Course Syllabus

ABUS 415 - Agricultural Price Analysis

Course Description: This is an upper undergraduate level course in Agricultural Price Analysis. The course integrates economic theory with empirical approaches to develop the basic analytical and decision making skills required in agribusiness profession.

Prerequisites: ABUS 301 and MATH 105. Students are expected to have basic knowledge of statistics and algebra. Students without the above background should be prepared to work hard in the early part of the course.

Term: Fall 2015

Meeting Time and Place: 9:00–9:50 A.M. (MoWe 321 Plumas Hall, Fr 303 Plumas Hall.)

Instructor: Dr. Kishore Joseph

Office Hours and Contact Information: MoWe 10:00 A.M.–12:00 P.M., and by appointment. Office: 219 Plumas Hall, E-mail: kjoseph5@csuchico.edu, Phone: 530-898-5723

Course Learning Objectives: After having completed the course students will be able to empirically assess the critical factors that affect the demand and supply of agricultural products, analyze how competitive market equilibrium is established, how supply and demand interact within various market levels to determine prices, how stocks, international trade, and product quality affect prices, identify the spatial price relationships among markets, and learn the basics of price trends, seasonality, and forecasting. Students will also learn price formation in imperfectly competitive markets, focusing on concepts of vertical coordination and contracting.


Blackboard Learn: PowerPoint presentations, homework assignments, and additional readings will be posted on Blackboard Learn. Students are responsible for monitoring the Blackboard Learn class page for updates.

Computer Software: The class will require extensive work with MS-Excel. You may need a flash drive.

Grade Policy: Final grades are determined based on: 4 homework assignments for 75 points each (30%), 1 announced quiz for 100 points (10%), a mid-term exam for 250 points (25%), and a final comprehensive exam for 350 points (35%).
Grades will be assigned as follows:

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<tr>
<th>Percentage Range</th>
<th>Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>93% - 100%</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90% - 92%</td>
<td>A-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>87% - 89%</td>
<td>B+</td>
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<tr>
<td>83% - 86%</td>
<td>B</td>
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<tr>
<td>80% - 82%</td>
<td>B-</td>
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<tr>
<td>77% - 79%</td>
<td>C+</td>
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<td>73% - 76%</td>
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<td>70% - 72%</td>
<td>C-</td>
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<td>65% - 69%</td>
<td>D+</td>
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<tr>
<td>60% - 64%</td>
<td>D</td>
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<tr>
<td>Below 60%</td>
<td>Failure</td>
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I will assign and grade 5 homeworks and use the 4 best homework grades for final grading. Exam questions may include multiple choices, short answers, numerical problems, interpretation of regression outputs, and mathematical and graphical analysis based on the study materials covered in the class. If you have issues with your grade at any stage of the course discuss it with me first.

Course Management/Policies: Students are expected to read and adhere to all course policies found in the College of Agriculture Common Course Policies found at:

Attendance Policy: Students are expected to attend classes regularly and are responsible for all material discussed in the class including homeworks assigned on days classes are missed. In case of an excused absence, the instructor should be notified in advance. In absentia a soft copy of the homework assignment may be sent to the instructor’s e-mail. Make-up assignments or tests will only be offered on case-by-case basis at the discretion of the instructor.

Homework: There will be 5 weekly homework assignments. The homework assignments may involve the analysis of sample data using computer software to answer questions on commodity price behavior. You may work in groups of 2 - 3 students to complete the homework assignment. However, each student will turn in a separate hard copy of the homework. Homework assignments will contain specific instructions on how to report your work. A total of 20% of the grade for each homework (15 points) may be allotted to clarity and brevity in reporting. Homework handed out in a week is due on the Friday of the following week before class. Late homework assignments will not be accepted.
Extra Help: Do not hesitate to come to my office during office hours or by appointment to discuss a homework problem or any aspect of the course. Students are recommended to analyze the problem carefully before seeking assistance from the instructor. When possible, students are encouraged to meet the instructor in groups. When requesting help or clarification define the question(s) clearly and make sure you clarify your doubts before you leave. When using e-mail to contact the instructor, please add ABUS 415 before the subject.

Expected Student Behavior: All class participants are expected to exhibit respectful behavior to other students and the instructor. Students may not read other materials nor should indulge in personal discussions with peers during class hours. Failure to adhere to above requirements may result in a 10-point penalty per occurrence.

University Policies and Campus Resources

i. Dropping and Adding
You are responsible for understanding the policies and procedures about add/drops, academic renewal, etc. found at: http://www.csuchico.edu/catalog/. Students should be aware of the new deadlines and penalties for adding and dropping classes.

ii. Academic Integrity
Students are expected to be familiar with the University's Academic Integrity Policy. Your own commitment to learning, as evidenced by your enrollment at California State University, Chico, and the University’s Academic Integrity Policy requires you to be honest in all your academic course work. Faculty members are required to report all infractions to the Office of Student Judicial Affairs. The policy on academic integrity and other resources related to student conduct can be found at: http://www.csuchico.edu/sjd/integrity.shtml.

iii. Campus Policy in Compliance with the American Disabilities Act
If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, or if you need to make special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please make an appointment with me as soon as possible, or see me during office hours. Students with disabilities requesting accommodations must register with the DSS Office (Disability Support Services) to establish a record of their disability. Special accommodations for exams require ample notice to the testing office and must be submitted to the instructor well in advance of the exam date.

iv. Student Services
Student services are designed to assist students in the development of their full academic potential and to motivate them to become self-directed learners. Students can find support for services such as skills assessment, individual or group tutorials, subject advising, learning assistance, summer academic preparation and basic skills development. Student services information can be found at: http://www.csuchico.edu/current-students.
v. Disability Services
If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability or chronic illness, or if you need to make special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please make an appointment with me as soon as possible, or see me during office hours. Please also contact Disability Support Services (DSS) as they are the designated department responsible for approving and coordinating reasonable accommodations and services for students with disabilities. DSS will help you understand your rights and responsibilities under the Americans with Disabilities Act and provide you further assistance with requesting and arranging accommodations. The Disability Support Services website is http://www.csuchico.edu/dss.

vi. Student Learning Center
The mission of the Student Learning Center (SLC) is to provide services that will assist CSU, Chico students to become independent learners. The SLC prepares and supports students in their college course work by offering a variety of programs and resources to meet student needs. The SLC facilitates the academic transition and retention of students from high schools and community colleges by providing study strategy information, content subject tutoring, and supplemental instruction. The SLC is online at: http://www.csuchico.edu/slc. The University Writing Center has been combined with the Student Learning Center.

Tentative Course Outline:

Section I
Data and Sources
Basics of Data Analysis
Announced Quiz (Monday, September 14th in class)
Demand and Supply
Simple and Multiple Regression Analysis
Mid-Term Exam (Monday, October 19th in class)

Section II
Marketing Margins
Stocks and International Markets
Price Variation across Space
Price Variation through Time
Product Quality
Monopoly
Imperfect Competition
Vertical Coordination and Contracting in Agriculture
Final Exam (TBD)

Topics covered in the course may be adjusted based on time and student interest at the discretion of the instructor.
Other Useful References:


