

COMMUNICATING AGRICULTURAL ISSUES
AGRI 340 – Spring 2025
School of Agriculture – Western Illinois University

INSTRUCTORS

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OFFICE HOURS

M, W, TH, and F 11:00 to 11:50 a.m. or by appointment

M/W 10:00 to 10:50 am or T 10:00 to 11:50 or by appointment

CLASS TIMES AND LOCATIONS: AGRI 340 will meet on M and W in Knoblauch 306 from 12:00 to 12:50 p.m.

This is a two-semester hour lecture/discussion, writing intensive course.

EMAILS: Please include the course and section you are enrolled in in any email.

MATERIALS:

- Agri-Pulse Weekly Newsletter available at Western Online
- Articles available at Western Online

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

The goal of the AGRI 340 course is to help students develop written and oral communication skills to address current issues in agriculture.

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. Students will write approximately 30 pages during this course.

PREREQUISITES:

AGRI 220 and ENG 280

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

After taking this course, the student will be able to:

1. Demonstrate superior business writing and communication skills.
2. Understand, analyze, and effectively communicate current agricultural issues.
3. Orally present information on an agricultural issue to different audiences.
4. Write business emails, letters, reports, and presentations.

EXPECTATIONS OF STUDENTS:

Participation/ Attendance & Sitting Chart: Attendance is required and will be graded through Kahoot! Quizzes. Students' participation in class is strongly encouraged. Students are expected to read the chapter and activities assigned each week – see the course outline at the end of this document.

Absences: If at any time you have a **family emergency, funeral, illness, or any university activity (including Judging Team, AgVocators)**, please use the Online Absence Reporting System (OARS) system to report your absence (www.wiu.edu/oars). Please note that the OARS system does not excuse your absence; it merely documents it. It is still up to the instructor to excuse the absence ([see above for valid excuses](#)). I will need the email generated from this

system before class and not after. If I receive the email after class starts, the late grade policies come into effect. Excessive absences will result in failure of the course. The student remains responsible for contacting the instructor to complete missed work as soon as possible and is ultimately accountable for catching up with the material covered in class during the student's absence.

Academic Integrity: This course applies the rules and regulations outlined in the University's policy on academic integrity. See <http://www.wiu.edu/policies/acintegrity.php>. Any violation of the Academic Integrity Policy in the Student Handbook will result in automatic failure.

Plagiarism is not tolerated in this class. Works evidenced as plagiarism (accidental or willful use of someone else's words or ideas) will be penalized by a failing grade on the homework, quiz, or exam. **In addition, the instructor will follow the procedure according to the Student Academic Integrity Policy- see the link above.**

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.

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 Disability Resources in the Student Development and Success Center at 309-298-1884, disability@wiu.edu, or at 125 Memorial Hall. Please notify the instructor as soon as possible to ensure that this course is accessible to you in a timely manner.

Military/Veteran Support Statement: As a military-friendly institution, and in accordance with federal regulations and Illinois statutes, Western Illinois University has established policies and procedures to accommodate military service students. In addition to the supports available at WIU's Veterans Resource Center (wiu.edu/student_success/veterans/ 309-298-3505), veterans, members of the National Guard or Reserves, and active-duty military personnel with military obligations (e.g., deployments, training, drill) are encouraged to communicate these, in advance whenever possible, to the instructor. The Military Service Policy can be found at <https://www.wiu.edu/policies/military.php>

University values: 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/report.php. If you disclose an incident to a faculty member, the faculty member must notify the Title IX Coordinator—the complete Discrimination, Harassment, and Sexual Misconduct Policy. The policy is available at: <http://www.wiu.edu/policies/dhsm.php>.

Technical Support for Western Online:

- Provided through the Western Online Brightspace Virtual Assistant by clicking on the **Get Help! link/icon at the bottom right corner of every page** in Western Online.
- Instructions for using the Virtual Assistant can be found at https://wiu.edu/citr/home/get_help.php.
- All other technical support, including issues with enrollment in online courses, should be requested by contacting:

University Technology (uTech) Support Center

Website: http://www.wiu.edu/university_technology/

Phone: (309)298-TECH (8-8324)

University Writing Center: The University Writing Center (UWC) is your go-to resource at any stage of the writing process! Appointments are available in three formats: in-person (3rd Floor, Malpass Library or

QC Riverfront 205), online (real-time with video or chat and document sharing), and eTutoring (asynchronous feedback on an uploaded paper).

