

AEB 4325 CONTEMPORARY ISSUES IN AGRIBUSINESS
SYLLABUS – FALL 2019

Time: Tuesday – periods 8 & 9 (3:00 – 4:55 pm)

Thursday -- period 9 (4:05 – 4:55 pm)

Location: 2196 McCarty A

INSTRUCTOR AND CONTACT INFORMATION:

Spiro E. Stefanou, Professor of Food and Resource Economics

Office: 1081 McCarty Hall B

Office Hours: Tuesday and Thursday, 10:00 – 11:30 AM, or by appointment

sstefanou@ufl.edu

352-294-7625

Staff Contact:

Ms. Rabya Hein, Program Assistant

Office: 1170 McCarty b/ 352-294-7638

Rabya7494@ufl.edu

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This is 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 macro economic principles, private business decisions taken by firms in response to public policies, and ethical considerations in developing and implementing public policy.

Competition is fierce among agri-food firms because supply exceeds demand for most agricultural commodities and food products. Consumers have choices and because of the IT revolution your competitors are not just the firms around the corner, but also those around the world. To succeed in this environment an agri-food firm must have a **sustainable competitive advantage** in the market so it will be:

(1) **the first choice of its customers** when they buy,

- (2) **the first choice of its employees** when they decide where to work, and
- (3) **the first choice of its investors** when they decide to invest their capital.

This course builds on strategic management that affect a firm's competitive advantage, and demonstrates how agribusiness managers can formulate a strong position in the market by:

- (1) asking the right questions,
- (2) making the right decisions, and
- (3) efficiently and effectively implementing their strategic decisions.

Their sustainable competitive advantage allows them to maximize their long run profits. This leads to maximizing their return on invested capital (**ROIC**). Because they are maximizing their ROIC, the price of their stock should increase.

PREREQUISITES:

AEB 4138 or AEB 4342.

OBJECTIVES:

At the end of this course, you should be able to:

- 1) explain what strategic management is and why it is important to the long-term success of an agribusiness.
- 2) define and explain strategic management theories and discuss them in context,
- 3) analyze and evaluate whether an agribusiness firm has a sustainable competitive advantage,
- 4) access and use the wealth of business information available on-line and in the library to develop and evaluate a firm's strategic plan
- 5) efficiently and effectively present arguments in both oral and written formats, i.e., become a solid critical thinker who can express himself/herself in a three to four-page business memo and in an oral report.

My definition of a critical thinker is one who is comfortable operating at all six levels (knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation). In short, you will become a thinker, decision maker and communicator.

FORMAT:

This course will offer a mixture of Lectures and emerging issues investigations that the food system and agribusiness enterprises will continue to face:

- E-Commerce Platforms
- Micro vs. Mega Brands
- Animal Welfare
- Resilience and Corporate and Social Responsibility
- The Next “Big Thing”

There will be reading assigned in advance of a Contemporary Issue presentation followed by a period of discussion. Business memorandum is assigned after each Contemporary Issue segment. The memorandum will be the 6Cs format including company, consumers, competitors, category, customers and critical partners. The grading of all written submissions is graded on the quality of your writing (flow, spelling, grammar, etc.).

GRADING

Grades will be determined based on the following:

Assessment		Points
Attendance		29 points (1 point each class meeting)
Participation		29 points
Submitted Assignments	Application Assignments	30 points (3 @ 10 points each)
	Business Memoranda	50 points (5 @ 10 points each)
Total		138 points

Participation refers to the quality of your participation and engagement in the class activities.

Grade Ranges:

A = 93.0% and above	B+ = 86.50-89.99%	C+ = 76.50-79.99%	D+ = 66.50-69.99%
A- = 90.00-93.99%	B = 83.50-86.49%	C = 73.50-76.49%	D = 63.50-66.49%
	B- = 80.00-83.49%	C- = 70.00-73.49%	D- = 60.00-63.49%
			E = 59.99% and below

All of the following must be true for the student to be eligible to receive a grade of "I:"

- 1) The student has completed a major portion of the course work with a passing grade (D or better), and
- 2) the student is unable to complete course requirements because of documented circumstances beyond their control, and
- 3) the student and instructor have discussed the situation prior to the final class meeting (except under emergency conditions).

COURSE MATERIALS:

There is no textbook for this course. We will be drawing on materials posted to the course Canvas site. Some of these materials are chapters, but most will be materials available in white papers prepared by industry analysts. You should plan on using resources available to students from the Business Library Databases.

The grading of all written submissions will also be graded on the quality of your writing (flow, spelling, grammar, etc.).

COURSE CALENDAR
(Subject to Change)

