

Course Syllabus: AEB 4325
Contemporary Issues in Agribusiness Management

Spring 2021

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

Classroom: Tuesdays in [MAEB 0211](#) and Thursdays in [FLG 280](#)

Synchronous Class Teams Link:

[Tuesday Meeting Link](#)

[Thursday Meeting Link](#)

Instructor and Contact Information

Dr. Misti Sharp	Email: mistisharp@ufl.edu
Office hours:	Tuesday from 9:30 – 11:00, Thursday from 2:00 – 3:00 and by appointment I intend on being in my office for office hours (MCCA 1189) but I can only meet one student at a time face to face and that requires an appointment (mistisharp@ufl.edu); I will be available on zoom with no appointment necessary: 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 and team chats are the best way to reach me. Any issues that require action **MUST** be handled in written form so that there is a 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). Watch the Teams channel closely as well as some information may be posted there.

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: Ms. Fei He; he.fe@ufl.edu, Mondays from 9:30 – 11:30 via Zoom:
<https://ufl.zoom.us/j/6096427860>

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Course Description: Real-world decision making for businesses is much “messier” 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 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 in a modality known as systems thinking; 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. Unlike many other courses in FRE, this course features problems with no right answer, many of which are unsolvable (known as wicked problems). It is not meant to be a repetition of previous courses but rather this course builds on the foundation you have in FRE and extends that foundation to help prepare you for post-graduate success. The key to being successful in this class is to try your best, ask questions when you are unsure, and back up all responses with supporting evidence.

Course Objectives:

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

- 1) Assess how policies and current events impact industries, businesses, and brands.
- 2) Evaluate a *wicked* problem and consider possible avenues of progress in a visual medium.
- 3) Apply systems thinking, economic criteria and business strategy in agribusiness decision making.
- 4) Create an innovative business plan within a local context.
- 5) Understand one’s 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/>

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- 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 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 class sessions as indicated within the modules.

Class Structure: This class is scheduled for 2 periods on Tuesday and 1 period on Thursday. It is scheduled as a "modified hyflex" class meaning that some students will attend the class in person and some students will attend the class virtually. For the online students, you will connect to the class using Microsoft teams (see link at the beginning of this syllabus) and instructions to install teams above. Here are some additional [Teams help resources](#). All classes will be recorded and will be available in teams. Students attending the class in person may also be required to engage with online peers in teams during class so even in-person students must bring a laptop and be signed into the team/meeting. It would also be helpful if everyone could bring their own set of headphones. There may be occasions when all students will meet online in teams or in zoom. This will be announced well in advance of class. All classes will involve a mixture of guest lectures, discussions, and various active learning activities all designed to help increase you engage with course topics. Active participation is required and recorded.

Our class sessions **may** be audio visually recorded although it is not likely that they will be posted on canvas. 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: Polarization in Agriculture

Module 2: Systems thinking

Module 3: Food Systems

Module 4: Vision, Mission, Capacity, and Learning

Module 5: Corporate social responsibility

Your grade is composed of the following:

Business Memos (5): these [business memoranda](#) will be typed and thorough and will typically require the creation of a mind map using [Plectica](#) or an alternative program. These are individual assignments which will be submitted in eLearning by the due date. Late submissions will not be accepted although if you find that you are unable to meet the deadline, you can request a 24 to 48 hour extension for any reason. Extensions beyond 48 hours will require documentation. To request an extension, message Dr. Sharp in Teams more than 6 hours before the due date for a quicker response time. None of the memos may be dropped. However, you will have an opportunity to revise and re-submit up to two memos if you are not happy with your grade. To request a revision, promptly after reviewing the grade/rubric, write a professional email to Dr. Sharp (mistisharp@ufl.edu) requesting an opportunity to revise your memo. The subject of the email must be “Memo #_ Revision” and you must suggest a time in which you could re-submit the memo. Failure to submit by the agreed upon date will result in you keeping the previously graded submission.

“Big Ideas” Projects: Each of the 3 main foci of this course (cognitive frameworks, food systems, 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.

