

University of Florida
College of Agricultural and Life Sciences
Food and Resource Economics Department

AEB4325 Contemporary Issues in Agribusiness Management Fall Term 2019

3 Credit Hours

Location: Room 139, UF Plant City, FL, 33563.

Class Times: Thursdays (9:00 am – 11:00 am)
Presentations: Tuesdays (11:00 am – 11:30 am)

Instructor and Contact Information

Instructor:	Luis Moisés Peña Lévano, Ph.D.
Office:	UF Plant City Campus, Office # 104
E-mail:	lpnalevano@ufl.edu
Office Hours:	In Person: Thursdays 11 – 12 pm Online: By appointment (via Zoom)

Communication must include 'AEB4325 – UNIT # ___ + (YOUR LAST NAME AND FIRST NAME)' in order to be answered. Use the Canvas Email to contact the instructor. Any email must be sent during **NORMAL HOURS**: Monday to Fridays 8:00 am – 5:00 pm. Emails sent outside the normal hours, or not using the title '**AEB4325**' **may not be answered**.

The emails will need to go through the following procedure:

1. Summarize in **one paragraph** of no more than three lines the e-mail question so that I can more effectively address your concerns. If you are stuck on a specific procedure, send me the picture of the problem and where you are specifically having the issue. This will help me to provide feedback. If you do not put an effort in attempting to solve the question, I will not provide you the hints to solve it
2. **Courteous and professional** e-mails may expect a prompt reply.
3. There will be 15 minutes before the second hour class starts to solve any doubts from the previous week.

The professor reserves the right to change the terms and dates stated in this Course Syllabus depending on upcoming or unexpected events. Any changes will be communicated in class, via the Gatorlink e-mail listserv, and posted on E-Learning Canvas. It is solely the student's responsibility to stay informed of any changes

General Course Information

Course materials:

There is no textbook for this course. We will be drawing on materials posted to the course Canvas website.

Course Description: This is a capstone course based on economic concepts that addresses 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 this class and the class activities, 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 and/or graduate 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.

This is an upper-division course and it is structured and taught accordingly. The importance in the curriculum means you should plan on spending time outside to review the in-class and online lectures. During exam weeks, the time-commitment will be significantly higher. A lower study input will more than likely adversely affect your grade.

Prerequisites: AEB3103 Introduction to Food and Resource Economics.

Co-requisite: AEB4138 – Advance Financial Management

AEB4235 is taught with the assumption that all students are comfortable with quantitative reasoning, analytical methods, and economics concepts.

Course objectives: *This course focuses on teaching economic concepts applied agriculture, business, policy, trade and finance. After the successful completion of this course, students should*

1. Have a strong understanding of economic theory
2. Be aware of contemporary issues in agricultural economics and the business world
3. Have improved written and oral communication skills
4. Be able to work on different projects with diverse colleagues
5. Learn and appreciate market failures and unintended consequences

Brief Course Outline: The material in AEB4235 is divided in four modules

MODULE I: THE INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS & ENVIRONMENT POLICY

1. Population, Climate and Income Change: The goal of 2050 (August 22)
 - Population expectation in 2050
 - Birth rate restrictions and impact on the economy
 - Climate change, forest carbon sequestration and food security
 - Dr. Luis Peña-Lévano** – *Climate Change: Projections and Mitigation Options*
2. Institutional Economics and Industrial Organization (August 29)
 - Traceability in the Supply Chain
 - Guest lecturer: Dr. Misti Sharp* – *Institutional Economics as a Framework for Managing Commons*
3. Biases and Logical Fallacies (September 5)
 - Cognitive Fallacies
 - Logical fallacies – The 18 common fallacies
 - Guest lecturer: Jennifer Clark*
4. International trade and Economic Development (September 12)
 - The Belt and Road Initiative
 - What defines developing and developed economies?
 - Development situation in countries around the globe
 - Guest lecturer: Dr. Travis McArthur*

