

# **AGR 486 — Agriculture and Government Programs Fall 2007**

## **Syllabus ▪ General Course Information ▪ Calendar**

### **Time & Location**

Monday and Wednesday 11:00-12:20 PM THOM 217

### **Description & Objectives**

*This course provides a introduction to government programs that affect farmers, ranchers, agribusiness firms, and consumers. Topics include the policy making process and the analysis of commodities, conservation, food safety, international trade, and rural development programs. The causes, nature, and effects of government participation in agriculture will be defined. Students will learn how to apply sound economic theory and evaluate current and future agriculture policies.*

### **Instructor**

Dr. Michael H. Lau  
310A THOM  
Phone: 294-1207  
Email: MichaelLau@shsu.edu

### **Office Hours**

MTWTH: 2:00 p.m. - 3:30 PM or by appointment

### **Text and Materials**

Agricultural and Food Policy, Knutson, Penn and Flinchbaugh, 5th Edition  
Supplemental reading may be given by the instructor.

### **Class Handouts and Materials**

The handouts used in this course are copyrighted. By “handouts,” I mean all materials generated for this class, which include but are not limited to syllabi, quizzes, exams, lab problems, in-class materials, review sheets, and additional problem sets. Because these materials are copyrighted, you do not have the right to copy the handouts, unless I expressly grant permission.

### **My Expectations of Students**

First of all, I expect each of you to attend class. Random quizzes and in class assignments will be given. It is my experience that students who attend class regularly, typically achieve a full letter grade over those who do not. You can't learn from me unless you are present. Plus, it should be fun. Second, I expect you to come prepared and ready to participate in class discussions. Sometimes, even the best student may prefer to sit back and “listen in” on discussions. By doing so, you are robbing yourself and others of a great learning opportunity. I expect you to share your insights through your questions and comments, and I will call on you to do so if necessary.

Don't be intimidated by this—there are no bad answers or bad questions, its all part of the learning process. The key to success is to learn by doing. If you prepare for class by reviewing your notes and reading the material, you will have a better understanding of the discussion topics. Further, as you share these findings you will improve your ability to express yourself in a concise, insightful manner, a very desirable characteristic to potential employers. I expect you to work hard, but I also expect you to enjoy yourself and take as much as you can from the class. If you find yourself frustrated and not enjoying class, please don't hesitate to come see me. You are expected to act honestly and ethically at all times. Remember the aggie code of honor.

### **Policies & Procedures**

#### **Grading System**

Your final letter grade will be determined by adherence to the following schedule:

A	≥ 90%
B	80 – 89.99%
C	70 – 79.99%
D	60 – 69.99%
F	≤ 59.99%

As a general rule, individual exams and other graded materials will not be “curved”. Further, students should plan on the final grades being assigned on the basis of the above-noted grade breaks. The instructor retains the privilege of adjusting in the favor of students one or more of the grade classifications after all grades have been recorded. No “incompletes” will be assigned. Each student will receive the grade he/she has earned at the end of the semester.

### Exams

Four exams will be given during the semester and will comprise 75 percent of your grade (i.e., 25% per exam). The lowest exam grade of the first three exams will be dropped. The final is required. For students who have missed an exam because of university excused absence, a makeup exam will be given.

### HW Assignments/Quizzes/In Class

There will be in-class assignments and written assignments during the semester will account for 25 percent of your grade. The assignments will give you a more in-depth understanding of important concepts while helping you to develop your written communication skills, and better prepare for the exams. Late homework lose 10% of the total points per day (i.e., 10% deduction) for each day (M-F) late and receive no credit if handed in after the graded homework is returned. There is no makeup for in-class exercises.

### Attendance is taken each day. Good attendance is rewarded as follows:

Classes Missed Points **added** to Final Grade

0-1 2%

2-3 1%

# Bonus points are for attendance so if you miss class you do not get the bonus, no matter your excuse.

A University excused absence does not count for my attendance bonus points plan. It is your responsibility each day to be sure the professor counts you present.

