

## **Course Syllabus**

### **AG 6321 – Research Methods**

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#### **Instructor**

Andrew P. Wright, Ph.D.

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Phone: (325) 486-6751

Office Location: #219, Vincent Building

Office Hours: Monday-Thursday, 2:30-3:30 pm, by appointment, or at any time that I am in my office (feel free to knock if the door is closed).

#### **Course Description**

This course will introduce students to procedures used in agricultural research including experimental design, data collection, preparation, and analysis of results.

#### **Meeting Time & Location**

Time: 11:00 am- 12:15 pm; Tuesdays & Thursdays

Location: Rassman Building, Room 103

#### **Prerequisite or Co-Requisite Courses**

There are no prerequisite courses for a student to complete before enrolling in AG 6321, nor are there any co-requisite courses that a student must be enrolled in at the same time. That said, I do expect that student enrolled in AG 6321 have prior experience with the mathematic and algebraic concepts and skills taught in an introductory college algebra or finite mathematics course.

#### **Prerequisite Skills**

The mathematic and algebraic skills that a student should possess before enrolling in AG 6321 include:

- The ability to calculate and interpret the ratio of two values;
- The ability to calculate and interpret the slope of a line;
- The ability to solve for an unknown variable in an equation;
- The ability to take given numerical information, and an equation, calculate a solution.

The technology and computer skills that a student should possess before enrolling in AG 6321 include:

- The ability to access and navigate Internet websites.
- Proficiency with Microsoft Word and PowerPoint.
- The ability to convert a document created in Word or a similar program into a .pdf file.
- The ability to upload a document to the course website in Blackboard.

Students should be aware that documents created using Pages will not display correctly in Blackboard. I will consider any work submitted to Blackboard with a .pages extension as incomplete. Such work will receive a grade of zero until it is resubmitted in a readable format and will be subject to any applicable late penalties.

## **Course Learning Objectives**

### *Idea Objectives*

At the end of the semester, you will be asked to fill out an IDEA survey in which you will assess this course in terms of its ability to meet certain objectives. Those objectives are:

1. Gaining a basic understanding of the subject (e.g., factual knowledge, methods, principles, generalizations, theories).
2. Learning to apply course material (to improve thinking, problem solving, and decisions).
3. Developing specific skills, competencies, and points of view needed by professionals in the field most closely related to this course.
4. Learning appropriate methods for collecting, analyzing, and interpreting numerical information.

### *Program Objectives*

Students working on their M.S. in Animal Science or their Master's in Agriculture (M.Ag.) should expect to make progress in the following areas:

1. Research development & planning
2. Scientific writing
3. Experimental design
4. Data analysis

Progress toward these objectives will be assessed through a written research proposal, a presentation of that proposal, other writing assignments, and reflection assignments.

## **Course Delivery**

This is a face-to-face course with online components that students are expected to access in [Blackboard](#).<sup>i</sup> Online components include lecture materials such as PowerPoint slides, worksheets for in-class activities, homework assignments, videos, and links to supplemental sources found on Internet websites. To successfully complete this course, students must have reliable and consistent access to its online components.

## **Required Texts and Materials**

There is not a required textbook for this course; however, I recommend that you find a copy of one of the following texts for use as a reference during the semester:

Morris, T.R. 1999. *Experimental Design and Analysis in Animal Sciences*. New York: CABI Publishing.

Kirk, R. 2012. *Experimental Design: Procedures for Behavioral Sciences*. Sage Publishing.

In addition, you may find one of these two texts useful as a guide to how to write an academic paper:

Schick, K., and L. Miller. 2020. *So What? The Writer's Argument*. Oxford University Press.

Holdstein, D., and D. Aquiline. 2020. *Who Says? The Writer's Research*. Oxford University Press.

## **Grading**

Your final grade in this course will be calculated based on the number of points you earn out of 1000. The grading scale for the course is as follows:

- To earn an A, you must earn 900-1000 points
- To earn a B, you must earn 800-899 points

- To earn a C, you must earn 700-799 points
- To earn a D, you must earn 600-699 points

You will earn points based on your performance on the following tasks:

- Written research proposal: 400 points
- Research proposal presentation: 100 points
- Writing Assignments: 200 points
- Reflection Assignments: 100 points
- Course Entry Assignments: 100 points
- Course Exit Assignment: 100 points

There are 300 points that are entirely effort based in the course. For this reason, I will not round an individual student's grade up to the next letter.

### **Assignment Descriptions**

#### *Written Research Proposal*

During the semester, students enrolled in AG 6321 will work on developing a proposal for an original research project. This assignment is worth 400 points towards a student's final grade and will be split into four parts:

- Develop a conceptual or theoretical framework (100 points), Due on September 30
- First draft of problem statement & literature review (100 points), Due on October 21
- Describe your data collection method (100 points), Due on November 11
- Submit your finished proposal (100 points), Due November 23

Instructions for each part of this assignment, along with their grading rubric will be presented in class during the first week of the semester.

#### *Writing Assignments*

During the first half of the semester, we will discuss important skills related to academic writing. As we discuss each skill, you will be given a short assignment to help you prepare to write your research proposal. You can expect 4-5 of these assignments. These assignments will contribute a total of 100 points toward your final grade.

