

AEB 4325: CONTEMPORARY ISSUES IN AGRIBUSINESS MANAGEMENT

FALL SEMESTER 2017, M-W, 4:05-5:20PM, ROOM MCCARTY HALL B G108

Instructor – Brandon R. McFadden, Ph.D.

Office: 1121 McCarty Hall, B-wing

Phone: 294-7654

E-mail: brandon.mcfadden@ufl.edu

Twitter: @McFaddenAgEcon

Office Hours: M-W, 1:30-3:30pm, or by appointment

COURSE OBJECTIVES: A capstone course utilizing economic concepts to address the interaction between the political process that legislates domestic agricultural, environmental and international trade policy, micro and macroeconomic principles, private business decisions taken by firms in response to public policies, and ethical considerations in developing and implementing public policy.

Students are expected to be highly committed to preparation for and actively engaged in class activities, and to show professional courtesy to classmates and the instructors by avoiding distractions of email, texting, etc. The goal is to help prepare students for the transition from college to a professional work environment, through application of economic theory and concepts. Students will be challenged to prioritize current information related to agribusiness and resource management from multiple sources. After completion of this course, you should:

1. have a firm understanding of economic theory
2. have a better understanding about contemporary issues in agriculture and economics
3. have improved written and oral communication skills
4. be able to work on different projects with different colleagues
5. have some appreciation for market failures and unintended consequences

COURSE MATERIALS:

Required Text:

MISBEHAVING: THE MAKING OF BEHAVIORAL ECONOMICS, RICHARD H. THALER, ISBN: 039335279X.

THE WISEST ONE IN THE ROOM: HOW YOU CAN BENEFIT FROM SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY'S MOST POWERFUL INSIGHTS, THOMAS GILOVICH AND LEE ROSS, ISBN: 1451677553.

Lecture Notes: As the semester progresses, most lecture material presented in class will be available through the UF E-Learning System in Canvas.

Course Web Site: Throughout the semester, we will use our course Canvas website. If you cannot access the course website, contact the instructor or the computer services help line at 392-HELP.

Recommended Supplements: Twitter account and a RSS reader.

COURSE WORK:

Attendance and Discussion Participation: Thoughtful contribution during class discussion is essential for successful completion of the course. It is only through contribution that you show daily command of assigned readings and more generally, the issues addressed in class discussions. Good attendance is expected. Students

will be allowed to drop two missed classes. Exceptions to this policy will be made per the University's attendance policy, which allows for specific cases of excused absences (e.g., religious holidays, military obligation, and special curricular requirements). However, I expect advanced notice of any anticipated absences and appropriate documentation will be expected. Note, excused absences do not exempt the student from completing the assigned task. If a student wants credit for a missed assignment, the student must complete that work. You are responsible for all in-class material presented and for all assignments of out-of-class work. If you miss a class, it is your responsibility to get lecture notes from colleagues and be aware of any assignment(s) that is (are) due. If you come in late or leave early you will only receive half a point. No computers or cell phones!!

Memos: The purpose of these four reports are to give you some experience with thinking about the complexities of a timely issue. You will work in teams of two for the memos. It is your responsibility to communicate/meet with your team member from the beginning of the semester.

Presentations: The purpose of these presentations are to give you some experience with communicating to a group of people. You will work in groups of four for the presentations (the group member from your *memo* group cannot be in your *presentation* group). Each group will make two presentations. One on assigned chapters from one of the assigned books. One on an assigned podcast. Each presentation should be 10 minutes in length. The presentations will peer assessed, meaning that you will be graded by your classmates. A rubric will be handed out for grading.

Team Score: *Memos* and *Presentations* are group projects. Your team members will grade your performance.

Exams: There will be two take-home examinations.

GRADING:

Attendance	25%
Memos (4)	25%
Presentations (2)	25%
Team Score	10%
Exams (2)	15%

Course grades will be assigned based on the following lower bounds (note, "rounding up" is not done):

A	92%	B-	79%	D+	66%
A-	89%	C+	76%	D	62%
B+	86%	C	72%	D-	59%
B	82%	C-	69%	E	0%

LECTURES: Lectures are delivered in three formats. 1) Lecture – these are standard lectures and notes with blanks are provided; 2) Research – these are seminar-style lectures covering different contemporary topics; 3) Guest Lectures – these are lectures given by experts in a given topic.

