

**AEB6385 - MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES FOR AGRIBUSINESS FIRMS**  
**Spring 2023. Class Number: 28272 (3 credits)**

**INSTRUCTOR:** Dr. Olesya Savchenko  
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**LECTURE:** Online asynchronous lectures and other course materials will be posted on Canvas

**OFFICE HOURS:** T 10:00AM – 12:00PM, or by appointment on Zoom.

**FRE CONTACTS:** Dr. Gao Zhifeng, Graduate Coordinator, [zfgao@ufl.edu](mailto:zfgao@ufl.edu)  
Jess Herman, Graduate Academic Advisor, [jherman@ufl.edu](mailto:jherman@ufl.edu)  
Dave Depatie, FRE Technology Assistance, [ddepatie@ufl.edu](mailto:ddepatie@ufl.edu)

**COMMUNICATION:** The best way to get a hold of myself is by emailing me either to directly to my email or via Canvas. Make sure to [enable emails for course announcements](#) and read this syllabus thoroughly. I will post important announcements on Canvas sparingly.

**COURSE OVERVIEW:**

AEB 6385 is an integrated course for the Food and Resource Economics Department MS Agribusiness and MAB program. It is designed to help students synthesize across their formal and informal learning of the general principles of marketing, finance, accounting and human resource management. The course presents both the theory and the practical application of strategic management concepts using case study method to facilitate students' learning and development of this basic skill set. Students will be exposed to a wide range of organizations and business strategies through case study analysis that will be completed individually and in small groups and will require students to assume the role of business consultants to address strategic and operational issues facing agribusiness firms.

**COUSE OBJECTIVES:**

Given active engagement in this course, at the end of this course students will:

1. Understand the key concepts of strategy formulation and competitive analysis.
2. Synthesize knowledge across business functional areas and apply this knowledge to the analysis of real-world contemporary agribusiness management issues.
3. Prepare for successful professional careers in agribusiness management by gaining an educational experience that will position students for a competitive market-place advantage.
4. Master the art of informed decision-making, critical-thinking, strategic management, and business analysis.
5. Transition from the state of dependent to self-directing learning.
6. Develop effective written and oral communication skills and ability to work well in a team environment.

## **TEACHING APPROACH:**

This course is delivered in asynchronous online format. Lectures will be recorded and posted for students on the course website on Canvas. In class I will act as a facilitator, moderator and a lecturer to help you gain understanding of strategic management, identify linkages between strategy and other business functional areas, and apply the concepts of strategic management and competitive advantage to the analysis of real-world business situations using case studies.

Case study method: A substantial portion of the class time will be devoted to the analysis of cases studies in agribusiness and other industries specifically hand-picked to provide students with experience to analyze real-world agribusiness challenges. Cases provide a way for students to gain a basis for analysis and decision-making necessary for successful professional careers. Cases will present students with a wide range of issues a business can face and will help students develop analysis and problem-solving skills. There are many ways to address a problem and generally there is no one correct answer, but there are strategies that are clearly better than others and those that are obviously wrong. This can be summarized in a popular phrase applied to case analysis “there are no right answers, but there are wrong answers.”

Simulation: Students will also have an opportunity to apply the knowledge they gain in class through a hands-on business simulation experience.

## **EXPECTATIONS FOR AEB6385 STUDENTS:**

Our success in the online asynchronous course will greatly depend on the same commitment we all bring to the physical classroom. We will adopt the same rules and norms (watch posted lectures, participate in online discussions, engage with other students through online discussions and group work, communicate with the instructor frequently via office hours and email). To be successful in this course, a student should:

1. Watch posted lecture material on Canvas.
2. Complete assigned readings prior to each respective class/module.
3. Actively participate in online class discussions.
4. Contribute your part towards completing a team project.

## **STUDENT FEEDBACK:**

I welcome students' feedback about the course, including content, assignments, and the style of lectures and discussions. I am committed to making this course a positive and valuable learning experience for each student. I will be collecting your feedback throughout the semester using anonymous surveys. You are also always welcome to talk to me directly.

## **COURSE MATERIALS:**

### **Required:**

1. *Strategic Management* (3<sup>rd</sup> edition) by Frank Rothaermel.
2. Course packet – Available for purchase from Harvard Business Publishing (after you register as a “student” user). This packet contains cases, articles and simulation we will be using during class.

3. A popular business book of your choice selected from a list provided by instructor.

**Supplementary:**

1. *The Case Study Handbook: A Students’ Guide* by Ellet William, Harvard Business Review Press, 2018.
2. Readings posted by instructor on Canvas course site. If you are enrolled, you should have access to it. I will post relevant course materials on this site (i.e., syllabus, group information, readings, etc.). Please check the site on a regular basis.

**COURSE EVALUATION:**

Your final grade will consist of the following components:

Graded Activity	Activity Type	Points	% of Grade
Online Discussions	Individual	75	15%
Case Study Memos	Individual	100	20%
Quizzes, Activities, Simulation	Individual or Team	150	30%
Book Review Presentation	Individual or Team	75	15%
Final Case Analysis & Presentation	Individual or Team	100	20%
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>500</b>	<b>100%</b>

The following grading scale will be used:

93 – 100%	A	80 – 82.9	B-	66 – 69.9	D+
90 – 92.9	A-	76 – 79.9	C+	63 – 65.9	D
86 – 89.9	B+	73 – 75.9	C	60 – 62.9	D –
83 – 85.9	B	70 – 72.9	C-	≤59.9	E

**IMPORTANT:** After any grade is posted, should you believe that your exam/assignment is incorrectly graded or that your grade was posted incorrectly, please contact the instructor within **7** days. To be considered, you must provide (1) the graded work in question and (2) a written explanation of why you are requesting the re-grade. **After 7 days have passed, your posted grade will be assumed to be correct and final.**

**COURSE ASSIGNMENTS:**

**Online Discussions (15%):**

Thoughtful contribution to online class discussions is critical for your success in this course and for creating an active and productive learning environment for all students. The quality of your learning experience in this course will directly depend on your and your classmates’ preparation, active participation in online discussions and responses to the posts of your peers. What you will gain in this class directly depends on what you put in – not just in terms of preparing for the class (watching/reading lecture material, reading and analyzing cases), but also in terms your willingness to be open to ideas and perspectives of other students. Because cases analysis uses real business situations that often involve uncertainty, risk and lack of information, it is

inevitable that different solutions will be proposed. Respectful discussion of issues or opposing opinions relevant to the case is welcome. This component of your grade will be graded based on your contribution to the learning process. Therefore, I will evaluate both the quantity and quality of your contribution to online discussions.

### **Case Study Memos (20%):**

Throughout this course, we will analyze a series of business case studies. Student will prepare a 2-page (single-spaced, 12-point Times New Roman font) case memo write up on 5 cases. Students will be provided with discussion questions that will guide their case study analysis. Each case will be tailored to the specific material covered in lecture and the textbook to enable students to apply the theory to real world business issues. I will provide general guidance on how to complete case analysis to ensure that each student understands the case study method and is well-equipped to do the analysis. Students have an option of working on these cases individually or in small groups (2 and no more than 3 students per group).

### **Quizzes, Activities, Simulation (15%):**

Throughout the semester, we will have a series of quizzes/application activities. One lowest grade for these activities will be dropped. Quizzes will test students' basic understanding of the material and will draw on the material presented in lectures/covered in textbook. Application activities will require students to apply the material to a specific business challenge. A simulation exercise will further provide hands-on experience solving real-world agribusiness challenges.

### **Book Review Presentation (15%):**

Students will read a 'popular' strategic management/business book of their choice (a list of suggested books will be provided by the instructor). Once selected, the book must be approved by the instructor. The goal of this assignment is to allow students to learn from the experience and advice of successful business owners and CEOs on how to formulate strategy, lead and manage a company, and also to develop students' leadership, teambuilding and entrepreneurial skills that will equip them for success in their professional careers. To complete this assignment, students will be divided into small groups (completing this assignment individually is an option) that will focus on reading the same book (each student will need to read the book). A summary of the key points of the book (including what you felt was strong and weak about the book) will be presented by each group to the class via an online recording. In addition to the presentation, each group will be responsible for preparing a set of questions to generate an online discussion of the book.

### **Final Group Case Analysis & Presentation (20%):**

This is a comprehensive case analysis assignment that will be prepared in groups or individually and presented at the end of the course using an online recording. Unlike the brief case assignments that are shorter, the final group case analysis should be 5 pages long (single-spaced, 12-point Times New Roman font) not including tables, graphs, and references included in the appendix. This case analysis will require students to synthesize and apply the knowledge and concepts of business strategy and competitive advantage learned throughout the entire semester. This case will be assigned early in the semester to ensure that students have sufficient time to analyze it and prepare it for presentation. While completing this assignment, students will assume the role of business

consultants presenting their analysis to the board of directors. Therefore, the written portion of this assignment must look professional, be original and written using proper English grammar and formal language. You will be graded based on the comprehensiveness of your analysis, but points will be deducted if a report is not well formatted, looks sloppy or has grammatical errors. Each group will also present their analysis in a 30-minute presentation. Presentations should communicate the key points of the analysis and must be professional, clear and to the point.

