

SAM HOUSTON STATE UNIVERSITY
AGRICULTURAL SCIENCES
COLLEGE OF SCIENCE & ENGINEERING TECHNOLOGY

COURSE INFORMATION:

Course ID: AGBU 4363.01
Course Title: Agricultural Sales and Consulting
Semester/Year: Spring, 2018
Credit Hours: 3 hour upper-division course, elective
Location: PIRK 210A
Time: MW 11:00 am-12:20 pm

PROFESSOR INFORMATION:

Instructor: Foy D. Mills, Jr., Ph.D.
Professor and Program Leader- Agribusiness
Strengths: Responsibility * Strategic * Maximizer * Analytical * Relator
Office: PIRK 440H
Office Hours: TR 2:00-5:00 pm or by appointment
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COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course presents the principles of professional sales techniques used by food and agricultural firms. Necessary skills required in the agribusiness industry such as interpersonal skills, sales techniques, and sales forecasting skills are developed and enhanced. Prerequisites: AGBU 2317, AGBU 2385 and completed 45 credit hours.

COURSE GOAL:

Though a student taking this course will not necessarily become a professional salesperson, each of you will sell yourself on a continuing basis. Concepts and skills developed in this course can be beneficial from convincing that potential employer post-graduation to hire you to selling an idea to your supervisor that can improve the business' position in the marketplace. Agribusiness sales and consulting emphasizes the phases of preparation, learning, communication and evaluation involved in a person selling a product, service, idea, etc. to a client. The focus of this course will be on **business-to-business** selling (consulting).

COURSE COMPETENCIES AND EVALUATION METHODS:

- 1) Identify personal/inherent attributes and potential implications for interaction with prospective clients by completing personality instruments (i.e., CliftonStrengths for Students, DISC, MBTI).
- 2) Identify how sales fits into the overall business organization.
- 3) Examine the selling process of preparation, learning, communication and evaluation by:
 - a) Professionally "selling yourself" at a SHSU Career Fair.
 - b) Exposure to seasoned professionals serving as guest speakers in class.
 - c) Experiencing actual business/sales transactions by shadowing a professional salesperson.
 - d) Planning and conducting a sales call.

- e) Developing business letters, reports and presentations.
 - f) Establishing networking skills and developing long-term partnerships and relationships with professional colleagues and business associates.
- 4) Compare and contrast similarities/differences between business-to-consumer and business-to-business sales.
- 5) Learn to differentiate, as warranted, between sales and consulting.
- 6) Assess professional development skills in preparation for entering the workplace.
- Evaluation of these competencies is accomplished by meeting deadlines, RAT (Readiness Assessment Tests), reflective writing assignments, SAS (Shadow a Salesperson), RSS (Ready, Set, Sell), etc.

CLASS FORMAT:

The course meets two days per week (one hour and twenty minutes each period) for a total of three hours of classroom instruction. Class sessions are highly interactive with the instructor serving as facilitator.

Though students must prepare and complete work as individuals, team-based learning (<http://www.teambasedlearning.org/>) is emphasized in this class. Consequently, a portion of your grade is determined by your ability to work with, and learn from, others. The course is designed so you can complete the ultra-majority of team assignments in class rather than having to schedule time outside of class. Use this time, and my presence, wisely!

Student will take RAT as individuals (iRAT) and as a team (tRAT) immediately before the introduction of each major concept to ensure preparedness. As noted earlier in the syllabus, multiple active learning assignments, reflective writing, a team selling project, mini-lectures, etc. are used to reinforce course concepts.

A formative peer evaluation is conducted once during the semester to assess how well each student is performing as a team member. A summative peer evaluation is administered at the end of the semester to determine what portion of the team's grade each student earns.

TEXT (REQUIRED):

Downey, W. Scott, W. David Downey, Michael A. Jackson and Laura A. Downey. 2011. *Proselling: A Professional Approach to Selling in Agriculture and Other Industries*. Chesterfield, MO:AgriMarketing Magazine.

CliftonStrengths for Students code <https://www.strengthsquest.com/schoolaccess/default.aspx>

COURSE MATERIALS:

Additional documents, readings, announcements, videos, etc. will be posted in Blackboard (Bb).

SCANTRONS:

You are expected to bring one (1) package of Scantron sheets (Form 882-E) to class where I will collect them. We will use Scantrons to record iRAT and tRAT responses throughout the semester. Rather than you having to remember when to bring them, I will have them prepared for the days they are used.

