Syllabus
ABUS 321 – Agribusiness Management
College of Agriculture California State University, Chico

Term: FALL 2017

Classroom Section 1: --- PLMS 303 on M W F --- 12:00 Noon
Classroom Section 3: --- O’Connell 121 on M W F --- 9:00 AM

Instructor: Dr. Patrick D. O’Rourke
Office: Siskiyou Rm 129
Cell Phone: ________________________________
e-mail: pdorourke@csuchico.edu
Office Hours: ________________________________

Course and Catalog Description:
The application of economic and management principles to the planning, control, and organization of agribusiness firms. Discussion and/or doing LP applications, decision trees, inventory control, and equipment replacement. 3 hours lecture. Prerequisites: ABUS 101 or equivalent.

READINGS AND TEXTBOOK:

REQUIRED:
Subscription (with Student Discount) to Wall Street Journal (WSJ).
Instructor will provide subscription instructions no later than the end of week 1 of the semester. Subscription to both print and electronic versions with proof satisfactory to instructor is worth 50 points toward your grade this semester. The WSJ will let me know when you have submitted your subscription and when you have paid for the subscription. Make the most of this opportunity because I want you to be very successful in your chosen career and life path.

Required Readings: ABUS 321 Handouts and Readings will be posted on BlackBoard, emailed, or distributed in hard copy. Printing of readings is a good idea for more complicated readings. Students are responsible for all reading materials as assigned.

Optional (Not Required) Supplementary Backup Reading:
COURSE OBJECTIVES: The overall objective of this course is to help you develop the appropriate managerial and decision-making tools that are needed in agricultural business. In addition to learning basic managerial skills, students will learn how to measure management performance, improve management skills, and how to better understand the financial condition of the business. Throughout the course, we will illustrate the role and importance of management decisions in agriculture and give you the opportunity to use the principles, tools and concepts discussed during class to solve problems that reflect real life.

Upon the successful completion of this course, students will …

✓ Be able to understand the information contained in Income Statements and Balance Sheets, apply that knowledge to making business management decisions, and apply that knowledge in analyzing and evaluating business performance, especially sustainable profitability.
✓ Be able to understand and apply the Volume-Cost analysis model to ascertain a business’s breakeven and profit goal volumes and the impacts of changes in product prices and business expenses on both of those volumes.
✓ Be able to calculate, understand and apply the price elasticity of demand for a product/service from data points representing the demand schedule in price-quantity space.
✓ Be able to understand and apply:
  • cash budgeting tools in analyzing and evaluating business performance, especially the cash needs of a business.
  • inventory management tools to better management of inventories.
  • time value of money tools and their use in estimation of the “Net Present Value” of business investments.

Some Course Policies and Practices:
Exams/Final Exam: Exams may involve essays, short essays, short quantitative problems, and multiple choice questions. 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.
Assignments: Assignments will be given throughout the semester, they are intended to help you learn and apply the course material. Most of these will be take-home assignments, but some may be done in class.
Attendance: You are expected to come prepared to each class and be willing to participate in discussions. As such, attendance will be taken 10 times throughout the semester and may be worth 5 points for each day.
Classroom Environment: I want everyone to feel welcome; no disparaging remarks will be tolerated in regards to ethnicity, sex, age, religion, disability, socioeconomic background, etc. Above all else you will 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.

MODUS OPERANDI:
There will be regular quizzes and exercises utilized to highlight and reinforce the important aspects of reading assignments. Later in the semester each student will complete a short report called the “Business Success Report” === more on that later Participation is very important.

MANAGEMENT OF PROSTAR AGIBUSINESS:
Students may be assigned to manage a simulated business in selected markets or report on a business. Each student manager will read, study, analyze the history and market of the simulated agribusiness and will manage that firm in competition with firms managed by other students. Students will develop critical skills in analytical thinking, financial analysis, and communication.

Grades (Tentative)
Final grades will be based upon the following:

1. Subscription (Instructor Approved) to WSJ 50
2. Exam 1 100
3. Exam 2 100
4. Business Success Report 50
5. Final Exam 100
6. Assignments and Quizzes (5 to 10) X 25 125 - 250
7. Participation and ProStar 100

Total: 625 to 750 Points
Grades will be assigned using the following scale:

90% - 100%  A  60% - 69%  D
80% - 89%  B  Below 60%  F
70% - 79%  C

*Ask for help if you need it: I am available outside of class.*

**Anticipated Time/Study Requirements**

To be successful in this course, a student should expect to spend between five to eight hours per week in class and working on readings and other activities related to this course. It sounds like a lot, but the time will go VERY quickly. I want to help you stay on track – if you get behind, you may find it difficult to find the time to catch up.

**Draft – Tentative BEGINNING Schedule ABUS 321 FALL 2017**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>TOPIC</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 and 2</td>
<td>Course Introduction, Income Statements and Balance Sheets and Profitability</td>
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<tr>
<td>3 and 4</td>
<td>Break-Even or Volume-Cost Analysis</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Price Elasticity of Demand</td>
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| 6 | **FIRST EXAM**  
Inventory Management |
| TBA |

**BUSINESS SUCCESS REPORT (BSR) PROJECT**

**DUE DATE:** October 20, 2017

Your assignment is to interview a successful leader/decision maker from a successful business and write a report of the results of that interview. Follow the guidelines below in conducting this assignment.

**INSTRUCTIONS:**

1. Identify a business that you think is financially successful.
2. Find out who the chief decision-maker is, such as the CEO, Chairman, President, General Manager or sole proprietor.
3. Interview the chief decision maker in person or over the phone, with the objective of getting their answers to the following three questions:

   **I.** What actions, approaches, or decisions have you and your business adopted, which you believe are most responsible for your business’s current and future financial success?

   **II.** What would you suggest are the two or three most important skills or areas of study I should master in order to become a successful manager in the future?

   **III.** What would you say are the most important characteristics or attributes someone should have to be hired by you?

4. Be sure to explain to the interviewee that you are doing a report for this class and thank them for their time. Send a thank you note after the interview.
5. Write a report of the results of your interview. The report should be titled **BUSINESS SUCCESS REPORT PROJECT** with a subtitle containing your name, the name of the business and the name of the person you interviewed. 

6. The report should contain three sections, one for each of the questions given above.
7. Each section should contain the question and your report of the interviewee’s response. The total report is should be no longer than three typed pages.