### Tentative Agenda

- Section 1: Overview of Agricultural Policy; Section 2: Economic Review
- Exam 1
- Section 3: History of Agricultural Policy; Section 4: Domestic Agricultural Policy
- Exam 2
- Section 5: International Policy
- Exam 3
- Section 6: Current Topics in Policy
- Exam 4

### Missed Work

If you miss an exam or assignment with an OFFICIAL UNIVERSITY EXCUSE you have the option of making-up your missed work. To do so, you must present an explanation and documentation of your absence to Dr. Lau *immediately* following your excused absence. Any delay will jeopardize your right to make up work. Whether you are present for an exam or not, you are expected to be prepared by the scheduled exam date, and thus should be prepared to take a makeup exam the day following your return. Missed work will **not be accepted** without an OFFICIAL UNIVERSITY EXCUSE. To make up missed work:

1. See Dr. Lau ASAP to obtain approval
2. Obtain the make-up assignment from Dr. Lau
3. Complete and return the assignment immediately
4. Write the name of the assignment you are making up at the top of your paper
5. Attach documentation of your OFFICIAL UNIVERSITY EXCUSE and hand in to Dr. Lau.

### Expected Student Behavior

- Students are expected to turn off all pagers, cell phones and other electronic devices during class time.
- There will be NO tobacco products of any kind allowed in the classroom; drinks and chewing gum are allowed. Food is only allowed for medical reasons and should be cleared with instructor before consumption.
- Inappropriate or disruptive behavior and language will not be tolerated.

- The class follows the standards set in the **Code of Students Rights and Responsibilities (EM 96-38)** and students are subject to disciplinary action for violation of that code.
- Violations of SHSU Academic Honesty Policy will result in a “F” for the course.

### **Attendance Policy**

Department attendance policy will be strictly enforced.

### **Department of Agricultural Sciences Attendance Policy**

1. Regular and punctual attendance is expected of each student in the Department of Agricultural Sciences at Sam Houston State University.
2. Each faculty member will keep a written record of student attendance.
3. **If a student misses four or more classes, the student's grade will be reduced by one letter grade. Additional penalties may be assessed at the discretion of the instructor.**
4. Three unexcused or unjustified tardies or early departures are considered as one absence.
5. Excused absences must be documented by the student with a letter of confirmation from the sponsoring student organization, professor or doctor. Exemptions will include participation in departmental activities when prior approval is attained from the Department Chair.
6. No exams or assignments will be given at alternative times unless arrangements are made with the professor/instructor before the scheduled activity occurs.

### **Academic Dishonesty**

All students are expected to engage in all academic pursuits in a manner that is above reproach. Students are expected to maintain complete honesty and integrity in the academic experiences both in and out of the classroom. Any student found guilty of dishonesty in any phase of academic work will be subject to disciplinary action. The University and its official representatives may initiate disciplinary proceedings against a student accused of any form of academic dishonesty including, but not limited to, cheating on an examination or other academic work which is to be submitted, plagiarism, collusion and the abuse of resource materials.

### **Classroom Rules of Conduct**

Students will refrain from behavior in the classroom that intentionally or unintentionally disrupts the learning process and, thus, impedes the mission of the university. Cellular telephones and pagers must be turned off before class begins. Students are prohibited from eating in class, using tobacco products, making offensive remarks, reading newspapers, sleeping, talking at inappropriate times, wearing inappropriate clothing, or engaging in any other form of distraction. Inappropriate behavior in the classroom shall result in a directive to leave class. Students who are especially disruptive also may be reported to the Dean of Students for disciplinary action in accordance with university policy.

### **Americans with Disabilities Act**

Students with a disability which affects their academic performance are expected to arrange for a conference with the instructor in order that appropriate strategies can be considered to ensure that participation and achievement opportunities are not impaired. The physically impaired may contact the Director of Counseling Center who also serves as chair of the Committee for Continuing Assistance for Disabled Students by telephone at extension #1720.

### **Religious Holidays**

*University policy states that a student who is absent from class for the observance of a religious holy day to take an examination or complete an assignment scheduled for that day within a reasonable time after the absence. Not later than the 15th calendar day after the first day of the semester, or the 7th calendar day after the first day of a summer session, the student must notify the instructor of each scheduled class that he/she would be absent for a religious holy day.*