

AEC 435: AGRICULTURAL POLICY
Texas A&M University-Commerce
School of Agriculture
Fall 2015

Syllabus
(UNDERGRADUATE)

INSTRUCTOR: Dr. Rafael Bakhtavoryan

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CLASS SECTION: 01E

CLASS MEETING: MWF 9:00-9:50 a.m., AGIT Room 233

OFFICE HOURS: My scheduled office hours are from 11:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Monday and Wednesday, or by appointment (email is the best way of communication for making appointments). Also, I keep an open-door policy. So, feel free to stop by my office and ask questions anytime. In case I am not available or cannot meet with you at that time, send me an email and we will make an appointment.

REQUIRED TEXTBOOK/MATERIALS: *Agricultural and Food Policy* by R.D. Knutson, JB Penn, B.L. Flinchbaugh, and J.L. Outlaw. Pearson Prentice Hall, New Jersey, 6th edition, 2007. (ISBN: 0131718738).

In addition, we will also rely on handouts and PowerPoint presentations provided throughout the semester. Students are also encouraged to use other news media (print or on-line) for practical illustrations of concepts discussed in the class.

COURSE DESCRIPTION: Analytical treatment of historical, recent and current economic problems, and governmental policies influencing American agriculture and rural America. The focus is on developing a historical and conceptual understanding of the economics of agriculture and how public policy has and does influence the nature and performance of American agriculture.

COURSE OBJECTIVES: The objectives of this course are:

1. To understand how and why policies are made, why policies are needed, who policy participants are, how policy is implemented, and how policies impact society.
2. To study problems in and related to agriculture that merit policy consideration.
3. To familiarize you with domestic agricultural, food and trade policies.
4. Develop the tools necessary to analyze policies.
5. Investigate the major international organizations that influence agricultural, food, and trade policies.
6. Analyze the interaction between economic goals and social goals and evaluate the ability of agricultural, food, and trade policies to accomplish these goals.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES: After studying all materials and resources presented in this course, students will be able to:

1. Understand the concepts and terminology related to agricultural, food, and trade policies.
2. Understand the process of developing and implementing U.S. agricultural policy.
3. Analyze U.S. agricultural, food, and trade policies and their implications for agricultural markets.
4. Understand relationship between policies, supply, demand and elasticities and social welfare changes.
5. Develop students' ability to think critically about the need for policies and policy reforms.
6. Improve students' written and oral communication skills, enabling them to work effectively in an agribusiness environment.

LECTURE TOPICS:

Review of Economics: Demand & Supply, Elasticities, Welfare Analysis

Forces of Policy Change

Rationale for Government Involvement in Agriculture and Food

The U.S. Policy Decision Process

Geopolitical Centers of Influence

World Trade Organization

U.S. Trade and Development Policy

U.S. Farm Policies

Living with Limited Resources

Environmental Policy

Food Safety and Security Policy

Food Assistance and Nutrition Policy

Future of Agricultural and Food Policy

GRADING POLICY: Your grade for the semester will be a weighted average of class participation, daily review quizzes, policy (agricultural or food or trade policy) paper, policy paper presentation, homework assignments, and three in-class exams.

Class participation	5%
Daily review quizzes	5%
Policy paper	15%
Policy paper presentation	5%
Homework assignments	10%
Exam 1	20%
Exam 2	20%
Final Exam	20%

GRADING SYSTEM: Course grading is done according to the following scale:

<u>Range</u>	<u>Letter Grade</u>
90-100	A
80-89.99	B
70-79.99	C
60-69.99	D
Less than 60	F

CLASS PARTICIPATION: The goal of class participation is to provide students with an incentive to come to class prepared and having read the appropriate course material. There is a couple of ways for you to earn class participation points. First, you can earn them by **correctly** answering questions posed by the instructor. Second, you can earn participation points by contributing to class discussions through thoughtful, timely, and constructive ideas/comments, as called upon by the instructor, or on a voluntary basis.

