AGBU 4375 (Section 01)

Advanced Agribusiness Management

Course Syllabus

Spring 2018

Instructor

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Class Meetings

Mondays and Wednesdays 12:30 to 01:50 pm in Pirkle 340

Office Hours

Mondays and Wednesdays	: 02:00 pm to 04:30 pm
Tuesdays and Thursdays	: 08:00 am to 10:00 am
Other Times	: I maintain an open-door policy. You can drop in at any time.
	Please see my tentative weekly schedule provided in this syllabus
	Please schedule an appointment to ensure my availability.

Student-Faculty Communication

Student-faculty communication is the most important aspect of my teaching philosophy. Your ideas, comments, suggestions, and questions are always welcome. I encourage you to come by my office to discuss the course and your academic progress. Please do not hesitate to email me at any time when you have questions regarding the course content. I will make sure to provide a quick response. Please start the subject line in every email communication with AGBU 4375.01.

Text Book

A specific textbook is not required for this course. I will assign readings from publicly available articles to help you prepare for the discussion.

Course Objective

The primary objective of this course is to help the students integrate economic, financial, and strategic management concepts and apply it to analyze the strategic option for Agribusiness firms. The course will use the case study methodology to make the students understand different aspects of the strategic management process and to improve their ability to work in a team environment. This course will also emphasize on the development of important soft skills such as verbal and written communication, teamwork, and leadership.

Expected Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of this course, students are expected to be able to understand the process of scanning the external and internal environment of a business organization, identify the strategic alternatives, and formulate potential strategies. Students will be also able to identify and analyze data sources and function efficiently in teams to achieve the desired objectives.

Assessment of Learning Outcomes

Learning outcomes of this class will be assessed through class participation, class activities, presentation, and final project report. A detailed schedule (tentative) is provided at the end of this syllabus. However, *the instructor reserves the right to reschedule the dates if necessary*.

Class participation and in-class write-ups

Teaching is not supposed to be a non-stop one-sided monologue. Students are encouraged to ask questions pertaining to the course material and engage in healthy discussions. I will greatly depend on class discussions and act as a facilitator in this course. Hence, the unique contribution from each student is expected to enhance the learning environment. Class attendance is required. If a student misses a class, it is the responsibility of the student to make up anything missed due to the absence. Please see the attendance policy of the Department of Agricultural Sciences and Engineering Technology provided in this syllabus.

The grading in this course is heavily dependent on the group based capstone project, which will be completed mostly during class periods. Hence, individual contribution to the group project through attending class, actively participating in the class activity, and contributing to the preparation of the project is extremely important. Hence, 20% of the grades in this course will be for class participation and class activities. Please remember that this grade is not just for attending the class, but for participating in the group discussion and successfully completing the class activities. Also, remember that this is a writing intensive course and you will complete an in-class assignment in each class. You will be given a score for class participation in each class based on the grade received in these in-class assignments. The lowest 3 scores will be thrown out and the average of the rest will be your score for class participation. Because of the special nature of this class, the following special attendance policy will be strictly followed for this course. These incentives and penalties are over and above the class participation score.

Incentives

If a student only misses 2 or less classes, 3 points will be awarded for class participation. If a student misses 3 or 4 classes, the incentives will be 2 and 1 points, respectively. There will be no incentive if a student misses 5 or more classes.

Penalties

If a student misses 5 classes a 2-point penalty will be imposed. The penalty will be 5, 8, 12, 18, and 30 points for missing 6, 7, 8, 9and 10 classes, respectively. If a student misses 11 or more classes, that student will receive an "F" for this course.

Individual Assignments

Assignment topics will be allotted to each individual. The topics will be various external factors influencing the industry in which your agribusiness firm operates. This well help you have a detailed understanding of the external environment and will become parts of the external analysis write-up of the class project. Individual assignments should be limited to a maximum of 4 pages. The detailed description of the individual assignments will be provided later.

