

**COMMUNICATING AGRICULTURAL ISSUES**  
**AGRI 340 – Spring 2024**  
**School of Agriculture - Western Illinois University**

**INSTRUCTOR**

Jana Knupp  
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Office: B21 Knoblauch (woods lab)  
 Office Hours: M/W 9-10 a.m., Friday 12-2 p.m.  
 or by appointment.

**OFFICE HOURS:** Please notify me ahead of time, if possible, to ensure I don't have a meeting with another student at that time.

**CLASS TIMES AND LOCATIONS**

Section I will meet Monday & Wednesday 10:00-10:50 a.m. in KH 226  
 Section II will meet Monday & Wednesday 11:00-11:50 a.m. in KH 226  
 This is a two-semester hour lecture/discussion, **writing intensive** course.

**COURSE DESCRIPTION AND PREREQUISITES**

AGRI 340 Development of written and oral communication skills to address current issues in agriculture.  
 Prerequisite: Eng 280 & Agri 220.

This course has been designated to meet the Writing Instruction in the Disciplines (WID) graduation requirement. WID courses provide instruction in the processes and formats for the writing content and style needed to be an effective professional in a student's chosen field. Students will write approximately 30 pages during this course.

**MATERIAL**

- WordPress Account
- Course handouts will be provided as necessary. Notes and additional information can be found on Western Online.
- Activities outside of the classroom will be required.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES**

At the conclusion of this course the student will be able to:

1. Demonstrate stronger business writing and communication skills.
2. Analyze, understand, and effectively communicate current agriculture issues.
3. Identify bias in shared information as well as your own biases.
4. Orally present information on an agricultural issue with confidence.
5. Write business emails, letters, reports, blog posts, and presentations.
6. Feel comfortable discussing a variety of agriculture issues and help others to have a greater understanding of agriculture.
7. Assess the credibility of information and understand the difference between fact and opinion.
8. Question everything. Ask yourself why you do things the way you do. Strive to make improvements in agriculture.

**IMPORTANT DATES**

January 29, Meet in the third floor classroom in the library  
 February 12-No Class, Lincoln's Birthday  
 April 29-May 1-Field Trip at the Livestock Center  
 May 6-Section I Final @ 10 a.m.  
 Ag 340-Communicating Agricultural Issues

May 8-Section II Final @ 10 a.m.

## **CLASS ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Important class announcements (cancellations, etc.) will be made via WIU email, Western Online, and the WIU text notification system. You must check your WIU email regularly.

## **ABSENCES**

To succeed in this class, you must be present. Each class period is worth 10 participation points. Excused absences (emergencies, funerals, and illness) should be cleared with the instructor **prior to the class** via email, the OARS system, or in person. Notifying the instructor of your absence does not mean you are excused from class that day. Notifying me of your absence after class has begun does not count as an excused absence. Unexcused absences will result in a loss of participation/attendance points for that day. All assignments missed due to an excused absence must be completed prior to the next class period or they will result in a zero.

All absences should be reported to the Student Development and Success Center. [SDSC@wiu.edu](mailto:SDSC@wiu.edu).

## **CLASS GUIDELINES**

**Failure to comply with the class rules will result in a loss of participation points. Repeated offenses will result in the loss of one letter grade.**

Technology: Cell phones/laptops/tablets are not to be used during class unless requested to do so for class activity purposes. If, due to medical or public safety concerns, a student needs an exception to this policy he/she should inform the instructor prior to class. **Students on their phone, laptop, or tablet during class will lose 10 points per incident. Reminders will be few, and most likely embarrassing. If I see your electronics, I assume you are waiving your 10 points for that day. This is not study hall.**

**\*\*\*Phone usage is not allowed during class. This isn't a joke. Seriously, put your /technology away.\*\*\***

Tobacco: Use of tobacco **in any form** is prohibited in university buildings/classrooms.

Talking: Unnecessary side conversations will not be tolerated.

Respect: Please respect the opinions of your classmates during class discussions and activities.

Do. The. Work.: The more effort you put into this class, the more you will get out of it.

Whining: There is a \$5 fine for whining.

## **PLAGIARISM**

Plagiarism is a serious offense. Students caught plagiarizing will fail the assignment and possibly the course. Properly learning to cite a source is vital to this course. <http://www.wiu.edu/policies/acintegrity.php>

## **Attention Education Majors:**

The changes within the Illinois State Teaching License requirements, students are required to receive a grade of a "C-" or better in this course in order to meet state requirements. With the university's +/- grading system, receiving a grade below a "C-" will require you to retake this course or find a substitute course to meet School of Agriculture graduation requirements.

