Agri 340 – Issues in Agriculture Fall 2012

School of Agriculture – Western Illinois University

Sections 1-3

Instructor: Dr. Thomas Bruening, 321 Knoblauch Hall Office: 298-1611 Office Hours: M-F 9-10, Th 2-3:30 Send an email to make an appointment: E-mail: T-Bruening@wiu.edu.

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

Objectives:

1. Explain 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 issue.
4. Formulate a position on a current agricultural issue.
5. Enhance writing skills and abilities.

Date | Topics
--- | ---
8/22 | 8/23 | Introduction to the course and the expectations for the semester
8/29 | 8/30 | Topic Selection
9/5 | 9/6 | Speaker on library resources
9/12 | 9/13 | Writing/Speech essentials and expectations
9/19 | 9/20 | Convincing speeches
9/26 | 9/27 | Convincing speeches – abstracts due
10/3 | 10/4 | Convincing speeches – abstracts returned
10/10 | 10/11 | Presentations 1
10/17 | 10/18 | Presentations 2 – peer review draft due
10/24 | 10/25 | Presentations 3 – journal check, peer reviews handed out
10/31 | 11/1 | Presentations 4 – peer reviews handed back in
11/7  11/8  Presentations 5
11/14 11/15  Presentations 6 – peer reviews returned to author
11/21 11/22  Thanksgiving
11/28 11/29  Presentations 7
12/4  12/6  Internet Assignment – final paper due

**Textbook:** *A Pocket Style Manual, Hacker.*

**Grading Scale**

A 100-92% A- 91-90% B+ 89-88% B 87-82% B- 81-80% C+ 79-78% C 77-72% C- 71-70% D+ 69-68% D 67-62% D- 61-60% F <60%

**Grades Based On:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignments</th>
<th>Points possible</th>
<th>Your score</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Blogging</td>
<td>15</td>
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<tr>
<td>Convincing Speech</td>
<td>20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Paper</td>
<td>100</td>
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<tr>
<td>Peer Review</td>
<td>20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Abstract/Outline</td>
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<tr>
<td>Internet</td>
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<tr>
<td>Issues Journal</td>
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<tr>
<td>Presentation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Attendance and participation</td>
<td>60</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Points</strong></td>
<td><strong>340</strong></td>
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**Blogging:** Five blogs/chats will be set up for class use. You should respond to three of these with a possible score of five points each. Say something meaningful that has a sound foundation. Do not repeat what others have written. Do not be offensive or confrontational. Blogs should be completed by October 6.

**Convincing Speech:** As a representative of your commodity group, you have been asked by that group to give a presentation on 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. 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 additives in livestock production  
5. Animal Rights  
6. Organic Crops  
7. GPS as it affects large vs. small farmers  
8. Import quotas  
9. Use of corn in the production of ethanol and not food.

**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 communication skills, and to receive feedback to help you better prepare your paper. This speech should be 8-10 minutes long – be prepared to answer questions. A schedule will be distributed. **Be prepared for the day you are scheduled, even if it appears unlikely that you will present on that day. Points will be deducted if you are not prepared.**

**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. The written discussion should be double spaced. 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. You will need to write this in APA style and it will be helpful to review and reflect how to write using this style before the in class assignment.

**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, or 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 in this paper.

**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 develop your paper. 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. 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: T-Bruening@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 official 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. No assignments will be accepted more than two weeks late.

You are highly encouraged to use the Writing Center in Simpkins 341. There are also satellite locations in Thompson and Bayliss/Henninger Halls. See their webpage at: http://www.wiu.edu/cas/english_and_journalism/university_writing_center/location
Harassment/derogatory remarks: While debate on the issues, questions and varied viewpoints are highly welcomed in the class, no harassment or derogatory comments will be allowed toward any individual, or to that individual’s viewpoint.

Cell phones: Cell phones must be turned off when in class. Ten points will be deducted for each cell phone call/use made or received in class (this includes texting).

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 an assignment and also the course. Learning how to properly provide citation is a component of the course.

Staplers: Assignments with multiple pages will have five points deducted if not stapled together. I do not have a stapler that you can use.

Attention Education Majors:
The changes within the state certification require all education majors to receive a grade of a "C" or better in this course in order to meet these new requirements. With the university +/- grading system, receiving a "C-" or below will require you to retake this course or find a substitute course to meet School of Agriculture graduation requirements.

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 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.