



Department of Agricultural Sciences

**COURSE SYLLABUS**  
**AGR 360.01**  
**COMMUNICATION SKILLS FOR AGRICULTURISTS**  
**3 HOURS**  
**Summer I Mini-Session, 2008**

**LOCATION**

Room 325, Thomason Building

**SCHEDULE**

8:00 – 11:50 a.m., May 16-June 2

**INSTRUCTOR**

Dr. Dwayne Pavelock  
Room 306, Thomason Building  
Phone: 294-1186  
E-Mail: agr\_dxp@shsu.edu  
Office Hours: Open Door Policy or By Appointment

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course is designed to provide an overview of information systems, principles and procedures used in communicating agricultural news and information in agricultural professions. Emphasis is placed on effective written and oral communications means in professional and media environments in addition to public relations efforts in the fields of agricultural education and agribusiness. *Pre-Requisites:* ENG 164 & ENG 165

*Overview:* Most information will be disseminated through lecture, but group discussion will be required in addition to related individual and group activities that foster a greater understanding of the material. Exams will include short answer and essay questions. Projects will require written, video, and/or computer composition and oral presentation.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES**

Upon completion of the course, students will be able to:

1. Analyze successful work habits necessary to work with diverse groups;
2. Examine characteristics of successful workers related to productivity, teamwork and ethical practices;
3. Describe writing as a primary form of communication;
4. Apply elements of effective writing;
5. Distinguish between writing styles;
6. Demonstrate the ability to write business letters and news stories;
7. Prepare communications for broadcast media purposes;
8. Prepare communications for public relations purposes;
9. Demonstrate effective oral communications skills; and
10. Develop a professional computer-generated presentation.

**TEXTS**

Burnett, C. & Tucker, M. (2001). *Writing for agriculture: A new approach using tested ideas* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Dubuque, IA: Kendall/Hunt Publishing Company.  
 Pavelock, D. (2008). *Course materials packet for AGR 360*. Available from selected source.

**ATTENDANCE POLICY**

Students are expected to attend all class meetings. Classes will begin promptly at the designated time. Frequent late arrivals and/or early departures will affect the student's Attendance, Participation and Professionalism grade. If an emergency or other justifiable reason prevents a student from attending class, the instructor should be notified as soon as possible. However, an absence will still be assessed regardless of the reason. **Students with 2 hours or less in absences (regardless of the reason) and an "A" or "B" average will have the option of taking the final.** Each absence, late arrival and/or early departure will also result in deductions from the student's Class Attendance, Participation, and Professionalism grade as follows:

Absence (per hour)	Minus 1 point
Late Arrival or Early Departure (per occurrence)	Minus 0.5 point

**ASSIGNMENTS & EXAMS**

Students will be expected to complete the requirements listed below.

1. Three (3) examinations and a final examination, which will be comprehensive. Exams will include both short answer and essay questions. Missed and make-up exams are subject to being administered in an all-essay format.
2. Five (5) writing assignments, including news-related stories, business-related letters, and public relations articles.
3. One (1) PowerPoint project with oral presentation.
4. Daily applied activities, homework and quizzes related to the current or previous day's topic(s).
5. Punctual and regular attendance, involvement in class discussions and activities, and participation in out-of-class activities.

The course is largely a writing course. Assignments shall be typed, double-spaced, and follow APA guidelines unless specified otherwise. Assignments are expected to be mechanically correct in spelling, grammar, etc.