Class Project Report

Please understand that this is a writing enhanced course. The class project (including class activities, reports, individual write-ups, and presentation) will account for 100% of the grade. The class project will be group based. *Learning to work as a team is an important learning outcome of this course*.

The class project is divided into 4 sections; Internal Analysis, External Analysis, Financial Analysis, and Strategic Analysis. The class will be divided into teams consisting of four or five students each. Each group member will be responsible for overseeing one section. Each group will submit internal, external, financial, and strategic analysis. These sections will be graded and returned to the team with suggestions for improvement. The section for which you are responsible will account for 15% of the grade. The other three sections will account for 10% each. The team will incorporate the suggestions and submit the final project report. For teams with five members, one person will be responsible for submitting the final documents. For four-member teams, the person responsible for strategic analysis will be responsible to submit the final report. The person responsible for each section will be responsible for organizing and submitting the section reports. The final project report will account for 15% of the final grade.

The final project report and reports on each sections will be graded on team basis (i.e. all the members in a group will get the same score for these reports). *However, team members in each group will evaluate the contributions of their team members through peer evaluations. Two peer evaluations will be conducted during the course of the semester (the schedule is attached at the end of the syllabus). The individual evaluations will be kept confidential and the average evaluation score only will be disclosed to the individuals in the team. The instructor will also evaluate the work ethics, professionalism, and team work exhibited by each group member. The average of peer evaluation from the group members and instructor evaluation will be used to derive individual scores from the group based class project scores.*

The entire class project (other than the individual write-ups on external factors and responding to my comments on write-ups) will be completed in class as various class activities. I have designed the class in the following manner to accomplish this and facilitate intra-group and inter-group communication.

1. Students will come to class well prepared after going through the relevant readings assigned in the previous class.
2. I will go over the materials and give detailed instructions on class activity (15 minutes)
3. Students will perform the class activity (45 minutes). Usually the class activity will be to prepare a 2-3 page write-up and to prepare 3-5 slides that explain the important points. *Groups can get my help, if needed, to accomplish class activities.*
4. One student from each group will present the important findings of the analysis to the class (2-3 minutes per group). These short presentations should be rotated among the four team members. These presentations are designed to improve your presentation skills and to make sure that all students understand the various aspects of the analysis.

Class Project Presentation

Members of each group will make a group presentation of the class project, in which all team members should share the responsibility. The presentation will be graded individually and will account for 10% of the final grade. The time allotted for each presentation is 15 minutes. The individuals will be evaluated for clarity of communication, maintaining eye contact with the audience, and exhibiting knowledge on the analysis. ***Business professional attire is required for presentation.*** All students other than the members in the presenting team will also evaluate the presentations and provide a grade for the presenters.

Grade Calculation

In-class write-ups	: 20%
Individual Assignment	: 10%
Final Project report	: 15%
Report on the section you are leading	: 15%
Report on other three sections (3 X 10)	: 30%
Class project presentation (Individual)	: 10%
Total	**: 100%**

For teams with five members, the final report will account for 20% for the person responsible for final report and the four sections will carry 10% each

The incentives and penalties for class participation will be added to the final score to determine the letter grade. A template for grade calculation is available in BlackBoard.

Grading scale

90 – 100 %	: A
80 – 89 %	: B
70 – 79 %	: C
60 – 69 %	: D
0 –59 %	: F

Attendance Policy of the Department of Agricultural Sciences and Engineering Technology

1) Regular and punctual attendance is expected of each student in the Department of Agricultural Sciences and Engineering Technology at Sam Houston State University.
2) Each faculty member will keep a written record of student attendance. If a student misses four or more classes, the student's grade will be reduced by one letter grade. ***Please see the incentives and penalties specific for this class provided in this syllabus.***
3) Three unexcused or unjustified tardies or early departures are considered as one absence.
4) Excused absences must be documented by the student with a letter of confirmation from the sponsoring student organization, professor or doctor.
5) Exemptions will include participation in departmental activities when prior approval is attained 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.

