

# ABUS 211

## Agricultural Sales and Consulting

(3 credits)

Wednesday 5:00 p.m. to 7:50 p.m., Plumas Hall Room 312

Fall 2008

**Instructor:** Marnie Dalton  
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**Office Hours:** Wednesday, 4:30 pm to 5:00 pm **and by appointment**  
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“Good listeners generally make more sales than good talkers”

**- B. C. Holwick -**

**Course Overview:** The role of salespeople in agriculture has often been misunderstood. The stereotypical image of a salesperson is often one a pushy, fast-talking individual who is not interested in the buyers welfare, but only in making a sale. In reality, the successful agribusiness salesperson is a highly trained individual who is very concerned with the needs of their clients. Consequently, agriselling is now viewed as an integral part of agricultural marketing and the technical communication necessary between agribusiness and the customer.

The role of a salesperson in an agribusiness is to act as a liaison between the company and the customer, with the ultimate goal being to satisfy the customer. Salespeople are first and foremost problem solvers (this is the consulting aspect). Those that can identify the needs of the customer and satisfy them will become successful.

**Course Objectives:** Upon completion of this course students will be able to:

1. To learn the purpose of selling, and its role, in agriculture.
2. To understand the many applications of selling, the seller-buyer relationship, and the selling process in agriculture.
3. To develop the communications skills to become an effective consultant and salesperson in agriculture
4. To develop the skills necessary to handle the responsibilities of direct selling.

**Text:** *AgriSelling: Principles and Practice* by W. David Downey, Marilyn Holschuh, and Michael A. Jackson. Doane Agricultural Services Company, St. Louis, Missouri, 1999.

Other readings as assigned.

**Grading:** Evaluation of a student's performance will be based upon three exams, a sales project, a salesperson interview, and other evaluation materials. **No extra credit or bonus assignments will be assigned or allowed.** Grade distributions will be as follows:

<b>Mid-Term Exams (2 @ 15% each)</b>	<b>30%</b>
<b>Comprehensive Final</b>	<b>15%</b>
<b>Sales Person Interview</b>	<b>15%</b>
<b>Group Sales Project</b>	<b>30%</b>
<b>Class Participation/Homework</b>	<b><u>10%</u></b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100%</b>

NOTE: The instructor reserves the right to add, remove or alter any of the evaluation materials in this class depending on circumstances. Any changes will be discussed during class. However, no material that has been completed and graded will be discarded for overall grading purposes.

Please feel free to discuss your grade on an exam or assignment with the instructor at anytime, **except during class time**. If you have a concern about a grade on an assignment, exam, etc. it will not be discussed during class for two reasons: 1-it takes time away from the class, and 2-it bothers other students who do not care about your

individual situation. Occasionally a scoring mistake will be made--professors are human, too. If you feel that you deserve more credit than you received, please see me and we will schedule an appointment. **This policy will be very strictly adhered too.** Also, if you have concerns, raise them sooner rather than later. Students have one week from the time a grade is posted to discuss their grade. Also, due to university policy regarding privacy issues, class grades cannot be posted in a public manner. If you are unsure of your current grade in the class contact the instructor personally. When discussing your course grade prior to the posting of final course grades, it will presented in terms of *generalities*. This is because the instructor does not know what the final grade will be until the final scores have been determined and posted. Students should not think they have a “guaranteed” grade, based on a generalization. Final grading will be based upon an overall class scale broken down, approximately, as follows:

<u>Percentage Earned</u>	<u>GRADE</u>
93.0% +	A
90.0 - 92.9%	A-
87.0 - 89.9%	B+
83.0 - 86.9%	B
80.0 - 82.9%	B-
77.0 - 79.9%	C+
73.0 - 76.9%	C
70.0 - 72.9%	C-
67.0 - 69.9%	D+
60.0 - 66.9%	D
0 - 59.9%	F

Because the instructor uses an overall class scale to determine the final grades, there are no grading scales utilized on exams, homeworks, term papers, etc. What you see is what you get.

Some of the grading on **all** assignments and exams will be dependent upon clarity and style. **Neatness, legibility, spelling, and proper grammar** are important components of written communication. **Answers and assignments that are difficult to read and/or follow will be graded as incorrect.** If I cannot read or understand the answer, then I cannot tell if it is correct. Except for in-class work, all assignments are expected to be typed as much as possible (i.e., mathematics, formulas, graphs, etc. may be neatly hand written).

Also, not having a copy of the textbook is not a viable excuse for poor performance in this class. The text is required. If you do not want to purchase a copy, borrow one from somebody.

