

Agriculture and Natural Resource Ethics AEB 4126

Spring 2026

Class Number: 10117

MWF | Period 8 (3:00 – 3:50 PM)

MCCB G086

Instructor: Dr. Caleb Stair

Office: 1179 McCarty A Wing

Office Hours: MWF 10:30am-11:30am & 1:00pm-2:30pm; Thursday 11:30am-12:30pm (or by appointment)

Phone: 352-294-7687

Email: cstair@ufl.edu

Communications:

I will communicate with you about news, assignments, emergencies, cancellations etc., through the announcements in Canvas. **PLEASE CHECK OUR CANVAS PAGE FREQUENTLY.** If you are struggling in the class, please let me know. My office hours are listed above. Those are times that you can definitely reach me. This does not mean that those are the only times you can meet with me. If those times do not work for you, we will schedule a separate time.

Other Communication:

Undergraduate Advisor: Ms. Michelle Baldwin; 1170B McCarty Hall A; (352) 294-7640; E-mail: baldwin.ma@ufl.edu; [Schedule an appointment](#)

Undergraduate Coordinator: Dr. Misti Sharp; 1189 McCarty Hall A; (352)294-7632; E-mail: mistisharp@ufl.edu; [Schedule an appointment](#)

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. It analyzes the human dimensions that have shaped the prevailing ideas surrounding these issues and examines the processes and means by which individuals make personal and group decisions, as well as the evaluation of opinions, outcomes, or human behavior. This course satisfies the 6000-word "Gordon Rule" writing requirement. The Writing Requirement (**WR**) ensures students both maintain fluency in writing and use writing as a tool to facilitate learning. Course grades have two components. To receive writing requirement credit, a student must receive a grade of C or higher and a satisfactory completion of the writing component of the course. The instructor will evaluate and provide feedback on all of your written assignments with respect to grammar, punctuation, clarity, coherence, and organization. See more information about the UF Writing Requirement here: <https://undergrad.ua.ufl.edu/general-education/gen-ed-program/writing-requirement/>

Expected Student Learning Outcomes:

After the successful completion of AEB 4126, a typical student should be able to:

- 1) Create opinions concerning issues related to agriculture and natural resources through research and articulate these opinions to others in a formal setting.
- 2) Analyze big "big picture" issues regarding natural resources and 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?
- 3) Evaluate philosophical / ethical concepts and positions that can be useful when assessing actions, practices, and policies. For example, the difference between thinking of ethical obligations in terms of "protecting rights" vs. "securing the greater social good."
- 4) Develop their ability to examine, speak, and most importantly write intelligently and reflectively (critically) about issues and positions and arguments as exemplified in (1), (2), and (3) above.

I hope that you will use this course to inform yourself in greater depth about natural resources, the food system, and ethics. Use this course to help you clarify your own beliefs and values regarding these and other ethical issues, as well as hone your analytical and argument skills. "Just as iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another."

Required Texts:

There is no textbook required for this class. Instead, I will pull notes from several different sources and occasionally assign readings for class. All readings are located in the CANVAS class files for the course. Even lacking a "book" or set of books, however, THERE IS A LOT OF REQUIRED READING FOR THIS COURSE. The readings are starting points for our discussions. Your take home essays will be based on both the assigned readings and what we discuss in class. **In our modules look for items that say READ. These are required readings for the course.**

Grades:

Assignment	Grade Percentage	Points
Milestone #1	5%	50
Milestone #2	5%	50
Milestone #3	10%	100
Milestone #4	15%	150
Milestone #5	20%	200
Quizzes	10%	100
Blue Book Exam	5%	50
Debate	10%	100
Participation	20%	200
Total	100%	1000
Extra Credit	-	45pts

1. *Milestones*¹

Milestone #1: Topic Selection (50pts / 5%)

Milestone #2: Research (100pts / 10%)

Milestone #3: Outline (100pts / 10%)

Milestone #4: Draft (150pts / 15%)

Milestone #5: Final Essay (200pts / 20%)

This will consist of a persuasive essay (6000 word minimum) on a topic of your choice. Submit via canvas.

2. Blue Book Exercise (50 points / 5%)

- This in class assessment will be one essay on a choice of three possible topics. These topics will be covered in class prior to the test itself. Grammar and format are less of a concern for this assessment. Rather the focus is on the ability to think and reason.

3. *Reading Quizzes*– (100 points / 10%)

- There will be a reading quizzes during the semester worth 100pts. They will cover information for the class and assigned readings. They are open note.

4. *Debate* - (100 points / 10%)

- The class will be randomly divided 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), as well as your teammates' confidential evaluation of your partners' contribution to the project, and the audience's evaluation of your debate team. You also must attend 2 of the final debates at the end of the semester (not counting your own).

