

COMMUNICATING AGRICULTURAL ISSUES
AGRI 340 – Fall 2019
School of Agriculture - Western Illinois University

INSTRUCTOR

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 Office Hours: M/W 3-4 p.m. & T 10-12 p.m.
 and by appointment

CLASS TIMES AND LOCATIONS

Section I will meet Monday & Wednesday 9:00-9:50 a.m. in KH 307 Final- December 11 at 8 a.m.
 Section II will meet Monday & Wednesday 10:00-10:50 a.m. in KH 307 Final- December 9 at 8 a.m.
 Section III will meet Monday & Wednesday 11:00-11:50 a.m. in KH 307 Final- December 11 at 10 a.m.
 This is a two-semester hour lecture/discussion, **writing intensive** course.

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND PREREQUISITES

AGRI 340 Development of written and oral communication skills to address current issues in agriculture.
 Prerequisite: Eng 280 & Agri 220.

This course has been designated to meet the Writing Instruction in the Disciplines (WID) graduation requirement. WID courses provide instruction in the processes and formats for the writing content and style needed to be an effective professional in a student's chosen field.

MATERIAL

- Facebook Account
- Twitter Account or Instagram Account
- WordPress Account
- Course handouts will be provided as necessary. Notes and additional information can be found on Western Online.
- Activities outside of the classroom will be required.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

At the conclusion of this course the student will be able to:

1. Demonstrate stronger business writing and communication skills.
2. Analyze, understand, and effectively communicate current agriculture issues.
3. Orally present information on an agricultural issue with confidence.
4. Write business emails, letters, reports, blog posts, and presentations.
5. Feel comfortable discussing a variety of agriculture issues and help others to have a greater understanding of agriculture.
6. Question everything. Ask yourself why you do things the way you do. Strive to make improvements in agriculture.

IMPORTANT DATES

August 28-Meet in the library, 2nd floor classroom
 Monday, September 2-No Class, Labor Day
 November 25-29-No Class, Thanksgiving Break

CLASS ANNOUNCEMENTS

Important class announcements (cancellations, etc.) will be made via WIU email, Western Online, and the WIU text notification system. You must check your WIU email regularly.

ABSENCES

To succeed in this class, you must be present. Each class period is worth 10 participation points. Excused absences (emergencies, funerals, and illness) should be cleared with the instructor prior to the class either via email or the OARS system. Unexcused absences will result in a loss of participation/attendance points for that day. All assignments due for that class period should be completed prior to the next class period.

CLASS GUIDELINES

Failure to comply with the class rules will result in a loss of participation points. Repeated offenses will result in the loss of one letter grade.

Cell Phones/laptops/tablets: Cell phones/laptops/tablets are not to be used during class unless requested to do so for class activity purposes. If, due to medical or public safety concerns, a student needs an exception to this policy, he/she should inform the instructor prior to class. Students on their phone during class will lose 10 points per incident.

*****Phone usage is not allowed during class. This isn't a joke. Seriously, put your phones away.*****

Tobacco: Use of tobacco **in any form** is prohibited in university buildings/classrooms.

Talking: Unnecessary side conversations will not be tolerated.

Respect: Please respect the opinions of your classmates during class discussions and activities. **Fifty points** will be deducted if at any time during a conversation you are harassing or demeaning towards another student with an opposing viewpoint.

Do. The. Work.: The more effort you put into this class, the more you will get out of it.

Whining: There is a \$5 fine for whining.

PLAGIARISM

Plagiarism is a serious offense. Students caught plagiarizing will fail the assignment and possibly the course. Properly learning to cite a source is vital to this course. <http://www.wiu.edu/policies/acintegrity.php>

GRADING SCALE:

93% and above = A

90 – 92 = A-

87 – 89 = B+

83 – 86 = B

80 – 82 = B-

77 – 79 = C+

73 – 76 = C

70 – 72 = C-

67 – 69 = D+

63 – 66 = D

60 – 62 = D-

59 and below = F

Attention Education Majors:

The changes within the Illinois State Teaching License requirements, students are required to receive a grade of "C-" or better in this course in order to meet state requirements. With the university's +/- grading system, receiving a grade below a "C-" will require you to retake this course or find a substitute course to meet School of Agriculture graduation requirements.

