



AEC 435.01W: Agricultural Policy

COURSE SYLLABUS

Fall 2026

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Instructor: Dr. Rafael Bakhtavoryan

Office Location: Agricultural Science Building, Room 232

Office Hours: Mondays through Fridays via email, or by appointment

Office Phone: (903) 886-5367

Office Fax: (903) 886-5990

University Email Address: Rafael.Bakhtavoryan@etamu.edu (please, use only this email address and put "AEC 435" in the subject of the email)

Preferred Form of Communication: Email

Communication Response Time: Within an hour during business hours

COURSE INFORMATION

Class Meeting: Web-based

Readings

Required: PowerPoint Presentations: These will be provided on D2L.

Recommended Textbook: *Agricultural and Food Policy* by R.D. Knutson, JB Penn, B.L. Flinchbaugh, and J.L. Outlaw. Pearson Prentice Hall, New Jersey, 6th edition, 2007, (ISBN: 0131718738).

Course Description

Analytical treatment of historical, recent and current economic problems, and governmental policies influencing American agriculture and rural America. The focus is on developing a historical and conceptual understanding of the economics of agriculture and how public policy has and does influence the nature and performance of American agriculture.

The syllabus/schedule are subject to change.

Lecture Topics

Chapter 1: Forces of Policy Change
Chapter 2: Rationale for Government Involvement in Agriculture and Food
Chapter 3: The U.S. Policy Decision Process
Chapter 4: Geopolitical Centers of Influence
Chapter 5: World Trade Organization
Chapter 6: U.S. Trade and Development Policy
Chapter 7: U.S. Farm Policies

Student Learning Outcomes

After studying all materials and resources presented in this course, students will be able to:

1. Understand the concepts and terminology related to agricultural, food, and trade policies.
2. Understand the process of developing and implementing U.S. agricultural policy.
3. Analyze U.S. agricultural, food, and trade policies and their implications for agricultural markets.
4. Develop students' ability to think critically about the need for farm policies and policy reforms.
5. Improve students' written communication skills, enabling them to work effectively in an agribusiness environment.
6. Demonstrate knowledge of the interconnectedness of global dynamics (issues, processes, trends, and systems) (assessed with a policy paper).

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Minimal Technical Skills Needed

Students are expected to know how to use the learning management system (D2L will be used heavily in this class), Microsoft Word and PowerPoint.

Student Responsibilities or Tips for Success in the Course

1. Read the assigned PowerPoint presentations.
2. Complete and turn in course assignments and exams at the scheduled time.
3. Use the web to actively seek out other agricultural policy sources that fit your learning style and help you better understand the material.

GRADING

Your grade for the semester will be a weighted average of homework assignments, agricultural or food policy paper, and three exams.

Homework Assignments	10%
Policy Paper	15%
Exam 1	25%
Exam 2	25%
Final Exam	25%

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Final grades in this course will be based on the following scale:

A = 90%-100%

B = 80%-89.99%

C = 70%-79.99%

D = 60%-69.99%

F = 59.99% or below

Assessments

HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENTS (HAs): Homework assignments are assigned regularly (see the course outline at the end of the syllabus) and must be completed individually. As a form of experiential learning, HAs help students sharpen their analytical skills. Students must turn in their HAs via D2L according to the course outline. HAs must be submitted by 11:30 p.m. on the due date. No late HAs will be accepted and a grade of zero will be assessed for missed HAs.

POLICY PAPER: All students are required to write an individual policy paper. Please make sure to select a topic at least the second week into the semester by emailing it to the instructor. See the course outline for the due date of the policy paper. Students are encouraged to submit completed papers in advance. Papers must be submitted electronically via D2L in Microsoft Word format. Guidelines for writing the policy paper will be provided throughout the semester.

Possible policy paper topics for students to choose from:

U.S. Corn Policy; U.S. Wheat Policy; U.S. Soybean Policy; U.S. Sorghum Policy; U.S. Oats Policy; U.S. Cotton Policy; U.S. Rice Policy; U.S. Dairy Policy; U.S. Tobacco Policy; U.S. Peanut Policy; U.S. Fruits and Vegetables Policy; U.S. Food Safety and Security Policy; U.S. Food Assistance and Nutrition Policy.

EXAMS: Exams will be administered through D2L (see the course outline at the end of the syllabus for specific exam dates). Exams must be completed by 11:30 p.m. on the due date. Exams will be timed and you will have 1 hour and 30 minutes to complete them. Make sure you have internet access ahead of time and that your laptop battery is fully charged. No make-up exams will be given. If an exam is missed a grade of zero will be assessed for it. Exams must be completed individually using your own student account and there should be no collaboration or sharing of work with your classmates on the exams. Final exam is NOT comprehensive and you will have 2 hours to complete it.