Academic Honesty

All students are expected to engage in all academic pursuits in a manner that is above reproach. Students are expected to maintain 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 which is to be submitted, plagiarism, collusion, and the abuse of resource materials.

Classroom Rules of Conduct

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 telephones and pagers must be turned off before class begins. Students are prohibited from using tobacco products, making offensive remarks, reading newspapers, sleeping, talking at inappropriate times, wearing inappropriate clothing, or engaging in any other form of distraction. Inappropriate behavior in the classroom shall result in a directive to leave class. Students who are disruptive also may be reported to the Dean of Students for disciplinary action as per the university policy.

Visitors in the Classroom

Only registered students may attend the class. Exceptions can be made on a case-by-case basis by the instructor. Unannounced visitors to class must present a current official SHSU identification card. The visitors must not present a disruption to the class by their attendance. Students wishing to audit a class must apply to do so through the registrar's office.

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.

Any student with a disability that affects his/her academic performance should contact the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities in the SHSU Lee Drain Annex (telephone 936-294-3512, TDD 936-294-3786) to request accommodations.

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. 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

Absence due to Religious Holidays

Section 51.911(b) of the Texas Education Code requires that an institution of higher education excuse a student from attending classes or other required activities, including examinations, for the observance of a religious holy day, including travel for that purpose. Section 51.911 (a) (2) defines a religious holy day as: "a holy day observed by a religion whose places of worship are exempt from property taxation under Section 11.20…." A student whose absence is excused under this subsection may not be penalized for that absence and shall be allowed to take an examination or complete an assignment within a reasonable time after the absence.

University policy 861001 provides the procedures to be followed by the student and instructor. A student desiring to absent himself/herself from a scheduled class in order to observe (a) religious holy day(s) shall present to each instructor involved a written statement concerning the religious holy day(s). The instructor will complete a form notifying the student of a reasonable timeframe in which the missed assignments / examinations are to be completed.

Cell Phone Policy

Please turn off your mobile phones and smart devises during class time. Use of a telephone, text messenger or any device that performs these functions during a test period is prohibited. These devices should not be present during a test or should be stored securely in such a way that they cannot be seen or used by the student. Even the visible presence of such devices during the test is considered de facto evidence of cheating and could result in a charge of academic dishonesty.

Campus Tobacco Policy

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. Tobacco products are not permitted on campus including University-owned or leased buildings or vehicles. The policy is applicable to hallways, classrooms, offices, restrooms, meeting rooms, indoor or open-air athletic facilities (including Bowers Stadium, Baseball/Softball Stadiums and Bernard G. Johnson Coliseum), performance halls, and all other spaces in university-owned or leased buildings or vehicles. The details of the policy can be found at https://www.shsu.edu/intranet/policies/administrative/documents/pre19tobaccopolicy.pdf

Other SHSU Policies

I will adhere to all institutional policies of the Sam Houston state University. Please visit the website of the dean of students (http://www.shsu.edu/dept/dean-of-students/index.html) to see the detailed student guidelines. Academic policy manual for students with details of academic policies is available at http://www.shsu.edu/dept/academic-affairs/aps/aps-students.html

Copyright Statement

All materials (handouts, texts, slides, etc.) used in this course are under copyright, 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, without written permission from the instructor, and seeking permission from other copyright owners.

Caveat to this Syllabus

Please understand that this syllabus is ***tentative*** and the instructor reserves the right to make changes to this syllabus as and when required. The detailed schedule of lectures and class activity provided here also are tentative and subject to change as needed. The instructor also reserves the right to modify the course contents based on the performance of the class.

