

AREC 410
Methods and Applications of Environmental Economics
AREC 423
Advanced Management Methods and Applications for Agri-Food, Environmental and Forestry Businesses

SEM B1 2:00-3:20 PM, Tues and Thurs
GSB 511 (GSB 559)

Winter 2010

Instructor:

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University of Alberta policy about course outlines can be found in section 23.4(2) of the University Calendar

Objectives: This course provides students with hands-on experiences in some of the methods used by agricultural, forestry and environmental economists and business specialists. The goal is to provide students with tools and knowledge that can be directly transferable to working situations, particularly in research oriented situations. The focus will involve assignments, readings and a class project in which students will develop problem specification, literature review, data collection and economic analysis for an actual research problem.

Methods: The first part of this course will largely consist of presentations and seminars by guest researchers or research-support experts, lectures by the instructor and computer laboratory work. Throughout the course class participation and discussion is strongly encouraged. The second part of the course will focus on the major class project.

Evaluation of Performance: There will be no examinations. Individual evaluation will consist of assignments, participation in class, and evaluation by peers. A final component of performance evaluation will involve grading of group work. Weights on these elements of evaluation are as follows:

Individual Assignments:	40% (assignments at varying weights)
Group Project(s):	
Presentation	25%
Final Report	<u>35%</u>
Total	100%

Final grades in this class will be based directly on the grades achieved for the various activities. These percentages will be translated directly into final letter grades using the University's grading system.

Textbook: There is no required textbook for this course. The material is based on book chapters, articles and reports that will be made available during the course by the instructor (or even the students!).

Assignments:

The assignment topics and their relative weights involve the following. (This may be subject to change as the term progresses)

1. Literature Review (15%). A review of literature (both journal articles, government reports etc.) involved with the Group Projects. Topics to be provided by the instructor and will be related to group research project topics.
2. Quantitative Assignment on some topical issue related to class or project material (15%).
3. Presentation of a published paper to the class on a topic related to the research project (10%). Papers to be presented will relate to the group projects and will be selected by the instructor from the literature review, or chosen by the student with permission of the instructor.

Group Project:

Students registered in these classes will be divided into groups. Each group is expected to work on and submit to the instructor a different project. Please note that the projects can be closely linked and that may be considerable interchange between the groups. A lot of time during the course will be spent on data organization, collection, and analysis. This may also involve considerable out-of-class time as well. However, working in teams should make these exercises go faster.

I anticipate that the final reports will be of considerable interest to some experts in the field. Thus, your findings in oral presentation and poster form will be presented to students, professors and external experts, (potentially from Alberta Energy, Alberta Environment, Alberta Agriculture, Canadian Forest Service, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, industry or consumer groups) that may be interested in your results.

** This presentation is tentatively scheduled for the officially scheduled final examination slot for the course which is: Wednesday April 27 at 2:00 PM. Details on the venue and audience will be announced later in the term.

The components of the group project that will comprise grades will be as follows:

Presentation Component

The research project results and analysis will be presented to a body of experts and interested outsiders. The presentation will involve both an oral and a poster presentation. While the instructor will be assigning the grades, he may seek input from some of the participants viewing both of these presentations. The group can assign different members to each of the presentation elements. For example three people may be involved from each group in the verbal and visual

presentation. The remaining individuals in the group could construct the poster presentation of the project. However, in past experience, all group members contributed to each of the presentation elements. The posters will also be collected for presentation at the Alberta Agricultural Economics Association Annual Meeting in early May in Red Deer. This will be discussed in detail in class at the appropriate time.

Report Component

The final report will comprise a full coverage of the project including coverage of the relevant literature, methods, analysis, and discussion of findings. Final report specifications will be provided to each group by the end of Reading Week.

Please Note that: The University of Alberta is committed to the highest standards of academic integrity and honesty. Students are expected to be familiar with these standards regarding academic honesty and to uphold the policies of the University in this respect. Students are particularly urged to familiarize themselves with the provisions of the Code of Student Behaviour and the Don't Cheat Sheet (online at <http://www.uofaweb.ualberta.ca/governance/studentappeals.cfm>) and avoid any behaviour that could potentially result in suspicions of cheating, plagiarism, misrepresentation of facts and/or participation in an offence. Academic dishonesty is a serious offence and can result in suspension or expulsion from the University.

In particular please take note of the following regulation on plagiarism:

30.3.2(1) Plagiarism

No Student shall submit the words, ideas, images or data of another person as the Student's own in any academic writing, essay, thesis, project, assignment, presentation or poster in a course or program of study.

Group Grading

While the instructors may be in the best position to evaluate the overall success of the group project, group members may be better positioned to evaluate the individual contributions of members. One way to allocate different marks for individuals in a group is to have the group take the project mark, multiply that mark by the number of members and allow the group to decide how those aggregate marks should be distributed among the members. If the group project is assessed at an overall grade of 70 and there are 8 team members then there are 560 marks to distribute among the team members. Collectively the group should agree on how the 560 marks are to be distributed among the group members. The following assessment guide could provide some information on which the group could make the decision. If a group wishes to have mark allocation other than equal marks for each member then the following process should be followed. The criteria suggested below are suggestions only and if the group agrees to different criteria then that is perfectly satisfactory. The only information submitted to the instructors is the form below and it must be submitted, and signed, even if the decision is to have every group member have equal marks.

GROUP PROJECT ASSESSMENT MECHANISM

Group project mark * Number of Students in group = Total Marks Available

_____ * _____ = _____

Consider three aspects of individual's contributions:

1. Quantity of contributions
 - Attendance at meetings
 - Number of tasks taken on
 - Size of tasks
 - Amount of time spent on tasks
2. Quality of contributions
 - Completed tasks, on time
 - Accurate, error free, little tidying required
 - Clear or confusing?
 - Imaginative or predictable?
3. Contribution to team
 - Made suggestions, had good ideas
 - Active in meetings, enthusiastic
 - Sorted problems, smoothed difficulties
 - Helped make decisions and keep to them

Process

Stage 1: have a brief open discussion in your group, considering what each member contributed. Try to be positive but rigorous.

Stage 2: On your own, decide for each member of the group, including yourself, what mark each should get overall (Rules: the total of the marks you give must be the same as the total given above, you are not permitted to give yourself the top mark)

Stage 3: Average the marks of everyone in the group and record them on the form below. Check that they still add up to the total. All sign to signify agreement with the assigned marks.

AREC410/423 Group Project Individual Assessment

Name of Student	Mark	Signature
Total Marks		

Capstone 2010: Specific Project ideas: