

Agriculture and Natural Resource Ethics

AEB 4126 -- Section 0014 – Fall 2017

Periods 8-9 Tuesdays (3:00 – 4:55) and 9 Thursdays (4:05 -- 4:55)

G108 McCarty B Wing

Instructor: Dr. Jeff Burkhardt.

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Office Hours: Thursdays 2 – 3 PM, also by appointment

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Communications: I will communicate with you about news, emergencies, etc., through a listserv for AEB 4126. That is, I will occasionally post mail to your Gatorlink email account. If you do not use your Gatorlink email account as your primary email send/receive, go to your Gatorlink mailbox and set your Gatorlink mail to be forwarded to your usual email account (e.g., gmail, cox.net, etc.) **PLEASE CHECK YOUR EMAIL FREQUENTLY. ALSO, don't send mail through canvas.**

Course Description:

This is a course about social, political, economic and ethical issues that arise in connection with the "food and fiber system" -- agriculture, food production/distribution, natural resource use/management, etc. --and public policy responses to those issues. My goals are for you to:

- Understand the "big picture" regarding the food and fiber system: How do the individual “pieces” like traditional family farms, environmental activists, global corporations, public policy decision-makers, consumers, etc, fit together in the larger scheme of things?
- Learn philosophical / ethical concepts and positions that can be useful in thinking about actions, practices and policies, for example, the difference between thinking of ethical obligations in terms of “protecting rights” vs. “securing the greater social good.”
- Develop/improve your ability to think, talk, and most importantly write intelligently and reflectively (critically) about issues and positions and arguments as exemplified in (1) and (2) above.
- I hope that you will use this course to inform yourself in greater depth about the food system and about ethics, and also use this course to help you clarify your own beliefs and values regarding these and other ethical issues, as well sharpen your analytical and argument skills.

Required Texts:

- ***There is no physical textbook for this class. All readings are located in the CANVAS class files for the course. Even lacking a “book” or set of books, THERE IS A LOT OF REQUIRED READING FOR THIS COURSE.*** The readings are

starting points for our discussions. You will be tested on both the assigned readings and what we discuss in class.

Grades will be based on:

1. **Take-home essay examinations** – (75%). These will consist short essays (~5 pages, double spaced) on topics I will assign. I will give you ~one week to write these papers.

2. **Group Project**

(A) **Debate** – 15 points (15%). I will randomly divide the class into small (~4-person) teams mid-semester. These teams will research the background on specific pre-determined topics in preparation for a series of debates at the end of the semester. You will be given ample time to meet with your team to prepare your position statements/arguments. Grades will be based on your team’s overall performance (as judged by the instructor and the rest of the class), as well as your teammates’ confidential (between her/him and the instructor) evaluation of your partners’ contribution to the project.

(B) **Paper** – 10 points (10%). **With all members of your debate team**, you will write a 4-6 page defense of the position you are arguing in the debate. This will consist of a structured “position paper” complete with appropriate references and bibliography.

This course satisfies the 6000-word “Gordon Rule” writing requirement based on the exams and the debate paper.

3. **Attendance & Participation** –There will be periodic sign-in sheets. Each signature counts 1 “extra” point. Additionally, there are several **REQUIRED** attendance days.

Course grades are based on:

- A = 93 – 100 points
- A- = 90 – 92.9 points
- B + = 87 – 89.9 points
- B = 83 – 86.9 points
- B- = 80 – 82.9 points
- C+ = 77– 79.9 points
- C = 73 – 76.9 points
- C- = 70 – 72.9 points and below
- D+ = 67 – 69.9 points
- D = 63 – 66.9 points
- D- = 60 – 62.9 points
- E = below 59.9 points

Student Information Sheet

Please fill in the student information sheet (posted under “assignments” on Canvas), attach a recent picture or yourself, and **turn in no later than September 7.**

Academic Honesty, Software Use, UF Counseling Services, Services for Students with Disabilities

In 1995 the UF student body enacted a new honor code and voluntarily committed itself to the highest standards of honesty and integrity. When students enroll at the university, they commit themselves to the standard drafted and enacted by students.

In adopting this honor code, the students of the University of Florida recognize that academic honesty and integrity are fundamental values of the university community. Students who enroll at the university commit to holding themselves and their peers to the high standard of honor required by the honor code. Any individual who becomes aware of a violation of the honor code is bound by honor to take corrective action. The quality of a University of Florida education is dependent upon community acceptance and enforcement of the honor code.

The Honor Code: We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honesty and integrity.