Visit uiu.mywconline.com to schedule an appointment, or call (309) 298-2814. **Spring 2025 UWC Hours at the 3rd Floor, Malpass Library:** M – Th: 9 AM - 8 PM, F: 9 AM - 4 PM, and Sun: 2 - 8 PM.

USE OF CELLULAR PHONES, SMART WATCHES, TABLETS, AND LAPTOPS:

All cell phones should be turned off before class as a courtesy to other students and the instructor. Continued disregard of this policy may result in ejection from the course. If a student needs an exception to this policy due to medical or public safety concerns, he/she should inform the instructor before class.

The use of laptops or tablets is not allowed in class unless it is required by the instructor to conduct research or any class activity related to the topic being covered. Lecture notes will be available at Western Online and must be printed in advance. **Texting or surfing the internet** is not allowed during class, and repeated violations may lead to dismissal from the course with an assigned grade of F.

TOBACCO POLICY:

Tobacco use of any kind will not be tolerated in class. This includes chewing tobacco.

IMPORTANT DATES:

Monday, Jan 20	Dr. Martin Luther King Day – No Class/ University Closed
Wednesday, Feb 12	Lincoln’s Birthday – No Class/ University Closed
Mon-Friday, Mar 10-14	Spring Break – No Class/ University Closed
Sunday, Mar 30	Last day to drop classes or withdraw from the university
Wednesday, May 07	Final Comprehensive Exam: 08:00 a.m. – 09:50 a.m.

GRADING POLICY:

The course grade will be based on the following factors, with weightings as indicated:

Writing Assignments	50%	A = 93% or above	C = 73 - 76.99%
Agri-Pulse Summary & Presentation	15%	A- = 90 - 92.99%	C- = 70 - 72.99%
Quizzes	10%	B+ = 87 - 89.99%	D+ = 67 - 69.99%
Term Project	25%	B = 83 - 86.99%	D = 63 - 66.99%
Total	100%	B- = 80 - 82.99%	D- = 60 - 62.99%
		C+ = 77 - 79.99%	F = <60%

Grade-breaking points may be lowered, but they will never be raised. They will be evaluated only after the final numerical grades are calculated.

Attention Education Majors: With the changes within the Illinois State Teaching License requirements, students must receive a grade of a "C-" or better in this course 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.

GRADING DISAGREEMENTS:

If students disagree with a particular answer, they must provide a logical reason in writing for their disagreement. This does not apply to scoring errors. All instructors are human, and occasional errors in grading will occur. Please bring any such mistakes to the instructor’s attention immediately.

ASSIGNMENTS

Writing Assignments

Students will have several writing assignments to reinforce the different topics the instructors will cover in class. Assignments will be graded on content, clarity, attention to detail and instructions, and completeness. Students will write approximately 30 pages during this course. "Revision assignments" will allow you to submit the assignment, receive feedback, revise, and resubmit for a grade.

Unless otherwise noted, all assignments should be:

- Typed, 12 pt. font, double-spaced
- 1" margin on all sides
- Times New Roman
- Labeled with your name, date, assignment name, and class section
- Cited using APA, Chicago, or Harvard style
- Uploaded to Western Online in Word (.docx) format – handwritten assignments or screenshots will not be accepted, resulting in zero points.

Attendance/ Kahoot! Quizzes and other type of quizzes (frequent but unannounced)

The quizzes will be based on the weekly Agri-Pulse Newsletter, which is available at Western Online, and any content we cover in class.

Agri-Pulse Newsletter Summary and Presentation

In each class session, one student will prepare a 5-minute PowerPoint presentation based on a previously chosen article from the Agri-Pulse Newsletter assigned during the week the student is presenting. Before the presentation, the student must submit a two-page summary of the article. Participation is highly encouraged.

