

AEB 6225: Public Policy and the Agribusiness Firms Spring 2026

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Location: Tuesdays periods 4 (10:40am – 11:30pm) MAEB 0238
Thursdays period 4 & 5 (10:40am – 12:35pm) MAEB 0238

Please do not come to class if you are exhibiting COVID-19 or other respiratory virus symptoms. If you have been exposed to COVID-19 or contracted COVID-19, please follow the current CDC guidelines.

Office Hours: In-person: Tuesdays & Thursdays 9:15am – 10:15am;
Zoom: Mondays 11:30am – 12:30pm;
& by appointment

Credits: 3

Prerequisites:

It assumed that students are familiar with basic microeconomic analysis and elementary calculus.

Required Materials:

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Houck, J. *Elements of Agricultural Trade Policies*, Waveland Press (1992). Note: This book is out of print. I have a copyright release and will provide you with a pdf version of the relevant chapters.

Older editions of the book may suffice. However, students are responsible for ensuring that they are studying the correct material.

Recommended Readings:

Knutson, R., J. Pen and B. Flinchbaugh, *Agricultural and Food Policy*, 6th edition, Pearson Prentice Hall (2007).

E-Learning Canvas:

There is an E-learning Canvas webpage for this course. To access the website, you will need your Gatorlink username and password. E-learning Canvas can be accessed via <http://elearning.ufl.edu>. If you are having difficulties accessing the website, please contact the UF Computing Help Desk

directly by calling (352) 392-HELP or via e-mail helpdesk@ufl.edu. You will need your UFID when contacting them.

Communication:

Having a dialog is important for fostering learning hence I encourage students to ask questions in and outside of class. Outside of class, I typically have an open-door policy when I am on campus. I encourage students to attend scheduled office hours; I also encourage students to communicate with me via email or via the email function in Canvas. If you email me during the workweek, please allow 24 hours for me to response; typically, I respond much sooner. If you email me on a holiday or weekend, I will respond on the next normal business day. I frequently work from home on days that class does not meet. If you wish to meet with me outside of office hours, please email me requesting a meeting. I will do my best to accommodate meetings but honoring same day requests will be difficult, particularly on Tuesdays and Thursdays as I teach other courses.

Course Navigation:

The Course Home page of Canvas contains quick links to five key pages: 1) Syllabus; 2) Assignments; 3) Lecture Notes; 4) Course Documents; and 5) Zoom Recordings. The complete course syllabus (a pdf of this document) can be found on the Syllabus page; the Syllabus page also contains contact information for Dr. Kropp and the TA as well as a listing of all lectures, assignments, and activities in chronological order with associated due dates. The assignments listed on the Syllabus page link to assignments and activities on the Assignments page, where more detailed instructions and rubrics for each assignment can be found. PowerPoint slides for each lecture can be found on the Lecture Notes page. Other important resources such as tips for writing case studies and calculator help can be found on the Course Documents page. Links to recording of prior lectures can be found on the Zoom Recordings page. Additionally, the Home page contains a link to a Getting Started page where you will find other important information. Once assignments are graded, grades will be posted on the Grades page. Occasionally, important information will be posted on the Announcements page; however, the majority of essential information is contained within this syllabus.

Course Description:

This course focuses on understanding the policy-development process and analyzing domestic and international policies and their influence on the decisions and success of agribusiness firms. Emphasis will be placed on developing a policy perspective and an understanding of the significance of policy dynamics. Various policy environments, drivers, mechanisms and processes will be analyzed. The economic and political forces underlying policy formation and change will be examined. The impact of current policies and policy issues on agribusiness firms, the relationship between policy signals and firm decisions, and the avenues for influencing the policy process will be explored. Policies considered include those associated with domestic agricultural price and income support, international trade, competition, the environment, food safety, biotechnology, country-of-origin labeling, traceability, economic development, agro-terrorism and globalization. U.S. policies are compared with those which influence agribusinesses in other countries.

Format:

Since AEB6225 is an *analytical* course, it will be delivered via traditional lectures, discussions and experiential learning. Theories and frameworks will be presented in class, and we will discuss their *derivations* as well as *applications* to the ‘real world.’ Quantitative reasoning and analytical methods are used extensively. Therefore, basic knowledge of economic principles and concepts is necessary. Keeping up with news, in general, and agricultural policy news, in particular, is imperative to get the most out of your experience in this course.