Week of	Tuesday (3:00 -4:55 pm)	Thursday (4:05 – 4:55 pm)	Deliverables
Aug 19	Course Overview + Food System	Emerging Trends	
Aug 26	Strategic Management Frameworks (part 1)	Strategic Management Frameworks (part 2)	Application DUE: 9/3 Noon
Sept 2	Accessing Business Library Resources	6Cs: Business Memorandum Writing	
Sept 9	Economic Performance: Productivity (part 1)	Economic Performance: Productivity (part 2)	Application DUE: 9/17 Noon
Sept 16	CI #1: E-Commerce Platforms	CI #1: E-Commerce Platforms Discussion	CI #1: Memorandum DUE: 9/24
Sept 23	Economic Performance: Efficiency (part 2)	Economic Performance: Policy (part 3)	Application DUE: 10/1
Sept 30	CI #2: Micro vs. Mega Brands	CI #2: Micro vs. Mega Brands Discussion	CI #2: Memorandum DUE: 10/8
Oct 7	Corporate and Social Responsibility (part 1)	Corporate and Social Responsibility (part 2/measurement)	
Oct 14	CI #3: Animal Welfare	CI #3: Animal Welfare Discussion (Article: Chicken of Tomorrow)	CI #3 Memorandum DUE: 10/22
Oct 21	Future Priorities and Solutions	Discussion: Article: Growing Climatic Sensitivity of US agriculture linked to tech change and regional specialization)	
Oct 28	Guest Lecture	Guest Lecture	
Nov 4.	CI #4: Resilience & CSR	CI #4: Resilience & CSR (Article: The Role of Food Retailers in Improving Resilience in Global Food Supply)	CI #4: Memorandum DUE: 11/12

Nov 11	Future Farms and Artificial Intelligence (Article: Future Farms without Farmers)	Economic Performance: Environment (part 4)	
Nov 11	Guest Lecture	Guest Lecture	
Nov 18	CI #5: The Next Big “Thing” FFAR Advisory Memorandum	Chocolate	CI #5: Memorandum DUE: 11/26
Nov 25		No Class (Thanksgiving)	
Dec 2	Wrap Up	READING PERIOD STARTS	

Policy Regarding Class Attendance, Make-up Exams, Assignments:

You are expected to attend each class meeting, read the assigned materials prior to class and be prepared to discuss. Requirements for class attendance, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university policies that can be found at:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>.

Policy Regarding Late Work:

All assignments are to be submitted via Canvas by the date and time indicated on the course calendar and on Canvas. **No late work is accepted.**

Classroom Policies:

- No phones should be out during class. Using phones during class distracts you from learning, distracts others around you from learning, and distracts me. Students with phones out once class starts will be asked to leave.
- Make sure that your phone is turned to vibrate during class.
- Do not use your phone as your computer in class. Using laptops during class distracts you from learning, distracts others around you from learning, and distracts me. If you have an accommodation that necessitates the use of a laptop, please see me. Students with laptops out on days other than the specified work days will be asked to leave.
- No headphones should be on during class. Using headphones in class is disrespectful of your colleagues, your instructor, and your own learning. Students with headphones on once class starts will be asked to leave.

- **Do not use the Canvas App for uploading any assignment. The app is fine for downloading documents but is not recommended for uploading. If you choose to use the app to upload assignments and the upload fails, it will be your responsibility to make sure the assignment is turned in on time. Otherwise, you will not receive credit for any work that comes in past the due date and time.**
- Stay on task.
- Respect your fellow classmates and instructor.
- Come to class on time.

Policy Regarding Requests for Grade Changes When Final Grades Post:

Earn the points needed for the grade you are seeking throughout the semester. Once grades have been posted, please do not reach out for a bump up to the next grade UNLESS you see a miscalculation.

Students with disabilities

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 accommodation. Students with disabilities should follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester. Accommodations will be honored from the time I receive the accommodation letter to the end of the semester.

Academic Honesty

As a student at the University of Florida, you have committed yourself to uphold the Honor Code, which includes the following 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."* You are expected to exhibit behavior consistent with this commitment to the UF academic community. On all work submitted for credit at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: *"On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment."*

It is assumed that you will complete all work independently in each course unless the instructor provides explicit permission for you to collaborate on course tasks (e.g. assignments, papers, quizzes, exams). 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. For more information regarding the student honor code, please see: <https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/policies/student-honor-code-student-conduct-code/>

Campus Helping Resources

Students experiencing crises or personal problems that interfere with their general well-being are encouraged to utilize the university's resources. The following resources are available 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.

Health and Wellness Resources

- U Matter, We Care:
If you or a friend is in distress, please contact umatter@ufl.edu or 352 392- 1575 so that a team member can reach out to the student.
- Counseling and Wellness Center:
<http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc/Default.aspx>, 392-1575; and the University Police Department: 392-1111 or 9-1-1 for emergencies.
- Sexual Assault Recovery Services (SARS)
- Student Health Care Center, 392-1161.
- University Police Department, 392-1111 (or 9-1-1 for emergencies).
<http://www.police.ufl.edu/>

Academic Resources

- E-learning technical support, 352-392-4357 (select option 2) or e-mail to Learning-support@ufl.edu. <https://lss.at.ufl.edu/help.shtml>.
- Career Resource Center, Reitz Union, 392-1601. Career assistance and counseling.
<http://www.crc.ufl.edu/>
- Library Support, <http://cms.uflib.ufl.edu/ask>. Various ways to receive assistance with respect to using the libraries or finding resources.
- Teaching Center, Broward Hall, 392-2010 or 392-6420. General study skills and tutoring. <http://teachingcenter.ufl.edu/>
- Writing Studio, 302 Tigert Hall, 846-1138. Help brainstorming, formatting, and writing papers. <http://writing.ufl.edu/writing-studio/>
- Student Complaints Campus:
https://www.dso.ufl.edu/documents/UF_Complaints_policy.pdf

- On-Line Students Complaints: <http://www.distance.ufl.edu/student-complaint-process>

Online Course Evaluation Process

Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing online evaluations at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu>. Evaluations are typically open during the last two or three weeks of the semester, but students will be given specific times when they are open. Summary results of these assessments are available to students at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu/results/>.