

COMMUNICATING AGRICULTURAL ISSUES
AGRI 340 – Fall 2021
School of Agriculture - Western Illinois University

INSTRUCTOR

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Office: B21 Knoblauch (woods lab)
 Office Hours: T/TH 9-11 a.m., Friday 9:30-10:30 a.m.
 or by appointment

OFFICE HOURS: We can meet in person, via email, Google Hangouts, phone, however you'd like to visit works for me. A heads up will help to make sure I don't have another appointment and that you aren't waiting around.

CLASS TIMES AND LOCATIONS

Section 1 will meet Monday & Wednesday 9:00-9:50 a.m. in KH 307
 Section II will meet Monday & Wednesday 10:00-10:50 a.m. in KH 307
 Section III will meet Monday & Wednesday 11:00-11:50 a.m. in KH 307

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

- 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. Identify bias in shared information as well as your own biases.
4. Orally present information on an agricultural issue with confidence.
5. Write business emails, letters, reports, blog posts, and presentations.
6. Feel comfortable discussing a variety of agriculture issues and help others to have a greater understanding of agriculture.
7. Assess the credibility of information and understand the difference between fact and opinion.
8. Question everything. Ask yourself why you do things the way you do. Strive to make improvements in agriculture.

IMPORTANT DATES

Monday, September 6: No Class

Ag 340-Communicating Agricultural Issues

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** via email, the OARS system, or in person. Notifying the instructor of your absence does not mean you are excused from class that day. Notifying me of your absence after class has begun does not count as an excused absence. Unexcused absences will result in a loss of participation/attendance points for that day. All assignments missed due to an excused absence must be completed prior to the next class period or they will result in a zero.

All absences should be reported to the Student Development and Success Center. SDSC@wiu.edu.

Covid related absence from class will be considered excused if the absence is (1) due to a required isolation or quarantine based on a (2) documented directive from a public health official or health provider, and (3) if the instructor of record receives notification through WIU Student Services. The student (4) remains responsible for contacting instructors to arrange to complete missed work as soon as possible and is (5) ultimately responsible for material covered in class.

This is not a Zoom class. I will do my best to Zoom lectures if you are in quarantine or isolation for Covid, however simply not wanting to attend class, not wanting to drive here, etc. are not reasons for joining via Zoom.

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.

Technology: 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, laptop, or tablet during class will lose 10 points per incident. Reminders will be few, and most likely embarrassing. If I see your electronics, I assume you are waiving your 10 points for that day. This is not study hall.

*****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.

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 state teaching license require all education majors to receive a grade of a "C-" or better in this course in order to meet Illinois teaching license requirements. With the university +/- grading system, receiving a "D+" or below 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, double spaced
- 1" margins on all sides
- Times New Roman or Garamond font
- Labeled with your name, date, assignment name, and class section.
- MLA style
- Uploaded to Western Online in Word or PDF format

****Handwritten assignments or screen shots of assignments will not be accepted and will result in 0 points.****

LATE ASSIGNMENTS

Your assignment is due at 11:30 p.m. on the day it is due on Western Online. All assignments will be submitted electronically, unless otherwise stated. All files must be a .docx or .pdf. **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.

Effort equals points. If you choose not to complete an assignment that is your choice. If you choose to write a half page when a full page is required, that is your choice. Please note that your grade will reflect your choices. It does not make me a “hard grader.”

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.**

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 the assigned documentary, write a reflection summary based on the questions provided and your own reaction.

Research

Daily Dirt: (20 pts) In order to be able to communicate about agriculture issues you need to stay up-to-date with what is going on in the world. Once per semester you will be responsible for leading discussion at the beginning of class with a current event that affects agriculture. These can be found on agriculture forums, newspapers, social media, etc. Email me the link ahead of time so I can share it with the class. You will provide a summary and we will discuss it as a group.

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

Bias Identification: (40 pts) Find a graphic, post, tweet, etc. that shows bias and share with the class the ways in which the bias is presented.

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

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

Persuasive Essay: (200 pts) Write a persuasive essay on the topic 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: (450 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.

Exams

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

Final Exam: (300 pts) The comprehensive final exam will cover the material presented in class by the instructor and the group presentations. Questions will include true/false, multiple choice, short answer, and essay questions.

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

ADA Compliance: In accordance with University policy and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), academic accommodations may be made for any student who notifies the instructor of the need for an accommodation. For the instructor to provide the proper accommodation(s) you must obtain documentation of the need for an accommodation through the Disability Resource Center (DRC) and provide it to the instructor. It is imperative that you take the initiative to bring such needs to the instructor's attention, as he/she is not legally permitted to inquire about such particular needs of students. Students who may require special assistance in emergency evacuations (i.e. fire, tornado, etc.) should contact the instructor as to the most appropriate procedures to follow in such an emergency. Contact Disability Resource Center (DRC) at 298-2512 for additional services.

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>.

MOVE TO ONLINE

In the event that the university moves to online instruction, or my situation requires the move to online, we will meet as a group one to two days per week. The amount of days we meet synchronously will be determined by the content being taught. If we do not meet over Zoom, you will be required to read and listen to the recorded lectures on Western Online. I will provide you with a run down of the week ahead on Sunday evening via email.

Should we move to online instruction, that does not mean that your schoolwork is a second priority to your job. School is still your job. Unless you have a family emergency that states otherwise, I do expect you to be present at all online class periods and have your work turned in on time.

For online meetings, I ask that you have your webcam on as long as your internet supports it. It is very difficult to talk to a computer of black squares for 50 minutes. Please be cognizant of your surroundings and what is going on in the background so as to not be distracting to your classmates. Keep your microphone muted unless you have a question or are called on. Questions can also be asked in the chat. The class will remain interactive and I will call on people frequently, so pay attention.

It is important that everyone remain flexible during this semester. I promise to be upfront with communication and any changes that are thrown our way. I will not add busy work to make up for class time lost if moved to remote instruction. I do expect you to be present.

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 in the manner presented. Any deviations from the syllabus will be announced as soon as possible.