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TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS

LMS

All course sections offered by East Texas A&M University have a corresponding course shell in the myLeo Online Learning Management System (LMS). Below are technical requirements

LMS Requirements:

<https://community.brightspace.com/s/article/Brightspace-Platform-Requirements>

LMS Browser Support:

https://documentation.brightspace.com/EN/brightspace/requirements/all/browser_support.htm

Zoom Video Conferencing Tool:

https://inside.etamu.edu/campuslife/CampusServices/CITESupportCenter/Zoom_Account.aspx?source=universalmenu

ACCESS AND NAVIGATION

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@etamu.edu.

Note: Personal computer and internet connection problems do not excuse the requirement to complete all course work in a timely and satisfactory manner. Each student needs to have a backup method to deal with these inevitable problems. These methods might include the availability of a backup PC at home or work, the temporary use of a computer at a friend's home, the local library, office service companies, Starbucks, an ETAMU campus open computer lab, etc.

COMMUNICATION AND SUPPORT

Technical Support

If you are having technical difficulty with any part of Brightspace, please contact Brightspace Technical Support at 1-877-325-7778. Other support options can be found here:

<https://community.brightspace.com/support/s/contactsupport>

Interaction with Instructor Statement

The instructor's communication response time is stated clearly on page 1.

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COURSE AND UNIVERSITY PROCEDURES/POLICIES

Course Specific Procedures/Policies

No late assignments will be accepted and a grade of zero will be assessed for them.

Syllabus Change Policy

The syllabus is a guide. Circumstances and events, such as student progress, may make it necessary for the instructor to modify the syllabus during the semester. Any changes made to the syllabus will be announced in advance.

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

ETAMU Attendance

For more information about the attendance policy, please view the [Attendance Webpage](#) and the [Class Attendance Policy](#)

Academic Integrity

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

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

[Undergraduate Student Academic Dishonesty Form](#)

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

[Graduate Student Academic Dishonesty Form](#)

Use of Artificial Intelligence

East Texas A&M University acknowledges that there are legitimate uses of Artificial Intelligence, ChatBots, or other software that has the capacity to generate text, or suggest replacements for text beyond individual words, as determined by the instructor of the course. Any use of such software must be documented. Any undocumented use of such software constitutes an instance of academic dishonesty (plagiarism). Individual instructors may disallow entirely the use of such software for individual assignments or for the entire course. Students should be aware of such requirements and follow their instructors' guidelines. If no instructions are provided the student should assume that the use of such software is disallowed. In any case, students are fully responsible for the content of any assignment they submit, regardless of whether they used an AI, in any way. This specifically includes cases in which the AI plagiarized another text or misrepresented sources.

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Students with Disabilities - ADA Statement

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

East Texas A&M University
Velma K. Waters Library Rm 162
Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835
Fax (903) 468-8148
Email: studentdisabilityservices@etamu.edu
Website: [Office of Student Disability Services](#)

Nondiscrimination Notice

East Texas A&M University 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 East Texas A&M University 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 ETAMU 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.

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

East Texas A&M Supports Students' Mental Health – Counseling Services

The Counseling Center at East Texas A&M University, 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.etamu.edu/counsel

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COURSE OUTLINE
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WEB-BASED

Weeks	Topic/All assignments are due on specific dates listed below by 11:30 p.m. For example, homework assignment 1 is due Aug 30 by 11:30 p.m., or EXAM 1 is due Sep 20 by 11:30 p.m., or Policy Paper is due Nov 15 by 11:30 p.m.
Week 1 Aug 20 – Aug 23	Syllabus & D2L Tutorial
Week 2 Aug 24 – Aug 30	Chapter 1: Forces of Policy Change Homework Assignment 1 Email the instructor your policy paper topic chosen from the list of topics given in the syllabus
Week 3 Aug 31 – Sep 6	Chapter 2: Rationale for Government Involvement in Agriculture and Food Homework Assignment 2
Week 4 Sep 7 – Sep 13	Chapter 3: The U.S. Policy Decision Process Homework Assignment 3
Week 5 Sep 14 – Sep 20	EXAM 1. Chapters 1, 2, 3
Week 6 Sep 21 – Sep 27	Chapter 4: Geopolitical Centers of Influence Homework Assignment 4
Week 7 Sep 28 – Oct 4	Chapter 5: World Trade Organization Homework Assignment 5
Week 8 Oct 5 – Oct 11	Chapter 6: U.S. Trade and Development Policy Homework Assignment 6
Week 9 Oct 12 – Oct 18	EXAM 2. Chapters 4, 5, 6
Week 10 Oct 19 – Oct 25	Chapter 7_1: U.S. Farm Policies Homework Assignment 7_1
Week 11 Oct 26 – Nov 1	Chapter 7_2: U.S. Farm Policies Homework Assignment 7_2
Week 12 Nov 2 – Nov 8	Chapter 7_3: U.S. Farm Policies Homework Assignment 7_3
Week 13 Nov 9 – Nov 15	Policy Paper submission via uploading on D2L
Week 14 Nov 16 – Nov 22	READING WEEK: Preparing for Final Exam
Week 15 Nov 23 – Nov 29	THANKSGIVING BREAK (NO CLASS)
Week 16 Nov 30 – Dec 6	FINAL EXAM. Chapter 7 (all parts)

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