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**NOTE: Any and all items presented on this syllabus are subject to change. Any changes and additional announcements will be made in class as the semester progresses. By enrolling in this class, you agree to the terms outlined in this syllabus.**

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**\*\*\*Detailed course schedule will be provided to students on Canvas \*\*\***

## **COURSE & UNIVERSITY POLICIES**

This syllabus is a contract between the students and the instructor. Each student can be assured that I will hold everyone to the same standards and policies.

### **COURSE NETIQUETTE**

This course will you a blend of face-to-face and online instruction. Please remember that online classroom is in fact a classroom, and certain behaviors are expected when you communicate with the instructor and your peers. When communicative online you should always:

- Treat your instructor and classmates with respect in email or any other communication.
- Always use your professors' proper title: Dr. or Prof.
- Unless specifically invited, don't refer to your instructor by first name.
- Use clear and concise language.
- Remember that all college level communication should have correct spelling and grammar (this includes discussion boards).
- Avoid slang terms such as "wassup?" and texting abbreviations such as "u" instead of "you."
- Use standard fonts such as Ariel, Calibri or Times new Roman and use a size 10 or 12 pt. font
- Avoid using the caps lock feature **AS IT CAN BE INTERPRETTED AS YELLING.**
- Limit and possibly avoid the use of emoticons like :) or 😊.
- Be cautious when using humor or sarcasm as tone is sometimes lost in an email or discussion post and your message might be taken seriously or sound offensive.
- Be careful with personal information (both yours and other's).
- Do not send confidential information via e-mail.

## EMAIL NETIQUETTE

- Always start the subject line with AEB4242, followed by a short, descriptive subject line.
- Always use your professors' proper title: Dr. or Prof.
- Be brief.
- Sign your message with your name and return e-mail address.

## ONLINE COURSE EVALUATION PROCESS

Student assessment of instruction is an important part of efforts to improve teaching and learning. At the end of the semester, students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students>. Students are notified when the evaluation period opens, and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via <https://ufl.bluera.com/ufl>. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results>.

## IN-CLASS RECORDING

Students are allowed to record video or audio of class lectures. However, the purposes for which these recordings may be used are strictly controlled.

The only allowable purposes are: (1) for personal educational use, (2) in connection with a complaint to the university, or (3) as evidence in, or in preparation for, a criminal or civil proceeding. All other purposes are prohibited. Specifically, students may not publish recorded lectures without the written consent of the instructor.

A “class lecture” is an educational presentation intended to inform or teach enrolled students about a particular subject, including any instructor-led discussions that form part of the presentation, and delivered by any instructor hired or appointed by the University, or by a guest instructor, as part of a University of Florida course. A class lecture does not include lab sessions, student presentations, clinical presentations such as patient history, academic exercises involving solely student participation, assessments (quizzes, tests, exams), field trips, private conversations between students in the class or between a student and the faculty or lecturer during a class session.

Publication without permission of the instructor is prohibited. To “publish” means to share, transmit, circulate, distribute, or provide access to a recording, regardless of format or medium, to another person (or persons), including but not limited to another student within the same class section. Additionally, a recording, or transcript of a recording, is considered published if it is posted on or uploaded to, in whole or in part, any media platform, including but not limited to social media, book, magazine, newspaper, leaflet, or third party note/tutoring services. A student who publishes a recording without written consent may be subject to a civil cause of action instituted by a person injured by the publication and/or discipline under UF Regulation 4.040 Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code.

## STUDENT PRIVACY

There are federal laws protecting your privacy with regards to grades earned in courses and on individual assignments. For more information, please see the [Notification to Students of FERPA Rights](#).

## SERVICES FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

The Disability Resource Center coordinates the needed accommodations of students with disabilities. This includes registering disabilities, recommending academic accommodations within the classroom, accessing special adaptive computer equipment, providing interpretation services and mediating faculty-student disability related issues. Students with disabilities who experience learning barriers and would like to request academic accommodations should connect with the [Disability Resource Center](#). It is important for students to share their accommodation letter with their instructor and discuss their access needs, as early as possible in the semester.

## GRADES AND GRADE POINTS

For information on current UF policies for assigning grade points, see <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>.

## ABSENCES AND MAKE-UP WORK

Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments and other work are consistent with university policies that can be found at: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>.

## ACADEMIC HONESTY

I take academic honesty very seriously and expect that you will too. As a student at the University of Florida, you have committed yourself to uphold the Honor Code, which includes the following pledge: “We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honesty and integrity.” You are expected to exhibit behavior consistent with this commitment to the UF academic community, and on all work submitted for credit at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: "On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment."

It is assumed that you will complete all work independently in each course unless the instructor provides explicit permission for you to collaborate on course tasks (e.g. assignments, papers, quizzes, exams). The Conduct Code specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. [Click here to read the Conduct Code](#). If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor or TAs in this class.

