

**AG 512: Methods of Technological Change**  
**COURSE SYLLABUS: Fall 2014**

**Instructor:** Robert L. “Bob” Williams, PhD Associate Professor

**Office Location:** Ag/IT 249

**Office Hours:** M-W 9:00-11:55 T 9:30-11:55 and 1:00-3:00 Th-F by appointment

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**COURSE INFORMATION**

**Materials – Textbooks, Readings, Supplementary Readings:**

*Textbook(s) Required:* Rogers, E.M. (2003). *Diffusion of innovations*. Freepress, 5<sup>th</sup> ed.

*Additional:* Supplemental readings, slides, and videos are embedded throughout the course.

**Course Description:** This course will focus on the processes by which professional change agents (extension agents, school leaders, etc.) influence the introduction, adoption, and diffusion of technological change. The interlocking relationships of technology, culture, and society and the role of the change agent in affecting those relationships will be covered. Students will learn how to predict and minimize the undesirable consequences of change and how to enhance the development of communication skills required when working with people.

**Student Learning Outcomes:**

*Learning outcomes are what you are able to do as a result of the activities, readings, instruction, etc. that have occurred in this course - these are my expectations of you. Assignments/activities related to these outcomes are described in the assignments and assessments portion of the syllabus.*

1. The learner will be an active and engaged participant in discussion forums within his/her learning community by analyzing, constructing/creating, and evaluating information presented within the textbook, external readings/resources, student research, and class activities.
2. The learner will conduct a series of three activities (such as concept mapping, interviewing, and case study analysis) via a variety of collaborations (synchronous/asynchronous, small group, one/one, individual) to demonstrate understanding of particular topics (diffusion, adopter categories, innovation decision process and being an agent of change) related to course content.

3. The learner will prepare a capstone project, either alone or in groups, to demonstrate thorough knowledge and understanding of all elements of the innovation-diffusion process through online discussions and a variety of activities to include:
  - Elements of diffusion
  - History of diffusion research and its contributions
  - Innovation-development process
  - Innovation-decision process
  - Attributes (characteristics) of innovations and rate of adoption
  - Level of innovativeness and adopter categories
  - Diffusion networks
  - The role of the change agent
  - Innovations within organizations
  - Consequences of innovations

## **COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

### **Instructional Methods / Activities/ Assessments**

This course is made up of a series of assignments and assessments to assist you in achieving the course learning outcomes. Each week you will work on various combinations of assignments, activities, discussions, readings, research, etc. which will be made available to you on each Friday and close on the following Sunday - allowing for 10 days total to complete the activities.

There are three main assignments/themes for this course: the online discussions in combination with the innovation activities, and the capstone project. The following sections describe the assignments with rubrics for assessment attached.

### **Discussion Forums: 3 total of 10 points/discussion totaling 30 points**

***Learning Outcome #1: The learner will be an active and engaged participant in discussion forums within his/her learning community by analyzing, constructing/creating, and evaluating information presented within the textbook, external readings/resources, student research, and class activities.***

***Description:*** The discussion forums are related to the chapter readings, external resources and activities. Upon completion or near completion of the assigned readings and activities, you are expected to engage in an **ongoing** discussion/debate with your learning community peers. Your contributions to the discussion forums will be graded for **quality** not quantity, **timeliness** of your contributions, and a **detailed analysis** of linking together theory (readings) to application (activities).

One major piece of advice for this assignment....To avoid point deduction, you should have an original post (response to the question) by Friday and interact with your peers over the weekend.

**Assessment Method:**

<b>5=Excellent; 4=Good; 3=Meets Expectations; 2=Needs Work; 1=Below Expectations</b>					
<b>Quality and thoroughness of response in original post. Must be posted on or before Friday</b>	5	4	3	2	1
<b>Quality and level of interaction with others in forum providing more than “I agree” statements</b>	5	4	3	2	1

**Innovation Activities: 3 total @ 10 points/activity totaling 30 points**

**Learning Outcome #2:** *The learner will conduct a series of three activities (such as case study analysis, interviewing, and problem solving) via a variety of collaborations (synchronous/asynchronous, small group, one/one, individual) to demonstrate understanding of particular topics (diffusion, adopter categories, innovation decision process and being an agent of change) related to course content.*