5. *Participation* – (200 points / 20%)

- Throughout the semester we will have 20 in-class activities. Each will be completed in class for credit for 12.5pts and **your four lowest scores will be dropped** for a total of 200pts.

6. *Extra Credit Chats*

- Three times throughout the semester you can attend either my office hours or our TA's to have a discussion about the material being covered. These should last no more than 10min and will be an opportunity for you to showcase your critical thinking skills. **No**

¹ The university's Writing Studio may be accessed through this link www.writing.ufl.edu

more than three can be completed and not more than once per week.

Course grades:

- A = 930 – 1000 points (93 – 100%)
- A - = 900 – 929 points (90 – 92.9%)
- B + = 870 – 899 points (87 - 89.9%)
- B = 830 – 869 points (83 – 86.9%)
- B - = 800 – 829 points (80 - 82.9%)
- C+ = 770– 799 points (77 – 79.9%)
- C = 730 – 769 points (73 – 76.9%)
- C- = 700 – 729 points (70 – 72.9%)
- D+ = 670 – 699 points (67 – 69.9%)
- D = 630 – 669 points (63 – 66.9%)
- D- = 600 – 629 points (600 – 62.9%)
- F = below 599 points (59.9%)

Note: Overall course grades have two components. To receive writing requirement credit, a student must receive a grade of C or higher and a satisfactory completion of the writing component of the course. To receive a satisfactory completion of the writing component of the course you MUST achieve the minimum word count for the category "6" course which is at least 6,000 words.

Course Policies:

- I expect you to abide by standards of civility and professionalism in this course. It has a large discussion-based component and several of the topics may elicit passionate debate about the subject at hand. Debates can be passionate; however, a lack of civility or professionalism is unacceptable.
- Plagiarism is unacceptable in this class. I will use the plagiarism database Turnitin.com to check submitted work. While I will cover some aspects of plagiarism and how to avoid it in class UF also has resources that can provide assistance in avoiding plagiarism in your writing and citing styles at <http://guides.uflib.ufl.edu/c.php?g=147797&p=967443>
- For the most part, notes will be provided via Canvas along with short videos concerning the subjects. I will post these to our Canvas website as the semester progresses. If you read the Canvas notes and are still confused, please contact me and we can discuss any issues.
- If for some reason you need to submit an assignment via email, make sure that in the subject line please you state the course number and assignment title. Also, please save your documents as AEB4126_*AssignmentTitle_YourNameHere*
- Late Policy
 - Late writing assignments will only be accepted up to two days after the due date. If an assignment is issued on Thursday and is due in a week it must be submitted by 11:59pm the following Thursday. Assignments submitted at

12:00am Friday are considered one day late. Late writing assignments will receive only half credit and writing assignments that are not submitted or that are submitted more than two days after the deadline will receive a zero. **Any assignment submitted after the last day of class will receive a zero.**

● **Illness**

- We will have face-to-face instructional sessions to accomplish the student learning objectives of this course.
- Sanitizing supplies are available in the classroom if you wish to wipe down your desks prior to sitting down and at the end of the class.
- **Course materials will be provided to you with an excused absence, and you will be given a reasonable amount of time to make up work. Find more information in the university attendance policies below.**

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

Date	Day	AEB4126	Due
1/12/2025	Monday	Syllabus Day	
1/13/2025	Tuesday		
1/14/2025	Wednesday	Communications	
1/15/2025	Thursday		
1/16/2025	Friday	Communications	
1/19/2025	Monday		
1/20/2025	Tuesday		
1/21/2025	Wednesday	Logic	
1/22/2025	Thursday		
1/23/2025	Friday	Logic	
1/26/2025	Monday	Ethics	
1/27/2025	Tuesday		
1/28/2025	Wednesday	Ethics	
1/29/2025	Thursday		Milestone #1 Due
1/30/2025	Friday	Ethics	Quiz #1 Open
2/2/2025	Monday	Wildlife Mgmt	
2/3/2025	Tuesday		
2/4/2025	Wednesday	Wildlife Mgmt	
2/5/2025	Thursday		
2/6/2025	Friday	Wildlife Mgmt	Quiz #1 Due