ATTENDANCE POLICY:

Presence- the fact or condition of being present (www.merriam-webster.com). I make a commitment that on MW 11:00 am-12:20 pm this semester, unless I am away on SHSU approved travel, ill or dealing with a family emergency, when I walk into PIRK 210A, I will be present in mind, body and spirit out of respect for you. I ask the same of you. I expect us to hold each other accountable out of respect for each other's investment in this class. Let's be present!

I expect you to be present on or before 11:00 am and to remain until the end of the class period each time we meet. Attendance policies are not designed to penalize, but rather, to prepare you for the expectations of the workplace. If you are frequently absent from work and/or late to work, you will eventually be dismissed by your employer. Translating this to a class setting and referencing the departmental attendance policy, it will negatively impact your grade.

Therefore, per the **Departmental attendance policy**:

- 1) Regular and punctual attendance is expected of each student in the Department.
- 2) Each faculty member will keep a written record of student attendance. (In this class, it is your responsibility to record your attendance on your team folder. Any absence, whether excused or unexcused is recorded. The only difference between the two is that you have the opportunity to make-up work missed if the absence is excused.)
- 3) If a student misses four or more classes, the student's grade will be reduced by one letter grade. Additional penalties may be assessed at the discretion of the instructor. **(In this class, on your seventh absence from class, regardless if your absences are excused or unexcused, your course grade will be reduced one letter grade.** On your ninth absence from class, I will reduce your grade an additional letter grade. Any modification to your grade due to excessive absences will be in addition to any adjustments resulting from your peers' assessment of team contribution.)
- 4) Three unexcused or unjustified tardies or early departures are considered as one absence.
- 5) Excused absences must be documented by the student with a letter of confirmation from the sponsoring student organization, professor or doctor. Exemptions will include participation in departmental activities when prior approval is obtained from the Department Chair.
- 6) No exams or assignments will be given at alternative times unless arrangements are made with the professor/instructor before the scheduled activity occurs.

If you regularly attend class, you will benefit from not being absent and/or tardy. I will "pay" you in the following manner for unused absences (tardies). Each unused absence, up to six (6), will add 0.33 points to your grade. Since three (3) tardies or early departures are considered one absence, each unused tardy is worth 0.11 points. So, if you are never absent or tardy, I will add two (2) points to your overall numeric grade. In my class, I will not penalize you when you are away from campus on official university business (prior approval from Department Chair- see no. 5 above), but you are still responsible for your work.

As you enter class each day, you will find a sign-in sheet attached to your team folder. Use the designated symbols to mark the sheet. This is your responsibility. Each team is responsible for self-policing (i.e., Ensure that everyone is noting their attendance accurately. Otherwise, students who are late receive the same benefit as those who are present and on time.). If you are late to class, **note it accordingly**. It is your responsibility to be at work and to be on time!

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:

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 to be submitted, plagiarism, collusion and the abuse of resource materials. For a complete listing of the university policy, see [Dean of Students' Office](#).

CLASSROOM RULES OF CONDUCT:

You are young adults and emerging young professionals. I expect you to act accordingly and I believe you will. However, if you choose to practice inappropriate behavior in the classroom (e.g., making offensive remarks, sleeping, talking at inappropriate times, wearing inappropriate clothing), I will ask you to leave class. Students who are especially disruptive may be reported to the Dean of Students for disciplinary action in accordance with university policy. Student guidelines are found at <http://www.shsu.edu/students/guide/>

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 phones and pagers must be turned off before class begins. If I find you using your phone (e.g., texting) during class, I will ask you to take your phone to the faculty desk at the front of the classroom and deposit it there. You may retrieve it as you leave the classroom.

Additionally, telephones and text messaging systems (and similar) are prohibited during tests, and if visible will result in a zero (0) grade for that test. Therefore, you will not be able to use your phone as a calculator. Plan accordingly.

The only exception to the telephone expectations noted above is if you are dealing with an urgent situation or a potential emergency. You must notify me of the situation in advance and I must approve the exception. If the exception is granted, please dismiss yourself from the classroom if you need to receive an incoming call or to make a call.

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 the visitor is not a registered student, it is at the instructor's discretion whether or not the visitor will be allowed to remain in the classroom.

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/disability/>.

RELIGIOUS HOLIDAYS:

University policy states that a student who is absent from class for the observance of a religious holy day shall be permitted to take an examination or complete an assignment scheduled for that day within a reasonable time after the absence. A student who wishes to be excused for a religious holy day must present the instructor with a written statement describing the holy day(s) and the travel involved. The instructor should provide the student with a written description of the deadline for the completion of missed exams and/or assignments.