**GRADING SCALE:**

93% and above = A

90 – 92 = A-

87 – 89 = B+

83 – 86 = B

80 – 82 = B-

77 – 79 = C+

73 – 76 = C

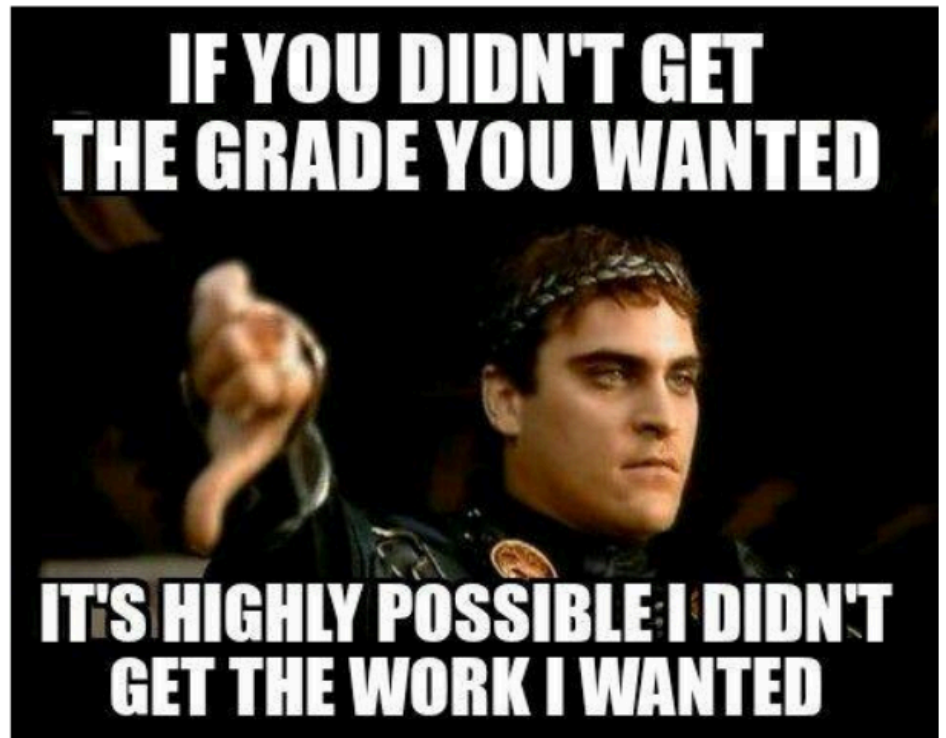
70 – 72 = C-

67 – 69 = D+

63 – 66 = D

60 – 62 = D-

59 and below = F

**UNIVERSITY WRITING CENTER**

The University Writing Center is available to you for your use on assignments and papers. Please feel free to visit it about material for this class or other classes. [http://www.wiu.edu/university\\_writing\\_center/index.php](http://www.wiu.edu/university_writing_center/index.php)

**ASSIGNMENTS**

**Formatting:** Unless otherwise noted, all assignments should be:

- **typed**, 12 pt. font, double spaced
- 1" margins on all sides
- Times New Roman or Garamond font
- Labeled with your name, date, assignment name, and class section.
- MLA style
- Uploaded to Western Online in Word or PDF format

**\*\*Handwritten assignments or screen shots of assignments will not be accepted and will result in 0 points.\*\***

## LATE ASSIGNMENTS

Your assignment is due at 11:59 p.m. on the day it is due on Western Online. All assignments will be submitted electronically, unless otherwise stated. All files must be a .docx or .pdf. **You will be allowed one late assignment during this class with no penalty. You must notify me ahead of time and it must be turned in in the form assigned within three days of the due date.** All other late work will receive a zero in the grade book.

## THE BASICS

Proper grammar, spelling, verb usage, flow, punctuation, capitalization, etc. should come naturally to you by now. All writing assignments will be graded for mechanics and additional errors will result in a loss of points. Assignments will also be graded on content, clarity, attention to detail and instructions, and completeness among other components. Students will write approximately 30 pages during this course. "Revision assignments" allow for you to submit the assignment, receive feedback, revise, and resubmit for a grade.

Effort equals points. If you choose not to complete an assignment that is your choice. If you choose to write a half page when a full page is required, that is your choice. Please note that your grade will reflect your choices. It does not make me a "hard grader."

## Writing Focused Assignments

**Ag Issue Opinion Piece: (25 pts)** Write a brief on the biggest issue facing the agriculture industry today. If you are stating the obvious, look at it from all angles. Breathe new life into the issue.

**Email/Letter: (25/50 pts)** Write a business email or letter, pending the assignment and issue at hand.

**Blog Post (120 pts):** Write a blog post and post it to the WIU School of Ag blog. Posts should include a title, your name as the author, relevant, pre-approved content, and photos. Your post will be read by the public. This will be a revision assignment. \*\*Posts deemed inappropriate or profane will result in a failing grade.

**Consumer Concern Responses: (50 pts)** Respond to consumer concerns using the EASE method of communicating agriculture issues.

**Ag Documentary Reflection Summary: (50 pts)** After watching the assigned documentary, write a reflection summary based on the questions provided and your own reaction.

## Research

**Daily Dirt: (40 pts)** In order to be able to communicate about agriculture issues you need to stay up-to-date with what is going on in the world. Once per semester you will be responsible for leading discussion at the beginning of class with a current event that affects agriculture. These can be found on agriculture forums, newspapers, social media, etc. Email me the link ahead of time so I can share it with the class. You will provide a summary and we will discuss it as a group.

