

ABUS 451: Agricultural Policy (Spring 2012)

Instructor: Dr. Eric Houk
Office Hours: Monday and Wednesday 1:00-2:00 PM, Friday 2:00-3:00 PM, and by appointment.
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Textbook (Recommended)

Knutson, Penn, Flinchbaugh, and Outlaw. *Agricultural and Food Policy*, 6th edition. Prentice Hall, 2007.

In addition to the textbook, you will be assigned other required readings. Additional reading materials will typically be available on the “Vista” site for this course, but they may also be handed out in class, made available electronically, or you will be responsible for locating and printing them yourself.

Students are responsible for the material covered in class and the material in any assigned readings. Students will receive the greatest benefit if they read the assigned readings before class.

Course Description

Domestic and international issues in U.S. agricultural food policy. A study of the major problems confronting agriculture, the process by which government formulates agricultural policy, and the socio-economic impact of current government programs. Prerequisites: ABUS 301, ECON 102

Course Objectives/Learning Goals

Students will understand the fundamental economic relationships and principles that affect agricultural markets; understand the justification for agricultural policy and the process of policy formulation; and understand the economic implications of these policies on agricultural consumers and producers.

Course Policies

Students are expected to read & adhere to the policies identified for all courses within the College of Agriculture (www.csuchico.edu/ag/assets/documents/syllabi/COACommonSyllabusPolicies.pdf) as well as all other University policies (www.csuchico.edu/catalog/cat09/08EndMaterials/02UniversityPolicies.html). Some additional policies for this course are as follows:

Behavior: Respect your classmates. Do not distract others by talking, coming into class late or leaving early, all cell phones must be turned off or silenced before coming to class.

Diversity: I want everyone to feel welcome; no disparaging remarks will be tolerated in regards to ethnicity, sex, age, religion, disability, socioeconomic background, etc.

Academic dishonesty: This is dealt with at the instructor’s discretion, with the likely penalty being an “F” for the course. All cases of Academic Dishonesty will be reported to Student Judicial Affairs. The University Catalog has more information regarding the Standards for Student Conduct.

Please ask for help if you need it. I am available outside of class.

Grades

Final grades will be based upon three exams, homework, and a paper/presentation as follows:

1. Exam 1	100
2. Exam 2	100
3. Final Exam	100
4. Paper/Presentation	100
5. Homework	50
6. <u>Attendance</u>	<u>50</u>
Total: 500 Points	

Grades will be assigned using the following scale:

93% - 100%	A
90% - 92%	A-
87% - 89%	B+
83% - 86%	B
80% - 82%	B-
77% - 79%	C+
73% - 76%	C
70% - 72%	C-
67% - 69%	D+
60% - 66%	D
Below 60%	Failure

Exams/Final Exam: Exams may involve essays, short essays, short problems, and multiple choice questions. You may use a simple calculator during exams, but no programmable calculators, laptops, or cell phones. The final exam will resemble the other exams, but it might include some cumulative material. Make-up exams will only be allowed with written verification of an unavoidable circumstance and must be approved. Make-up exams are strongly discouraged.

Paper/Presentation: You will need to demonstrate your understanding of economic principles as they relate to a current agricultural policy, problem, or issue. More information will be given at a later time.

Homework: Homework will be given occasionally throughout the semester (approx. 2-5 times), these assignments are intended to help you learn, feel free to refer to your text or ask questions as needed.

Attendance: You are expected to come prepared to class and participate in discussions. As such, attendance will be taken 10 times throughout the semester and will be worth 5 points for each day. Arriving late (after attendance has been taken), leaving early, or acting unprofessionally will result in 0 out of 5 points. In addition, if your cell phone rings during class you will lose the attendance points for that day.

Late Policy

Students are responsible for handing in assignments when they are due. Homework will be accepted late for partial credit (grade reduced by 50%) up to the date of the next exam. Late papers will automatically be reduced by 20%, with an additional reduction of 5% for every additional school day past the due date.

Computer Use

This course will require you to access and use the learning management system "Vista". Vista will be used in a variety of ways, including: course announcements, readings, assignments, etc.

Course Outline *Course outline is subject to change.

Section 1: Introduction to Agricultural Policy

Ch. 1 (Knutson, et al.): Forces of Policy Change (What is policy and why does it change)

Ch. 2 (Knutson, et al.): Rationale for Govt. Involvement in Ag and Food

Article: The Twelve Best Reasons for Commodity Programs: Why None Stands Scrutiny.

Section 2: Agrarian Ideology and Modern Agriculture

Ch. 2 (Browne, et al.): Never assume that Agrarian Values are Simple

Ch. 3 (Browne, et al.): Never Confuse Farming with Rural America

Ch. 4 (Browne, et al.): Never Base Decisions on the Average Family Farm

Section 3: The Policy Process and the Role of Economics

Ch. 2 (Knutson, et al.): Rationale for Govt. Involvement in Ag and Food

Ch. 3 (Knutson, et al.): U.S. Policy Decision Process

Role of Economics in Policy Evaluation

Exam #1: February 20, 2012 (Sections 1-3 and any additional material if covered)

Section 4: U.S. Farm Program Details

Ch. 7 (Knutson, et al.): U.S. Farm Policies

Overview of the 2008 Farm Bill (Highlights, Factsheets, and Video)

Video: "How To Get Fat Without Really Trying" ABC News Special

Ch. 5 (Browne, et al.): Never Confuse Production with Productivity

Ch. 6 (Browne, et al.): Never Confuse Farm Prices with Farmers' Income

Exam #2: April 11, 2012 (Section 4 and any additional material if covered)

Section 5: Limited Resources and Environmental Policies

Ch. 8 (Knutson, et al.): Living with Limited Resources (Land, Water, Biological Diversity)

Ch. 9 (Knutson, et al.): Environmental Policy

Ch. 8 (Browne, et al.): Never Equate Good Farming with a Healthy Environment

Section 6: International Trade Policies

Ch. 4 (Knutson, et al.): Geopolitical Centers of Influence

Ch. 5 (Knutson, et al.): World Trade Organization

Ch. 6 (Knutson, et al.): U.S. Trade and Development Policy

Ch. 7 (Browne, et al.): Never Forget That U.S. Ag Depends on the World Economy

Section 7: Food Safety and Nutrition Policies

Ch. 10 (Knutson, et al.): Food Safety and Security Policy

Ch. 11 (Knutson, et al.): Food Assistance and Nutrition Policy

Ch. 9 (Browne, et al.): Never Assume Farm Programs are Food Programs

Ch. 10 (Browne, et al.): Never Assume That a Government Program will do what it says

Ch. 12 (Knutson, et al.): Future of Agriculture and Food Policy

Final Exam: See final exam schedule (Sections 5-7 and any additional material if covered)

Welcome to ABUS 451. I hope you have a great semester, good luck.