

COURSE SYLLABUS
AESC 4190 – Agricultural Ethics Seminar
Spring Semester 2009

INSTRUCTOR

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OFFICE HOURS

By appointment arranged by contacting the instructor in person, by telephone or by email.

TEXTBOOKS AND ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

No textbooks are required for this course.

An eBlog has been established as a communication forum for this course. The url is <http://agriculturaethics.blogspot.com>. Students will be identified as 'authors' on this blog which will require that each have or establish a gmail account (no cost).

CATALOG COURSE DESCRIPTION

Coverage and discussion of ethical issues in agriculture including animal rights/animal welfare, agriculture as a business/agriculture as a way of life, sustainable agriculture, (bio)technology, migrant farm workers, foreign aid, world hunger, and related topics.

PURPOSE

Agricultural Ethics is offered in fulfillment of the requirements for the Bachelor of Science at the University of Georgia. This course addresses the basic premises of undergraduate education at the University in educating and preparing future generations of practitioners, scientists and scholars; improving the understanding of our world; enhancing the preservation of our environmental resources; developing communication skills to accurately and successfully compete in our global society, and; developing individual and collaborative problem-solving skills. It will serve as a foundation for critical thought and discussion of contemporary agricultural and environmental issues.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Students successfully completing this course will:

- Develop knowledge and understanding of ethical issues as they apply to our natural environment and the agricultural and environmental sciences.
- Develop abilities to critically evaluate contemporary perspectives on human interaction with nature and mankind's impact upon environmental integrity and resources.
- Develop tolerance of diverse viewpoints on controversial issues.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND ASSESSMENT

This seminar will examine a series of global topics and issues of environmental and agricultural importance during the semester. The number of issues to be examined will be determined by the progress of the class in exploring each successive topic. Topics to be covered may be partially determined by student/class interest.

Topic Reports

All class members will collaboratively create and publish a 'position paper' or 'white paper' on each topic explored during the semester. Each topic report must be a thoughtful, concise statement that assesses the issue and the problems and provides a recommendation that reflects the opinion of the majority of the students in the class. A brief minority statement should be entered as part of the report by student(s) who do not agree with the majority opinion. The format of the topic reports might be: Summary (an abstract of the report); Background (factual evidence); Recommendation; Minority Report (if needed), and; References Cited. Each topic report will count equally towards the final grade earned for the course. Individual student's grades on each topic will be based upon the following criteria:

- *Participation/attendance.* Fifty (50) percent of each topic report grade will be based upon effective participation. This involves (1) contributing thoughtful and factual information to class discussions; (2) posting salient information, facts and observations on the topic to the class blog (<http://agriculturaethics.blogspot.com>) after EACH seminar session; (3) meaningful and significant contributions to the collaborative topic report, and; (4) class attendance. Thus, a student attending and participating in class discussions, posting contributions on the topic each week to the class blog, and contributing to the preparation and publication of the collaborative class report will earn a higher number of points (40 maximum) for each topic report, while those who miss class sessions, do not post information to the blog, and/or do not contribute to the collaborative report will be awarded lesser points to 0 for participation.
- *Report content.* Fifty (50) percent of each topic report grade will be based on report content. Maximum points will be earned with a polished, concise, thoughtfully-crafted statement of observation or opinion that is supported with factual information on the assigned topic along with a concise recommendation. Reports lacking various combinations of important report elements (i.e., precise statement, development of thought, use of supporting facts and evidence, concise recommendation that is based upon the facts, appropriate citation of references) will receive fewer points.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Class attendance and participation is critical to successfully achieving the goals of this seminar offering, thus, students are required to attend all classes for the entire semester. In the event of absences, students are responsible for all materials and information covered and assignments given. Students absent from classes will NOT be awarded attendance points on the corresponding Topic Report grade unless the absence is the result of personal illness/injury or death of a member of the immediate family. Written verification from an appropriate authority (i.e., physician) is required for these excused absences.

COURSE GRADING SCALE

A	90 to 100%
B	80 to 89%
C	70 to 79%
D	60 to 69%
F	below 60%

DISABILITIES STATEMENT

Students with a documented disability should contact the Griffin Campus Undergraduate Education Program Registrar.

ACADEMIC HONESTY

The University of Georgia seeks to promote and insure academic honesty and personal integrity among students and other members of the University Community. All students agree to abide by the Student Honor Code by signing the UGA Admission Application. This code provides, "I will be academically honest in all of my academic work and will not tolerate academic dishonesty of others." All academic work must meet the standards contained in this Code and in "A Culture of Honesty." Students are responsible for informing themselves of those standards before performing any academic work. Links for more detailed information can be found at:

<http://www.uga.edu/ovpi/honesty/acadhon.htm>.

Note: This course syllabus is a general plan for the course. It is subject to change at the discretion of the instructor in order to accommodate instructional and/or student needs. Any deviations from the syllabus will be announced by the instructor.