

AGRI 340 -- Issues in Agriculture
Fall 2009 -- Wednesday, 2:00 p.m.

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Course Description: The study of current issues in Agriculture and the development of skills to publicly address these issues.

Textbook: A Pocket Style Manual, Hacker.

Course Objectives:

1. Know and analyze current issues in today's agriculture
2. Prepare a research paper on a current issue in agriculture
3. Effectively present information on specific agricultural issues
4. Formulate a position on a current agricultural issue
5. To develop correct writing skills and abilities.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Topic</u>
8/26	Introduction, Topic selection
9/2	Writing/Speech essentials and expectations
9/9	Speaker on library resources
9/16	Convincing speeches -- letter to the Editor due
9/23	Convincing speeches -- abstracts due
9/30	Convincing speeches -- abstracts returned
10/7	Presentations I Presentations II -- peer review draft
10/14	due
10/21	Presentations III -- peer reviews handed out
10/28	Presentations IV -- journal check
11/4	Presentations V -- peer reviews handed back in
11/11	Presentations VI -- peer reviews returned to author
11/18	Presentations VII
11/25	NO class -- Thanksgiving Holiday
12/2	Presentations VIII -- final paper due
12/9	Internet Assignment

Final Exam -- Monday, 12/14 at 3:00

Grading

<u>Scale</u>	<u>Grades Based On:</u>	
A 100 - 90%	Letter to the Editor	20
B 89 - 80%	Convincing Speech	20
C 79 - 70%	Final Paper	60
D 69 - 60%	Peer Review	20
F 0 - 59%	Abstract/Outline	15
	Internet	25
	Issues Journal	40
	Presentation	45
	Attendance	<u>60</u>
	Total Points	305

Letter to the editor: As a representative of your commodity group, you have been asked by that group to write a letter representing your group's position. You are to write the letter as if you were going to send it to the Chicago Tribune -- think of your audience! It must be 500 words or less, but strongly show your group's position and why. Search the internet for arguments against your group's position and for references for your position. A hard copy and an electronic copy (**MS-Word** via email) must be handed in. You may choose from the following topics:

1. Use of GMO's in corn and soybeans
2. Use of GMO's in fruit and vegetable production
3. NAFTA
4. Use of antibiotics/growth promotants in livestock production
5. Animal Rights
6. Organic crops
7. GPS as it affects large vs. small farmers
8. Import quotas

Convincing Speech: -- The scenario for this is that your letter to the editor topic is now being debated in the state legislature. You have been asked by your commodity group to give a presentation on the proposed legislation. You can choose the particular item of legislation that has been proposed, assuming that it is realistic. The speech should be 4-5 minutes in length, with questions following.

Presentation -- You will give a presentation on the topic about which you are writing a paper. The purpose of this is to help you organize the material, improve verbal communications skills, and to receive feedback to help you better prepare your paper. This speech should be 12-15 minutes long -- be prepared to answer questions. A schedule will be distributed. However, you need to be ready one

period early so that the class can continue on schedule if someone ahead of you is unable to present.

Issues Journal: You must take notes on presentations on the various issues. For each presentation, write at least 1/2 page (content), detailing what you learned, strong and weak points of the presentation, what you agreed and disagreed with, and why (important). The journal you hand in must be typewritten with a maximum of 1 in. margins on all four sides. Hard copy only is needed.

Internet -- This will be an in-class assignment where you will be given a topic to write a short paper (about 2 pages) using the internet to gather resource material. This class session will be held in a computer lab and you will want to bring the style manual to the class session.

Final Paper: You will be assigned a topic about which you must write a paper of at least 8 pages, double spaced, with margins of 1 inch on top, bottom and sides, using 12 pt Times New Roman font. The eight pages do not include the cover, nor the bibliography. The paper must include references and follow the class text for style. The paper must include information about both sides of the controversial issue. Wikipedia CANNOT be used as a reference. Important paper components are:

Abstract/Outline: You will submit an abstract or outline clearly showing the **specific** items you plan to address. While you can certainly add items to the final paper that are not included in the abstract, all abstract items must be included in the final paper. The purpose of the abstract is to help you form your paper before you get into it too heavily. The abstract is to be submitted both in paper form and electronically through email.

Review: You will submit your initial paper both in paper form and electronically for an initial review. The purpose of the review is to analyze what you have written so far, help you develop your writing skills, and, in general, help you develop a better paper. All critique items must be addressed in the final paper unless cleared with the instructor prior to submission. The review copy is to be handed in with the final paper. When you hand in the initial review copy, have your name on the cover page, but nowhere else. Confidentiality cannot be assured if you have your name other than on the cover page. The review paper must be at least four **complete** pages in length, in addition to the cover page and reference page.

Peer Review: You will be assigned one of your classmate's papers, without their name on the paper, to review and offer editing and content suggestions. The peer revision suggestions will then be given to the writer of the paper to help that person write their final paper. Submit a hard copy and electronic copy.

Summarization: You must carefully evaluate both sides of the issue and logically summarize the material for a final overall statement.

Submission: The final submissions must be in hard form and also submitted in MS Word (no other format) via email to: JP-Carlson@wiu.edu

IMPORTANT: You must receive a passing grade on the final paper to pass the class

Excuses: Class attendance will be taken. If you are unable to attend class on a certain day, you **MUST** contact the instructor **prior** to class either in person, or via phone or email. In general, the only accepted

excuses will be for university events, personal health if a doctor's excuse is available, and verifiable family emergencies.

Deadlines for all assignments will be strictly followed in order to keep the class on schedule and not disrupt the progress of other students. A penalty of 10 points will be assessed for **each** class period or week that an assignment is late.

You **are** highly encouraged to use the Writing Center in Simpkins 341.

Harassment/derogatory remarks: While debate on the issues, questions and varied viewpoints are highly welcomed in the class, no harrassment or derogatory comments will be allowed toward any individual, or to that individual's viewpoint.

Cell phones: The ringing option must be shut off on all cell phones when in class. Ten points will be deducted for each cell phone call made or received in class.

ADA Compliance: In accordance with University policy and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), accomodations in the areas of test and note-taking may be made for any student who notifies the instructor of the need for accomodation. It is imperative that you take the initiative to bring such needs to my attention, as I am not legally permitted to inquire.

Hats off! Hats and caps will not be worn in class. Ten points per class will be deducted.

Each student needs to review the information at: <http://www.wiu.edu/policies/acintegrity.php>
It is important to especially note the section on plagiarism. Plagiarism may be grounds for failing the course.