***Tentative* Schedule of Lectures, Class Activities, Class Project, and Peer Evaluations.**

Date	Analysis	Topic	Class Activity
17-Jan	*Introduction*	Introduction & Overview	What employers want
22-Jan		Case study Methodology	Identifying the corporation, individual responsibilities
24-Jan		The big picture	Naïve SWOT and TOWS
29-Jan		Know your Corporation	Introduction, economic engine, history, and mergers
31-Jan	No Class (ExCEL@Sam)		
05-Feb	*External Analysis* **(due on 26-Feb)**	Industry Environment	Industry definition and rationale. Status and trends
07-Feb		External Scanning I	Ecological, social, and politico-legal factors
12-Feb		External Scanning II	Technological and economic factors
14-Feb		Competitive Analysis	Buyers, suppliers, substitutes, and other stakeholders
19-Feb		Competitor Analysis	Industry structure, competitors, potential entrants
21-Feb	*Internal Analysis* **(due on 28-Mar)**	Organizational Analysis	Core competency and business model
26-Feb		Corporate Governance	Organizational structure & Executive compensation
28-Feb		No Class (Career Fair)	
05-Mar		Current Strategy	Mission, vision, and their analysis
07-Mar		Portfolio Analysis	Formulation of BCG Matrix and its analysis
19-Mar		Supply Chain Analysis	Representation and analyze the supply chain
26-Mar	*Financial Analysis* **(due on 16-Apr)**	Stock Performance	Stock performance of the corporation & competitors.
28-Mar		Balance Sheet	Consolidating balance sheets
02-Apr		Income Statement	Consolidating income statements
04-Apr		Financial Ratios	Liquidity, solvency, and profitability ratios
09-Apr		DuPont Analysis	Perform DuPont analysis to dissect ROE
11-Apr	*Strategic Analysis* **(due on 02-May)**	SWOT Preparation	Write-ups on SWOT
16-Apr		SWOT Analysis	IFAS Matrix, EFAS Matrix, and SWOT overview
18-Apr		Strategy Formulation	TOWS matrix
23-Apr		Strategy Alternatives	Business, Corporate, and Functional Strategies
25-Apr		Strategy Recommendation	Write-up on top strategies; finalize the PowerPoint
30-Apr	*Final Report* **(due on 7-May)**	Executive Summary	Finish executive summary and proofreading
02-May		Layout and References	Formatting, style, references, and table of contents
07-May		Oral presentation and submission of the final report (1:00 to 3:00 pm)	

My Tentative Weekly Schedule

My tentative weekly schedule is provided below. Please note that I may arrange meetings not specified here. Please feel free to walk in if my door is open. Students will have priority over the research activities.

Sam Houston State University — **Spring 2018**
Agricultural Business — **Dr. Nair's Schedule**

I practice an open door policy. You are welcome to walk in at any time.
Please feel free to set up an appointment at nair@shsu.edu to ensure my availability.

Times not specifically designated involve course preparation, research, meetings, and time away from the office for professional meetings.

Time		Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
7:00 AM	7:30 AM					
7:30 AM	8:00 AM					
8:00 AM	8:30 AM		Office Hours		Office Hours	
8:30 AM	9:00 AM					
9:00 AM	9:30 AM					Research
9:30 AM	10:00 AM	AGBU 4378 PIRK 340		AGBU 4378 PIRK 340		
10:00 AM	10:30 AM					
10:30 AM	11:00 AM					
11:00 AM	11:30 AM		AGBU 3385 PIRK 340		AGBU 3385 PIRK 340	
11:30 AM	12:00 PM	Lunch		Lunch		Lunch
12:00 PM	12:30 PM					
12:30 PM	1:00 PM	AGBU 4375 PIRK 340	Lunch	AGBU 4375 PIRK 340	Lunch	
1:00 PM	1:30 PM					
1:30 PM	2:00 PM					
2:00 PM	2:30 PM	Office Hours			Office Hours	
2:30 PM	3:00 PM			AGBU Faculty Meeting		
3:00 PM	3:30 PM					
3:30 PM	4:00 PM					
4:00 PM	4:30 PM					
4:30 PM	5:00 PM					
5:00 PM	5:30 PM					
5:30 PM	6:00 PM					
6:00 PM	6:30 PM					
6:30 PM	7:00 PM					

"The mind is not a vessel to be filled,

but a fire to be kindled"

-Plutarch