

COMMUNICATING AGRICULTURAL ISSUES
AGRI 340 – Fall 2020
School of Agriculture - Western Illinois University

INSTRUCTOR

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Office: B21 Knoblauch (woods lab)
 Virtual Office Hours: T/TH 10-12 p.m., Friday 9-10 a.m.
 F2F by appointment

VIRTUAL OFFICE HOURS: I will be available during my virtual office hours by Google Hangouts or email. If you contact me during the office hour times I will respond to you promptly. If you would like to set-up a time to meet over Google Meets, please let me know.

CLASS TIMES AND LOCATIONS

Section I will meet Monday & Wednesday 9:00-9:50 a.m. in KH 305
 Section II will meet Monday & Wednesday 10:00-10:50 a.m. in KH 226
 Section III will meet Monday & Wednesday 11:00-11:50 a.m. in KH 305
 This is a two-semester hour lecture/discussion, **writing intensive** course.

*This class will be hybrid to some extent. Please refer to class announcements and the calendar on WO as to how we will meet. F2F=face to face in class ASynch=we will not meet in class, you will be responsible for viewing the lecture/assignment. Zoom=We will meet via zoom at class time.

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

- Facebook Account
- Twitter Account or Instagram Account
- 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. Orally present information on an agricultural issue with confidence.
4. Write business emails, letters, reports, blog posts, and presentations.
5. Feel comfortable discussing a variety of agriculture issues and help others to have a greater understanding of agriculture.

6. Question everything. Ask yourself why you do things the way you do. Strive to make improvements in agriculture.

IMPORTANT DATES

September 2-Bring a laptop to class.

Monday, September 7-No Class, Labor Day

Wednesday, October 7-No Class, Virtual Career Fair

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. 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. Students who are missing class, for any reason, must contact the faculty member and copy SDSC@wiu.edu. COVID related absences are excused. Please email me documentation if you have it.

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.

Cell Phones/laptops/tablets: 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 during class will lose 10 points per incident.

*****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. **Fifty points** will be deducted if at any time during a conversation you are harassing or demeaning towards another student with an opposing viewpoint.

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

Ag 340-Communicating Agricultural Issues

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
- 1” margins on all sides
- Times New Roman or Garamond font
- Labeled with your name, date, assignment name, and class section.
- MLA style
- Submitted to Western Online by the deadline

**Handwritten 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. 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.

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.

Facebook Posts: (50 pts) Create 5 Facebook posts about advocating for agriculture. **Two** shares of articles (not classmate's posts) are allowed, but you **must** include your own unique comments for the post. Three of your posts must be created using Canva.com. Summarize your experience. Was there engagement? Did people comment/like/share your post? Did you receive any negative comments? If so, how did you handle them? Screenshot each of your posts and comments and include with your write-up in a Word document.

Twitter/Instagram Posts: (50 pts) Create 5 Twitter OR Instagram posts advocating for agriculture. **Two** retweets (not from classmates) are allowed, but you must include your own unique comments for the post. You **must tag @WIUAg** and use the hashtag **#WIUAgLife**. If you do not tag WIUAg AND use the hashtag, you will not receive credit for that tweet. Compile screenshots into a Word document on WO. No write up is needed.

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

Research

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.

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 3-5 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: (300 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.

Agriculture Advocacy Project/College Aggies Online---This is a big maybe

Plan Proposal: (50 pts) As a group, complete a project plan proposal for your agriculture outreach project in detail. Intent, dates, times, message, supplies, budget, etc. are all needed in the proposal.

Agriculture Outreach Project: (200 pts) Develop, organize, and conduct an agriculture outreach project to educate the consuming public about the truths of food and fuel production and practice communicating with people about agriculture. Messages should be effective, informative, and reach the masses.

Ag Outreach Summary: (50 pts) Complete a summary stating what you did for your project. What was the overall message? How did you convey the message? Was it effective? What would you change if you could do it differently? Include a minimum of 10 photos from your event. Due within one week after your event is held.

Exams

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

Final Exam: (200 pts) The comprehensive final exam will cover the material presented in class by the instructor and the group presentations. The final will be a take home exam.

Extra Credit

Daily Dirt: (10 pts) Each week we will discuss a current event/ag issue. If you provide me with the topic you wish to discuss and lead the discussion in class, you will receive 10 extra credit points. You must notify me of the topic prior to class, via email.

Alumni Panel: (30 pts) Attend the Zoom Ag Alumni Panel on September 22 at 3 p.m. Notify me if you plan to attend.

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. There are countless ways to collaborate that do not require in person, face-to-face communication; please use them.

ACCREDITATION

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

UNIVERSITY POLICIES

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 the Disability Resource Center at 309-298-2512, disability@wiu.edu or in 143 Memorial Hall. Please notify the instructor as soon as possible to ensure that this course is accessible to you in a timely manner.

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>.

Policy on a Seating Chart: Contact tracing is required to control any potential outbreak of COVID 19 on campus. As such, in each class we strongly recommend a seating chart be created on the first day of a course and students should be expected to adhere to their respective seat in each course for the remainder of the semester.

Policy on Face Coverings in the Classroom: All students and faculty are required to wear a face covering at all times in the classroom.

Western Illinois University will provide two (2) cloth face coverings to all instructors and students, and replace them when necessary. Individuals may use a personally purchased alternative face covering as appropriate. Employees and students are responsible for laundering their reusable cloth face coverings. It is the responsibility of University units to ensure compliance from employees and students under their purview. Units can also refer to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidance on face coverings with regard to type and fit, wearing, and washing. Additionally, no food or drink will be allowed in the classroom.

Please find a more detailed explanation of this policy at: http://www.wiu.edu/policies/covid_facecovering.php

Disciplinary Policy on Refusal to Wear a Face Covering: Exceptions to the policy require approval by WIU's Disability Resources Center (DRC) located within the Student Development and Success Center (SDSC) and the Office of Equal Opportunity and Access.

If a student refuses to comply with the policy, and does not have appropriate approval from the DRC, instructors and University officials can request that the student leave the class or activity. If a student is found to be in repeated violation of this policy, instructors and University officials can sanction the student through the student conduct process for violating the WIU Code of Student Conduct code number 17: *"Failing to comply with the directions of or obstructing University officials or law enforcement officers acting in performance of their duties and/or failure to positively identify oneself to these persons when requested to do so."*

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