UNIVERSITY WRITING CENTER

The University Writing Center is available to you for your use on assignments and papers. Please feel free to visit it about material for this class or other classes. http://www.wiu.edu/university_writing_center/index.php

ASSIGNMENTS

Formatting: Unless otherwise noted, all assignments should be:

- **typed**, 12 pt. font
- 1" margins on all sides
- Times New Roman or Garamond font
- Labeled with your name, date, assignment name, and class section.
- MLA style

Failure to properly format any assignment will result in a loss of 5 points.

**Handwritten assignments will not be accepted and will result in 0 points.

LATE ASSIGNMENTS

Your assignment is due at the beginning of class on the day it is due in the form assigned (WO, hard copy, etc). All dropboxes will close at the beginning of class. You will be allowed one late assignment during this class with no penalty. You must notify me ahead of time and it must be turned in in the form assigned within three days of the due date. All other late work will receive a zero in the grade book.

THE BASICS

Proper grammar, spelling, verb usage, flow, punctuation, capitalization, etc. should come naturally to you by now. All writing assignments will be graded for mechanics and additional errors will result in a loss of points. Assignments will also be graded on content, clarity, attention to detail and instructions, and completeness among other components.

Writing Focused Assignments

Ag Issue Opinion Piece: (25 pts) Write a brief on the biggest issue facing the agriculture industry today. If you are stating the obvious, look at it from all angles. Breathe new life into the issue.

Email/Letter: (25/50 pts) Write a business email or letter, pending the assignment and issue at hand.

Blog Post (120 pts): Write a blog post and post it to the WIU School of Ag blog. Posts should include a title, your name as the author, relevant, pre-approved content, and photos. Your post will be read by the public. ****Posts deemed inappropriate or profane will result in a failing grade.**

Facebook Posts: (50 pts) Create 5 Facebook posts about advocating for agriculture. **Two** shares of articles (not classmate's posts) are allowed, but you **must** include your own unique comments for the post. Three of your posts must be created using Canva.com. Summarize your experience. Was there engagement? Did people comment/like/share your post? Did you receive any negative comments? If so, how did you handle them? Screenshot each of your posts and comments and include with your write-up in a Word document.

Twitter/Instagram Posts: (50 pts) Create 5 Twitter OR Instagram posts advocating for agriculture. **Two** retweets (not from classmates) are allowed, but you must include your own unique comments for the post. You **must tag @WIUAg** and use the hashtag **#WIUAgLife**. If you do not tag WIUAg AND use the hashtag, you will not receive credit for that tweet. Compile screenshots into a Word document on WO. No write up is needed.

Consumer Concern Responses: (50 pts) Respond to consumer concerns using the EASE method of communicating agriculture issues.

Ag Documentary Reflection Summary: (50 pts) After watching a documentary in class, write a reflection summary based on the questions provided and your own reaction.

Research

Source Credibility Check: (25 pts) Determine the credibility of the provided sources by answering the questions provided in the library guide.

Source Identification: (25 pts) Identify three credible sources of information for your first persuasive essay. Submit three complete MLA citations in proper format from the following types of sources: A peer-reviewed journal article, an agricultural extension publication, an article requested through I-Share. Use the CRAAP test to help you determine credibility. These sources must be unique and not the same as your friends.

Thesis & Outline: (25 pts) Complete a working thesis and outline of your first persuasive essay.

Peer Review: (25 pts) Review a draft of a paper written by a classmate. Your feedback should be constructive.

Persuasive Essay: (100 pts each) Write 1 or more persuasive essays on the topics assigned. Essays should be 2-3 double spaced pages. Essays should be unbiased, include scientific information, and conclude with your argument for your stance, which should be supported by science and sound reasoning.

Food Labels: (300 pts-group assignment)

Review food labels as printed on current food packaging for your assigned commodity. Are the food labels mandated by the government? Regulated by the government? Necessary for health reasons? Truthful? Solely for marketing purposes? Design and conduct a survey of consumers to understand their preferences and what contributes to their purchasing choices. Compile your information in writing and with graphs/charts. Present your information in class.