You will record your own participation points and the associated questions you answered or ideas/comments you voiced to earn the participation points on a piece of paper that you will have to give to the instructor at the end of the class. Make sure you also write your name, the date, and the course title on the paper. If you fail to give the instructor the paper with the points, associated questions and ideas/comments, your name, the date, and the course title at the end of the class, you will not be given any participation points for that class.

I will give full credit for class participation (5%) to a student with maximum points at the end of the semester. The rest of students' class participation will be evaluated relative to the full-credit student's total points. You can email me asking about your total participation points at the moment. I will keep you posted on the maximum points earned at the time throughout the semester so that you can see where you are at as far as class participation.

DAILY REVIEW QUIZZES (DRQs): The DRQs will be given almost every class on material covered in the prior class period. DRQs are intended to: (1) motivate you to come to every class (2) motivate you to study on a regular basis, and (3) give you and your instructor immediate feedback on your progress. No make-up DRQs will be given and a grade of zero will be assessed for the missed DRQ.

POLICY PAPER: All students are required to write an individual policy paper. Please make arrangements to meet with the instructor in the second week of the course to select a topic. The paper is due on the last day of class (December 11th) at 9:05 a.m., no exceptions. Students are encouraged to submit completed papers in advance. Papers must be submitted both electronically (by email) and in hard copy.

Papers must be at least 5 pages (not including the title page and the references section) and typed using Times New Roman, 12 point, doubled spaced and 1-inch margins all around. Before submitting the final paper, use the "Spelling & Grammar" function of the MS Word to correct grammar.

The paper must include at least the following 5 sections:

1. Introduction (10 points): Brief introduction including the history of the policy and its development. Also, this section has to include a clearly worded research objective (what is it that you are going to analyze).

- 2. Policy Discussion (20 points):** Describe the agricultural or food or trade policy you have chosen with emphasis on explaining its key characteristics and dimensions (for example, the policy goals and objectives, key policy provisions, markets/groups affected, etc.).
- 3. Policy Analysis (50 points):** Analyze the policy graphically and discuss the market effects and who gains and loses from the agricultural or food or trade policy you have chosen. If appropriate, I also recommend that you consider including data to illustrate the points pertinent to your analysis. A very good source for such data is the U.S. Department of Agriculture Economic Research Service web site: <http://www.ers.usda.gov/>
- 4. Conclusions (10 points):** Summarize the main conclusions of your paper based on the analysis done in the “Policy Analysis” section.
- 5. References (10 points):** Provide the list of sources cited in the paper in an alphabetical order (please no Wikipedia sources).

Possible policy paper topics:

U.S. corn policy; U.S. sorghum policy; U.S. oats policy; U.S. cotton policy; U.S. dairy policy; U.S. ethanol policy; U.S. wine policy; U.S. tobacco policy; U.S. peanut policy; U.S. shrimp policy; U.S. sugar policy; U.S. wool and mohair policy; U.S. honey program; U.S. programs affecting fruits and vegetables; Policy issues affecting U.S. livestock producers; Crop insurance; The Conservation Reserve Program (CRP); Farmland preservation programs; Export enhancement and market development programs; North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA); World Trade Organization (WTO); Trade policy (import restriction or export subsidy for an agricultural commodity); The Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) of the European Union; U.S. food safety and security policy; U.S. food assistance and nutrition policy.

POLICY PAPER PRESENTATIONS: At the end of the semester you will make a formal PowerPoint presentation to the class on your policy paper. The dates for the presentations as well as other details regarding the length and format of the presentations will be specified throughout the semester.

HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENTS: Homework assignments will be assigned regularly. Homework assignments are intended to help students enhance understanding of the material covered in class. Homework assignments must be handwritten and must be submitted to the instructor on the due date at the beginning of the class. No late submission of a homework assignment will be accepted and a grade of zero will be assessed for it. If you expect to miss class, you can submit your homework assignment early. If necessary, homework assignments will be discussed in class to help students with homework problems.