This course will proceed at a rapid pace. Therefore, it is expected that students keep up with the assigned readings. Furthermore, the class will be designed such that classroom participation (not only attendance but also active participation) and individual study and preparation outside the classroom are necessary for learning and performing well in the exams. Lectures will cover the major points of assigned readings. However, unless told otherwise, students are required to read and understand all assigned readings.

Frequently, the course will be delivered in a flipped classroom style where **students are expected to complete assigned readings prior to class** and be ready for active exploration and discussion to deepen their understanding. The role of the instructor will be to facilitate discussion, add insights from their expertise, moderate activities, and ask probing questions to stimulate students’ creative and critical thinking skills.

Course objectives:

This course will provide an overview of issues relating to agricultural policy, international trade policy, globalization, economic development and political economy. The course will equip students with the tools necessary to analyze the impacts of agricultural policies on agricultural consumers and producers, agribusiness firms and international trade. The course will focus on the policies of the European Union and United States with an emphasis on U.S. agricultural policies. Thus, the objectives of the class may be summarized as follows:

- 1) Develop the tools necessary to analyze past, current, and proposed agricultural policies.
- 2) Critique the major international organizations that influence agricultural policy.
- 3) Explain why international agricultural trade is often regulated.
- 4) Analyze the impact of past, current, and proposed agricultural policies on trade.
- 5) Analyze the interaction between economic goals and social goals and evaluate the ability of agricultural policies to accomplish these goals.
- 6) Relate international economic events to the operations of agribusiness firms.

Attendance Policy:

I accept students to attend all classes. Regular and punctual attendance at all classes is the responsibility of each student. In the event of an absence, it is the responsibility of the student to make up any resulting deficiencies.

I will inform the class in advance if I will not attend a particular class, in which case arrangements will be made for a substitute instructor or other alternatives such as meeting via Zoom.

In general, late assignments will NOT be accepted. The instructor reserves the right to determine if a student shall be permitted to submit an assignment late.

Excused Absences and Late Assignment Policy:

To be excused from class, activities, or allowed to submit an assignment late, you **must** notify me in advance and secure my permission. The only acceptable reasons to request an excuse are:

- Medical emergency (ordinary doctor's visit is not acceptable; proper documentation justifying the excuse will be required).
- Significant personal or professional commitment (e.g., field trip for another course; military duty; interview; religious holidays; participation in official university activities such as music performances, athletic competition or debate; court-imposed legal obligations (jury duty or subpoena; court appearance for traffic tickets or arrests will not be excused). Eligibility depends on instructor's judgment, and hence *prior permission is a must*. Students will not be excused from presentations as they are scheduled based on students' availability. Assignments are due on their due date and assignments must be submitted on their due date or prior to their due date even if the student is excused from class on the assignment due date.

- Genuine family emergency (again, proper documentation/verification will be needed).

Given that case study assignments are posted well in advance of their due dates, university athletes or students engaging in approved professional or personal commitments are expected to submit assignments by their stated due dates. Under certain circumstances, I will allow make-up assignments or extensions when the assignment is missed due to official university sporting events pending ample WRITTEN notification in advance (at least 7 days prior). Club/recreational sports are not granted the same courtesy.

- To minimize the potential spread of COVID, students will also be excused from class when they are exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19 or other respiratory infections.
- Students who are excused from class will be able to make up the associated participation and REEF polling points by completing and submitting the make-up abstract exercise discussed below.
- Students should contact Dr. Kropp on the first day that they return to class after their absence to make arrangements to complete missed assignments/activities.

Documentation must be submitted no later than the first day you return to class. Simply emailing Dr. Kropp that you will not be in class does not count as documentation.

Should you experience a significant hardship/illness (e.g. COVID; diagnosis of a terminal/chronic disease of you or a close family member; e.g., depression; Crohn's disease, cancer, etc.) during the semester that negatively affects your performance in the course or has the potential to negatively affect your performance in the course, you must inform Dr. Kropp as soon as possible such that appropriate accommodations can be made. You will be asked to obtain documentation from the Dean of Students Office regarding your circumstances. Providing documentation at the end of the semester and seeking retroactive accommodations will not be well received. Special arrangements regarding making up assignments, REEF polling points and participation points will be made for students with extended absences due to COVID or other illnesses. These arrangements may include receiving an incomplete in the course.

