ABUS 451: Agricultural Policy (Fall 2015)

Instructor: Dr. Eric Houk
Office Hours: M, W, F 9:00 AM – 10:00 AM; T/Th 9:00 – 9:30 AM and by appointment.
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Textbook (Recommended)

In addition to the textbook, you will be assigned other required readings. Additional reading materials will typically be available on the “Blackboard Learn” 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 Learning Objectives/Goals
- Students will understand the fundamental economic relationships & principles that affect agricultural markets.
- Students will understand the basic justification for agricultural policy and the process of policy formulation.
- Students will understand the economic implications of agricultural policies on consumers, producers and taxpayers.

Course Policies
- Behavior: Respect your classmates. Do not distract others by talking, reading, coming into class late or leaving early, and silence all cell phones before entering the classroom. In addition, you are expected to follow all of the guidelines established under the “Standards for Student Conduct”.
- Diversity: I want everyone to feel welcome in class; therefore no disparaging remarks will be tolerated in regards to ethnic background, sex, age, religion, disability, socioeconomic background, educational background, etc.
- Read the syllabus and course outline to be aware of all requirements and deadlines.
- Academic Dishonesty (plagiarizing, cheating, or helping someone else violate the standards of academic behavior): will be dealt with at the instructor’s discretion, with the likely penalty being an “F” for the course. The incident will also be reported to the student affairs disciplinary office for additional actions as outlined in your student handbook.
- 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. Attendance 50

Total: 500 Points

Grades will be assigned using the following scale:

<table>
<thead>
<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>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>83% - 86%</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80% - 82%</td>
<td>B-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>77% - 79%</td>
<td>C+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>73% - 76%</td>
<td>C</td>
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<tr>
<td>70% - 72%</td>
<td>C-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>67% - 69%</td>
<td>D+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60% - 66%</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Below 60%</td>
<td>Failure</td>
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</tbody>
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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 “Blackboard Learn”. Blackboard Learn will be used in a variety of ways, including: course announcements, readings, assignments, etc.
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Course Outline

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.

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

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: September 25, 2015 (Sections 1-3 and any additional material if covered)

Section 2

U.S. Farm Program Details
- Ch. 7 (Knutson, et al.): U.S. Farm Policies
  - Overview of the 2008 and 2014 Farm Bills (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: November 6, 2015 (Section 4 and any additional material if covered)

Section 3

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

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

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.

*Course outline is subject to change.