**Description:** On occasion, we will conduct an activity to further assist you in developing an understanding of diffusion/adoption utilizing a variety of approaches such as case studies, problem solving exercises/role playing, etc. At times, these activities may be as simple as you developing a concept map that symbolizes your understanding of a point in this theory or an asynchronous activity via a discussion forum in small groups where you will play the role of the change agent, or adopter in the innovation decision making process. Such assignments will be noted as **Activity:** and given an identifying name such as **Activity: Case Study Analysis**

**Assessment Method:**

<b>5=Excellent; 4=Good; 3=Meets Expectations; 2=Needs Work; 1=Below Expectations</b>					
<b>Quality of activity produced</b>	5	4	3	2	1
<b>Addressed all of the components to the activity</b>	5	4	3	2	1

**Capstone Project: Point Breakdown:**

**Paper/Presentation = 50; Presentation Evaluation= 25; Team member contribution evaluation=25; Totaling 100 points**

**Learning Outcome #3:** *The learner will prepare a capstone project to demonstrate thorough knowledge and understanding of all elements of the innovation-diffusion process through online discussions and a variety of activities.*

**Description:** The purpose of this assignment is to serve as a capstone experience for the course. Either alone or in small groups (no more than 3) you will develop and deliver a group presentation and report on the diffusion of an innovation into a particular social system. You will select, or better yet, create an innovation to be diffused into your social system. You will be required to conduct research about your system in order to effectively act as change agents to

diffuse the innovation. As a group, you will develop a twelve-fifteen page paper and develop a mini presentation to complement your paper of your innovation at the end of the semester. This is a team effort, so it is encouraged that you divide the effort for this paper among your team members, sharing resources and responsibilities within your team. This paper will be graded for clarity and grammar. Your comprehensive report will include information on why the innovation was developed, its attributes, and characteristics. In addition, you will report on the people involved in the process, from the innovator to the change agents, intended audience, power actors and opinion leaders. You will analyze the overall positive and negative effects of the innovation, the adoption process and the consequences of adoption.

Your innovation should be fun and creative. Transport your peers into the social system you have been studying. Visuals such as PowerPoint, posters, role-playing and the actual innovation (if possible) are highly encouraged.

As we progress throughout the semester you will develop a clearer understanding of what you as change agents need to research in order to effectively and successfully diffuse an innovation into a social system. Here are a few key areas that should be researched within a social system:

- Educational System
- Religion
- Technology
- Government & Politics
- Culture & Traditions
- Social Systems
- Family Structure
- Economics

You will also conduct an ongoing evaluation of your team members. Only you and the professor will see this evaluation. The purpose of this evaluation is to inform the professor of team member contributions to the project which will in turn reflect on individual grades.

**Assessment Method:**

**Rubric will be made available in the week this activity is introduced.**

**Grading**

Grades will be determined via a simple point system and grading rubrics. Rubrics are posted in the course syllabus under each assignment description. **You** are responsible for reviewing them prior to submitting an assignment - they tell you all you need to know in order to earn a passing grade in this course.

**Total Points Possible: 160**

**160-144=A**

**143-128=B**

**127-112=C**

**111-96=D**

**95-0=F**

## TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS

This is an online course and some obvious technological resources will be required.

Access to a computer with

- o Internet access (high-speed preferred)
- o Microphone for any classlive sessions throughout the semester (these run about \$10)
- o Speakers so you can hear me and other audio enhanced assignments.
- o Word processing software (Microsoft Word preferred)

As a student enrolled at Texas A&M University-Commerce, you have access to an email account via myLeo - all my emails sent from eCollege (and all other university emails) will go to this account, so please be sure to check it regularly. Conversely, you are to email me via the eCollege email system or your myLeo email as our spam filters will catch yahoo, hotmail, etc. and I will not check for your email in spam.

## ACCESS AND NAVIGATION

**eCollege Technical Concerns:** Please contact the eCollege HelpDesk, available 24 hours a day, seven days a week by sending an email directly to [helpdesk@online.tamuc.org](mailto:helpdesk@online.tamuc.org). You may also reach the HelpDesk by calling (toll-free) 1-866-656-5511, or through the Online Chat by clicking on the "Live Support" tab within your eCollege course.

