

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

Textbook

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

Additional course material will come from a variety of sources including scientific and professional journals, publications from governmental agencies, information from agricultural organizations, and guest presenters. Other documents/handouts 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* citizens within the context of sustainable food production and its relevance to people, profits, and planet.

The following instructional objectives will guide 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. 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.
3. Evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of specific farming methods.
4. Present contrasting and/or informative viewpoints in a civil and effective manner.
5. Compose informative, persuasive, and/or reflective reports on relevant topics.

6. Develop and deliver an informative poster and video presentations.
7. Examine ecological, economic, and social impacts of farming methods.
8. 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
Video (2 minutes) over specific farm or case study	100
Poster presentation over a <i>sustainable agriculture practice</i>	100
Research summary and reflection	100
Farm-Based Experiential Learning and Report	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. **You do not have to respond to other student's posts unless directed otherwise for a specific discussion prompt.**

Introductory Video

Student will prepare and submit a 30-45 second video introducing themselves to the class and professor.

Video Farm/Case Study Report

Each student will identify a farm (or case study from USDA) that utilizes sustainable practices. The student may read reviews, webpages, Facebook pages, and conduct interviews to develop a 2-3 minute video presentation about the farm/case. The video presentation may be shared with class peers.

Research Brief

Students will select and read a 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 or the location where the student resides.

Poster Presentations

Each student will create a *poster presentation* elaborating on a sustainable agricultural practice or equipment item, if used to make farming more sustainable. Presentations will be submitted in D2L and may be posted to Facebook for peer/instructor/guest review at a date and time TBA.

Farm-Based Experiential Learning and Report (in lieu of final exam)

Each student is expected to complete **10 hours of farm-based experiential learning** and provide a 1-2 page reflection report with evidence of what type of experience(s), where they occurred, when it happened, and who (contact information) can verify that it did. The following farm-based experiential learning activities are pre-approved. Any others will have to be approved in writing by the professor prior to the start date of activity. **All experiences must have occurred during the Fall 2025 semester.**

- Volunteering at Twin Oaks Farm for Experiential Learning
- Volunteering at a school, community, or donation garden or garden
- Attending workshops or programs presented by Texas AgriLife Extension Service, PVAMU Cooperative Extension, Master Gardeners, or GROW North Texas.
- Volunteering to judge FFA or 4-H competitive events
- Volunteering for agricultural or agricultural exhibits/competitions at State Fair of Texas
- Attending and engaging in the Agriculture Networking Night hosted by CASNR
- Participation in a conference related to agricultural research or production
- Completion of one or more extension or beginning farmer *online* courses from any land-grant university or similar institution

The student will compose a 1-2 page report documenting the experience(s) and time allocated to each with other relevant information described above. The final paragraph should provide a summative reflection of how the experience(s) complimented the student's understanding of farming, sustainable agriculture practices, and/or agricultural education/training. **This assignment will be due the last week of the semester but you should not wait until the last week to begin thinking about how to complete it.**

Written Assignments and Format

The Research Brief, presentation, and essays 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 East Texas A&M University.

Syllabus Addendum for Dr. Bob Williams for the Fall 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 professor's control, professional travel to conferences or meetings, or medical appointments for professor or his household dependents.

Monday	9:00-9:50 a.m.
Tuesday	9:30-11:30 a.m.
Wednesday	9:00-9:50 a.m.
Thursday	by appointment
Friday	by appointment

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 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](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 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

Waters Library- Room 162

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

Fax (903) 468-8148

Website: <https://www.etamu.edu/student-disability-services/>

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 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.