

Course Syllabus: AEB 4325
Contemporary Issues in Agribusiness Management

Fall 2020

Period 8 & 9, Tuesday & Thursday 3:00 – 4:55 pm, and Period 9, Thursday 4:05 - 4:55 pm

Synchronous Class Link:

[Join Microsoft Teams Meeting](#)

Instructor and Contact Information

Dr. Misti Sharp	Email: mistisharp@ufl.edu
Office hours:	Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 3 – 4:30 and by appointment I am teaching remotely this fall so all office hours will be in zoom: https://ufl.zoom.us/j/902541919

Course Description (from Catalog): 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.

Co-Requisites: AEB 4138: Advanced Agribusiness Management or AEB 4342: Agribusiness and Food Marketing Management.

Communication:

Email is the best way to reach me. Any issues that require action **MUST** be handled by email so that there is a written record of need. After class conversations are not likely to result in action. I typically respond to emails within 24 hours if a response is required.

Class cancellations, changes in office hours, meeting locations and changes in the syllabus will be announced on e-learning. Be sure that you receive those notifications in a timely manner (controlled in your e-learning settings). Appointments are not necessary during office hours. Groups of students are welcome.

Undergraduate Advisor: Ms. Danielle Shu; 1170B McCarty Hall A; (352) 294-7640;
E-mail: dshu@ufl.edu
Office Hours: daily-- 9:00 am – 12:30 pm and 1:30 pm – 4:30 pm

FRE Technology Assistance: Dave Depatie; 1197 McCarty Hall A; (352) 394-7641;
E-mail: ddepatie@ufl.edu

Teaching Assistants: TBD

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Course Description: Real-world decision making for businesses is much more “messy” than what would be suggested by economic theory. It is not always the case that firms operate until marginal revenue equals marginal costs. Rather, firms may choose to take on an economic cost in order to build their brand or simply to be good stewards (we call this corporate social responsibility). As graduating seniors in food and resource economics, it is essential that we spend some time thinking about what you have learned in the program and how to leverage that knowledge and those skills to be successful in your future endeavors. The first part of this course will be spent considering alternative frameworks of thinking, inquiry and decision making as it relates to economic policy; the second part of the course considers how entrepreneurs must adapt and function in a complex and constantly changing political and economic setting; the third part of the course emphasizes strategic management for those going into corporate business structures focusing on leadership, culture, resilience and sustainability.

Course Objectives:

After successful completion of this course, each student should be able to:

- 1) Apply systems thinking, economic criteria and business strategy in agribusiness decision making.
- 2) Assess how policies and current events impact industries, businesses and brands.
- 3) Create an innovative business plan within a local context.
- 4) Evaluate a *wicked* problem and consider possible avenues of progress in a visual medium.
- 5) Understand ones role in the workplace as an economist, leader, manager and/or analyst.
- 6) Efficiently and effectively present arguments in both oral and written formats.

Required Course Materials:

- **E-learning:** can be accessed via <http://elearning.ufl.edu> using your Gatorlink username and password. If you are having difficulties accessing E-learning, please contact the UF Computing Help Desk by calling (352)-392-HELP or email helpdesk@ufl.edu. This will be where you submit some of your work and where I will post grades on a regular basis.
- **Plectica Account:** The Cabrera Research Lab at Cornell University provides Plectica as a free, online mind mapping app. Students will be expected to sign up for a Plectica Account to access the software app via the internet. This will be used for memos and projects. Sign up for Plectica:
 - Open an internet browser and navigate to <https://www.plectica.com/>.
 - Click on the Sign up for free and get started icon in the center of the page.
 - Sign in with Google or enter your email and create a password.
 - Click Agree and create my Account
- **Office 365:** More specifically, this class will use Microsoft **teams**, forms, powerpoint, one-note, etc which are all freely available to UF students and Faculty. To Install Microsoft Teams:
 - Open an internet browser and navigate to <https://cloud.it.ufl.edu/collaboration-tools/office-365/>
 - Click on *Teams* and then *Get the Windows App* if you have sufficient space. If you don't have sufficient space, simply choose “Use the web app instead.”
 - You should have gotten an email from teams that you were invited to this team. If you accepted the invite, you should be able to see the AEB 4325: Contemporary Issues in Agribusiness Management

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team. If you did not, here is the [link to the team](#) (this will take a bit of time because it requires my approval) or you can ask the professor for a join code.

- **Required text:** there is no required text; however, there are readings posted within each module and it is expected that you will complete these readings prior to synchronous class sessions as indicated within the modules.

Class Structure: This class is scheduled for 2 periods on Tuesday and 1 periods on Thursday. In order to reduce “zoom fatigue” among students taking several online classes simultaneously, we will only meet as a class synchronously on Tuesday. We will be meeting in Microsoft teams (see link at the beginning of this syllabus) and instructions to install teams above. It is expected that you will watch all posted video lectures, read all assigned readings and review supplemental material prior to the synchronous session on Tuesday. Synchronous classes will involve a mixture of guest lectures, discussion, and various active learning activities all designed to help increase your understanding of the course topics. Business memos, a large component of this course, will be due on asynchronous days and will build on material explored synchronously and asynchronously.

