

**COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES**  
**Department of Agricultural and Industrial Sciences**

**COURSE SYLLABUS**

**AGR 635 – Techniques and Interpretation of Research**

3 credit hours

Spring 2008 semester

- LOCATION:** Thomason Room 322, unless otherwise noted
- CLASS MEETING TIME:** Monday, 6:00-9:00 p.m.
- INSTRUCTOR:** Robert A. Lane  
Office phone: 936-294-1225  
Fax #: 936-294-1232  
e-mail address: blane @shsu.edu  
Office location: Thomason Room 313D  
Office hours: posted on office door, please call or e-mail for appointment if I'm not available when dropping by.
- COURSE DESCRIPTION:** A course designed to develop the competencies needed to interpret and utilize agricultural research. Topics will include: the philosophy of the scientific method, formats for agricultural research data, interpretation of data, and application of information to specific situations.
- COURSE OBJECTIVES:** To show the proper use and frequent misuse of research results and examine how to properly critique, interpret and present research findings. To familiarize the students with the principles and theory of experimental design and structure, and to examine the differences in different types of data collection. The fundamentals of research funding will also be investigated.
- COURSE FORMAT:** This course will meet for approximately three hours per day on Mondays only - 6:00 to 9:00 pm.
- COURSE OUTLINE:**
- I. Defining and classifying research
  - II. The process - scientific method
  - III. Differences in the approach
  - IV. Identifying and selecting a problem
  - V. Developing hypotheses
  - VI. Style and format
  - VII. Literature review

- VIII. Citation of references
- IX. Survey development and demographics
- X. Research design
- XI. Finding funding
- XII. Budgets
- XIII. Critical evaluation of published research
- XIV. Understanding statistical presentation

**COURSE EVALUATION (tentative):**

This course will entail a good deal of writing as well as critiquing the writing of others and analyzing research results. Each student will be responsible for selecting a research problem or topic (thesis subject is allowable), developing a hypothesis, writing a literature review, developing an appropriate research design. Readings and assignments not made during class may be made through Blackboard. It is the student’s responsibility to check for updates frequently. Brief class presentations and discussion will be expected of all students. Grades and announcements will be put on Blackboard.

<u>Assignment/Criteria</u>	<u>Weighting</u>	<u>Due Date</u>
Class participation	5%	N/A
Problem & Hypothesis	5%	Feb. 4
Journal Article Critiques (2)	10%	Feb. 11 and April 14
Dissertation/Thesis critique	5%	Feb. 18
Literature Review (1 <sup>st</sup> draft)	10%	March 3
Literature Review (2 <sup>nd</sup> draft)	15%	March 17
Materials and Methods (1 <sup>st</sup> draft)	5%	March 31
Materials and Methods (2 <sup>nd</sup> draft)	10%	April 7
Grant Identification Exercise	5%	April 21
Final Exam	30%	TBA

**GRADING SCALE:**

Grades will be assigned based on final course averages (%ile basis)with the following breakdown:

- 88-100 = A
- 74-87 = B
- 60-73 = C
- <60 = F

**ATTENDANCE POLICY:**

Following the Department of Agricultural Sciences Attendance Policy, students will be allowed one unexcused day of absence (3 hours) without penalty. Each **unexcused** absence beyond that will result in a deduction of 4 points from the final average tabulated from assignments and exams.

**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 outside 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 to be submitted, plagiarism, collusion and the abuse of resource materials. Cheating on any exam will result in a grade of zero for the exam and a grade of F for the course.

**AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT:**

Students with a disability affecting 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. Disabled students may request assistance with academically related problems stemming from individual disabilities by contacting the Director of the Counseling Center in the Lee Drain Annex or by calling 294-1720.