

Agriculture and Natural Resource Ethics AEB 4126

Section 0014 – Spring 2019 Tuesdays (3:00 – 4:55) and Thursdays (4:05
-- 4:55)

1142 McCarty A Wing (MCCA 1142)

Instructor: Dr. Caleb Stair

Office: 2111 McCarty B Wing

Office Hours: Mondays 2-3 PM, Tuesdays 2-3PM, and Thursdays 3-4PM. (Also, by appointment)

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Communications:

I will communicate with you about news, assignments, emergencies, cancellations etc., through your Gatorlink email account. If you do not use your Gatorlink email account as your primary email, go to your Gatorlink mailbox and set your Gatorlink mail to be forwarded to your usual email account (e.g., gmail, yahoo, etc.) **PLEASE CHECK YOUR EMAIL FREQUENTLY.**

If you are struggling in the class, please come see me. My office hours are listed above. Those are times that you can definitely find me in the office. 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.

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.

Course Goals:

- 1) Understand the "big picture" regarding 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?
- 2) Learn philosophical / ethical concepts and positions that can be useful in thinking about actions, practices and policies, for example, the difference between

thinking of ethical obligations in terms of “protecting rights” vs. “securing the greater social good.”

- 3) Develop/improve your ability to think, talk, and most importantly write intelligently and reflectively (critically) about issues and positions and arguments as exemplified in (1) and (2) above.

I hope that you will use this course to inform yourself in greater depth about the food system and about ethics, and also use this course to help you clarify your own beliefs and values regarding these and other ethical issues, as well sharpen your analytical and argument skills.

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.

Grades:

1. *Three take-home essay examinations* – (60%).

These will consist short essays (~5 pages, double spaced) on topics I will assign. After the assignment is posted you will have one week to finish the assignment and submit it to me via email.

2. *Group Project* - (30%)

- *Debate* – (15%).

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 and the rest of the class), as well as your teammates’ confidential evaluation of your partners’ contribution to the project.

- *Paper* – (15%).

With *all* members of your debate team, you will write a 4-6 page defense of the position you are arguing in the debate. This will consist of a structured “position paper” complete with appropriate references and bibliography. More details will be given in the final assignment. *This course satisfies the 6000-word “Gordon Rule” writing requirement based on the exams and the debate paper.*

3. *Quizzes* (10%)

There will be random quizzes throughout the semester covering topics discussed in class. Your two lowest quiz grades will be dropped at the end of the semester.

Course grades:

A = 93 – 100 points

A- = 90 – 92.9 points

B + = 87 – 89.9 points

B = 83 – 86.9 points

B- = 80 – 82.9 points

C+ = 77– 79.9 points

C = 73 – 76.9 points

C- = 70 – 72.9 points

D+ = 67 – 69.9 points

D = 63 – 66.9 points

D- = 60 – 62.9 points

F = below 59.9 points

Course Policies:

- I expect you to abide by standards of civility and professionalism in the classroom. This course has a large discussion-based component and several of the topics may elicit passionate debate about the topic at hand. Debate can be passionate however; a lack of civility or professionalism is unacceptable.
- 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 0.
- 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>

- While attendance is not mandatory, it is highly encouraged that you attend all classes for the full time. Questions on your take home assignments will reflect discussions had in the classroom and quizzes are issued randomly throughout the semester. Please let me know in advance of any scheduled absences.
- For the most part, I will write notes in class using the document camera. I will post these to our CANVAS website as the semester progresses. If you do miss a class, please read the class notes, and see me if you have additional questions.
- When submitting an assignment via email in the subject line please state the course number and assignment title. Also, please save your documents as *AEB4126_AssignmentTitle_YourNameHere*
- Please silence your cell phones before class starts.
- If you are using a laptop, please only take notes during class-time.
- In general, do not be a source of disruption in the classroom.

Academic Honesty and the UF Honor Code

The University of Florida holds its students to the highest standards, and we encourage students to read the University of Florida Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code (Regulation 4.040-1), so they are aware of our standards. Any violation of the Student Honor Code will result in a referral the Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution and may result in academic sanctions and further student conduct action. The two greatest threats to the academic integrity of the University of Florida are cheating and plagiarism. Students should be aware of their faculty's policy on collaboration, should understand how to properly cite sources, and should not give nor receive an improper academic advantage in any manner through any medium. The honor code can be found at <http://regulations.ufl.edu/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/4.040-1.pdf>

Software Use:

All faculty, staff and students of the university 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.

Students with Disabilities:

Resources for Disabled Students: If you have a documented disability and wish to discuss academic accommodations, please contact me as soon as possible to set up the appropriate arrangements. Please do not wait until an assignment is due to request accommodations. Further information can be found at <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/>.

Student Counseling and Support:

Several resources are available on campus for students. <http://www.umatter.ufl.edu/>

- Honors Advising
 - <http://www.honors.ufl.edu/current/advising/>
 - 343 Infirmary Building
 - (352) 392-1519
- Dean of Students
 - <http://www.dso.ufl.edu>
 - P202 Peabody Hall
 - (352) 392-1261
- Counseling and Wellness Center
 - <http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc/>
 - 2190 Radio Road
 - (352) 392-1575
- Student Health Care Center
 - <http://shcc.ufl.edu>
 - Infirmary Building
 - (352) 392-1161
- Career Resource Center
 - <http://www.crc.ufl.edu>
 - 1st Floor, Reitz Union
 - (352) 392-1601
- International Center
 - <http://www.ufic.ufl.edu/>
 - Suite 170, Hub Building
 - (352) 392-5323

TENTATIVE DISCUSSION TOPICS AND TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

| Week | Dates | Topics | Assignments |
|-------------|-------------------|---|---|
| #1 | Jan 8th & 10th | Introduction / Debates, Arguments, and Logic | |
| #2 | Jan 15th & 17th | Ethical Theory I | |
| #3 | Jan 22nd & 24th | Ethical Theory II | Paper #1 Assigned |
| #4 | Jan 29th and 31st | Ethics and Agriculture (Harvesting Resources) | Paper #1 Due |
| #5 | Feb 5th & 7th | Ethics and Agriculture (Animal Rights and Welfare) | Mock Debate |
| #6 | Feb 12th & 14th | Ethics and Agriculture (Technology and Agriculture) | |
| #7 | Feb 19th & 21st | Ethics and Food (Organic Agriculture) | Debate Teams Assigned / Paper #2 Assigned |
| #8 | Feb 26th & 28th | Ethics and Food (Genetically Modified Organisms) | Paper #2 Due |
| #9 | March 5th & 7th | Spring Break | |
| #10 | March 12th & 14th | Water Allocation | |
| #11 | March 19th & 21st | Alternative Energy | Mock Debate / Paper #3 Assigned |
| #12 | March 26th & 28th | Legalization of Marijuana | Paper #3 Due |
| #13 | Apr 2nd & 4th | Space Exploration & Colonization | Final Paper Assigned |

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| #14 | Apr 9th & 11th | Class Choice of Topic | Mock Debate |
| #15 | Apr 16th & 18th | Debates | |
| #16 | Apr 23rd | Debates / Final Class Day | |
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| #17 | May 1st | Final Paper | Final Paper Due |