In order to receive full credit, all assignments must be turned in at the beginning of class on their due date unless otherwise noted by the instructor. **Late assignments will not be accepted, period.** This policy will be strictly adhered to. If you have difficulty in providing me with an assignment on time, let me know **prior** to the due date and time and if, in my view, the excuse is reasonable we can discuss alternative arrangements. I will not be contacting you about late or missing assignments. You have my office address and phone number, my home phone number, and my e-mail address. Use them if you need to, do not wait until class time to tell me about a late assignment, by then it is too late.

**Exams:** The mid-term exams will be non-comprehensive, covering only material since the previous exam. The final exam is comprehensive. The structure of the exams is likely to be a combination of short answer and essay questions, but they can be of any format. Material from lectures, field trips, handouts, readings, discussions, videos, guest lecturers, etc. will be fair game for an exam. **Basically anything that goes on in the classroom or is assigned (this includes the readings) has the potential to show up on an exam.** The mid-term exams will be given during class time. The final exam will be given during finals week. **ALL** exams must be taken to receive a passing grade in the course. See the accompanying list below for tentative exam dates:

<b>EXAM 1:</b>	<b>October 1, 2008</b>
<b>EXAM 2:</b>	<b>November 5, 2008</b>
<b>FINAL:</b>	<b>December 17, 2008</b>

There are NO MAKE-UP EXAMS. You may make arrangements to take the exam prior the scheduled exam with my approval. **This policy will be strictly adhered to.** Ignorance to the scheduling of an exam is not a viable excuse.

**Interview:** The assignment involves interviewing a salesperson and observing them in action. You will have to meet with your salesperson at least twice during the semester. The assignment consists of a memo, two business letters, and written report of your interview and observations. The salesperson interview (i.e., the written report) must be completed to receive a passing grade in the course. Details are in the appendix to the syllabus. The assignment is worth 15% of your grade.

**Sales Call:** Early in the semester the class will be broken into groups. All groups will be selling to the same client. When the groups are assigned, the instructor will provide a list of potential sales products/services and each group will select a product or service from the list.

During the course of the semester we will be learning how to properly construct a sales portfolio and presentation. Each group will be required to develop and submit a proposal for their group's product or service. The portfolio consists of the following five areas:

1. **Prospecting profile**
2. **Long-term goals and objectives**
3. **Short-term goals and objectives**
4. **Outline of sales presentation**
5. **Sales materials**

Then, using the presentation developed, the group will present their product to the customer this will be 2 to 3 judges from the industry. Please remember, you are an agribusiness salesperson professional during the sales presentation. Be professional and dress appropriately, talk appropriately and act appropriately.

Each student within a group will receive the same grade for their written presentation and for the presentation given to the customer. In addition a peer evaluation will be factored in to the final grade.

Students are encouraged to work together on any out-of-classroom assignment, but independent representation is necessary to receive credit (except, of course, on group assignments). Due dates and time will be given when the assignment is assigned. Only a hard copy submission of assignments is allowed. Students are strongly encouraged to keep a folder of all completed and graded work and to have personal copies of all assignments. NOTICE: all written assignments may be subjected to being submitted/verified/analyzed via TURNITIN.COM.

All due dates and time for assignments, exams, etc. and are tentative and subject to change depending on circumstances. The dates for the exams will not be changed except under very extenuating circumstances. Unless noted, work on in-class assignments (exams and quizzes) are to be completely independent.

**Attendance:** All students are expected to attend class and behave in a professional manner. Disruptive behavior will not be tolerated and will be subject to University policy (see *Schedule of Courses*). Be considerate of your fellow

students and limit behavior such as excessive talking, etc. Cell phones, beepers, etc. are prohibited during class and visitors/guests need to be approved. The instructor has no problem taking points off your final grade for disruptive behavior.

Attendance is required and highly recommended. You are all adults who can make your own decisions. Regular attendance is important to achieve a deeper understanding of the material. Classes will not be dismissed the days before or after school vacations and holidays. Students are expected to be present and prepared before the lecture (i.e., read the text, handouts, etc.). You are encouraged to ask questions at any time and expect to be called upon to answer questions. **The student is responsible for any class material or announcements missed due to absences (excused or not).** You have a variety of ways to contact me if you are going to miss a class (phone, office, e-mail).