**Source Identification: (25 pts)** Identify three credible sources of information for your persuasive essay. Submit three complete MLA citations in proper format from the following types of sources: Two peer-reviewed journal articles and an agricultural extension publication. Use the CRAAP test to help you determine credibility. These sources must be unique and not the same as your friends.

**Bias Identification: (40 pts)** Find a graphic, post, tweet, etc. that shows bias and share with the class the ways in which the bias is presented.

**Social Media Post: (40 pts)** Create a social media post to advocate for agriculture.

**Thesis & Outline: (25 pts)** Complete a working thesis and outline of your persuasive essay. This will be a revision assignment.

**Peer Review: (25 pts)** Review a draft of a paper written by a classmate. Your feedback should be constructive.

**Persuasive Essay: (200 pts)** Write a persuasive essay on the topic assigned. Essays should be 2-3 double spaced pages. Essays should be unbiased, include scientific information, and conclude with your argument for your stance, which should be supported by science and sound reasoning. This will be a revision assignment.

### Advocacy

**Field Trip Station: (150 pts)** Create and lead a station for a field trip at the WIU farm. (group project.) Develop the lesson plans, write in detail what supplies are needed, the learning objectives and outcomes, etc. This will be a revision assignment.

### Exams

**Quizzes:** Quizzes will be given at the instructor's discretion and will be unannounced.

**Final Exam: (250 pts)** The comprehensive final exam will cover the material presented in class by the instructor and the group presentations. Questions will include true/false, multiple choice, short answer, and essay questions.

### **GROUP WORK**

The real world relies on group work, therefore, so does this class. How well you work with your group members will affect your grade.

### **ACCREDITATION**

The School of Agriculture is housed in the College of Business and Technology which is accredited by AACSB-International.

### **UNIVERSITY POLICIES**

**ADA Compliance:** In accordance with University policy and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), academic accommodations may be made for any student who notifies the instructor of the need for an accommodation. For the instructor to provide the proper accommodation(s) you must obtain documentation of the need for an accommodation through the Disability Resource Center (DRC) and provide it to the instructor. It is imperative that you take the initiative to bring such needs to the instructor's attention, as he/she is not legally permitted to inquire about such particular needs of students. Students who may require special assistance in emergency evacuations (i.e. fire, tornado, etc.) should contact the instructor as to the most appropriate procedures to follow in such an emergency. Contact Disability Resource Center (DRC) at 298-2512 for additional services.

**Title IX:** University values, Title IX, and other federal and state laws prohibit sex discrimination, including sexual assault/misconduct, dating/domestic violence, and stalking. If you, or someone you know, has been the victim of any of these offenses, we encourage you to report this to the Title IX Coordinator at 309-298-1977 or anonymously online at: [http://www.wiu.edu/equal\\_opportunity\\_and\\_access/request\\_form/index.php](http://www.wiu.edu/equal_opportunity_and_access/request_form/index.php). If you disclose an incident to a faculty member, the faculty member must notify the Title IX Coordinator. The complete Title IX policy is available at: <http://www.wiu.edu/vpas/policies/titleIX.php>.

**Academic Integrity:** The rules and regulations outlined in the University's policy on academic integrity are applied to this course. <http://www.wiu.edu/policies/acintegrity.php>

**Student Rights and Responsibilities:** Detailed information regarding student rights and responsibilities can be found at <http://www.wiu.edu/provost/student.php>. It is your responsibility to be familiar with the posted information.

**Disruptive Student Behavior:** Disruptive Student Behavior is defined as inappropriate student behavior that a reasonable faculty member would view as interfering with the ability of the instructor to teach and students to learn whether in a classroom or other learning environment (such as an online course, laboratory, site field experience, internships, instructor's office, computer lab, or other setting whether it is an on-campus or off-campus location), which disrupts the educational process. It is also considered disruptive behavior for a student to exhibit threatening, intimidating, or other inappropriate behavior toward the instructor or classmates outside of the learning environment. Further information is available at <http://www.wiu.edu/vpas/policies/disrupst.php>.

- Technical Support for Western Online is provided through the Western Online Brightspace Virtual Assistant by clicking on the **Get Help! link/icon at the bottom right corner of every page** in Western Online.
- Instructions for using the **Virtual Assistant** can be found at [https://wiu.edu/citr/home/get\\_help.php](https://wiu.edu/citr/home/get_help.php).
- All other technical support, including issues with enrollment in online courses, should be requested by contacting:  
**University Technology (uTech) Support Center**  
**Website:** [http://www.wiu.edu/university\\_technology/](http://www.wiu.edu/university_technology/)  
**Phone:** (309)298-TECH (8-8324)

## NOTICES

Please be advised that this syllabus is **tentative**. All classes are different and we may or may not be able to address all of the content areas in the manner presented. Any deviations from the syllabus will be announced as soon as possible.