EXAMS: Other than for university-excused absences or a valid doctor’s excuse, no make-up exams will be given. If an exam is missed a grade of zero will be assessed for it. Final exam is NOT comprehensive. Students cannot use a programmable calculator for exams. A simple 4-function (addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division) calculator is sufficient for all problems. Also, no use of cell phones as calculators is allowed for exams.

PROCEDURE FOR APPEALING GRADES: You may appeal a grade received on any course assignment within 2 days after you receive the grade. There must be sufficient documentation (the graded exam, DRQ, homework assignment) to substantiate your claim. If there is no documentation, no grade change will occur.

A ROADMAP FOR SUCCESS IN AEC 435 & MY EXPECTATIONS OF YOU:

1. Come to class in a timely manner and stay for the duration of the class.
2. Prior to class, read the assigned readings, print and review the relevant PowerPoint slides.
3. Participate in class discussions sharing your insights through your questions and comments.
4. Complete and turn in course assignments at the scheduled time.
5. Use the web to actively seek out other relevant sources that fit your learning style and help you better understand the material.
6. Use your instructor as a resource for understanding the course material during the office hours.
7. Come to exams prepared.

COMMUNICATION: All the PowerPoint presentations, handouts, syllabus, homework assignments and other course-specific material will be available on eCollege. It is your responsibility to check eCollege, download the appropriate class material, print it out (if necessary), read it or solve the problems, and bring it to the class to facilitate the note taking. In addition, the grades for all graded materials will be entered into eCollege as we progress through the semester.

You will need your CWID and password to log in to the course. If you do not know your CWID or have forgotten your password, contact Technology Services at 903.468.6000 or helpdesk@online.tamuc.org.

The Student Orientation/Tutorial link for eCollege is available under the “My Course List” subtab of the “My Courses” tab of the eCollege website. There you will see the following link: “**NExT Student Orientation Tutorial**”. The main objective of this tutorial is for you to learn how to submit documents, take online exams, post comments on discussion boards, and do many other things on eCollege.

IMPORTANT DATES:

August 31st, Monday: First day of classes.

November 26th and November 27th: Thanksgiving Holiday (No Class).

December 11th, Friday: Last day of classes.

December 16th, Wednesday: Final Exam, 8:00 - 10:0 a.m.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES: The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact:

Office of Student Disability Resources and Services

Texas A&M University-Commerce

Gee Library

Room 132

Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835

Fax (903) 468-8148

StudentDisabilityServices@tamuc.edu

COUNSELING CENTER: A student that faces a crisis or a serious and unforeseeable event that affects his/her class performance must contact the Counseling Center, Student Services Building, Room 204, Phone (903) 886-5145. If important class material or course assignments are missed because of such crisis or event, the student must contact the instructor as soon as possible.

GENERAL POLICIES FOR CLASSES: All students enrolled at the University will follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment. See Student's Guide Handbook, Rules and Procedures, Code of Student Conduct (<http://www.tamuc.edu/CampusLife/documents/studentGuidebook.pdf>).

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY: Students must follow the *Code of Student Conduct* in the *Student Guidebook* (<http://web.tamuc.edu/admissions/studentGuidebook.aspx>). Any form of plagiarism or academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Academic honesty is defined on *Chapter 13 Students (Academic)* of the *TAMUC Rules and Procedures* (<http://web.tamuc.edu/aboutus/policiesproceduresstandardsstatements/rulesprocedures/>):

“Academic dishonesty” includes, but is not limited to, plagiarism (the appropriation or stealing of the ideas or words of another and passing them off as one's own), cheating, collusion (the unauthorized collaboration with others), and abuse (destruction, defacing, or removal) of resource material.

NOTE: The instructor reserves the right to make changes to the syllabus as needed. If changes are made, you will be notified of them ahead of time.