Our class sessions **may** be audio visually recorded for students in the class to refer back and for enrolled students who are unable to attend live. Students who participate with their camera engaged or utilize a profile image are agreeing to have their video or image recorded. If you are unwilling to consent to have your profile or video image recorded, be sure to keep your camera off and do not use a profile image. Likewise, students who un-mute during class and participate orally are agreeing to have their voices recorded. If you are not willing to consent to have your voice recorded during class, you will need to keep your mute button activated and communicate exclusively using the "chat" feature, which allows students to type questions and comments live. The chat will not be recorded or shared. As in all courses, unauthorized recording and unauthorized sharing of recorded materials is prohibited.

Netiquette Policy: As this is an online class, there are several considering of how to be respectful of your teacher and peers. See the following netiquette guide for more information: <http://teach.ufl.edu/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/NetiquetteGuideforOnlineCourses.docx>

Course modules:

Module 0: Orientation and Pre-Test/Survey Completion

Module 1: Systems thinking

Module 2: Strategic Management

Module 3: Industrial Organization

Module 4: Entrepreneurship

Module 5: Leadership Frames and Culture

Module 6: Resilience and Sustainability

Module 0: Orientation and Pre-Test/Survey Completion is required as a pre-requisite to access module 1

Your grade is composed of the following:

Synchronous discussions (best 10 of 13): in order to create an interactive and educational synchronous class setting, I would like to reward participation in the weekly synchronous activities (on Tuesdays). Each synchronous class will involve at least one activity that I will record participation for in some format (could be as easy as a check in, could be submitting something in a discussion, Microsoft form, etc). In order to get full credit for this synchronous discussion, you must be prepared by reviewing course content and participate fully.

Business Memos (best 5 of 6): these business memoranda will be typed and thorough and will require the creation of some sort of graph and/or figure from data or a systems process using excel and/or Plectica. These are individual assignments which will be submitted in eLearning by the due date. Late submissions will be penalized.

“Big Ideas” Projects: Each of the 3 main foci of this course (cognitive frameworks, entrepreneurship and strategic management) will have a “Big Ideas” project associated with it. These projects will be completed in teams by teams and will require a presentation during our regular class meeting. Therefore, all work must be completed prior to the synchronous class session.

Pre-Test, Post-Test and Surveys: As this is my first time teaching this course, I want to get an idea of where my students are when they start the class, gauge what is necessary to cover in more depth versus what would be repetitive, and assess what students actually learn in the class relative to where they start (all within a process known as [inquiry based teaching](#)). As such, during the first week, each student must make a ~20-minute appointment with Dr. Sharp to do a “pre-test” oral exam. During the last week of the course, students must again make an appointment with Dr. Sharp to do a “post-test” oral exam. Additionally, surveys will help drive the course content (week 1) and provide reflection of course topics (last week). The grades for this component will be based largely on participation with the exception of the final oral exam which will have a rubric for qualitative grading.

Attendance and Make-up Work: Requirements for class attendance and make-up assignments and other work are consistent with university policies that can be found at:

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

Course Grade Composition:

Category	Total Points	% of Total Grade
Synchronous Discussions (best 10 of 13)	20 points (2 points each)	10%
Memos (best 5 of 6)	100 points (20 points each)	50%
“Big Ideas” Projects (3)	60 points (20 points each)	30%
Pre-test, Post-test and Surveys	20 points	10%
Total	200 points	100%

****You will not be able to access any of the above categories until you complete the requirements within Module 0 on e-learning!****

Grades and Grade Points: Grades will be assigned as follows

Grade	Percentage	Total Points	Grade Points
A	93% or more	≥ 186	4.00
A-	90.0 – 92.9%	180 – 185	3.67
B+	86.0 – 89.9%	172 – 179	3.33
B	83.0 – 85.9%	166 – 171	3.00
B-	80.0 – 82.9%	160 – 165	2.67
C+	76.0 – 79.9%	152 – 159	2.33
C	73.0 – 75.9%	146 – 151	2.00
C-	70.0 – 72.9%	140 – 145	1.67
D+	66.0 – 69.9%	132 – 139	1.33
D	63.0 – 65.9%	126 – 131	1.00
D-	60.0 – 62.9%	120 – 125	0.67
E	≤ 59.9%	≤ 120	0.00

Your final letter grade will be posted on e-learning after the final exam. The professor has the right to change this point structure at any point so long as it improves the student's final score.

**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 there is an error in recording a grade, I will gladly give you the correct points. If you believe that your assignment is incorrectly graded or that your grade is incorrectly posted, please contact me via e-mail as soon as possible. You have 7 days after a 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 information on current UF policies for assigning grade points, see

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

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, and 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/process/student-conduct-code/>

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 peers...