Grading:

Two in-class exams (15% each)	30%
Participation and effort	5%
Lead Theory in Action	5%
In-class Debates (3 @ 5%)	15%
Policy brief	15%
Peer review of policy briefs (2.5% each)	5%
Presentation	5%
Reflection journal	5%
Homework assignments	<u>15%</u>
	100%

In-class Exams:

There will be two in-class exams. All exams will be cumulative with an emphasis on the most recent material. The exams will consist of short-answer, essays, and analytical problem-solving questions.

Exam 1: Thursday, February 12, 2026

Exam 2: Thursday, April 2, 2026

Closed Book Exams:

All exams are closed book and closed notes. No formula sheets or any other aids are allowed. A simple calculator may be used. However, graphing calculators, cell phones, touch screen devices, tablets, laptops, smartwatches, or other devices with the capability to store formulae or access the internet are not allowed. Sharing calculators during an exam is not allowed.

Exam Day Policy:

It is expected that all students be on time to exams. Please arrive early, if possible, to get seated and get your books/bags stowed away so that the exam can be started at the stated time.

Make-up Exams:

- Make-up exams are not given except in cases of excused absences. Make-up exams will be arranged on a case-by-case basis and will occur as close to the scheduled exam as possible – in some cases, the make-up exam may be given prior to the scheduled exam date.
- Individuals absent in any exam will receive a score of **zero** (0) on that exam unless there is an excused absence or valid, medically related, excuse for missing the exam.
- In order to be excused from an exam, you **must** notify the instructor in advance and secure instructor's permission.

The exam dates are presented in this course syllabus, so please plan your semester accordingly.

Class Participation and Effort:

As previously stated, students are expected to attend all classes. In addition to attending class, students are expected to participate and exert effort in learning the material both in class and outside of class. While you must attend class to be able to participate, simply showing up will not suffice. Thus, class participation and effort will be based on:

Participation: Attending class and **actively** participating in activities and discussions, asking questions, and providing comments. Obviously, you cannot participate if you do not attend class. Contributing to conversations in other classes and on the job is a critical skill. You can take steps to improve your participation. If you tend to be a non-participant, I encourage you to prepare questions or jot down a few key points before class and make an effort to speak up in class/use the chat function to ask questions or comment. If you tend to 'dominate' discussions, learn to let other people contribute.

Arriving on time: Arriving late impedes your learning as well as the learning of your classmates. Tardiness will be noted and will negatively affect your grade.

Engagement: Use of cell phones, laptops, etc. for non-note taking purposes during class impedes your learning as well as the learning of your classmates. Engaging in these activities will negatively affect your grade.

Energy spent on assignments: The in-class assignments and case study assignments are designed to be learning experiences. To learn you must get outside your comfort zone, and hence the assignments are designed to be challenging and make you uncomfortable. Rushed, sloppy, and incomplete assignments indicate a lack of effort.

Utilizing office hours/seeking assistance from Dr. Kropp: Office hours are designed to give students an opportunity to obtain additional assistance and clarification. Students are encouraged to attend office hours; however, it is expected that students exerted some effort in attempting to find the answer prior to arriving at office hours. Students are expected to have read the assignment and required readings, attempted the assignment, and come with specific questions. I recognize that my office hours may not be convenient for all students, and hence I encourage students to also ask questions in class or via email or request a meeting outside of office hours.

Please note that students who simply attend every class but do not actively participate will earn a C as their participation grade.

I intend to record the lectures and post them on Canvas. However, this is a courtesy. The recordings are not a substitute for attending class. If class attendance falls below 75%, I will no longer record and post the lectures.

Abstract Exercise to Make-up Participation Polling Points:

Students with valid excuses for missing a class will be permitted to make-up associated class participation and effort points by submitting an abstract summary of the missed class. The abstract must be no longer than 150 words and clearly summarize the main takeaways of the lecture. To receive full credit, it must be clear from the abstract that the student reviewed the associated lecture notes, watched the recording of lecture, and read the associated readings. Simply copying verbiage from the post PowerPoint slides will not be well-received and no credit will be awarded for doing so.

Emailing, Text Messaging, Instant Messaging, Facebook, Smokeless Tobacco, Etc.:

Students caught engaging in these activities during class will receive a one percentage point penalty on their final class participation grade for **each** offense. ***This policy will be strictly enforced.***

Theory in Action:

On several Thursdays throughout the semester, we will dedicate part of the class to discussing current events pertaining to agricultural policy. Each student will be asked to lead a Theory in Action discussion. The topic leader will be responsible for selecting the topic, assigning associated readings from credible sources (3-5 news articles), preparing a short-presentation on the topic, and generating class discussion.