TENTATIVE IMPORTANT DATES:

August:

- 21 First Day of Class
- 23 Lecture 1 – Economic History
- 28 Guest Lecture – Derek Farnsworth, PhD
- 30 No Class

September:

- 4 No Class – Labor Day!
- 6 Lecture 2 – Incentives, Unintended Consequences, & Market Failures
- 8 Memo 1 Due**
- 11 Lecture 3 – Distributions and Beliefs
- 13 Lecture 4 – Biases and Logical Fallacies
- 18 Lecture 5 – Regression and Decisions under Uncertainty
- 20 Guest Lecture – Allie Ricker, M.Ed./Ed.S.
- 22 Memo 2 Due**
- 25 Lecture 6 – Risk and Time Preferences
- 27 Guest Lecture – Ariel Singerman, PhD

October:

- 2 Presentations – Documentary/Podcast (files due to me on the 1st)**
- 4 Lecture 7 – Experimental Economic
- 9 Lecture 8 – Behavioral Economics
- 11 Guest Lecture – Jaclyn Kropp, PhD
- 16 Research 1 – Nutrition and Food Insecurity
- 18 Research 2 – Breeding Techniques & Production Techniques
- 20 Exam 1 Due**
- 23 Guest Lecture – Chuck Adams, PhD
- 25 Guest Lecture – Chuck Adams, PhD
- 30 Research 3 – Genetically Engineered Food

November:

- 1 Research 4 – Organic Food
- 3 Memo 3 Due**
- 6 Guest Lecture – Bill Messina
- 8 Research 5 – Media
- 13 Research 6 – Various Food Technologies
- 15 Research 7 – Hemp and Marijuana
- 17 Memo 4 Due**
- 20 Guest Lecture – Kevin Folta, PhD
- 22 No Class – Thanksgiving Break!
- 27 No Class!
- 29 Research 8 – Trust and Transparency

December:

- 4 Research 9 – Food Waste
- 6 Presentations – Book (files due to me on the 5th)**
- Exam 2 Due**

CAMPUS HELPING RESOURCES: Your well-being is important to the University of Florida. The U Matter, We Care initiative is committed to creating a culture of care on our campus by encouraging members of our community to look out for one another and to reach out for help if a member of our community is in need. If you

or a friend is in distress, please contact umatter@ufl.edu so that the U Matter, We Care Team can reach out to the student in distress. A nighttime and weekend crisis counselor is available by phone at 352-392-1575. The U Matter, We Care Team can help connect students to the many other helping resources available including, but not limited to, Victim Advocates, Housing staff, and the Counseling and Wellness Center. Please remember that asking for help is a sign of strength. In case of emergency, call 9-1-1.

Several resources are available on campus for students, especially if academic performance is at stake. In general, the Dean of Students Office provides a hub for these services: Location: P202 Peabody Hall Dean of Students Office (<http://www.dso.ufl.edu>) Telephone: 392-1261

Students with disabilities are encouraged contact the Disability Resource Center and coordinate the needed accommodations. 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. Please contact this office at 0001 Reid Hall, 392-8565, www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/.

Students experiencing crises or personal problems that interfere with their general well-being are encouraged to utilize the university's counseling resources (<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/supportservices/campuscounseling.php>). Resources are available on campus for students having personal problems or lacking clear career or academic goals, which interfere with their academic performance. These resources include:

Counseling and Wellness Center (<http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc/>) Location: 3190 Radio Road Telephone: 392-1575

Student Health Care Center (<http://shcc.ufl.edu/>) Location: SHCC Infirmary Building Telephone: 391-1161

Career Resource Center (<http://www.crc.ufl.edu>) Location: 1st Floor (CR-100), Reitz Union CR-100 Telephone: 392-1602

Academic Honesty: Academic Honesty (<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/honorcodes/conductcode.php>). The academic community at UF prides itself on intellectual growth as well as stimulating and encouraging moral development. This is accomplished through nurturing and maintaining an environment of honesty, trust and respect. The responsibility to maintain this environment falls with student as well as faculty members.

Students who enroll at UF commit to holding themselves and their peers to the high standard of honor required by 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. Thus, on all work submitted for credit, the following pledge is implied: "On our honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment." Moreover, any individual who becomes aware of a violation of the Honor Code is bound by honor to take corrective action.

Violations of the Academic Honesty Guidelines shall result in judicial action and a student being subject to the sanctions in paragraph XIV of the Student Conduct Code. For example, conduct such as cheating and plagiarizing constitutes a violation of the Academic Honesty Guidelines (University of Florida Rule 6C1-4.017), which will be vigorously upheld at all times in this course.

Student Responsibility: Students should report any condition that facilitates dishonesty to the instructor, department chair, college dean or Student Honor Court.

Faculty Responsibility: Faculty members have a duty to promote honest behavior and to avoid practices and environments that foster cheating in their classes. Teachers should encourage students to bring negative conditions or incidents of dishonesty to their attention. In their own work, teachers should practice the same high standards they expect from their students.

Administration Responsibility: As highly visible members of our academic community, administrators should be ever vigilant to promote academic honesty and conduct their lives in an ethically exemplary manner. (Source: 2016-2017 UF Undergraduate Catalog).

Student Complaints: Residential Course: https://www.dso.ufl.edu/documents/UF_Complaints_policy.pdf

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 feedback on the quality of instruction in this course using a standard set of university and college criteria. These evaluations are conducted online at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu>. Evaluations are typically open for students to complete during the last two or three weeks of the semester; students will be notified of the specific times when they are open. Summary results of these assessments are available to students at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu/results>.