#### *Research Proposal Presentation*

At the end of the semester, each student will present their research proposal to the rest of the class. The presentation should be professional in nature and should communicate the information detailed in the instructions for the written proposal. This assignment is worth 100 points towards a student's final grade. Instructions for this assignment, along with the grading rubric will be presented in class during the first week of the semester.

#### *Reflection Assignments*

There are 10-11 reflection assignments planned for this course. Each of assignment will be worth 10 points toward a student's final grade. The grades for these assignments are entirely effort based. If a student submits a response to the reflection prompt they will receive full credit. Students are encouraged to respond to every prompt that is assigned during the semester, but will only be graded on their response to 10 of these assignments, for a total of 100 points toward their final grade.

### *Course Entry Assignments*

Students enrolled in AG 6321 must complete two course entry assignments at the beginning of the semester. The first of these is a Course & Academic Policies Statement “Quiz” by which students will indicate that they have read and understand the content presented in the course syllabus. The second of these is a brief introductory essay or video in which you will tell me a bit about yourself, any experience you have that is relevant to the course, and what you hope to learn this semester.

Both of these assignments are worth 50 points, for a total of 100 points toward a student’s final grade. The grades for these assignments are effort based. If a student completes these assignments, they will receive full credit for them.

### *Course Exit Assignment*

The final assignment in this course is a final reflection on the course. In this assignment you will reflect on what you have learned this semester, how effective the course and the instructor communicated this knowledge, and you may provide suggestions for future improvements to the course if you wish. This assignment is worth 100 points toward a student’s final grade and is entirely effort based. If a student completes this assignment, they will receive full credit.

## **Attendance Policies**

### *General Policy*

Regular attendance in lectures is a vital part of the learning process for a face-to-face course. For this reason, I expect students enrolled in AG 6321 to make every effort to attend every scheduled lecture and in-class activity.

I realize that there may be times when an absence from class is unavoidable. To help students who cannot attend class, I will stream and record each lecture session using Blackboard Collaborate. Students who cannot attend class are welcome to log in to Blackboard to follow the lecture remotely.

Students need to be aware that access to lecture recordings and any other lecture materials, such as PowerPoint slides, lecture notes, or handouts, is a privilege that I extend to you as the instructor. If students take advantage of this and collectively choose not to attend class, I will remove these items from Blackboard. It will then be the student’s responsibility to work with their classmates to make up any notes missed during an absence.

### *How I Take Attendance*

I will maintain a record of every student’s attendance for each day of class. If I do not record that you were in class then you will be counted absent on that day. If a student come in to class late, it is the student’s responsibility to make sure I update the attendance roster for that day.

### *Information Missed During an Absence*

You are responsible for any information related to the class that you miss while absent. I am happy to answer any questions you might have, but I will not reproduce a lecture for you in my office.

### *Angel State University Policy on Religious Holy Days*

A student who intends to observe a religious holy day should make that intention known in writing to the instructor prior to the absence. See ASU Operating Policy 10.19 [Student Absence for Observance of Religious Holy Day](#)<sup>ii</sup> for more information.

## **Emailing the Instructor**

Communication is an important skill that nearly all employers look for in new employees, and particularly in college graduates. Learning to communicate professionally is vital if you wish to remain employed in any career for very long. For this reason, when you contact me via email, please include a subject, a greeting, and a signature. For example, if you are experiencing a difficulty logging into Connect your email might look like this:

Subject: Blackboard is down

Dear Dr. Wright,

I tried to log in to Blackboard to submit a reading quiz, but the program is down for emergency maintenance. Have any other students encountered this issue? Considering the circumstance, would you please extend the assignment's due date?

Thank you,

[Your Name]

## **Additional Policies Related to This Course**

All students are required to follow the policies and procedures presented in these documents:

- [Angelo State University Student Handbook](#)<sup>iii</sup>
- [Angelo State University Catalog](#)<sup>iv</sup>

## **Academic Integrity and Misconduct**

Students are expected to maintain complete honesty and integrity in all work. Any student found guilty of any form of dishonesty in academic work is subject of disciplinary action and possible expulsion from ASU.

The College of Science and Engineering adheres to the university's [Statement of Academic Integrity](#).<sup>v</sup>

## **Accommodations for Students with Disabilities**

ASU is committed to the principle that no qualified individual with a disability shall, on the basis of disability, be excluded from participation in or be denied the benefits of the services, programs or activities of the university, or be subjected to discrimination by the university, as provided by the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments of 2008 (ADAAA) and subsequent legislation.