**Academic Honesty:** Students are responsible for the honest completion and representation of their work, for the appropriate citation of sources, and for the respect of others' academic endeavors. Students who violate these standards (e.g., cheating and plagiarism) must be confronted and must accept the consequences of their actions. The university's policies on academic dishonesty will be strictly enforced. It is the student's responsibility to know and understand the CSUC Academic Honesty Policy. The university's policy is provided in their catalog as well as via its web site. Ignorance of university policies and to what constitutes academic dishonesty are not acceptable excuses in this matter. If there is evidence that the student has been involved in any form of academic dishonesty, they will receive an "F" grade for the course, be locked from WebCT, and a report will be provided to Student Judicial Affairs for further action. For more information visit the following CSU, Chico website: <http://www.csuchico.edu/sjd/integrity/> .

**Religious Accommodation:** Students will receive reasonable accommodation of religious beliefs with regards to scheduling of examinations and other course requirements. Prior notification is required.

**Disabilities:** Students will receive the accommodations needed to ensure equal access to educational opportunities, programs and activities in the most integrated setting appropriate. Students with concerns are required to consult the instructor and university as soon as possible. Disability Support Services can be contacted at 530-898-5959 or [dboyes@csuchico.edu](mailto:dboyes@csuchico.edu) (Debbie

Boyes). Additional information can be found at the following website:  
<http://www.csuchico.edu/dss/index.htm> .

## ACADEMIC RIGOR AT CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, CHICO

Academic rigor means the consistent expectation of excellence and the aspiration to significant achievement. It should pervade the entire atmosphere of the University--teaching and learning, curriculum, evaluation of student and faculty, outreach, admissions, advising, and student life.

### **Rigorous Teaching**

Rigorous faculty are role models for the behaviors and accomplishments the University seeks to promote. They demonstrate a high level of professionalism and commitment to the University and to their discipline and inspire in students an excitement about learning. Guiding students toward excellence, they

- Communicate high expectations and demonstrate them through a demanding syllabus and well-prepared classes.
- Encourage student-faculty contact in and out of class and offer conscientious advising and consistent availability.
- Encourage collaboration and active learning, fully involving students in the learning experience.
- Provide students early, prompt, and frequent feedback and develop appropriate assessment strategies.
- Emphasize time on task, clearly communicate time required for learning, make it clear that full-time study is full-time work, and design learning experiences so that homework matters.
- Develop approaches and strategies geared to diverse talents and ways of learning, while maintaining high standards of accountability.
- Reduce opportunities to engage in academic dishonesty and challenge its occurrence.

### **Rigorous Learning**

Rigorous students are part of the equation of rigorous teaching and learning. A rigorous education is vigorous, difficult, deeply satisfying work, and it requires a lifestyle conducive to achieving excellence. College is not a temporary diversion or a period of entertainment, but a fundamental piece of student character, citizenship, and employment future. A diploma and good grades from a demanding institution count for something. Rigorous students

- Set high personal standards, develop a strong sense of purpose, come to class well-prepared, and complete assignments on time.
- Develop an effective relationship with the instructor, in and outside of class, and make the most of University advising and other services.
- Treat fellow students and the classroom environment with complete respect. Give each class full attention and participation. Do not miss class, arrive late, or leave early.
- Accept continuing responsibility for learning and for grades earned.
- Approach each class in a professional manner, as if the class were real employment. Treat a full-course load as full-time work and spend no less time on it. Determine exactly what is expected.
- Experiment with all teaching and learning strategies used in classes, and also determine which work best for them.
- Demonstrate complete honesty and integrity.

## INTERVIEW WITH A REAL WORLD SALESPERSON

This assignment involves spending time with a real world salesperson. You are required to choose a salesperson to interview and observe in action. It is preferred that you choose a person who is not a family member or significant other and who is preferably is in some area of agriculture. This person can be from your hometown, Chico, or any other place as long as you will have access to this person at least twice during the semester.

The first session with your salesperson will be to interview him/her about the profession of sales (why did you become a salesperson, what do you like about being a salesperson, what advice would you have for someone pursuing a sales career, what qualities are most important in a salesperson, what is one of your best/worst sales experience, what are the negatives of being a salesperson, etc.)

The second session will be traveling or sitting with your salesperson on an actual sales call. In this session your assignment is to both interview the salesperson and witness the salesperson's selling process. How is the salesperson's process similar to what we discussed in class, how is it different, are there areas for potential improvement, did you recognize the stages of the selling process, what does your salesperson do with respect to prospecting, sales planning, building rapport, identifying needs, gaining commitment, follow up, etc. Timing and logistics may not allow you to sit on or travel with the salesperson on an actual sales call. If not, you will have to rely upon a second interview, but try as hard as you can to witness an actual sales call. It will be worth your time.

