

AGRI 5360 Contemporary Issues in Agricultural Business (3 credit hours)
Fall 2017: Legal Issues of Innovative Agribusinesses

Department of Agricultural Sciences – Sam Houston State University

FACULTY INFORMATION:

Instructor: Dr. Art Wolfskill

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Office: Pirkle Engr. Tech. Ctr. 440E

Office Hours: Mon and Wed 8:00 – 9:00 and 11:00 – 12:00 or by appointment, phone, or drop-in

Office hours may be interrupted by Official University Business (e.g., committee meetings)

MEETING TIMES AND LOCATION: Online, using Blackboard

COURSE DESCRIPTION: AGRI 5360 is a topical course designed to study key areas relating to agribusiness management. This semester, we will study the legal issues surrounding starting and operating small, innovative agribusinesses. These include such topics as types of business structure, legal issues in both starting and ending businesses, general legal issues of contracts and torts, ag-related legal issues such as land and fencing laws, owner responsibilities and liability, and various food establishment laws. It is not a course designed to give any form of legal advice, and the material taught should not be interpreted as such.

COURSE OBJECTIVES: By design, this course aims to provide a practical and straightforward approach to starting, planning, and implementing basic business strategies, and legally preparing owners and businesses for the legal realities of doing business, particularly in Texas. We will cover a wide range of business legal topics with a goal of being able to use and understand those principles as they apply to practical situations. By the end of this semester, this course will provide you with the following outcomes:

- Learn major business structures, with their pros and cons.
- Gain the ability to apply critical thinking skills.
- Understand different business laws and how they apply to innovative agribusinesses.
- Learn legal principles important for starting a small business.
- Gain knowledge of contracts and the laws that govern them.
- Understand how torts can affect a business.

Weekly online modules will be used to teach the core aspects of the course using:

- Guided online discussion boards
- Topical readings form online and posted documents
- Writing and reflection assignments

COURSE TEXTBOOKS:

None required. Readings will be assigned from freely available Internet sources.

COURSE MATERIALS: Course documents, announcements and links to other materials will be posted on Blackboard accessed at <http://blackboard.shsu.edu>. Checking Blackboard and email daily is a course requirement. The general course topic outline will be posted on Blackboard, and is subject to change at any time.

STANDARD SYLLABUS ITEMS: Much of the “boilerplate” that is included in syllabi for face-to-face courses does not directly apply to fully online courses. However, while not directly translatable, the concepts generally hold and should be considered as applicable in whatever way makes sense in the original spirit of the rules. Please see www.shsu.edu/syllabus for important items.

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 formal 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. As a minimum, any work produced under academically dishonest conditions will receive a grade of zero.

THIS SYLLABUS IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT NOTICE

As a completely online course, students may have opportunity to use others' work without fear of being noticed while doing so. Please be sure that all work done is your own. Quizzes and exams must be taken while alone, and you must ensure (and certify) that no unauthorized help is used.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES POLICY: It is the policy of Sam Houston State University that individuals otherwise qualified shall not be excluded, solely by reason of their disability, from participation in any academic program of the university. Further, they shall not be denied the benefits of these programs nor shall they be subjected to discrimination. Students with disabilities that might affect their academic performance should register with the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities located in the Lee Drain Annex (telephone 936-294-3512, TDD 936-294-3786, and e-mail disability@shsu.edu). They should then make arrangements with their individual instructors so that appropriate strategies can be considered and helpful procedures can be developed to ensure that participation and achievement opportunities are not impaired.

SHSU adheres to all applicable federal, state, and local laws, regulations, and guidelines with respect to providing reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. If you have a disability that may affect adversely your work in this class, then I encourage you to register with the SHSU Services for Students with Disabilities and to talk with me about how I can best help you. All disclosures of disabilities will be kept strictly confidential. NOTE: No accommodation can be made until you register with the Services for Students with Disabilities. For a complete listing of the university policy, see: <http://www.shsu.edu/dept/academic-affairs/documents/aps/students/811006.pdf>

RELIGIOUS HOLIDAYS: University policy states that a student who is absent from class for the observance of a religious holy day may 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. *In this online course we have a weekly schedule to keep, although you will be able to manage your own times for completing required work within the week. If you believe that a religious holiday or other such event will keep you from completing work on time, you must arrange for a discussion with the instructor well in advance of the conflict.*

COPYRIGHT STATEMENT: All materials (handouts, texts, slides, videos, etc.) used in this course are under copyright by the professor or another, and may not be sold, rented, or otherwise transferred, with or without compensation, including taking notes for others or providing to businesses that sell tutoring or other grade-increasing services.

STUDENT SUCCESS RESOURCES:

1. **SHSU Reading Center;** Farrington Building, Suite 109; 936.294.3114;
Hours: Monday – Thursday, 8:00am – 7:00pm; Friday, 8:00am – 3:00pm; Sunday 2:00pm – 7:00pm
2. **SHSU Student Money Management Center;** Estill Building Suite 228; (936) 294-2600;
<http://www.shsu.edu/~smmc/> ; Hours: Monday- Thursday, 8am-7pm; Friday, 8am-3pm

COURSE EVALUATION PROCESS:

Course grades will be based on the weighted average of scores in the following areas: mid-term examinations, final examination, assignments, and quizzes.

Grading: Grade Scale

90% - 100%	A
80% - 89.99%	B
70% - 79.99%	C
60% - 69.99%	D
Below 60%	F

EXAMS: Exam format will vary and may consist of true/false, multiple choice, short answer and essay questions. Questions will come from material in lectures and/or PowerPoints, assignments, and other readings taken from handouts and internet sites. Make-up exams will not be given. Each exam will have a time window for successful completion. If a student will not be able to complete the exam during the window, it is imperative that the professor be contacted in advance to make arrangements.

Assignments: Online quizzes and other work will be assigned weekly over the course of the semester. These assignments are intended to: (1) motivate you to study on a regular basis and stay in the material, and (2) give you and your instructor feedback on your progress. No late assignments will be accepted. We are all professionals who should understand the value of working to deadlines.

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