USE OF TOBACCO AND TOBACCO PRODUCTS:

In order to promote a healthy, safe, and aesthetically pleasing work, educational, and living environment, Sam Houston State University (SHSU) will endorse a smoke free and tobacco free environment. The primary purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines prohibiting smoking and the use of all tobacco products. Tobacco products include cigarettes, cigars, pipes, smokeless tobacco, and all other tobacco products. This policy applies to all faculty, staff, students, employees of contractors, and visitors of Sam Houston State University on the premises of the university.

MISCELLANEOUS COURSE POLICIES:

- Assignments completed outside of class must be deposited in Blackboard (Bb) before the date and time detailed in the syllabus (noted also in Bb instructions).
- Assignments are not accepted late and no extra credit assignments are provided.
- All work is word-processed in font Times New Roman, font size 12, one inch margins top-bottom-sides, unless it is done in class.
- Use the Chicago Manual of Style, 16th ed. (<http://www.shslibraryguides.org/chicago>) author/date style to cite sources.
- Headgear (e.g., caps, hats, hoods) is to be removed by men and women upon entering class unless it is in observance of your religious faith.

COPYRIGHT STATEMENT:

All materials (e.g., handouts, texts, problem sets) used in this course are under copyright and may not be sold, rented or otherwise transferred for any compensation, including taking notes for others or providing to businesses that sell tutoring or other grade-enhancing services without written permission from me or from other copyright owners.

GRADING CRITERIA AND COURSE GRADE:

SAS (Shadow a Salesperson)

The SAS project requires students to spend a minimum of four hours in the field shadowing a salesperson. Each student selects a company/person and makes all arrangements for the visit. The arrangements should be confirmed by letter (**which is reviewed and graded by me before it is mailed to the company/person**). The project enables students to learn: a) more about what a salesperson does during a typical day, b) how the concepts and techniques covered in class are applied by professionals in the field and c) how to handle themselves as professionals in a business environment. By allowing our students to observe their work, the salesperson provides an invaluable nurturing experience for the student. Grades for the project are based on the following criteria. (No credit is given for shadowing a relative who is a sales representative.)

SAS Assignments	Points
Assignment 1- Salesperson choice	10
Assignment 2- Letter confirming shadowing arrangements	15
Assignment 3- Thank you letter	15
Assignment 4- Written project	50
Assignment 5- Shadowing evaluation by sales representative	10
SAS Total Points	100

RSS (Ready, Set, Sell)

In this project, each team develops a sales presentation for a food/agribusiness/agricultural product after submission and approval by the instructor. Product as defined here is not limited to a tangible item; it can also include services and information. The sales transaction must be business-to-business (i.e, B2B). The team is responsible for collecting all technical information about the product, manufacturer and all information concerning competitive brands. Students will identify potential customers, set objectives, establish a sales scenario, etc. Periodic assignments ensure that each team systematically gathers the relevant information in preparation for the sales presentation. During the presentation, the students play the role of a sales team attempting to close a deal with a client. The client will be played by a professional and the faculty instructor. Grades are based on timely completion of assignments, a written report and evaluation by professional reviewers.

RSS Assignments	Points
Assignment 1- Product choice and justification	5
Assignment 2- Prospect profile worksheet and PPI	10
Assignment 3- Features and benefits, selling points and handling objections	10
Assignment 4- Objectives, strategies, opening, probing, closing	20
Assignment 5- Presentation	30
Assignment 6- Final written summary report	25
RSS Total Points	100

Readiness Assessment Test (RAT)

Five short, true-false/multiple choice iRAT/tRATs will be given during the semester. The lowest iRAT and tRAT score will be dropped except in the following instances:

- If you are absent from class due to an excused absence or if you are away from campus on official university business (prior approval from Department Chair) during a RAT, this counts as your drop.
- If you miss a RAT due to an unexcused absence, the grade of zero is earned and is not dropped. Consequently, your next lowest score for an iRAT and tRAT will be dropped.

A RAT is administered *before* the material is addressed in class. Therefore, it is essential that the assigned material be read in preparation for the RAT. You will be allowed five to ten minutes before each RAT to ask questions about the material. The same RAT will be given to individuals and teams. All team members will receive the same score on the tRAT except in the case noted above.

Assignments

Work is not accepted late for any reason other than an excused absence or if you are away from campus on official university business (prior approval from Department Chair). In either of these instances, work must be turned in before the anticipated absence or before returning to class. Assignments are always due at the beginning of the class period unless designed for completion in class.