## SOFTWARE USE

All faculty, staff, and students of the University are required and expected to obey the laws and legal agreements governing software use. Failure to do so can lead to monetary damages and/or criminal penalties for the individual violator. Because such violations are also against University policies and rules, disciplinary action will be taken as appropriate. We, the members of the

University of Florida community, pledge to uphold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honesty and integrity.

## YOU WELLBEING & CAMPUS HELPING RESOURCES

Students experiencing crises or personal problems that interfere with their general well-being are encouraged to utilize the university's counseling resources. The Counseling & Wellness Center provides confidential counseling services at no cost for currently enrolled students. Resources are available on campus for students having personal problems or lacking clear career or academic goals, which interfere with their academic performance.

- *U Matter, We Care*: If you or someone you know is in distress, please contact [umatter@ufl.edu](mailto:umatter@ufl.edu), 352-392-1575, or visit [U Matter, We Care website](#) to refer or report a concern and a team member will reach out to the student in distress.
- *Counseling and Wellness Center*: [Visit the Counseling and Wellness Center website](#) or call 352-392-1575 for information on crisis services as well as non-crisis services.
- *Student Health Care Center*: Call 352-392-1161 for 24/7 information to help you find the care you need, or [visit the Student Health Care Center website](#).
- *University Police Department*: [Visit UF Police Department website](#) or call 352-392-1111 (or 9-1-1 for emergencies).
- *UF Health Shands Emergency Room / Trauma Center*: For immediate medical care call 352-733-0111 or go to the emergency room at 1515 SW Archer Road, Gainesville, FL 32608; [Visit the UF Health Emergency Room and Trauma Center website](#).

## ACADEMIC RESOURCES

- *E-learning technical support*: Contact the [UF Computing Help Desk](#) at 352-392-4357 or via e-mail at [helpdesk@ufl.edu](mailto:helpdesk@ufl.edu).
- *Career Connections Center*: Reitz Union Suite 1300, 352-392-1601. Career assistance and counseling services.
- *Library Support*: Various ways to receive assistance with respect to using the libraries or finding resources.
- *Teaching Center*: Broward Hall, 352-392-2010 or to make an appointment 352- 392-6420. General study skills and tutoring.
- *Writing Studio*: 2215 Turlington Hall, 352-846-1138. Help brainstorming, formatting, and writing papers.
- *Student Complaints On-Campus*: [Visit the Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code webpage for more information](#).
- *On-Line Students Complaints*: [View the Distance Learning Student Complaint Process](#).

## LAUREN'S PROMISE: I will listen and believe you if someone is threatening you.

Lauren McCluskey, a 21-year old honors student athlete, was murdered on October 22, 2018, by a man she briefly dated on the University of Utah Campus. We must all take actions to ensure this never happens again. Any form of sexual harassment or violence will not be excused or tolerated at the University of Florida.

If you are experiencing sexual assault, relationship violence, or stalking, you can take the following actions:

- If you are in immediate danger, call 911.
- Report it to me, and I will connect you to resources.
- Seek confidential sources of support and help:
  - [UFPD Office of Victim Services](#): 51 Museum Road, 352-392-5648
  - [Sexual Assault Recovery Services \(SARS\)](#): Infirmary Building, 352-392-1161
  - Alachua County Rape Crisis Center (confidential): 352-264-6760

## **Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion**

The University of Florida's College of Agricultural and Life Sciences (CALs) supports the University of Florida's commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion. By fostering a sense of belonging for students, staff, and faculty, while leveraging the uniqueness of the people who study and work at the university, we believe our campus community is enriched and enhanced by diversity, including but not limited to, race, ethnicity, national origin, gender, gender identity, sexuality, class, and religion. This course will support an understanding of the diversity of our distance and campus communities as well as our agricultural and natural resource communities, locally and globally.

This course will strive to create a learning environment for students that supports a diversity of thoughts, perspectives, and experiences while honoring your identities. In this class we will take the following approaches to help achieve this:

- All course participants will use the names and pronouns provided by students for use in class. If these differ from those that appear in official university records, you can change your Display Name at One.UF.
- If your performance in this course is being impacted by your experiences inside and/or outside the classroom, do not hesitate to contact the instructor and/or teaching assistant (TA). Instructors in CALs are a great resource for you and you may provide feedback anonymously. Feedback may result in general announcements to the class, if necessary, or reporting to appropriate UF personnel to address your concerns.
- CALs instructors and TAs like many people, are still in the process of learning about diverse perspectives and identities. If something was said in class (by anyone) that makes you feel uncomfortable, please discuss with your instructor or TA or contact the CALs Dean's Office ([cals-dean@ufl.edu](mailto:cals-dean@ufl.edu)).