On all work submitted for credit by students at the university, the following pledge is either required or implied: **“On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.”**

The university requires all members of its community to be honest in all endeavors. A fundamental principle is that the whole process of learning and pursuit of knowledge is diminished by cheating, plagiarism and other acts of academic dishonesty. In addition, every dishonest act in the academic environment affects other students adversely, from the skewing of the grading curve to giving unfair advantage for honors or for professional or graduate school admission. Therefore, the university will take severe action against dishonest students. Similarly, measures will be taken against faculty, staff and administrators who practice dishonest or demeaning behavior.

Students should report any condition that facilitates dishonesty to the instructor, department chair, college dean or Student Honor Court. (*Source: 2007-2008 Undergraduate Catalog*)

It is assumed all work will be completed independently unless the assignment is defined as a group project in writing by the instructor.

This policy will be vigorously upheld at all times in this course.

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.

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. Both the Counseling Center and Student Mental Health Services provide 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. The Counseling Center is located at 301 Peabody Hall (next to Criser Hall). Student Mental Health Services is located on the second floor of the Student Health Care Center in the Infirmary.

- *University Counseling Center*, 301 Peabody Hall, 392-1575, www.counsel.ufl.edu
- *Career Resource Center*, CR-100 JWRU, 392-1602, www.crc.ufl.edu/
- *Student Mental Health Services*, Rm. 245 Student Health Care Center, 392-1171, www.shcc.ufl.edu/smhs/
 - Alcohol and Substance Abuse Program (ASAP)
 - Center for Sexual Assault / Abuse Recovery & Education (CARE)
 - Eating Disorders Program

Employee Assistance Program
Suicide Prevention Program

Students with Disabilities

Students requesting classroom accommodation must first register with the Dean of Students Office. The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to the Instructor when requesting accommodation.
0001 Reid Hall, 392-8565, www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/

On Classroom Civility

I expect you to abide by standards of civility and professionalism in my classroom. This means that you will respect the instructor and your fellow students by (1) not talking while any other person -- instructor or fellow student -- is talking, (2) not reading or studying anything other than materials relevant to this course (including the Alligator), and (3) not showing up for class late or departing early (or getting ready to leave by packing up books, etc., when class time is nearly ended).

Anything that ‘rings’ must be turned off before class.

A part of ethics is manners, and I expect both from you.

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TENTATIVE DISCUSSION TOPICS AND TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

ALL READINGS ARE IN CANVAS

Aug	22	Introduction	
Aug	24	Ethical Theory “About Ethics”	Singer, About Ethics; SEP, What is Moralit
Aug	29	Case Studies: Instagram; Plant relocation	
Aug	31	Ethical Theory II "Rights Theory"	
Sep	5	Rights continued	
Sep	7	Ethical Theory III “Utilitarianism”	
Sep	12	Ethical Theory IV “Virtue Ethics”	
			Paper I assigned
Sep	14	Ethics and Food Burkhardt “Food in our Future”	
Sep	19	Ethics and Food II	
			Paper I due
Sep	21	Ethics and Food III	
Sep	26	Animal Ethics “Animal Ethics”	
Sep	28	Animal Ethics II “Animals Deserve Ethical Treatment” “PETA”	

Paper II assigned

- Oct 3 **Guest Speaker**
- Oct 5 **Ethics & Agriculture**
“Food System Facts”
“Economics and Ethics of the Food System”

Paper II due

- Oct 10 **Ethics & Agriculture II**
“History of American Agrarianism”
“Berry”
“Agrarianism Reborn”

- Oct 12 **Ag Ethics & Biotechnology**
“Ethics and Agricultural Biotechnology”
“Why is Technology Important?”

Paper III assigned

- Oct 17 **Biotech II**
- Oct 19 **Food Safety & Risk**
“Ethics and Food Safety”

Paper III due

- Oct 24 **Food Choice & Labeling**
“Ethics and Food Labels”

- Oct 26 **Ethics and the Environment**
“Environmental Philosophy”

Paper IV assigned

- Oct 31 **Food Safety & Risk**
“Ethics and Food Safety”
- Nov 2 **Food Choice & Labeling**
“Ethics and Food Labels”

Nov	7	Global Ethics I “Famine, Affluence and Morality” *** DEBATE TEAMS ASSIGNED – ATTENDANCE REQUIRED ***
		Paper IV due
Nov	9	Global Ethics II “Ethics and Development”
Nov	14	Debate Preparation (meet with your teams)
Nov	16	Debate Preparation (meet with your teams)
Nov	21	Debate Preparation (meet with your teams)
Nov	23	THANKSGIVING
Nov	28	Group Presentations (2) – Attendance Required
Nov	30	Group Presentations (1) – Attendance Required
Dec	5	Group Presentations (2) – Attendance Required Debate papers due