Student Disability Services is located in the Office of Student Affairs, and is the designated campus department charged with the responsibility of reviewing and authorizing requests for reasonable accommodations based on a disability. It is the student's responsibility to initiate such a request by contacting an employee of the Office of Student Affairs, in the Houston Harte University Center, Room 112, or contacting the department via email at [ADA@angelo.edu](mailto:ADA@angelo.edu). For more information about the application process and requirements, visit the [Student Disability Services website](#).<sup>vi</sup> The employee charged with the responsibility of reviewing and authorizing accommodation requests is:

Dr. Dallas Swafford  
Director of Student Disability Services  
Office of Student Affairs

325-942-2047

[dallas.swafford@angelo.edu](mailto:dallas.swafford@angelo.edu)

Houston Harte University Center, Room 112

### **Incomplete Grade Policy**

It is policy that incomplete grades be reserved for student illness or personal misfortune. Please contact faculty if you have serious illness or a personal misfortune that would keep you from completing course work. Documentation may be required. See ASU Operating Policy 10.11 [Grading Procedures](#)<sup>vii</sup> for more information.

### **Plagiarism**

Plagiarism is a serious topic covered in ASU's [Academic Integrity policy](#)<sup>viii</sup> in the Student Handbook. Plagiarism is the action or practice of taking someone else's work, idea, etc., and passing it off as one's own. Plagiarism is literary theft.

In your discussions, assignments, and/or your papers, it is unacceptable to copy word-for-word without quotation marks and the source of the quotation. It is expected that you will summarize or paraphrase ideas giving appropriate credit to the source both in the body of your paper and the reference list.

All work submitted by any student is subject to be evaluated for originality. Resources to help you understand this policy better are available at the [ASU Writing Center](#).<sup>ix</sup>

### **Title IX at Angelo State University**

Angelo State University is committed to providing and strengthening an educational, working, and living environment where students, faculty, staff, and visitors are free from sex discrimination of any kind. In accordance with Title VII, Title IX, the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA), the Campus Sexual Violence Elimination Act (SaVE), and other federal and state laws, the University prohibits discrimination based on sex, which includes pregnancy, and other types of Sexual Misconduct. Sexual Misconduct is a broad term encompassing all forms of gender-based harassment or discrimination and unwelcome behavior of a sexual nature. The term includes sexual harassment, nonconsensual sexual contact, nonconsensual sexual intercourse, sexual assault, sexual exploitation, stalking, public indecency, interpersonal violence (domestic violence or dating violence), sexual violence, and any other misconduct based on sex.

You are encouraged to report any incidents involving sexual misconduct to the Office of Title IX Compliance and the Director of Title IX Compliance/Title IX Coordinator, Michelle Miller, J.D. You may submit reports in the following manner:

Online: [Incident Reporting Form](#)<sup>x</sup>

Face to Face: Mayer Administration Building, Room 210

Phone: 325-942-2022

Email: [michelle.miller@angelo.edu](mailto:michelle.miller@angelo.edu)

Note, as a faculty member at Angelo State, I am a mandatory reporter and must report incidents involving sexual misconduct to the Title IX Coordinator. Should you wish to speak to someone in confidence about an issue, you may contact the University Counseling Center (325-942-2371), the 24-Hour Crisis Helpline (325-486-6345), or the University Health Clinic (325-942-2171).

For more information about resources related to sexual misconduct, Title IX, or Angelo State's policy please visit the [Title IX website](#).<sup>xi</sup>

### **Information about COVID-19**

Please refer to ASU's [COVID-19 \(Coronavirus\) Updates](#)<sup>xii</sup> web page for current information about campus guidelines and safety standards as they relate to the COVID-19 pandemic.

All students are expected to perform a wellness screening prior to coming to setting foot on campus. Any student that is experiencing COVID-19 symptoms should report their symptoms through the wellness screening app and then report to a COVID-19 testing location to be tested for the virus. Such students will be exempted from the requirement to attend class in person until they receive a negative test result. In addition, such students will be eligible to receive accommodations related to any exams or other in-class work they might miss while they are waiting for a test result or are quarantined.

### **Modifications to the Syllabus**

This syllabus, including grade evaluation and course schedule, is subject to modification on potentially short notice based on developing circumstances. If such a circumstance occurs then I will communicate it in class, via Blackboard, and by email. Once announced, any such change will supersede what is written in this syllabus or is currently published online.

### **Course Schedule**

A course schedule will be made available to students on Blackboard. Proposal presentations are tentatively scheduled for the final week of the semester.

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<sup>i</sup> <https://blackboard.angelo.edu/>

<sup>ii</sup> <https://www.angelo.edu/content/files/14206-op-1019-student-absence-for-observance-of>

<sup>iii</sup> <https://www.angelo.edu/current-students/student-handbook/>

<sup>iv</sup> <https://www.angelo.edu/academics/catalog/>

<sup>v</sup> <https://www.angelo.edu/live/files/27603-student-handbook-2020-21#page=96>

<sup>vi</sup> <https://www.angelo.edu/current-students/disability-services/>

<sup>vii</sup> <https://www.angelo.edu/content/files/14197-op-1011-grading-procedures>

<sup>viii</sup> <https://www.angelo.edu/live/files/27603-student-handbook-2020-21#page=96>

<sup>ix</sup> [https://www.angelo.edu/current-students/writing-center/academic\\_honesty.php](https://www.angelo.edu/current-students/writing-center/academic_honesty.php)

<sup>x</sup> <https://www.angelo.edu/incident-form>

<sup>xi</sup> <https://www.angelo.edu/title-ix>

<sup>xii</sup> <https://www.angelo.edu/covid-19/>