

Course Description: This course introduces students to the principles and practices associated with sustainable agriculture from ecological, economic, social, and ethical perspectives.

Textbook

There is no official textbook for this class. We will mostly use references such as extension and other government agency bulletins, research articles, and videos. We will have a minimum of 12 weekly modules, and possibly up to 14, contingent upon how the course evolves. I will be building the course as we go and *may* stay as much as a week ahead of you. This is a new course, and I want to make sure that we address the most important/relevant topics. I know that importance and relevance are not always the same and may differ among individuals. If you get bored, feel shorted, or feel the topics are too advance, the information related to accessing the free online textbook we use in *AG 350 Introduction to Sustainable Agriculture* is provided below.

Mason, John. (2003). *Sustainable Agriculture, 2nd. Edition*. Land Links Press.
This book is out of print but may be available from used sources. It is **available free** in digital format at the following link:

https://archive.org/details/Sustainable_Agriculture/mode/2up

Other documents/handouts, articles, and videos will be provided through your university D2L account.

Student Learning Outcomes:

Upon completion of the course the student will be able to-

- a. **Learning Outcome 1:** Students will be able to demonstrate *knowledge* of the interdependence of global dynamics in our present food system as well as the need for more sustainable alternatives.
- b. **Learning Outcome 2:** Students will be able to *apply* knowledge of the principles of sustainable to the context of food production as evidenced through course related activities and assignments.
- c. **Learning Outcome 3:** Students will be able to view themselves as *engaged* change agents/educators within the context of sustainable food production and its relevance to people, profits, and planet.

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The following instructional objectives will guide course content to achieve these outcomes.

1. Recognize historical and contemporary issues of in agriculture and food systems in context of resource utilization and conservation.
2. Examine ecological, economic, and social impacts of farming methods.
3. Identify, analyze, and utilize various sources/types of information and:
 - a. Discuss *case studies* and examples of sustainable food production,
 - b. Distinguish between conventional and sustainable agriculture,
 - c. Determine relevant sources of training and professional development.
 - d. Recognize agencies and organizations supporting sustainable agriculture.
4. Compare/contrast concepts related to *agroecology*, *regenerative agriculture*, and *permaculture*.
5. Explore factors associated with *soil health* and *soil improvement*.
6. Review training materials and create assessment items.
7. Develop and deliver an informative presentation.
8. Consider the *human conditions* associated with labor in farming/food processing.
9. Recognize the role of livestock/poultry/fish in sustainable agriculture.
10. Identify sources of influence in the development of regulations and policies affecting the production, distribution, and management of food, agriculture, and natural resources systems.

Grade Determination:

	<i>Possible Points</i>
Completion of online discussions (12 @ 10 pts each)	120
Introductory video	80
Poster presentation over a <i>sustainable agriculture practice</i>	100
Research article summary and reflection (2 @ 100)	200
Review of training material and assessment items	100

$$\text{Your Grade (\%)} = \frac{\text{Points Earned}}{600} \times 100$$

A = 90-100 B = 80-89 C = 70-79 D = 60-69 F = below 60%

Class Attendance and Participation in Discussions

Students are expected to discuss experiences and observations, as well as ask questions. Being in attendance is only part of the learning process. By discussing issues and asking questions, you will reinforce learning through a multi-sensory approach. Your attendance and *effective listening* are also necessary for participation in the *peer review* of the team presentations and individual speeches. Some discussions will be online in D2L.

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Additionally, there will be a **Facebook group page** for this class where news items may be shared for further discussion. **Send a request to join *AG 350 Intro to Sustainable Agriculture*.**

Introductory Video

Student will prepare and submit a 30-45 second video introducing themselves in D2L.

Research Brief (2)

Students will select and read two research article related to some aspect of sustainable agriculture and summarize key points in 2-3 paragraphs. In the final paragraph, the student will describe how this research relates to one or more topics presented/discussed in class and whether or not the research could be put into practice in Northeast Texas.

Poster Presentations

Each student will create a *poster presentation* elaborating on a production practice or process that makes farming more sustainable. Presentations will be submitted in D2L.

Review of Training Materials and Creation of Relevant Assessment Items

Each student will be assigned a training reference that may be used in the Sustainable Agriculture Career Development Event for FFA (and possibly/eventually 4-H). The student will review the material per professor directions and compose 10 multiple-choice exam items over the material assigned. The student sill also compose a one-page review of the reference regarding its potential relevance and a training/learning tool.

The research summaries and presentation, should be written in a format compatible with the *American Psychological Association (APA) Manual for Publication*, 7th edition. A synopsis and tutorial on scientific writing, including the use of APA format is available from the Online Writing Lab at Purdue University (<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/>). Personal face-to-face assistance with editing and format suggestions is available from the on-campus Writing Center at TAMU-Commerce.

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Syllabus Addendum for Dr. Bob Williams for the Fall 2022 Semester

OFFICE HOURS

Office hours are available for student conferences with the professor for additional course support and, if applicable, academic/career advisement. The following hours will be maintained for this purpose, provided they are not circumvented by administrative assigned tasks beyond the professors control, professional travel to conferences or meetings, or medical appoints for professor or his household dependents.