Setting Grade Weights

Students determine the grade weights for this course within the designated parameters. The procedure for setting grade weights is:

- Teams set preliminary weights for the performance areas and select a member to meet with the other team representatives.
- Team representatives meet at the front of the classroom and negotiate grade weights for the entire class.

*Team Performance/Peer Evaluation

Team members assess each individual's helpfulness to the team through peer evaluation. The individual's contribution is measured by a set of criteria. Performance is measured on a formative basis at mid-term. A final summative evaluation is administered just before the end of the semester. An individual's *Peer Evaluation* weight (percentage designated by their peers) is multiplied by the points earned from the *Team Performance* category to calculate this portion of their grade. The scoring of your peers is done independently and is a private matter.

Determination of the Final Grade

A raw score is computed by category for each student after the class establishes grade weights. Each raw score is multiplied by the quotient of the respective *within area* and *performance category (adjusted by the peer evaluation for team performance)*. Attendance points are added after the individual and team performance scores are computed to calculate the final grade.

A =	90 – 100	D =	60-69
B =	80 – 89	F =	≤ 59
C =	70 – 79		

Criteria

Performance Areas	Grade Weights and Percentages	
	Within Area	Of Total
1) <i>Individual Performance</i> ($\geq 50\%$)		_____ %
RAT Practice ($\leq 5\%$)	_____ %	
RAT ($\leq 30\%$)	_____ %	
Career Fair Prep/Reflection ($\geq 5\%$)	_____ %	
Individual- PIP ¹ ($\geq 15\%$)	_____ %	
FFA CDE Judge/Reflection ($\geq 5\%$)	_____ %	
MBTI/SII Reflection ($\geq 5\%$)	_____ %	
SAS ($\geq 30\%$)	_____ %	
	100 %	
2) <i>Team Performance</i> * ($\geq 40\%$) (Weighted)		_____ %
RAT Practice ($\leq 10\%$)	_____ %	
RAT ($\leq 50\%$)	_____ %	
RSS ($\geq 50\%$)	_____ %	
	100 %	
		100 %

¹ PIP stands for Put in Practice. The assignments are experiential in nature. They are designed to “learn by doing.”

COURSE OUTLINE:

Date	Class Activity	Assignment (Next or Future Class)
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January

Week 1

W17	Student/faculty introductions Syllabus- Bb Significance of this course Career Fair- thinking ahead	
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- Prepare or update professional resume. Bring hard-copy to class on M22

Week 2

M22	Resumes (Guest- Vinessa Mundorff, Associate Director, SHSU Career Services)	
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<http://www.shsu.edu/dept/career-services/resumes/index.html>

- Submit resume for evaluation to Career Services **NOW** to meet 5:00 pm, **Feb, W21** deadline. Submit hard copy or email verification to me no later than this deadline for credit.
- Submit PIP- Reflection (Mundorff) to Bb by 11:00 am, W24

W24	MBTI (Guest- Michelle Meers, Assistant Director, SHSU Career Services) Pre-Strengths assignment	
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- Submit Top-5 Strengths in order to Bb by **11:59 pm, Jan, F26**
- Submit DISC profile to Bb by **11:59 pm, Jan, F26**
- Review your Top-5 themes of talent (Strengths) before class
- Read Chap 5 (Downey et al.) for M29
- Complete MBTI/SII, set up counseling session no later than **4:00 pm, Mar, F30** and submit hard copy or email verification of session participation to me on or before 11:00 am, **Apr, M 2**. After completing all components, submit the MBTI/SSI Reflection to Bb on or before 11:00 am, **Apr, M 2. Do it NOW!**

Date	Class Activity	Assignment (Next or Future Class)
<u>Week 3</u>		
M29	Strengths	
W31	Strengths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submit PIP- Reflection (Strengths) to Bb by 11:00 am, M 5 • Read syllabus for iRAT/tRAT Practice on M 5
February		
<u>Week 4</u>		
M 5	Team formation and introductions iRAT/tRAT Practice- syllabus Career Fair preparation	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submit SAS 1 to Bb by 11:00 am, W 7 • Read Chaps 1 and 2 (Downey et al.) for iRAT/tRAT #1 on W 7
W 7	iRAT/tRAT #1- Chaps 1 and 2 Sales and marketing are related, but not the same Team- set grade weights	
<u>Week 5</u>		
M12	Team SWOT	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Chaps 3 and 4 (Downey et al.) for iRAT/tRAT #2 on W14 • Submit SAS 2 to Bb by 11:00 am, W14
W14	iRAT/tRAT #2- Chaps 3 and 4 Planning and prospecting	
<u>Week 6</u>		
M19	Prospecting (Guests- Fastenal managers)	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submit PIP- Reflection (Fastenal) to Bb by 11:00 am, W21 • Prep RSS 1 for team discussion/document on W21
W21	Team- RSS 1 (product choice)	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submit RSS 1 to Bb by 11:00 am, M26 by one team member • Prep RSS 2 for team discussion/document on M26
<u>Week 7</u>		
M26	Team- RSS 2 (prospect profile worksheet and PPI)	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submit RSS 2 to Bb by 11:00 am, W28 by one team member • Attend Career Fair