MODULE II: CONSUMERS PERSPECTIVES & TRENDS

5. Behavioral economics (September 19)
 - Behavioral finance: The influence of market trends and expectations
 - Advertisement role in agribusiness
 - Guest lecturer: Dr. Bachir Kassas*
6. Consumer economics (September 26)
 - Thinking as a consumer:
 - Galvanic skin response
 - Decision-making time
 - Eye-tracking
 - Neural signals
 - Guest lecturer: Dr. Hayk Khachatryan* – *Eye Tracking Technology*
7. Food nutrition programs (October 2)*
 - The SNAP program
 - Food stamps
 - Programs for elderly
 - Guest lecturer: Dr. Shaheer Burney* – *Food stamp program*
8. Food security and food waste (October 10)
 - Food waste in many economies in the world
 - Differences in food security between economies
 - World hunger
 - Guest lecturer: Dr. Angelia Chen*
9. Food labeling and organic foods (October 17)
 - Growing trend of farmer's markets
 - Organic food: Trends vs. challenges
 - Local food and government support
 - Guest lecturer: Dr. Grace Melo*

MODULE III: COMMUNICATION IN THE AGRIBUSINESS WORLD

10. Communication crisis (October 24)
Bad publicity in the media
Addressing communication crisis
Guest lecturer: **Mrs. Katie Lawson**

MODULE IV: PRODUCERS SITUATION & CHALLENGES

11. Small business perspectives (October 31)
Farmers' crisis: Psychological stress of working farmers
The Proposed STRESS Act
Guest lecturer: **Dr. Luis Peña-Lévano** – *What is different in finance for small farmers vs. corporations?*
12. Florida produces: Citrus, strawberries and tomatoes (November 7)
Urban agriculture
Major Florida food and fiber products
New proposed agricultural production for Floridians
Guest lecturer: **Dr. Ariel Singerman** – *Citrus greening*
13. Labor economics (November 14)
The domestic labor issue for agricultural farmers in US
The H2A Program: Sustainability issues for ag. Farmers
The labor conditions for farm workers
Guest lecturer: **Dr. Derek Farnsworth** – *H2A Program*
14. Transportation (November 21)
Global shipping routes:
The North Pole
The Panama Canal
The Mediterranean Sea
The North Sea
The Egypt Canal
Singapore
Guest lecturer: **Dr. Tara Wade** - *Electronic Logging Device Mandate*

MODULE V: THE FUTURE

15. The future of agribusiness in a globalized economy (December 3rd) – **Final reception**
New practices in agribusiness
Food sharing and crowfarming
Algae feedstock
Nanotechnology
Drone technology
Blockchain
Dr. Luis Peña-Lévano – *What is expected to change in the global economy?*

Note: Class will be on October 2nd in the afternoon via Zoom

Class Unit summary

Unit	Description	Lecture	Activity due	Special Topic	Presentation	Date
1	Population, climate and income: The goal for 2050	Aug 20	Aug 30	<i>The goals of 2050</i>	Dr. Luis	
2	Institutional Economics as a Framework for Managing Commons	Aug 29	Sep 6	<i>Traceability</i>	Colton Adams	Aug 27
3	Biases and Logical Fallacies	Sep 5	Sep 13	<i>18 Common Fallacies</i>	Amanda Bishop	Sep 3
4	International Trade and Economic Development	Sep 12	Sep 20	<i>Belt and Road Initiative</i>	Brian Hale	Sep 10
5	Behavioral economics	Sep 19	Sep 27	<i>Influence of financial behavior</i>	Jeffrey Mitchell	Sep 17
6	Consumer economics	Sep 26	Oct 4	<i>Behavior lab techniques</i>	Small Presentations	Sep 24
7	Food nutrition programs	Oct 2*	Oct 11	<i>SNAP Program</i>	Marlena Moore	Oct 1
8	Food security and food waste	Oct 10	Oct 18	<i>World hunger</i>	Amanda Bishop	Oct 8
9	Food labeling and organic foods	Oct 17	Oct 25	<i>Growing trend of farmer's markets</i>	Brian Hale	Oct 15
10	Communication in the agribusiness world	Oct 24	Nov 1	<i>Bad publicity in agribusiness</i>	Small Presentations	Oct 29
11	Small business perspectives	Oct 31	Nov 8	<i>Farmers' crisis & the STRESS Act</i>	Colton Adams	Oct 22
12	Florida produces: Citrus, strawberries and tomatoes	Nov 7	Nov 15	<i>Urban agriculture</i>	Jeffrey Mitchell	Nov 5
13	Labor economics and extension	Nov 14	Nov 22	<i>The H2A program</i>	Marlena Moore	Nov 12
14	Transportation	Nov 21	Nov 26	<i>Global shipping routes</i>	Small Presentations	Nov 19
15	The future of global agribusiness	Dec 3	Dec 4	<i>New practices in agribusiness</i>	Small Presentations	Dec 3

