

## Course Syllabus

### AGEC 2317 – Introduction to Agricultural Economics & Business

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#### Instructor

English Ratliff

Email: [eratliff@angelo.edu](mailto:eratliff@angelo.edu)

Phone: (325) 486-6938

Office: VIN 226, Vincent Building

Office Hours: I will be available over email and it is the best way to get in touch with me. **Please let me know if you would like to set up a collaborate appointment by sending me an email.**

#### Course Description

This course is designed to provide students with an introduction to the fundamental principles of economics and their application to the behavior of individuals, businesses, and societies.

#### Required Technology & Computer Skills

This is an online class. As such, I will rely heavily on technology to communicate course content to students. To successfully complete this course, students are expected to:

- Possess access to the necessary hardware required to view online materials, such as:
  - A computer or mobile device with a reliable internet connection,
  - The ability to view videos from various sources and that use various formats, and
- Possess basic web navigation skills;
- Register for McGraw-Hill Connect Plus on or before the first day of class; and students will need to pay to register for Connect Plus, but can begin the class with two weeks of free courtesy access.

#### Expected Knowledge Prerequisites

As an introductory course in microeconomics, this class has very few required prerequisites in terms of knowledge. I do expect that students taking this course have prior experience with some basic mathematic and algebraic concepts:

- Students should know what a ratio is and how to interpret one.
- Students should know what the slope of a straight line communicates about the relationship between two variables.
- Students should be able to calculate the slope of a line using information found in a graph.
- Students should be able to solve for an unknown variable in an equation.
- Students should know how to take numerical information and plug it in to an equation to calculate a solution.

I provide an opportunity to review and practice these skills at the beginning of the course.

## **Textbook & Learning Platforms**

- This course is based on the 7<sup>th</sup> edition of *Principles of Microeconomics* by Frank, Bernanke, Antonovics, & Heffetz. Registering for Connect Plus will provide you with access to an electronic copy of the text.
- I will use the McGraw-Hill Connect Plus platform to deploy reading assignments, application/study assignments, and extra credit assignments.
- You will be able to access all course content, including McGraw-Hill content, through the course Blackboard page.

## **Course Learning Objectives**

As your instructor I have established a set of learning goals and related objectives:

- Goal 1: Learn essential knowledge. Students will demonstrate the correct use of microeconomic principles to draw conclusions about market outcomes.
- Goal 2: Develop critical thinking skills. Students will take numerical and graphical data, synthesize this data into usable information, and use the information they create to draw conclusions about market outcomes.
- Goal 3: Develop quantitative skills. Learning Goal 3 is strongly related to Goal 2. Where Goal 2 emphasizes the ability to draw conclusions using data, Goal 3 emphasizes the ability to use quantitative skills to create the information you need to draw conclusions.

This list provides a general idea of what a student must do to successfully complete this course. A more detailed list of goals and objectives will be made available to students on the course Blackboard page. Students' progress toward these goals will be assessed through their performance on exams and daily application/study assignments.

## **Core Student Learning Objectives**

AGEC 2317 has been approved to count towards your Social Sciences core credit. To this end, students taking this course must show progress toward 4 goals.

- Demonstrate critical thinking skills (CT)
- Demonstrate communication skills (CS)
- Demonstrate empirical and quantitative skills (EQS)
- Demonstrate social responsibility (SR)

Progress toward these objectives will be assessed using exams and homework assignments.

## **Grading**

Your grade will be calculated based on the number of points you earn out of 900. The grading scale for the course is as follows:

- A = 810-900 points
- B = 720-809 points
- C = 630-719 points
- D = 540-629 points
- F = 0-539 points

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

- Exams: 400 points
- Daily Assessments: 400 points
- Course Entry Tasks: 90 points
- Course Exit Task: 20 points

## **Exams**

There are four midterm exams scheduled for this course, plus one final exam.

- Each midterm exam will focus on one week's worth of material. The final exam will be cumulative.
- Each week, a midterm exam will be made available on Friday at 8:00 am. You will have until the following Sunday at 5:00 pm to complete each midterm.
- The final exam will be made available on Monday, July 4th at 8:00 am and must be completed by Midnight on Friday July 8
- Every exam will be timed
- Each exam is worth 100 points. The exam portion of your grade will be calculated using the highest four of your five exam scores.

## **Daily Assessments**

During the course you will be required to take 15 daily assessments; one for each day of the week, Monday-Thursday. Each assessment is worth 25 points and must be completed by 11:59 pm on the day it is assigned. The purpose of these assessments is to give you a chance to determine what you do and don't understand about the day's topics. As such, you will be allowed three attempts on each assessment. After each attempt, please take an inventory of the questions you missed, determine which topics those questions are related to, and review those topics before attempting the assessment again. It is possible to earn full credit through "trial and error"; however, doing so will not help you accomplish the learning goals for the course.

