LECTURE 1: INTRODUCTION
AGEC 429
AGRICULTURAL POLICY

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Ecampus Issues:

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My Background

- Graduated from Monterey HS, Lubbock, Texas, 1968
- Missionary in Chile, 1969-71
- BS in Economics - Brigham Young U., 1974
- Economist for the (Shhh!) CIA, 1974 - 1978
- MS in Ag. Economics - Purdue U., 1977
- Special Asst to Deputy Under Secretary of Ag. (USDA), Washington, D.C., 1978-1979
- Economist, ERS, USDA, 1979-1981
- PhD in Ag. Economics - Purdue Univ., 1981
- Senior Economist, Chase Econometrics, 1981-1983
- Asst/Assoc. Prof. - Iowa State U., 1983-1988
- Professor of Agricultural Economics and Co-Director of Agribusiness, Food and Consumer Economics Research Center Dept. of Agric. Econ., Texas A&M University, 1988 - present
Most Importantly, However...

- **Husband:** Married for 45 years
- **Grandfather:** 18 Grandchildren
- **Father of 5 children:** 4 daughters and 1 son
Now...
Who Are You?
AGEC 429
AGRICULTURAL POLICY
Syllabus Review

http://agecon2.tamu.edu/people/faculty/williams-gary/429
OR
http://ecampus.tamu.edu/
You will be writing two policy papers during the semester. You also will have writing to do on two problem sets. All writing assigned will be graded for both English (20%) and content (80%).

**GENERAL RULES FOR POLICY PAPER WRITING ASSIGNMENTS:**

1. Both policy paper writing assignments must be submitted electronically by the BEGINNING of class (1:30 pm) through ecampus on the due date – no exceptions.

2. The two Policy Papers must include all required elements as given in the rubrics for each paper which are posted on our class website.

3. All writing assignments must be typed and include at least the 500 or 1,000 words as indicated (not including the list of works cited) using Times New Roman 12 font, doubled spaced. Papers that do not meet the minimum word requirements will receive an automatic zero grade.

4. The first policy paper is worth 50 points and the second is worth 100 points.

5. Problem Set Writing Assignments will be graded as part of the problem sets.

6. **YOU MAY NOT USE PAPERS YOU WROTE IN AGEC 217 OR ANY OTHER CLASS OR EVEN THE SAME TOPIC FOR ANY OF THESE WRITING ASSIGNMENTS.**
General Guidelines for Policy Paper #1
Agricultural Interest Group Overview
(500 words)

WHAT ARE YOU TO DO?

Main Objective: To provide a comprehensive and factual overview of an agricultural interest group.

FIRST: Select an agricultural policy interest group with agricultural policy positions and/or views.

SECOND: Do research on the interest group to determine:
• the history of the group;
• the make-up of the group leadership and the membership;
• the farm and food policy goals/objectives of the group and the methods the group uses to obtain those goals/objectives;
• other relevant issues like the role of the group in the ag. sector.

THIRD: Format your research paper into four main sections: (1) Introduction, (2) Farm/Food Policy Goals/Objectives, (3) Summary and Conclusions; (4) Works Cited (References).

FOURTH: Follow guidelines in the syllabus and the rubrics.
FOUR TYPES OF INTEREST GROUPS

1. General Farm Organizations
   - Four major general farm groups:
     (1) American Farm Bureau Federation, (2) National Farmers’ Union,
     (2) National Farmers’ Organization, and (4) The Grange

2. Commodity Organizations
   - Every commodity has at least one (and some have many)

3. Public Interest Groups
   - Typically focus on only 1 issue such as the environment or animal rights

4. Agribusiness/Trade Associations
   - Examples: Restaurant Associations, Farm Equipment Dealers, Farm
     Chemical Associations, Dairy Foods Associations, and many others

Be careful in making your selection, though. Choose only those groups
that have agricultural or food policy goals and objectives.

Many groups only exist to serve the marketing, networking, buying,
information, and other needs of their members.

We will discuss these groups in more detail next week.
## Policy Paper #1 Rubric (50 points)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criterion</th>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Score</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. <strong>Introduction</strong></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>_____</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Does this section discuss the history of the interest group?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Does this section describe the interest group, leadership, and membership?</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Does this section provide a well worded thesis statement?</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Does this section provide a balanced, adequate introduction of the interest group?</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. <strong>Farm/Food Policy Goals/Objectives</strong></td>
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<td>_____</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Does this section discuss the group’s agricultural and food policy goals and objectives?</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Does this section discuss the method(s) this group uses to achieve its policy goals and objectives?</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. <strong>Summary and Conclusions</strong></td>
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<td>_____</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Does this section summarize the key points of the paper and main conclusions regarding the farm policy goals, influence, and work of the group?</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Does this section tie back to the thesis statement in the introduction?</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. <strong>Works Cited and Other Items</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Does the paper tell a story or does the paper basically list facts and figures with little effort to weave them into an interesting narrative?</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Does the paper include extra touches like graphs, tables, and other communication devices?</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Would this paper be an adequate introduction to the interest group for someone considering joining?</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Are there adequate and appropriate in-text citations of material used from other sources in the text?</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Is there an appropriately formatted Works Cited section?</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Does the paper follow the required format and is no less than 500 words and is organized into the 4 sections required?</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. <strong>English</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Does the paper use correct grammar and word usage?</td>
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<td>• Is punctuation used and used properly?</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Are there spelling errors?</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Are the structure and style appropriate (professional language, effective flow and transition from section to section, appropriate sentence structure, clearly stated objectives and conclusions, etc.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Does the narrative flow well with appropriate transitions?</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Is the paper divided into sections with the appropriate section headings (1 through 4 above).</td>
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General Guidelines for Policy Paper #2
Agricultural or Food Policy Analysis
(minimum 1,000 words)

WHAT ARE YOU TO DO?

