of class preparation, research, and service prohibit immediate drop-in service.

Monday	8:00-10:00 a.m.	or	by appointment
Tuesday	9:30-10:00 a.m.		by appointment
Wednesday	1:30-3:00 p.m.		
Thursday	Off campus for Supervision of Field Experiences or Research		
Friday	Off campus for Supervision of Field Experiences or Research		

Assistance in Hosting FFA Event

Each student will be expected to assist with the hosting of the Area V & VI FFA Career Development events held in Commerce and Sulphur Springs on Tuesday, April 9. This is a professional/career enhance networking opportunity for all students in the department. Some professors, including the one for this class offer extra credit for those students who work beyond the class time designated for this class. The amount of credit varies.

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