Monday	9:00-11:55 a.m. (available for in-office appointment)
Tuesday	NA
Wednesday	NA
Thursday	9:00-11:55 a.m. (available for in-office appointment)
Friday	by pre-scheduled appointment only

COUNSELING

The Counseling Center at A&M-Commerce, located in the Halladay Building, Room 203, offers counseling services, educational programming, and connection to community resources for students. Students have 24/7 access to the Counseling Center’s crisis assessment services by calling 903-886-5145. For more information regarding Counseling Center events and confidential services, please visit www.tamuc.edu/counsel

TECHNOLOGY ACCESS AND NAVIGATION

The electronic gradebook on D2L will be used in this course. You will need your campus-wide ID (CWID) and password to log into the course. If you do not know your CWID or have forgotten your password, contact the Center for IT Excellence (CITE) at 903.468.6000 or helpdesk@tamuc.edu.

If you are having technical difficulty with any part of Brightspace [D2L] , please contact Brightspace Technical Support at 1-877-325-7778 or click on the **Live Chat** or click on the words “[click here](#)” to submit an issue via email.

COMMUNICATION AND SUPPORT

Interaction with Instructor Statement

The professor and GAs or SIs will be accessible to students via email as well as the professor will have specific office hours and times when students may schedule an appointment. Email is the most effective form of correspondence with the professor. Do not attempt to text, Skype, or Facetime the professor. Response to emails, except for the

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weekends or during times which the professor may be in remote area conducting research, will normally occur within 24 hours or receipt of the original message.

COURSE AND UNIVERSITY PROCEDURES/POLICIES

University Specific Procedures

Student Conduct

All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment. The Code of Student Conduct is described in detail in the [Student Guidebook](#).

<http://www.tamuc.edu/admissions/registrar/documents/studentGuidebook.pdf>

Students should also consult the Rules of Netiquette for more information regarding how to interact with students in an online forum: [Netiquette](#)

<http://www.albion.com/netiquette/corerules.html>

TAMUC Attendance

For more information about the attendance policy please visit the [Attendance](#) webpage and [Procedure 13.99.99.R0.01](#).

<http://www.tamuc.edu/admissions/registrar/generalInformation/attendance.aspx>

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/13students/academic/13.99.99.R0.01.pdf>

Academic Integrity

Students at Texas A&M University-Commerce are expected to maintain high standards of integrity and honesty in all of their scholastic work. For more details and the definition of academic dishonesty see the following procedures:

[Undergraduate Academic Dishonesty 13.99.99.R0.03](#)

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/13students/undergraduates/13.99.99.R0.03UndergraduateAcademicDishonesty.pdf>

[Graduate Student Academic Dishonesty 13.99.99.R0.10](#)

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/13students/graduate/13.99.99.R0.10GraduateStudentAcademicDishonesty.pdf>

ADA Statement

Students with Disabilities

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning

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environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact:

Office of Student Disability Resources and Services

Texas A&M University-Commerce

Gee Library- Room 162

Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835

Fax (903) 468-8148

Email: Sandi.Patton@tamuc.edu

Website: [Office of Student Disability Resources and Services](#)

<http://www.tamuc.edu/campusLife/campusServices/studentDisabilityResourcesAndServices/>

Nondiscrimination Notice

Texas A&M University-Commerce will comply in the classroom, and in online courses, with all federal and state laws prohibiting discrimination and related retaliation on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, age, genetic information or veteran status. Further, an environment free from discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression will be maintained.

Campus Concealed Carry Statement

Texas Senate Bill - 11 (Government Code 411.2031, et al.) authorizes the carrying of a concealed handgun in Texas A&M University-Commerce buildings only by persons who have been issued and are in possession of a Texas License to Carry a Handgun. Qualified law enforcement officers or those who are otherwise authorized to carry a concealed handgun in the State of Texas are also permitted to do so. Pursuant to Penal Code (PC) 46.035 and A&M-Commerce Rule 34.06.02.R1, license holders may not carry a concealed handgun in restricted locations.

For a list of locations, please refer to the [Carrying Concealed Handguns On Campus](#) document and/or consult your event organizer. Web url:

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/34SafetyOfEmployeesAndStudents/34.06.02.R1.pdf>

Pursuant to PC 46.035, the open carrying of handguns is prohibited on all A&M-Commerce campuses. Report violations to the University Police Department at 903-886-5868 or 9-1-1.

COVID-19 Conditions and Response

During this COVID pandemic, you may face periods of isolation or restriction of movement. Since this is an online course, it is designed for your completion from anywhere that internet access exists. If you do not have internet access in your current residence, you need to identify how you will access your assignments if you cannot leave. This may include the use of a smart phone or other digital device that can offer connectivity. Most assignments can be completed offline, but the internet may be

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AG 509 Contemporary Issues in Sustainable Agriculture
Course Syllabus

Dr. Bob Williams
Office AGIT 247 903-886-5350 Fax 903-886-5990

Bob.Williams@tamuc.edu

required for research, online discussions, and the uploading of assignments/projects. If you have a medical reason for an assignment to be delayed, I will excuse that. Internet access, or the lack of it, is not a medical excuse.

A&M-Commerce requires the use of face-coverings in all instructional and research classrooms/laboratories. Exceptions may be made by faculty where warranted. Faculty have management over their classrooms. Students not using face-coverings can be required to leave class. Repetitive refusal to comply can be reported to the Office of Students' Rights and Responsibilities as a violation of the student Code of Conduct. Students should not attend class when ill or after exposure to anyone with a communicable illness. Communicate such instances directly with your instructor. Faculty will work to support the student getting access to missed content or completing missed assignments.

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