Class structure

1. Special topic (Tuesdays): These topics are presented on Tuesdays by the professor of the class. These presentations are introductions for the guest lecture that is held on Thursdays.

2. Student's Presentation (Thursdays): These presentations will be provided on Tuesdays at 11:00 am. The duration of the presentation is expected to be 12 minutes. The topic will be selected according to the schedule presented on the right figure. The power point presentation must be sent the **two days** before the presentation (**Sunday at 11:59 pm**). There will be 3 minutes of questions. This is a **professional presentation, under professional attire**; it is expected that the topic is properly studied and delivered to the audience.

3. Guest Lecture (Thursdays): The guest-lecturer will proceed to explain the topic of the day. Overall, the guest lecturer will provide her/his material of the presentation before the class meeting and will be posted on Canvas. Each student is responsible of reading the material before coming to class. Active participation is required.

The professor of this class will **design the activity assignment based on the lecture** presented by the guest. Depending on the nature of the presentation, the activities will be different each week.

Note: Many of the professors are in other universities. Thus, most lectures will be offered via Zoom, making an interactive experience of the class. There are no midterms or final exam. Each weekly activity accounts for **50 points** (explained in the table), making a total of **70% of the grade**.

Evaluation of Performance and Grading

Grades: You have the *opportunity* to earn up to **1000** points throughout the semester. Your final grade in AEB4138 will be based composed by the following items described on the right figure.

1. Final activity questionnaire: There will be one final questionnaire at the end of the semester worthy **25 points**. The objective of the questionnaire is to provide a summary of the topics learned in class.

Description	Quantity	Unit Value	Total
Discussion and participation	15	5	75
Presentations	2	100	200
Assignments and activities	14	50	700
Final activity questionnaire	1	25	25
TOTAL			1000

2. Assignments and activities: There are 14 assignments/activities, overall one per week. Each assignment and activity are based on the weekly lesson. All final versions of assignments are expected to be submitted by **Friday 4:59 pm of the week the lecture was presented**. Late homework submissions are **not accepted**. Please note that assignments and activities are **70% of your total grade**. All homework must be submitted via online through canvas using the following title: AEB4325 ASSIGNMENT #_____ %LAST NAME% %FIRST NAME%
Note: Excel skills are expected on this class, please review this software ahead of time.

3. Participation: Each week, you have an opportunity to obtain **5 points** for participation and discussion depending on how active and involved you are in the class. Active participation ensures the points.

4. Presentations: Each week, one student will present a special topic (described in the Summary Table). Each student will present **twice** during the semester. These presentations must be state-of-art and must demonstrate the skills of communicating a topic effectively as an economist. Each presentation is worthy **100 points**.

Because this is an intensive applied course with weekly activities, there are no exams in this course.

Final Grade	Minimum Score
A	930
A-	900
B+	870
B	830
B-	800
C+	770
C	730
C-	700
D+	670
D	630
D-	600
F	0

Bonus points: On the other side, there are three ways to obtain bonus points:

(1) If all the class fills the class evaluation at the end of the semester course feedback will allow for **25 extra points** included in the final review questionnaire.

(2) Participation actively in all classes provides up to **5 possible extra points**.

This means that there are many opportunities to obtain bonus points. This can make a change in letters (from B to A for example). No other opportunities to increase your score will be given.

Final course grades will have the following benchmarks out on **1000** possible grade points as described on the left figure. Please note that grades are **not 'rounded' or 'adjusted' at the end of the term**.