In-class Debates:

There will be three in-class debates. During each debate, students will be assigned to either the Pro Side or the Con Side. Students will individually prepare a short (1 page) Position Brief providing some background on the topic and outlining their key points and arguments prior to the debate. These Position Briefs should be used for reference during the debate. Students will be given time in class to collaborate with other students on the same side to ensure they present a cohesive and logical argument. Students with unexcused absences on the day of the debate will receive a zero for that debate.

Policy Briefs:

Each student will be required to complete one 5-page (max) typed (double spaced, 12pt font, one-inch margins throughout) policy brief pertaining to an U.S. agricultural policy topic of his/her choosing. Please make arrangements to meet with Dr. Kropp to select a topic within the first few weeks of the semester. Only one student per topic is permitted as these briefs are individual assignments; thus, once a topic is taken, no other student can pursue the same topic. It is entirely Dr. Kropp's discretion to determine whether a topic is taken or whether a proposed topic is 'sufficiently different' from an already spoken for topic. Further details and guidelines will be provided in class.

Possible topics include: Impacts of Tariffs on Mexican Avocados; H-2A Guest Worker Programs; Trade Implications of the Supplemental Coverage Option (SCO); Dairy Margin Protection; Offering Flavored Milks in National School Lunch Program; Implications of Fat Taxes

Briefs must be properly referenced and cited. Students are encouraged to use numerical data to support their arguments. While data and figures will enrich your policy brief, the 5 pages do NOT include lengthy data tables and figures; these would be in addition to the 5 pages. The title page does not count as part of the 5-page requirement. Citations should include only credible sources (not Wikipedia or other open-source websites or blogs). Citations do not count as part of the 5-page requirement. A detailed rubric will be posted on the course website.

The purpose of these policy briefs is for you to display your ability to apply the analytical techniques developed in the course and to demonstrate your ability to synthesize the concepts covered in the course via independent research. Students are welcomed to take an interdisciplinary

approach to their topic by incorporating concepts from other Food and Resource Economics courses into their briefs and relating these concepts to the material covered in this course.

Policy Brief Peer Reviews:

To encourage the development of writing skills and a better understanding of the academic writing process, students will be asked to conduct a peer review of their peers' policy briefs. Students will have one week to complete the peer review process and then each student will have approximately one week to incorporate the suggestions of their peers into their policy briefs before submitting their final draft.

Presentations:

Each student will be required to give a 15-minute presentation on his/her policy brief. The presentation should be professional in nature and should utilize PowerPoint. The purpose of the presentations is to generate discussion on the topics. Note, that presentation length may be adjusted such that the presentations fit within the allocated time. Necessary adjustments will be made in accordance with final course enrollment.

Attendance at all presentations is required. Out of courtesy and respect to your fellow classmates and students making presentation, arriving late on presentation days is not allowed and will result in the loss of all attendance/participation points allocated for that day.

Reflection Journal:

Students are required to maintain a reflection journal throughout the semester. Each week, students should complete the RSVP (Respond, Summarize, Vocabulary, Pose a New Question) exercise (see the assignments section of Canvas for additional detail).

Homework:

There will be several homework assignments (approximately 5) to assist learning. Homework must be turned in by the due date. Homework turned in after the due date will not be accepted except in the case of excused absences. Homework will not be accepted once the solutions have been posted. Students will generally have one-two weeks to complete assignments.

Re-Grades:

If you feel that an error has been made in the grading of an assignment/exam, you are encouraged to submit the assignment/exam for a re-grade. Please note that the **entire** assignment/exam will be reviewed for accuracy.

Re-grade requests must be submitted no more than one week after the assignment/exam in question was returned to you. Please put the assignment in an envelope along with a typed explanation of the issue in question.

Final Grades:

<u>Grade</u>	<u>Range</u>
A	93 - 100
A-	90 - 92.99
B+	87 - 89.99
B	83 - 86.99
B-	80 - 82.99
C+	77 - 79.99
C	73 - 76.99
C-	70 - 72.99
D+	67 - 69.99
D	63 - 66.99
D-	60 - 62.99
E	0 - 59.99

If necessary, a curve may be added when calculating final grades. The curve will be determined based on current semester's students' performance.