**GRADING PLAN**

The following are the point values of each course requirement:

<u>Assignment</u>	<u>Maximum Point Value</u>
Examination #1	100 points
Examination #2	100 points
Examination #3	100 points
Final Examination	150 points
Writing Assignments (5 @ 15 points each)	75 points
PowerPoint Project with Oral Presentation	100 points
Attendance, Participation, Professionalism, Homework	75 points
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<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>700 points</b>

The following ranges of scores will be used to calculate the final grade:

- A = 700 – 644 points (92% and above)
- B = 643 – 574 points (82% and above)
- C = 573 – 504 points (72% and above)
- D = 503 – 420 points (60% and above)
- F = Below 420 points

**Late assignments will be assessed a 33% penalty for each calendar day they are late, regardless of the reason.** Assignments are considered late if they are not turned in at the start of class on the due date. Assignments may be submitted early, e-mailed, faxed, turned in by a classmate, or by other arrangements. If a student is absent on the day an assignment is done in class, it shall be due at the beginning of the next scheduled class day. **It is the student's responsibility to check with the instructor regarding possible missed assignments. Make-up exams for students with pre-approved absences are subject to being administered in an all- essay format.**

### **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 or other materials not related to the course, sleeping, talking at inappropriate times, wearing inappropriate clothing, or engaging in any other form of distraction. Hats and caps shall not be worn in the classroom. 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.

### **VISITORS IN THE CLASSROOM**

Unannounced visitors to class must present a current, official SHSU identification card to be permitted in the classroom. They must not present a disruption to the class by their attendance. If a visitor is not a registered student, it is the instructor's discretion whether or not the visitor will be allowed to remain in the classroom.

### **STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**

Students with a disability that 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. A student seeking accommodations should contact the Counseling Center and Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) at the very beginning of the semester.

### **RELIGIOUS HOLIDAYS**

An institution of higher education shall excuse a student from attending classes or other required activities, including examinations, for the observance of a religious holy day, including travel for that purpose. A student whose absence is excused under this subsection may not be penalized for that absence and shall be allowed to take an examination or complete an assignment from which the student is excused within a reasonable time after the absence. A student who plans to miss a class or required activity to observe a religious holy day should inform the instructor of all such days in writing not later than the 15<sup>th</sup> calendar day after the first day of the semester.

**TENTATIVE SCHEDULE**

FRI	05/16	<p>Course Introduction and Requirements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ <b>Writing Assignment #1 (Assessment) – due 05/19</b></li> </ul> <p>Understanding Good Writing          Elements of Writing          Writing Styles          Using a Draft to Improve Writing</p>
MON	05/19	<p>Written Communications for Business and Professional Purposes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ <b>Writing Assignment #2 (Business Letter) – due 05/21</b></li> <li>✓ <b>Writing Assignment #3 (Letter of Application) – due 05/21</b></li> <li>✓ <i>End of information for Examination #1</i></li> </ul>
TUE	05/20	<p><b>Examination #1</b></p> <p>News Determinants          Writing News Stories – Hard News, Features and Attribution</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ <b>Writing Assignment #4 (News Determinants) – due 05/22</b></li> </ul>
WED	05/21	<p>Types of News Stories          Public Relations Efforts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ <b>Writing Assignment #5 (Agricultural Press Release) – due 05/22</b></li> </ul>
THU	05/22	<p>Using Computers to Enhance Professional Presentations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ <b>Assign PowerPoint Project – due 05/30</b></li> </ul> <p>Planning and Creating a Professional Computer Presentation          Effective Oral Communication Skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ <i>End of information for Examination #2</i></li> </ul>
FRI	05/23	<p><b>Examination #2</b></p>
MON	05/26	<p>Characteristics of Successful Workers          Communication Characteristics of a Successful Worker</p>
TUE	05/27	<p>Non-Verbal Communication          Ethical Practices and Professionalism in the Workplace</p>
WED	05/28	<p>Understanding Group Dynamics          Accomplishing Objectives Through Teamwork</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ <i>End of information for Examination #3</i></li> </ul>
THU	05/29	<p><b>Examination #3</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Independent Study Time and Professor Assistance for PowerPoint Project</li> </ul>
FRI	05/30	<p><b>PowerPoint Project Due</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ <b>PowerPoint Presentations</b></li> <li>✓ Review for Final Examination</li> </ul>
MON	06/02	<p><b>Final Examination</b></p>