You are required to complete a paper describing your experiences including questions posed, answers, sales techniques or hints, advice, funny or special stories, etc. The paper must be typed. They should be doubled-spaced, with 12-point font, one-inch margins, and include a cover page (example included in appendix). There is a strict 8-page limit on the paper. Failure to pass in a paper will result in failure in the course.

### Deadlines

- September 10, 2008** Turn in typed, one page memo indicating who your salesperson is including the person's name, company name, business address and phone number. Also include a brief summary of the type of company, it's products and services. length of time the person has been in sales, etc. **The portion of the assignment is worth 5 points.**
- October 1, 2008** Contact the salesperson and secure their willingness to be interviewed. Turn in a copy of your typed-written thank and confirmation letter. Be sure to include the date, time, place of the meeting, plus where and how to be contacted if plans change, and any other special information. **This portion of the assignment is worth 5 points.**
- November 5, 2008** Turn in a copy of the thank you and confirmation letter for the sales call visit/second interview. **This portion of the assignment is worth 5 points.**
- December 3, 2008** Final paper due. **This portion of the assignment is worth 100 points.**

Do not panic about finding a salesperson. I have never had a student not find a salesperson to work with on this project. Just keep trying. It will be easier than you think, most salespersons are very outgoing and willing to help (probably why they are salespersons to begin with). Also, the dates are **DEADLINES!!!**

**INTERVIEW WITH MRS. BRENNEN**

Prepared for

ABUS211 – Agricultural Sales and Consulting

for

Marnie Dalton

By

Kevin P. Hardwick

December 8, 2006

**MEMORANDUM**

**DATE:** September 15, 2006  
**TO:** Melissa Kowalski  
**FROM:** Marnie Dalton  
**RE:** Memo Format

Proper business communications is essential in the real world, regardless of your career path. One common form of communication is the use of memos or memorandums. The format illustrated here is the preferred one for this class. Do not forget to initial your memos (by your name), indicating you have read and approved the memo.

## A Example of a Business Letter

Marnie Dalton  
400 West First Street  
College of Agriculture  
California State University, Chico  
Chico, CA 95929-0310

October 20, 2006

Irene M. Seller  
Widgets and Gidgets, Inc.  
742 W. Northridge Ave.  
Willows, CA 95988

Dear Ms. Seller:

I would to thank you for willingness to allow me to interview you for my Agricultural Sales and Consulting class. As part of the class requirements we are asked to meet with a salesperson in order to provide a “real world” perspective on the principles discussed in class, as well as the selling process itself.

As you and I agreed, we will meet Friday, November 2, 2006 at 3:00p.m. at your office. If this information is incorrect or if we need to change plans please contact me. You may reach me at 530-898-4146.

Thanks again for your assistance.

Sincerely,

(Do not forget to sign your letters)

Marnie Dalton

## Planned Schedule for ABUS211, Fall 2008

Unit	Material	Readings
<b>I</b>	Introduction To Class Importance Of Sales <b>August 27, 2008</b>	
	What Is Selling? <b>August 27, 2008</b>	Ch. 1
	The Sales Profession <b>September 3, 2008</b>	Ch. 2 & 3
<b>II</b>	The Buying Decision <b>Sept 10<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup></b>	Ch. 4, 5, & 6
<b>III</b>	Sales Process: Selling With A Strategy <b>September 24, 2008</b>	Ch. 8
	Sales Process: Prospecting <b>October 1, 2008</b> <b>MIDTERM EXAM I</b>	Ch. 9
	Sales Process: Planning <b>October 8, 2008</b>	Ch. 10
	Sales Process: The Sales Call – Opening And Building Rapport <b>October 15, 2008</b>	Ch. 11
	Sales Process: The Sales Call – Identifying Needs <b>October 22, 2008</b>	Ch. 12
	Sales Process: The Sales Call – Presenting Your Value <b>October 29, 2008</b> <b>MIDTERM EXAM II</b>	Ch. 13
	Sales Process: The Sales Call – Objections <b>November 5, 2008</b>	Ch. 14
	Sales Process: The Sales Call – Closing <b>November 12, 2008</b>	Ch. 15
<b>IV</b>	After The Sale <b>November 19, 2008 (Thanksgiving Break)</b>	Ch. 16
	The Market System <b>December 3, 2008</b>	Ch. 7

\* Dec 10, 2008 Group Presentation to Customer

\* Dec 17, 2008 Comprehensive Final Exam