## **Course Entry Tasks**

You must complete four entry tasks on or before Monday, June 1<sup>st</sup>. The purpose of these tasks is to make sure that you are aware of the course goals and policies, and that you are prepared to interact with the various technologies that you will be using in the course before you actually need them. The Three tasks you must complete are:

1. Read the syllabus, review the course policies, review Angelo State's policies regarding academic integrity and academic dishonesty, and complete a short quiz over this information;
2. Register for McGraw-Hill Connect and complete a series of orientation exercises;
3. Complete a set of Math Preparation exercises in Connect

Completing all of these tasks will earn you 90 points toward your final grade, 30 points each. These points are largely effort-based; as long as you successfully complete each task you should earn full credit.

### **Course Exit Task (the final exam)**

Hopefully, you will earn high grades on each of the four midterms and will not need to use your final exam score as a part of your final grade. You still need to take the final exam, however, so that I can perform a final assessment of your progress toward the course learning goals. For this reason, you will earn 20 points towards your final grade simply for taking the final. For many of you, this may be the final "bump" you need to progress to a higher letter grade.

### **Extra Credit**

To earn extra credit during the course you will have the opportunity to complete six LearnSmart modules in Connect. These are adaptive learning modules in Connect's Smart Book program that ask you questions as you read each chapter of the text. During the course we will read all or parts of Chapters 1, 3, 5, 6, 7, and 8. You may complete a LearnSmart module associated with each of these chapters to earn up to 60 points of extra credit. Each module that you complete is worth 10 points.

The best practice for completing the LearnSmart modules will be to complete each module during the same week you are asked to read the related chapter. Doing so should help you to understand the material, and should help prepare you for the assessments and exams. However, you may complete these modules at any time before 5pm on June 30<sup>th</sup> to earn the extra credit.

### **Policy on Missing a Deadline**

#### *General Policy*

It is vital that you regularly assess your knowledge of the material presented in this course if you want to accomplish the course learning goals. For this reason, every daily assessment must be completed by the date and time listed in the course schedule to receive full credit. You may complete daily assessments after their deadline; however, late assessments will receive an automatic 50% reduction in their score. The deadline to submit late assessments for partial credit is July 1st at 11:59pm.

Exams must be completed within the time frame listed in the course schedule; that is, between 8am on Friday and 5pm on Sunday of the given week. Students will not generally be allowed to access an exam once the deadline is passed.

Special circumstances may warrant an extension on the deadline for an assessment or exam. Please see the policy on requesting extensions or changes in due dates for more information.

#### *ASU 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. A student who is absent from classes for the observance of a religious holy day shall be allowed to take an examination or complete an assignment scheduled for that day within a reasonable time after the absence.

### **Requesting an Extension on Change in a Due Date**

As you progress through the course you may find yourself faced with a situation that prevents you from accessing and submitting an assessment or exam by the given deadline. When these circumstances occur, you may request an extension by emailing me. When you request an extension please provide an explanation for why you will miss the deadline, why the circumstance cannot reasonably be avoided, and an estimate for when you expect to complete the assessment or exam.

If you know beforehand that you will be unable to access an assessment or exam you may request that its due date be changed. Once this change is made you will be expected to complete the assessment or exam by the new deadline, and will be subject to the same consequences for missing deadlines that all other students face.

Please submit all requests for extensions or a change in due dates to me by email so that there is a written record of the request. In addition, please note that you are not guaranteed an extension or change in due date that you ask for. I will consider each request based on their individual merits.

### **Contacting Dr. Ratliff**

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: Connect is down

Dear Dr. Ratliff,

I tried to log in to Connect to complete the daily assessment, but it seems the program is down for emergency maintenance. Have any other students encountered this issue? Considering the circumstance, would you please extend the assignment's deadline?

Thank you,

[Your Name]

Be advised that I may ask some follow up questions and your answers might determine how accommodating I am.

### **Academic Integrity and Misconduct**

Angelo State University expects its student to maintain complete honesty and integrity in their academic pursuits. Students are responsible for reading and understanding the policies set forth in the [Student Handbook](#)<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.angelo.edu/student-handbook/>

## **Americans with Disabilities Act**

Angelo State University 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 Act 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>2</sup>](#). The employee charged with the responsibility of reviewing and authorizing accommodation requests is:

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

## **Course Schedule**

A detailed schedule of course topics, including the due dates for all assessments and exams, are provided to students on the course website in Blackboard.

## **Policies on Deviations from this Syllabus**

While I hope I do not have to make any changes to the course policies or course schedule, there is always the possibility that special circumstances will arise that necessitate changes be made. If such a circumstance occurs then I will communicate it to the class via Blackboard and email. Once announced, any such change will supersede what is written in this syllabus or currently published online.

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.angelo.edu/services/disability-services/index.php>