Haggling over grades at the end of the semester is NOT entertained. Of course, if I did a mistake in grading your exam I will gladly give you the correct points. If you believe that your exam is incorrectly graded or that your grade is incorrectly posted, please contact me via e-mail (i.e., in writing) as soon as possible. You have **7 days** after the grade has been posted to voice your concern. After 7 days have passed, your **posted grade will be assumed to be correct and accurate**.

For general information about grading and grading policy at the University of Florida, please refer to: <http://www.registrar.ufl.edu/catalog/policies/regulationgrades.html>.

Presentation evaluation criteria

Criteria	Novice (0 pts)	Fair (2 pt)	Fair (5 pt)	Good (8 pts)	Outstanding (10 pts)	Score
Time limit	Student has not prepared adequately time for presentation (<8 or >15 minutes)	Student is having difficulties with time limit, either short (8-9 minutes) or long (14-15 minutes)	Student is learning to adjust to adequate time: 9-10 minutes or 13-14 minutes	Student is close to adequate time: 10-11 minutes or 12.5-13 minutes	Student is able to present in 11.5 to 12 minutes effectively	
Presentation design	Design of the presentation was taken from a basic design with poor colors, excessive number of lines per slide, difficult to read, images are not consistent with the presentation flow	Design was directly taken from Power Point with no modification, background colors are not attractive and makes difficult to read for the audience, images are not high definition	Design was based on template, modified to make it organized, the background colors are good but are not a good contrast with the letter color, images are not high definition, there are 10 to 12 lines per slide	Good design, colors are adequate, modified from other presentations, images are in good resolution but definition decreases in big screen; letter size is adequate but there are between 8 to 10 lines per slide	Design of the presentation is novel and attractive, colors are adequate, images are clear and have a reason in the presentation, letter size is 24 pts, and there are only 8 lines per slide	
Presentation skills	Student constantly reads from notes and is not able to keep the flow of the presentation	Student is able to keep the flow of the presentation but only while reading from notes. There are constant pauses for rephrasing.	Student keeps the flow of the presentation, reads moderately, there are some pauses but does not capture the audience attention.	Student promotes some discussion during the presentation, but audience is not completely engaged, reads moderately but there are some pauses during presentation.	Student actively engage classmates in the presentation, shows proficiency in the topic and provides an entertaining environment.	
Content	Lack of content, the topic was not covered on a state-of-art manner	The presentation points out the major concepts of the topic but lacks of providing details on the specific aspects of the topic. Content is not based on research or trustable news.	Presentation cover major concepts and some details, but it is unable to connect the ideas from previous and sequent slides. Content is based on trustable news but not relevant research.	Student cover major concepts and details, slides are connected providing flow for the presentations. Content is based on research and trustable news but is not recent and/or global.	Student cover major concepts and specific details, based on research and trustable news. It provides examples that occur at the regional and global scale, consistent with flow of presentation.	
Economic application	Student is unable to connect how the presentation is connected to economics.	Student attempts to provide examples from economics but lacks of explaining the economic basis.	Student is able to provide examples of economic applications, however the media content is not based on trustable facts. Student makes fair connection with economics but there is not full explanation in the presentation.	Student provides examples of economic application based from books, research and articles but still has limited explanation on how the economic principles are applied to these examples.	Student provides examples of economic application based from books, research and articles with fully understanding of the economic theory applied in the example.	
Organization	Organization of the presentation is unclear, and it is not easy to follow.	There is some level of organization though there are many ambiguities and irrelevances. Abbreviations are not explained, ineffective transitions.	There is some level of organization with few ambiguities and irrelevances. Abbreviations are not explained. Transitions are still drastic with no clear connection between slides.	Presentation has a clear organization structure with some ambiguities, easily followed, good transitions and structured format.	Presentation is clearly organized, easily folloed, effective, smooth and logical transitions, professional format.	
Voice and Language	Audience is unable to hear the student. Presenter does not use proper basic language while presenting.	Audience is unable to hear part of the presentation due to contant low voice. Presenter uses adequate basic language, but is unable to connect simple sentences.	Audience is able to hear the presenter, but there are several signals of cacophony. Presenter uses compound sentence but makes too many grammatical mistakes.	Tone of voice is adequate for the audience. Vocabulary is varied, specific and appropriate, frequently uses economic and correct vocabulary and grammar.	Tone of voice is adequate for the audience. There is not cacophony, sentences are well structure, language is professional and use proper economic language.	
Q&A	Student is not able to answer any question correctly	Student is able to only answer one or less than 50% questions correctly	Student is able to answer two or 50% questions correctly	Student is able to answer three or 75% questions correctly	Student is able to answer to answer all questions correctly	
Etiquete	Student does not come presentable to class and wear hats	Student does not come presentable to class but does not wear hats or short during presentation	Student comes using acceptable clothing but not adequate for professional presentation	Student presents not in professional attire but uses acceptable clothing for a formal presentation	Student presents in professional attire	
TOTAL						