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Academic Performance: Your grade on e-learning throughout the semester may not reflect your true performance in the course. You will have regular assignments that may require quick turnaround in this class and it is crucial that you do not “check-out” at any point in the semester. If you fall behind, you **MUST** communicate with me when you realize this is happening. Do **NOT** wait until the end of the semester as there is nothing I can do to help at that point. It is my goal to teach students and not to “give grades” as I believe grades are earned. As such, consider the following guidelines when you have questions about your grade or class performance:

- If you have any questions about your score at any point, you may come to the professor during office hours to clarify the number of points you have and what points will be required to achieve your desired grade.
- Do **NOT** ask for clarification of your grade in class or after class. This type of discussion is reserved for office hours or scheduled meetings. Please note that I cannot communicate grade information over email. All grades are posted in e-learning in a timely fashion; please let the instructor know if this is not the case.
- Do **NOT** email me or come to office hours expecting to change your score on a given assignment unless an egregious error has been made in entering your grade into canvas (i.e. you failed to get credit for a completed assignment or an exam grade was entered incorrectly).
- Do **NOT** ask for additional points throughout the semester. It may be the case that bonus opportunities to gain additional points will be available; however, this is determined solely by the professor based on an assessment of the relevance of additional activities to course materials and learning objectives.

Student counseling and support: If something happens in your personal life that has an impact on your academic life, you must go through the Dean of Students Office (contact below) for additional accommodations. If you are experiencing other forms of distress that do not impact your performance in my class, there are several resources available on campus for students (<http://www.umatter.ufl.edu/>)

Service	Location	Phone
GatorWell Health Promotions Services (works on time management, etc.) (gatorwell.ufsa.ufl.edu)	1 st Floor, Reitz Union	273-4450
Dean of students (http://www.dso.ufl.edu)	P202 Peabody Hall	392-1261
Counseling and wellness center (http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc/)	2190 Radio Road	392-1575
Sexual Assault Recovery Services (SARS)	Infirmery Building	392-1161
Student health care center (http://shcc.ufl.edu)	Infirmery Building	392-1161
University Police Department (police.ufl.edu)		392-1111
Career Resource Center (http://www.crc.ufl.edu)	1 st Floor, Reitz Union	392-1601
UF Help Desk—Technical Support (helpdesk@ufl.edu)	1 st Floor, the HUB	392-4357
Library Support (http://cms.uflib.ufl.edu/ask)	online	
Teaching Center (http://teachingcenter.ufl.edu/)	Broward Hall	392-6420
Writing Studio (http://writing.ufl.edu/writing-studio/)	online	846-1138

Resources for disabled students: 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

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instructor when requesting accommodation. Students with disabilities should follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester. Requests to the DRC for accommodated exams must be made at least 5 days prior to the exam. Failure to meet this deadline may result in a lack of testing accommodations.

Evaluations: Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. [Click here for guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner](#). Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens, and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via ufl.bluera.com/ufl/. [Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students here](#).

Tentative Course Schedule:

Class	Day	Date	Topic	Module	Assignments	Format
1	T	1-Sep	Pre-test/Survey Completion	0		Synchronous
2	Th	3-Sep	Pre-test/Survey Completion	0		Asynchronous
3	T	8-Sep	Systems thinking	1	Discussion 1	Synchronous
4	Th	10-Sep	Systems thinking	1		Asynchronous
5	T	15-Sep	Systems thinking	1	Discussion 2	Synchronous
6	Th	17-Sep	Systems thinking	1	Memo 1 due	Asynchronous
7	T	22-Sep	Strategic Management	2	Discussion 3	Synchronous
8	Th	24-Sep	Strategic Management	2		Asynchronous
9	T	29-Sep	Strategic Management	2	Discussion 4	Synchronous
10	Th	1-Oct	Strategic Management	2	Memo 2 due	Asynchronous
11	T	6-Oct	Big Idea 1 Due	3	Discussion 5	Synchronous
12	Th	8-Oct	Industrial Organization	3		Asynchronous
13	T	13-Oct	Industrial Organization	3	Discussion 6	Synchronous
14	Th	15-Oct	Industrial Organization	3	Memo 3 due	Asynchronous
15	T	20-Oct	Industrial Organization	4	Discussion 7	Synchronous
16	Th	22-Oct	Entrepreneurship	4		Asynchronous
17	T	27-Oct	Entrepreneurship	4	Discussion 8	Synchronous
18	Th	29-Oct	Entrepreneurship	4	Memo 4 due	Asynchronous
19	T	3-Nov	Big Idea 2 Due	5	Discussion 9	Synchronous
20	Th	5-Nov	Leadership Frames and Culture	5		Asynchronous
21	T	10-Nov	Leadership Frames and Culture	5	Discussion 10	Synchronous
22	Th	12-Nov	Leadership Frames and Culture	5	Memo 5 due	Asynchronous
23	T	17-Nov	Resilience and Sustainability	6	Discussion 11	Synchronous
24	Th	19-Nov	Resilience and Sustainability	6		Asynchronous
25	T	24-Nov	Resilience and Sustainability	6	Discussion 12	Synchronous
26	T	1-Dec	Big Idea 3 Due	6	Discussion 13	Synchronous
27	Th	3-Dec	Leadership Frames and Culture	7	Memo 6 Due	Asynchronous
28	T	8-Dec	Post-test/Survey Completion	7		Scheduled

Note: The instructor reserves the right to change the terms and dates stated in this course syllabus at any time.

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

I look forward to a fun and productive semester with you all!