**Course Concerns:** If you have questions pertaining to the content of this course (e.g., questions about an exam, about course due dates, etc.), please contact me via email, through the Q&A Forums or during office hours.

**Other Questions/Concerns:** Contact the appropriate TAMU-C department relating to your questions/concern. If you are unable to reach the appropriate department with questions regarding your course enrollment, billing, advising, or financial aid, please call 903-886-5511 between the hours of 8:00 a.m.- 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday.

## COMMUNICATION AND SUPPORT

### **Interaction with Instructor Statement:**

***Participation & Communication:*** I expect each of you to be active and thoughtful participants within the learning environment (eCollege) and your learning community. You are to expect the same of me. This includes completing the extensive readings related to course topics, team and/or individual research proposal topics and participation in proposal revision activities (submission of individual draft sections and evaluation of draft sections from other class members).

Email is the best way to reach me as I check it daily. A reply will be sent within 24 hours depending upon the time your message was received. Please do not send me panicked last minute emails with the word HELP!!!!!!!! in the subject line.

## **Class Syllabus Addendum, Fall 2014**

### Professionalism

Students are expected to attend class and/or laboratory as scheduled. Their participation in class discussion and instructional activities should follow the basic principles of common courtesy, decency, and cooperation with peers and instructional personnel. Rude and disruptive behavior, as well as cheating, in any form, will not be tolerated. The use of tobacco products in the classroom, laboratory, or field trip sites is prohibited. Inappropriate conduct will not be tolerated. Failure to comply with instructor's guidelines may result in suspension from class for the remainder of the day's instruction. Repeat offenses may result in additional consequences.

### Reasonable Accommodations

Requests from students with disabilities for reasonable accommodations must go through the Academic Support Committee. For more information, contact Director of Disability Services at 903/886-5835.

### Teaching Assistants/Guest Instructors

The need will arise occasionally for either a teaching assistant or guest instructor to teach/present a lecture or lab. It is expected that students will support and participate in class activities with the same level of courtesy as that demonstrated when the professor is present. Discourteous behavior during the lecture/demonstration by a teaching assistant or guest instructor is not acceptable.

### Office Hours

The following office hours are the official times that I will be available for drop-in student consultation.

Mondays and Wednesdays	9:00-11:55 a.m.
Tuesdays	10:00-11:55 a.m.
Wednesday, Thursdays, Fridays	by appointment only

### Academic Honesty and Integrity

Students are expected to do their own work. Assistance with written assignments, such as proofreading or editing, is encouraged as long as the final concepts and product are those drafted and authored by the student. Information or materials (including ideas, quotes, data, procedures, etc.) from sources other than the student must be given proper credit through appropriate citation. The discipline of Agricultural Education uses the APA format (6<sup>th</sup> edition) as its primary style guide for publications, including research papers and reports. Assistance with this format and general guidelines for written assignments are available at the following two sources:

[Purdue Online Writing Lab \(OWL\)](#)

[TAMUC Writing Center](#)

Academic honesty and integrity is expected of all students. Cheating including but not limited to copying, talking to classmates during testing, using notes when prohibited by instructor, and plagiarism (as defined by the Council of Writing Program Administrators <http://www.wpacouncil.org/node/9>) will not be tolerated. Penalties may include grade reduction or suspension from class, depending on the frequency and severity of the violation.

## TENTATIVE COURSE OUTLINE / CALENDAR FALL 2014

Originally, this course was presented in an 8-week format, thus 8 modules of instruction. The length of modules in duration will vary, depending on the assignments. At present, most will last less than ten days in duration. There will be some time designated for field observation and data analysis that is not included below.

<b>Module</b>	<b>Activities</b>
<b>1</b>	Introductions Readings: Chapter's 1-3 Discussion – Elements of Diffusion
<b>2</b>	Readings: Chapter's 4 & 5 Innovation Activity – Innovation Decision Process
<b>3</b>	Readings: Chapter's 6 & 7 Innovation Activity – Adopter Interviews
<b>4</b>	Reading Chapter 8 Discussion: A Network of Diffusion Capstone project introduction
<b>5</b>	Reading: Chapter 9 Innovation Activity – Case Study analysis
<b>6</b>	Reading: Chapter's 10 & 11 Discussion: Innovations in Organizations & Consequences
<b>7</b>	Capstone project development
<b>8</b>	Capstone project presentation