Extenuating Circumstances

Exception Exceptions to the Missed Assignment Policy reflect excused University events that fall under the 12-day rule or are of a very serious nature. These exceptions are referred to as “Extenuating circumstances” and require formal, letter-head documentation from a physician, hospital, UF faculty/academic advisor, or an email from the UF Dean of Students Office sent to the instructor’s UF email address, within 24 hours of assignment deadline. A health-clinic note on the day an assignment is due does not warrant extenuating circumstances and the “Missed Assignment” Policy (above) will apply.

Student Responsibility for Online Submissions

Students are responsible for ensuring and verifying that all of their assignment files are uploaded successfully in to Canvas. The instructor cannot be responsible for internet connections or failures.

Students are strongly advised against using wireless connections to complete quizzes or upload assignments. Wireless connections have been problematic in previous semesters with students losing all points due to upload failure. A hard -wired connection can be located at any UF computer lab on campus or any public library to submit graded assignments. **TO REPEAT**, wireless connections are problematic, and quizzes or assignment uploads may not be saved (without any warning) and therefore locating a hard-wired connection is recommended to submit any graded assignments.

Online course evaluation: Student assessment of instruction is an important part of efforts to improve teaching and learning. As a motivation, there will be **20 extra bonus points question if the task is completed**. 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>

Other Important Information

Students are responsible for all deadlines/critical dates and policies set forth by the University of Florida. Deadlines/critical dates are published on the University of Florida Office of the University Registrar's web-site, <http://www.registrar.ufl.edu/>. Current academic policies are presented in the University of Florida Undergraduate Catalog, <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/Pages/home.aspx>. Please familiarize yourself with this information.

Students Requesting Classroom Accommodation: 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 requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/) by providing appropriate documentation. Once registered, students will receive an accommodation letter which must be presented to the instructor when requesting accommodations. Students with disabilities should follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester. This must be done at least 10 days prior to any accommodation is needed.

UF Counseling Services: The life of a college student can sometimes be overwhelming. Resources are available on-campus to help students manage personal issues or gain insight into career and academic goals. Students experiencing crises or personal problems that interfere with their general well-being are encouraged to utilize the university's various counseling resources. The following resources are available for all UF students:

- For general student affairs: Dean of Students Office, 392-1261 (after hours, please call 392-1111);
- For mental health consultations: Counseling & Wellness Center, 392-1575 (24/7 phone access);
- For students experiencing distress: U Matter, We Care, 294-2273, www.umatter.ufl.edu;
- For physical health consultations: Student Health Care Center, 392-1161;
- For victims of sexual assault: Office of Victim Services, 392-5648 (after hours, please call 392-1111);
- For career guidance: Career Resource Center, 392-1602, www.crc.ufl.edu.

Software Use: All faculty, staff, and students of the University of Florida 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.

Academic Honesty: In 1995 the UF student body enacted an 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 their words, **the Honor Code Preamble:** 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 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.

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.

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

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Any instances of academic dishonesty will be reported to Student Judicial Affairs.

Student complaints: The University of Florida believes strongly in the ability of students to express concerns regarding their experiences at the University. The University encourages its students who wish to file a written complaint to submit that complaint directly to the department that manages that policy.

- For a residential course, please read the following link:
https://www.dso.ufl.edu/documents/UF_Complaints_policy.pdf
- For an online course, please follow this link:
<http://www.distance.ufl.edu/student-complaint-process>

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

I wish everyone a rewarding and productive semester 😊