Quizzes

We will have weekly quizzes related to the Agri-Pulse Newsletter, which will be uploaded to Western Online every Wednesday. A set of questions will be uploaded by Friday for students to answer. The work is individual and must show understanding. Copying and pasting the information from the Agri-Pulse Newsletter or any other source will result in a zero. The quiz will be due each Monday by 11:59 am (before our class starts).

Term Project

Term Project guidelines will be provided in class.

LATE ASSIGNMENTS

Your assignment is due at 11:59 p.m. on the day it is due on Western Online. Unless otherwise stated, all assignments will be submitted electronically. All files must be .docx documents. Late assignments will have a penalty. Assignments submitted after the third day of the due date will receive a zero in the grade book.

ACCREDITATION:

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

AGRI 340 – COURSE OUTLINE

<i>Week</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Topic/ Material</i>	<i>Term Project / Due dates</i>
1	Jan 13 – Jan 17	Syllabus & Term Project Intro PowerPoint Tools	▪ WT: Article’s theme – Jan 15
2	Jan 20 – Jan 24	Word Tools <i>Jan 20 – MLK Day – No Classes</i>	▪ ET: Article’s theme comments – Jan 20 ▪ PT: Aggie Newsletter layout first draft – Jan 24
3	Jan 27 – Jan 31	The Interview	▪ WT: Interview questions – Jan 29 ▪ ET: Article – First draft – Jan 31 ▪ PT: Aggie Newsletter layout second draft – Jan 31
4	Feb 03 – Feb 07	Paraphrasing and Summarizing In-text Citation and References	▪ WT: Article – First draft edits – Feb 03 ▪ ET: Article – Second draft revised – Feb 07 ▪ PT: Aggie Newsletter final second draft – Jan 31
5	Feb 10 – Feb 14	Headings and Subheadings <i>Feb 12 – Lincoln’s Birthday – No Classes</i>	▪ WT: Article – Final draft – Feb 10 ▪ PT: Aggie Newsletter release – Feb 16
Aggie Neck Newsletter – First Edition S25			
6	Feb 17 – Feb 21	The Survey Instrument	▪ WT: Article’s theme – Feb 17
7	Feb 24 – Feb 28	The Survey Instrument	▪ ET: Article’s theme comments – Feb 24 ▪ PT: Aggie Newsletter layout first draft – Feb 28
8	Mar 03 – Mar 07	Communicating with Graphs and Tables	▪ WT: Interview questions – Mar 05 ▪ ET: Article – First draft – Mar 07 ▪ PT: Aggie Newsletter layout second draft – Mar 07
9	<i>Mar 10 – Mar 14</i>	<i>Spring Break</i>	<i>No Classes/ No Homework</i>
10	Mar 17 – Mar 21	Critical Thinking CRAAP	▪ WT: Article – First draft edits – Mar 17 ▪ ET: Article – Second draft revised – Mar 19 ▪ PT: Aggie Newsletter final second draft – Mar 21
11	Mar 24 – Mar 28	Bias, Perspective, and Fake News	▪ WT: Article – Final draft – Mar 24 ▪ PT: Aggie Newsletter release – Mar 28
Aggie Neck Newsletter – Second Edition S25			
12	Mar 31 – Apr 04	Bias, Perspective, and Fake News	▪ WT: Article’s theme – Mar 31
13	Apr 07 – Apr 11	Communication	▪ ET: Article’s theme comments – Apr 07 ▪ PT: Aggie Newsletter layout first draft – Apr 11
14	Apr 14 – Apr 18	Email	▪ WT: Interview questions – Apr 16 ▪ ET: Article – First draft – Apr 18 ▪ PT: Aggie Newsletter layout second draft – Apr 18
15	Apr 21 – Apr 25	AI in Agriculture	▪ WT: Article – First draft edits – Apr 21 ▪ ET: Article – Second draft revised – Apr 23 ▪ PT: Aggie Newsletter final second draft – Apr 25
16	Apr 28 – May 02	AI in Agriculture	▪ WT: Article – Final draft – Apr 28 ▪ PT: Aggie Newsletter release – May 02
Aggie Neck Newsletter – Third Edition S25			
17	May 05 – May 11	Final Exam	

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