Date	Class Activity	Assignment (Next or Future Class)
W28	Ag Sci/Eng Tech Career Fair LSC Ballroom, 10:00 am – 2:00 pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submit Career Fair Prep/Response to Bb by 11:00 am, M 5 • Read Chaps 6 and 7 (Downey et al.) for iRAT/tRAT #3 on M 5
<u>Week 8</u>		
<u>March</u>		
M 5	iRAT/tRAT #3- Chaps 6 and 7 Opening and listening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submit formative peer evaluation by 11:00 am, W 7
W 7	Opening (Guest- Jacob Brock, Account Manager, Baker Corp.)	
12-16 Spring Break		
<u>Week 9</u>		
M19	Mock sales call and consulting call (Altom-Mills)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submit PIP- Reflection (Altom-Mills) to Bb by 11:00 am, W21 • Read Chap 8 (Downey et al.) for Team- RSS 3 on W21
W21	Team- RSS 3 (FAB and handling objections)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submit RSS 3 to Bb by 11:00 am, M26 by one team member • Submit SAS 3 to Bb by 11:00 am, M26
<u>Week 10</u>		
M26	Listening and networking (Guest- Mark Taylor, BNI)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submit PIP- Reflection (Taylor) to Bb by 11:00 am, W28 • Read Chaps 9 and 10 (Downey et al.) for iRAT/tRAT #4 on W28
W28	iRAT/tRAT #4- Chaps 9 and 10 Resistance and the close	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submit MBTI/SSI Reflection to Bb by 11:00 am, M 2
<u>Week 11</u>		
<u>April</u>		
M 2	More on Strengths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submit SAS 4 to Bb by 11:00 am, W 4 • Submit SAS 5 and business card in sealed envelope no later than 11:00 am, W 4

Date	Class Activity	Assignment (Next or Future Class)
W 4	SAS conversation, write thank you notes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submit PIP- Cover letter using Strengths language to Bb by 11:00 am, M 9 • Prep RSS 4 for team discussion/document on R 6
<u>Week 12</u>		
M 9	Team- RSS 4 (objectives, strategies, opening, probing, closing)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submit RSS 4 to Bb by 11:00 am, W11 by one team member • Read Chap 11 (Downey et al.) for iRAT/tRAT #5 on W11
W11	RAT #5- Chap 11 Follow-up and follow-through	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submit PIP- Elevator Speech to Bb by 11:00 am, M16
<u>Week 13</u>		
M16	Elevator speech	
T17	Area/Invitational FFA CDE- Ag Sales	
W18	Follow-up and follow-through (Cortney Wesneski, Sales Manager, Graybar and Dean Overmyer, HR Generalist, Graybar)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submit PIP- Reflection (Wesneski) to Bb by 11:00 am, M23 • Review document on consulting posted to Bb
<u>Week 14</u>		
M23	Specifics on consulting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RSS 5 preparation
W25	RSS 5 prep	
F27	State FFA CDE- Ag Sales	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submit Judge/Reflection (FFA CDE- Ag Sales) to Bb by 11:00 am, M30 • RSS 5 begins. Teams will evaluate each presentation using the same rubric used by professional evaluators
<u>Week 15</u>		
M30	RSS presentations (Guest- TBD)	
May		
W 2	RSS presentations (Guest- Karen Altom, Altom Consulting & Marketing, Inc.)	

Date	Class Activity	Assignment (Next or Future Class)
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete summative peer evaluation by 5 pm, F 4. Failure to do so will result in no score recorded for the entire RSS assignment
<u>Finals Week</u>		
W 9	RSS presentations, 12:00 noon-2:00 pm (Guest-Walter Holmes, VALIC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RSS 6 (individual) deposited in Bb by 12:00 noon, R10