Main Objective: To discuss and analyze one agricultural or food policy.

FIRST: Choose an agricultural or food policy like crop insurance, COOL, bioenergy, a food safety policy (like the Food Modernization Act, food labeling, etc.), a food assistance program (like SNAP, school lunch program, etc.), an agricultural resource or environmental policy (like water policy, EQIP, CSP, or some EPA rule affecting agriculture), or an agricultural trade policy (like NAFTA, WTO, SPS rules, some import restriction or export subsidy for some commodity).

SECOND: Provide a brief introduction and thesis statement.

THIRD: Describe the agricultural or food policy you have chosen with emphasis on explaining its key characteristics and dimensions (for example, the policy goals and objectives, key policy provisions, markets/groups affected, etc.).

FOURTH: Analyze graphically and discuss the market effects and who gains and loses from the agricultural or food policy you have chosen.

FIFTH: Summarize the main conclusions of your paper and demonstrate how those conclusions relate to your thesis statement. See University Writing Center for help.

FINALLY: Provide a properly formatted list of “Works Cited.” (For help go to the University Writing Center website: https://style.mla.org/works-cited-a-quick-guide/).
# Policy Paper #2 Rubric (100 points)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criterion</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1. Introduction</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Does this section provide a brief introduction to the issues discussed in the paper?</td>
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<td>• Does this section provide a clearly worded thesis statement?</td>
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| **2. Policy Discussion**                      | 15     | _____|
| • Does this section adequately and clearly describe an agricultural or food policy with emphasis on explaining its key characteristics and dimensions (for example, the policy goals and objectives, key policy provisions, markets/groups affected, etc.)? |        |       |
| • Does the discussion flow well with appropriate transitions or does the discussion ramble? |        |       |
| • Does this section simply list policy characteristics/dimensions of the policy without adequate supporting discussion? |        |       |

| **3. Farm Policy Analysis**                   | 30     | _____|
| • Does this section graphically analyze the economic market effects of the policy? |        |       |
| • Is at least one analytical graph used to analyze the market effects? |        |       |
| • Instead of analysis of market effects, is this section just a further description of the policy? |        |       |
| • Does the section discuss/analyze who gains and who loses from the policy? |        |       |
| • Is good sound economic thinking evident in the discussion? |        |       |

| **4. Conclusions**                            | 20     | _____|
| • Does this section summarize the main conclusions? |        |       |
| • Does this section demonstrate how the conclusions relate to the thesis statement? |        |       |
| • Rather than conclusions, does this section simply provide a collection of opinions? |        |       |

| **5. Works Cited and Other Items**            | 10     | _____|
| • Are there adequate, appropriate in-text citations of material used as sources? |        |       |
| • Is there an appropriately formatted and complete list of works cited? |        |       |
| • Does the paper follow the required format and is no less than 1,000 words? |        |       |

| **6. English**                                | 20     | _____|
| • Does the paper use correct grammar, spelling, and diction? |        |       |
| • Is punctuation used properly? |        |       |
| • Are the structure and style appropriate (professional language, effective flow and transition from section to section, appropriate sentence structure, clearly stated objectives and conclusions, etc.) |        |       |
| • Does the narrative flow well with appropriate transitions? |        |       |
| • Is the paper divided into five required sections with the appropriate section headings (1 - 5 above). |        |       |
Written Problem Sets

1. The second and third problem sets will require some writing. All requirements for the two policy papers apply to the written portion of Problem Sets #2 and #3. Each of those problem sets is worth 100 points, half of which (50 points) is for the written portion of the problem set. The written portion of the problem sets must be uploaded through ecampus along with the problem portion of the problem set.

2. To submit your work (answers to problems and written part) on the two problem sets, click on “Problem Sets (SUBMIT HERE)” on the left side-bar on the homepage of our ecampus website.

3. Specific Requirements for the Written Part of Problem Sets #2 and #3
   • A minimum of **500 words** is required.
   • You must submit BOTH the written portion of each problem set along with your answers to the associated problems or you will receive a zero on the entire problem set.
   • A grading rubric will be provided for the written portion of each problem set.
   • You will receive a separate grade on the problems and on the written part of each problem set.
DO’S AND DON’TS IN PREPARING POLICY PAPERS

DO’s:

• DO use what you have earned in all the English classes you have taken to make sure that your grammar, spelling, presentation, vocabulary, and choice of words are all appropriate and contribute to a well written paper.

• DO use a variety of sources in your research. Be creative – like interviewing someone knowledgeable in person or over the phone. DO NOT USE Wikipedia as a source! (It can’t be trusted.)

• DO properly cite any information taken from a source.

• DO provide a properly formatted List of Works Cited at the end.

• DO follow the required outline for the papers, include all required elements, and use the rubric to guide you.

• DO upload your work through ecampus BEFORE class on the due date.
DON’TS:

- DON’T wait until the last minute to get started because doing the proper research takes time.
- DON’T cut and paste information found on the Internet (or elsewhere) into your paper. Use your own words AND provide proper citations. Otherwise you will be committing plagiarism – a serious academic offense. Just so you know – we use plagiarism-checking software to check your papers for plagiarism. YOU WILL BE CAUGHT IF YOU TRY IT. SO DON’T DO IT!
- DON’T try to use a paper you wrote in AGEC 217 or even the same topic for these writing requirements.
- DON’T copy the work of any current or former students. I keep an electronic file of these papers and run a comparison check to keep you honest.
- DON’T ignore the required format or the rubric. That’s the surest way to a bad grade on the paper.