Pre-Test, Post-Test, and Surveys: to get an idea of where my students are when they start the class and to gauge what is necessary to cover in more depth versus what would be repetitive, there will be a pre-test the first week of the semester. Each student must schedule a ~20-minute appointment with Dr. Sharp to do a “pre-test” oral exam (interview). 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 except for the final oral exam which will have a rubric for qualitative grading.

Participation: this is a discussion-based class which means that each student must show up to class ready to contribute to the discussion. I will use mentimeter, teams, collaborative documents, and my general observations to measure participation. After class each day, I will endeavor to update your “attendance” grade in e-learning. It is expected that you read all assigned material, read announcements that are posted in e-learning in a timely fashion and follow instructions, and finally at least skim the “daily” briefs that I forward to you from the *Agri-Pulse Daily Harvest*.

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
Memos (5)	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%
Participation	20 points	10%
Total	200 points	100%

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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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 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.](#)

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!

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Tentative Course Schedule:

Class	Day	Date	Topic	Module	HW/Reading	Format
1	T	12-Jan	Orientation	0	Teams+Syllabus	Hybrid
2	Th	14-Jan	Polarization in Agriculture	1	B&B CH 4	Hybrid
Complete Pre-test no later than Friday, January 15th						
3	T	19-Jan	Polarization in Agriculture	1	B&B Ch 5	Online (zoom)
4	Th	21-Jan	Polarization in Agriculture	1	B&B Ch 8	Hybrid
5	T	26-Jan	Polarization in Agriculture	1	B&B Ch 9	Online (zoom)
Complete Memo 1 by Friday, January 27th						
6	Th	28-Jan	Systems thinking	2	STMS--CH 1	Hybrid
7	T	2-Feb	Systems thinking	2	STMS--CH 2	Hybrid
8	Th	4-Feb	Systems thinking	2	STMS--CH 3	Hybrid
9	T	9-Feb	Systems thinking	2	STMS--CH 4	Hybrid
10	Th	11-Feb	Modeling CAS	2	Cabrera Lab Resources	Hybrid
Complete Memo 2 by Friday, February 12th						
11	T	16-Feb	Big Idea 1	3		Hybrid
12	Th	18-Feb	Food Systems	3	AHPA 2007, Woods (2013)	Hybrid
13	T	23-Feb	Food Systems	3	CHOICES Special Issue-COVID	Hybrid
14	Th	25-Feb	Food Systems	3	AMS (2017)	Online (zoom)
15	T	2-Mar	Food Systems	3	Service profit chain	Hybrid
16	Th	4-Mar	Food Systems	3	Norwood and Peel (2020)	Hybrid
Memo 3 due by Friday, March 5th						
17	T	9-Mar	VMCL	4	Flock not clock--CH 1	Hybrid
18	Th	11-Mar	VMCL	4	Flock not clock--CH 2	Hybrid
19	T	16-Mar	Big Idea 2	4		Hybrid
20	Th	18-Mar	VMCL	4	Flock not clock--CH 3	Hybrid
21	T	23-Mar	VMCL	4	Flock not clock--CH 6	Hybrid
22	Th	25-Mar	VMCL	4	Sowcik, et al (2017)	Hybrid
Memo 4 due by Friday, March 26th						
23	T	30-Mar	CSR--DEI	5	DEI videos/readings	Online (zoom)
24	Th	1-Apr	CSR--ENV	5	Environmentalism	Hybrid
25	T	6-Apr	CSR--Resilience	5	Gharajedaghi--Ch 1	Hybrid
26	Th	8-Apr	CSR--Resilience	5	Gharajedaghi--Ch 2	Hybrid
27	T	13-Apr	Big Idea 3	5		Hybrid
28	Th	15-Apr	Big Idea 3	5		Hybrid
Memo 5 due by Friday, April 16th						
29	T	20-Apr	Post-test/Wrap-up			Hybrid

Hybrid: some students will be in the classroom while others will be joining remotely using teams.

Online (zoom): these are days where there will be a remote guest speaker; I will send the zoom link in an announcement prior to the class and post the zoom link in teams.

Reminder: Please keep up with the announcements posted on e-learning as critical changes in readings, class format, etc. will be communicated there.