Final grades will not be posted on the course website. Students may obtain their final course grade once grades have been posted by the University Registrar. I will not respond to emails or other inquiries regarding grades between the final examination and when final grades are posted by the registrar.

Academic Honesty:

It is assumed that you will complete all work independently and without the assistance of AI unless the instructor provides explicit permission to do so. Furthermore, as part of your obligation to uphold the Honor Code, you should report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. It is your individual responsibility to know and comply with all university policies and procedures regarding academic integrity and the Student Honor Code. Violations of the Honor Code at the University of Florida will not be tolerated. Violations will be reported to the Dean of Students Office for consideration of disciplinary action.

Examples of cheating: copying the homework of a peer, copying and pasting from a source without quotations and source attribution, paying someone else to do your homework/project/exam, dividing work amongst you and your peers and then all submitting the same document, giving or receiving material from a peer.

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

This course adheres to all UF Academic Policies: <https://go.ufl.edu/syllabuspolices>

Tentative Course Outline:

<i>Date</i>	<i>DOW</i>	<i>Topics</i>
Jan. 13	Tuesday	Administration, Objectives, and Introduction (Knutson et al Chapter 1)
Jan. 15	Thursday	Rationale for Government Involvement in Ag; Policy Process (Knutson et al Chapter 2 & 3)
Jan. 20	Tuesday	U.S. Farm Policies – Introduction to Welfare Economics (Knutson et al Ch. 7)
Jan. 22	Thursday	U.S. Farm Policies – U.S. Price Support Regimes & Homework 1 Due
Jan. 27	Tuesday	U.S. Farm Policies – U.S. Price Support Regimes
Jan. 29	Thursday	Theory in Action; U.S. Farm Policies – U.S. Price Support Regimes & Policy Brief Topic Due
Feb. 3	Tuesday	U.S. Crop Insurance Programs & Homework 2 Due
Feb. 5	Thursday	Debate 1 – Should the U.S. downsize farm support programs?
Feb. 10	Tuesday	Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018 (2018 Farm Bill)
Feb. 12	Thursday	Exam 1
Feb. 17	Tuesday	GATT and WTO (Knutson et al Chapter 5)
Feb. 19	Thursday	Theory in Action & Partial Equilibrium Analysis (Houck Chapters 4)
Feb. 24	Tuesday	Protection by Importers (Houck Chapters 4-9)
Feb. 26	Thursday	Debate 2 – Is the WTO Dead?
Mar. 3	Tuesday	Protection by Importers (Houck Chapters 4-9) & Homework 3 Due
Mar. 5	Thursday	Theory in Action; Protection by Importers (Houck Chapters 4-9)
Mar. 10	Tuesday	Tariff Rate Quotas and “Dirty Tariffication”
Mar. 12	Thursday	Theory in Action; Protection by Exporters (Houck Chapters 10-12) & Homework 4 Due
Mar. 17	Tuesday	No class – spring break
Mar. 19	Thursday	No class – spring break
Mar. 24	Tuesday	Guest Lecture – Dr. Savchenko – U.S. Environmental Policy (Knutson et al Chapter 8 & 9) & Policy Brief First Draft Due
Mar. 26	Thursday	Theory in Action; Food Assistance and Nutrition Policy (Knutson et al Chapter 11) Homework 5 Due
Mar. 31	Tuesday	Food Safety and Security Policy (Knutson et al Chapter 10)
Apr. 2	Thursday	Exam 2
Apr. 7	Tuesday	Guest Lecture – Dr. Onel – U.S. Guest Work Programs & Peer Reviews of Policy Briefs Due

Apr. 9	Thursday	Debate 3 – Should the USDA regulate sugar content in school breakfasts?
Apr. 14	Tuesday	Policy Brief Presentations & Policy Brief Final Draft Due
Apr. 16	Thursday	Policy Brief Presentations
Apr. 21	Tuesday	Policy Brief Presentations (if necessary); Future of Agricultural and Food Policy in the US – The Next Farm Bill and World Trade; Wrap-up and Final Thoughts

The instructor reserves the right to change this outline as appropriate.

**Other readings will be added

The above schedule, policies, procedures and assignments in this course are subject to change in the event of extenuating circumstances, by mutual agreement, and/or to ensure better student learning.