Agriculture Advocacy Project/College Aggies Online

Plan Proposal: (50 pts) As a group, complete a project plan proposal for your agriculture outreach project in detail. Intent, dates, times, message, supplies, budget, etc. are all needed in the proposal.

Agriculture Outreach Project: (200 pts) Develop, organize, and conduct an agriculture outreach project to educate the consuming public about the truths of food and fuel production and practice communicating with people about agriculture. Messages should be effective, informative, and reach the masses.

Ag Outreach Summary: (50 pts) Complete a summary stating what you did for your project. What was the overall message? How did you convey the message? Was it effective? What would you change if you could do it differently? Include a minimum of 10 photos from your event. Due within one week after your event is held.

Advocacy Project Assistance: (25 pts) Assist another group in one of the 340 sections with the execution of their event. Many events are large in scale and extra help is needed to complete them.

Exams

Quizzes: Quizzes will be given at the instructor's discretion and will be unannounced.

Final Exam: (200 pts) The comprehensive final exam will cover the material presented in class by the instructor and the group presentations.

Extra Credit

Daily Dirt: (10 pts) Each week we will discuss a current event/ag issue. If you provide me with the topic you wish to discuss and lead the discussion in class, you will receive 10 extra credit points. You must notify me of the topic prior to class, either via email or in person.

College of Business & Technology Professional Development Series- (10 pts each. Maximum of 30 points)

Attend a session of the CBT Professional Development Series, write a summary about what you learned, and turn it in on WO. You must pre-register for each session.

Fallen Soldiers 5K- (25 pts) Sign up for and participate in the Fallen Soldiers 5K run/walk on September 21. Take a photo of yourself at the finish and post on social media tagging the School of Agriculture page or upload on WO. You must participate to earn these points. <http://wiu.edu/vpas/fallensoldiers/>

*Additional extra credit opportunities may be available throughout the semester.

GROUP WORK

The real world relies on group work, therefore, so does this class. How well you work with your group members will affect your grade.

ACCREDITATION

The School of Agriculture is housed in the College of Business and Technology which is accredited by AACSB-International.

UNIVERSITY POLICIES

Students with disabilities: In accordance with University values and disability law, students with disabilities may request academic accommodations where there are aspects of a course that result in barriers to inclusion or accurate assessment of achievement. To file an official request for disability-related accommodations, please contact the Disability Resource Center at 309-298-2512, disability@wiu.edu or in 143 Memorial Hall. Please notify the instructor as soon as possible to ensure that this course is accessible to you in a timely manner.

Title IX: University values, Title IX, and other federal and state laws prohibit sex discrimination, including sexual assault/misconduct, dating/domestic violence, and stalking. If you, or someone you know, has been the victim of any of these offenses, we encourage you to report this to the Title IX Coordinator at 309-298-1977 or anonymously online at: http://www.wiu.edu/equal_opportunity_and_access/request_form/index.php. If you disclose an incident to a faculty member, the faculty member must notify the Title IX Coordinator. The complete Title IX policy is available at: <http://www.wiu.edu/vpas/policies/titleIX.php>.

Academic Integrity: The rules and regulations outlined in the University's policy on academic integrity are applied to this course. <http://www.wiu.edu/policies/acintegrity.php>

Student Rights and Responsibilities: Detailed information regarding student rights and responsibilities can be found at <http://www.wiu.edu/provost/student.php>. It is your responsibility to be familiar with the posted information.

Disruptive Student Behavior: Disruptive Student Behavior is defined as inappropriate student behavior that a reasonable faculty member would view as interfering with the ability of the instructor to teach and students to learn whether in a classroom or other learning environment (such as an online course, laboratory, site field experience, internships, instructor's office, computer lab, or other setting whether it is an on-campus or off-campus location), which disrupts the educational process. It is also considered disruptive behavior for a student to exhibit threatening, intimidating, or other inappropriate behavior toward the instructor or classmates outside of the learning environment. Further information is available at <http://www.wiu.edu/vpas/policies/disrupst.php>.

NOTICES

Please be advised that this syllabus is **tentative**. All classes are different and we may or may not be able to address all of the content areas. Any deviations from the syllabus will be announced as soon as possible.