2/9/2025	Monday	Fisheries Mgmt	
2/10/2025	Tuesday		
2/11/2025	Wednesday	Fisheries Mgmt	
2/12/2025	Thursday		
2/13/2025	Friday	Fisheries Mgmt	
2/16/2025	Monday	Agricultural Systems	
2/17/2025	Tuesday		
2/18/2025	Wednesday	Agricultural Systems	
2/19/2025	Thursday		Milestone #2 Due
2/20/2025	Friday	Agricultural Systems	
2/23/2025	Monday	Animal Agriculture	
2/24/2025	Tuesday		
2/25/2025	Wednesday	Animal Agriculture	Debate Choices Due
2/26/2025	Thursday		
2/27/2025	Friday	Animal Agriculture	
3/2/2025	Monday	Food Waste	
3/3/2025	Tuesday		
3/4/2025	Wednesday	Food Waste	
3/5/2025	Thursday		
3/6/2025	Friday	Food Waste	
3/9/2025	Monday	Resource Extraction	
3/10/2025	Tuesday		
3/11/2025	Wednesday	Resource Extraction	
3/12/2025	Thursday		Milestone #3 Due
3/13/2025	Friday	Resource Extraction	
3/16/2025	Monday		
3/17/2025	Tuesday		
3/18/2025	Wednesday		
3/19/2025	Thursday		
3/20/2025	Friday		
3/23/2025	Monday	Alternative Energy	
3/24/2025	Tuesday		
3/25/2025	Wednesday	Alternative Energy	

3/26/2025	Thursday		
3/27/2025	Friday	Alternative Energy	
3/30/2025	Monday	Automation + Trade	
3/31/2025	Tuesday		
4/1/2025	Wednesday	Automation + Trade	
4/2/2025	Thursday		Milestone #4 Due
4/3/2025	Friday	Automation + Trade	
4/6/2025	Monday	Ethics of Expertise	
4/7/2025	Tuesday		
4/8/2025	Wednesday	Bluebook Assessment	
4/9/2025	Thursday		
4/10/2025	Friday	Unintended Consequences	
4/13/2025	Monday	Debate #1	
4/14/2025	Tuesday		
4/15/2025	Wednesday	Debate #2	
4/16/2025	Thursday		
4/17/2025	Friday	Debate #3	
4/20/2025	Monday	Debate #4	
4/21/2025	Tuesday		
4/22/2025	Wednesday	Debate #5	Mileston #5 Due

Example Writing Rubric:

	EXCELLING	SATISFACTORY	UNSATISFACTORY
CONTENT	Papers exhibit at compelling evidence of ideas that respond to the topic with complexity, critically evaluating and synthesizing sources, and provide an in-depth discussion with extensive understanding of sources.	Papers exhibit at least some evidence of ideas that respond to the topic with complexity, critically evaluating and synthesizing sources, and provide at least an adequate discussion with basic understanding of sources.	Papers either include a central idea(s) that is unclear or off- topic or provide only minimal or inadequate discussion of ideas. Papers may also lack sufficient or appropriate sources.

ORGANIZATION AND COHERENCE	Documents and paragraphs exhibit identifiable structure for topics, including a clear thesis statement and a natural flow that allows the reader to easily follow.	Documents and paragraphs exhibit at least some identifiable structure for topics, including a clear thesis statement but may require readers to work to follow progression of ideas.	Documents and paragraphs lack clearly identifiable organization, may lack any coherent sense of logic in associating and organizing ideas, and may also lack transitions and coherence to guide the reader.
ARGUMENT AND SUPPORT	Documents use persuasive and confident presentation of ideas, strongly supported with evidence. Uses thought provoking arguments that are compelling and stand up to a basic level of scrutiny.	Document provides only generalized discussion of ideas or may provide adequate discussion but rely on weak support for arguments.	Documents make only weak generalizations, providing little or no support, as in summaries or narratives that fail to provide critical analysis.
STYLE	Documents use a writing style with word choice appropriate to the context, genre, and discipline. Sentences display complexity and logical sentence structure. Little imprecise vocabulary and a varied sentence structure.	Documents use a writing style with word choice appropriate to the context, genre, and discipline. Sentences display complexity and logical sentence structure. Displays a less precise use of vocabulary and an uneven use of sentence structure or a writing style that occasionally veers away from word choice or tone appropriate to the context, genre, and discipline.	Documents rely on word usage that is inappropriate for the context, genre, or discipline. Sentences may be overly long or short with awkward construction. Documents may also use words incorrectly.
MECHANICS	Features correct or error-free presentation of ideas. Minimal spelling, punctuation, or grammatical errors.	Features correct or error-free presentation of ideas. Papers may contain some spelling, punctuation, or	Papers contain so many mechanical or grammatical errors that they impede the reader's understanding

		grammatical errors that remain unobtrusive, so they do not muddy the paper's argument or points.	or severely undermine the writer's credibility.
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Note: The instructor reserves the right to change the terms and dates stated in this course syllabus at any time. Any changes will be communicated on e-learning as an announcement. It is solely the student's responsibility to stay informed of any changes.

******By enrolling in this course, you are agreeing to the terms outlined in this syllabus!!******