Syllabus, Spring 2007

“If you have a good publication record, you will never be at anyone’s mercy.”

-Tim Baker

Course Description:

This course will be the official beginning of your apprenticeship as a professional researcher in the discipline. We will explore advanced topics in the frontiers of scholarship in agribusiness and managerial economics. The learning objectives of this seminar-style course are to:

1. Enhance your skills in critical analysis of topical research
2. Formulate an individual research plan involving testable hypotheses from a contemporary problem in agribusiness
3. Complete a journal-quality paper that reports the model and its results in a manner appropriate for professional audiences.

Instructor: Dr. Victoria Salin, Associate Professor
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Classroom: Horticulture/Forest Science Building (HFSB) 104, Thursday, 2:20–5:10 p.m.

Communications: I will use the departmental Groupwise email and WebCT (http://elearning.tamu.edu/) to send assignments and updates on our schedule. Please check these sources regularly.

Evaluations: The following requirements will contribute to your final grade for the class:

- Critiques of peer-reviewed frontier literature (written) 25%
- In-class presentations and participation 15%
- Term paper (Due no later than May 8) 60%

Grades of incomplete will be assigned only for cases of demonstrated and justifiable need, as determined in advance of May 1, 2007.
Topics: The specific topics covered will be selected by students in the class, choosing from the following:

1. Overview of Recent Issues in Agribusiness
   - Food Safety
   - Competitiveness in Retail Food Markets
   - Alliances, Mergers, and Acquisitions

2. Research Approaches in Finance
   - Portfolio Analysis
   - Equity Capital Markets
   - Financial Intermediation
   - Principal-Agent Model
   - Real Options

3. Research Approaches in Marketing
   - Applied Business Forecasting
   - Marketing Management
   - Contract Theory
   - Strategic Branding

4. Research Approaches in Management
   - Supply Chain Management
   - Auctions
   - Franchising
   - Market Power/Negotiations/Strategic Alliances
   - Dynamics of Pricing Rivalry
   - Business Ethics and Social Responsibility

Academic Integrity: For many years Aggies have followed a Code of Honor, which is stated in this very simple statement:

An Aggie does not lie, cheat or steal or tolerate those who do.

The Aggie Code of Honor is an effort to unify the aims of all Texas A&M men and women toward a high code of ethics and personal dignity. For most, living under this code will be no problem, as it asks nothing of a person that is beyond reason. It only calls for honesty and integrity, characteristics that Aggies have always exemplified. The Aggie Code of Honor functions as a symbol to all Aggies, promoting understanding and loyalty to truth and confidence in each other.

Upon accepting admission to Texas A&M University, a student immediately assumes a commitment to uphold the Honor Code, to accept responsibility for learning and to follow the philosophy and rules of the Honor System. Students will be required to state their commitment on examinations, research papers, and other academic work. Ignorance of the rules does not exclude any member of the Texas A&M University community from the requirements or the processes of the Honor System. For additional information, please visit: [http://www.tamu.edu/aggiehonor](http://www.tamu.edu/aggiehonor).
On all course work, assignments, and examinations at Texas A&M University, the following Honor Pledge shall be preprinted and signed by the student:

“On my honor, as an Aggie, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid on this academic work.”

_______________________________________   _________ _____
Student’s Signature          Date

Student Needs: All students who have the need for adjustments to enable their learning will be accommodated. 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 believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact the Department of Student Life, Services for Students with Disabilities in Room 126 of the Koldus Building so your professor can best accommodate your needs. The phone number is 845-1637.

Writing Center:
Room 1.120 B of Evans Library, Telephone 458-1455

Format Requirements: All papers submitted for grades or peer review must be in 12-point font or larger, double-spaced, and on clean paper.

Outputs and Assignments, AGEC 695 (601) (Preliminary, subject to change)


Critiques (3 or more): Must cover peer-reviewed published literature. See Bb (formerly known as WebCT) Vista website for an outline and we’ll do an example critique in class.

Annotated Bibliography: Compiled from the students’ critiques and research papers. List of quality journal titles as determined by students’ survey of faculty and staff.

Publishable Papers: One per student. Review pieces for RAE, or complete research papers for various journals.
Reading:
*For Jan. 25, 2007*: Read the following articles and be prepared to discuss in the context of a model critique of published research.


**Criteria for Evaluation of Critiques, AGEC 695 (601)**

**Dr. Salin**

The objective of the critiques is for students to practice the peer-reviewing process and gain familiarity with literature in their area of specialization. Grading criteria will be:

1. Critiques are submitted in a timely way, according to the deadlines in the student’s Research Strategic Plan. (15%)
2. Summary is brief and covers key points. (10%)
3. Critique contains the student’s ideas about strengths and weaknesses of the paper, expressed professionally (75%).

Deductions will be made for papers that are not up to professional standards for presentation and legibility. At a minimum, students must use spell check and proofread their papers.
Criteria for Evaluation of Final Paper, AGEC 695 (601)
Dr. Salin

The objective of the term paper is for the student to prepare an independent research work that makes a significant contribution toward his or her thesis research in the agribusiness field.

There are 5 elements to an excellent paper:
1. Thorough and complete literature review
   a. All works that are cited must have been read.
   b. Key works were selected from the cited list.
   c. Key works have been examined closely for model structure, data used, and analytical methods.
   d. A connection must be made in the development of a line of inquiry on the topic.
2. Identification of significant research problem
   a. At least one page narrative
   b. Contains convincing statements of the linkage of this problem to a business decision.
3. Presentation of research strategy to address the problem
   a. Conceptual model that includes economic thought
   b. Research hypothesis
   c. Quantitative approach and/or mathematical structure
   d. Data needs
   e. Data availability
4. Results
5. Conclusions and Implications--At least one page.

A student who writes a paper that contains all five elements has earned a grade of A+. A paper that contains elements 1-3 can earn a grade of A- if all elements are of high quality. A student who turns in a paper with items 1-2 completed can earn no more than a B.

Deductions will be made for papers that are not up to professional standards for presentation and legibility. At a minimum, students must use spell check, proofread their papers, and clearly note the portions of the paper that satisfy the 5 elements of an excellent paper.

Students who have research work in progress with another faculty member must consult with the instructor regarding the paper for this course, to ensure that the term paper complements their research experience without sacrificing the independent learning that is the goal of this assignment.

Grades of incomplete will be assigned only for cases of demonstrated and justifiable need, as determined in advance of May 1, 2007.