

INTRODUCTION TO AGRICULTURAL LAW

AGEC 3503 | Spring 2017

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Meeting: Tuesday & Thursday 11:00am – 12:10pm, Room AGRI 115

Office Hours: By appointment

Materials: All reading materials will be posted on Blackboard or provided in class. There is no required textbook for this course. Students will be required to purchase scantrons for examinations.

Catalog Description

Examination of those areas of law especially applicable to agriculture. Fundamentals of contract law, torts law, and property law will accompany discussion of major areas of agricultural law; acquisition and disposal of farmland; farm tenancies; rights and limitations in the use and ownership of farmland; animal law; environmental protection; protection of the productivity of agricultural land; and the law of sales and secured transactions in an agricultural context.

Learning Objectives

1. Obtain a basic understanding of how the US legal system functions

- 1.1. Review the hierarchy of legal authority in the United States
- 1.2. Paraphrase a brief history of how food and agriculture law developed in the United States
- 1.3. Identify the key players involved in regulating food and agriculture, i.e., administrative agencies, local governments, independent certifiers

2. Understand the variety of factors and influences that shape food and agriculture policy

- 2.1. Identify key stakeholders, i.e., consumers, farmers, food businesses, conservationists
- 2.2. Consider the varying perspectives, interests, and goals of each stakeholder
- 2.3. Understand some of the recent cultural, economic, social, and political shifts in the food and agriculture industry
- 2.4. Identify areas where the existing law has recently changed, may be changing, or will likely change soon

3. Analyze a wide variety recent and current events involving food and agriculture legal issues

- 3.1. Understand how to identify recent, emerging, and current legal issues in the food and agriculture sector
- 3.2. Compare different sources of information relevant to each current event, i.e., administrative agency reports, legal opinions, news reports, public comment, press releases
- 3.3. Cultivate the ability to independently and objectively assess legal issues
- 3.4. Dissect current legal issues and hypothesize how the ultimate outcome could impact the broader food and agriculture industry

4. Review various laws, regulations, and legal principles by applying them to current legal issues and other real-world hypotheticals

- 4.1. Gain a general understanding of core legal concepts like contracting, property rights, food safety, food labeling, tort law, animal welfare, environmental regulation, and succession planning
- 4.2. Recognize key terminology, sources of law, and governing bodies/agencies for each field of law
- 4.3. Apply core legal concepts to current legal issues and real-world hypotheticals
- 4.4. Analyze, compare, and critique the potential legal outcomes

Course Overview

This course will use recent and current legal issues to identify, analyze, and explore the many laws and regulations that govern our food and agriculture system. Examples of units that may be covered during the course include, but are not limited to:

- Agribusiness & Antitrust
- Food Labeling
- Food Safety
- Emerging Agriculture Technologies
- Environmental Regulation
- Labor Law
- Livestock Sales & Welfare
- Property & Land Tenure

Academic Integrity

The University language on academic integrity is as follows: “As a core part of its mission, the University of Arkansas provides students with the opportunity to further their educational goals through programs of study and research in an environment that promotes freedom of inquiry and academic responsibility. Accomplishing this mission is only possible when intellectual honesty and individual integrity prevail.”

You are required to be familiar with and abide by the University’s Academic Integrity Policy, which can be found at http://provost.uark.edu/academic_initiatives.php. Contact me if there are questions about how this policy applies to this course. Here are some specific guidelines on academic integrity policies that are specific to this course:

- Unless directions provided on assigned work specifically state otherwise, all work for this course should be completed independently.
- Quizzes or exams taken during class time must be completed independently and are to be written without the use of study aids, prompts, and personal electronic devices.
- Personal electronic devices may not be used during an in-class quiz or exam. This includes personal calculators, phones, and tablets. Use of any of these devices will be considered a violation of the academic integrity standards of this course.
- The only personal items that you can use during an in-class quiz or exam are a pencil or pen and an eraser. If I determine that a calculator is needed on a specific quiz or exam, I will provide one for your use.

Students with Disabilities

If you want to request reasonable accommodations for this class due to a disability, you must first register with the Center for Educational Access (CEA) and hand-deliver an official accommodation letter from the CEA to me after class or during office hours.

Class Attendance & Participation

Class attendance is **required** and critical to success in AGECE 3503. This class will involve substantial discussion and debate of current legal issues in the food and agriculture industry. As a result, you must come to class prepared. If necessary to facilitate discussion, students may be called upon at random. If a student is unprepared, he or she will be deemed absent for that day.

Attendance will be recorded at the beginning of each class. A variety of methods may be used to track attendance, including sign-in sheets and surveys. Surveys may be administered in a variety of mediums, including Google Forms, written quizzes, Survey Monkey, etc.

Signing a classmate's name to the attendance roster or forwarding a hyperlink to the attendance survey are considered academic dishonesty.

Panel Assignments: For each class, a panel consisting of 1 to 4 students will be pre-selected to answer questions and help lead the session's discussion. Panel assignments will be available on the Blackboard website. In general, each session will involve a discussion of a current legal issue(s), a discussion of the interests involved in the resolution of the issue(s), the legal framework that applies to the issues resolution, and a discussion of the policy issues behind the legal framework. If a student is particularly interested in a specific subject and would like to volunteer for a specific panel assignment, please contact the professor immediately to make arrangements.

Although the panelists will help lead most the discussion, other students in the class may be called upon to help facilitate the discussion and share their perspectives. Plan on being prepared even when you are not assigned to a panel. If you are not able to attend class on the day you are assigned to panel, please notify the professor at least 24 hours before class to make alternative arrangements. Panelists will not be assigned for the first two class sessions.

Students can have up to four absences for things like minor illness, car trouble, job interviews, etc. Five or more absences will result in a deduction in the student's grade (see **Grading and Exams** below).

"Excused" absences will ONLY be given in the following situations:

1. For University events: A faculty member must provide an email or letter before the missed class; or
2. For Serious Illness or Death in the family: If you face a serious illness or a family emergency, please notify the Dean of Students. The Dean of Student's Office will coordinate with me and your other instructors to ensure that we are aware of your circumstances. This will enable me to work with you on an exception to the normal attendance policy.

A pattern of tardiness by a student will be addressed and can result in an appropriate reduction of that student's final grade. If you leave class early then you must sign out and be counted as absent, unless you email me before class and I agree to it by email.

Grading & Exams

There are 400 total points available in this course, distributed as follows:

Three exams @ 100 points each	=	300
Attendance	=	50
Participation	=	50

Exams: There will be two midterm exams and one final exam. Each exam will count for 100 points and the final exam will only cover the materials from between the second exam and the end of the semester (i.e. NOT comprehensive). If for some reason you are unable to attend one of the exams, then let the professor know before the exam in an email to see about another time to take the exam.

Attendance:

- 4 or fewer absences 50 points
- 5 absences 40 points
- 6 absences 30 points
- 7 absences 20 points
- 8 absences 10 points
- 9 or more absences 0 points

Participation: Points allocated to this category will be used to assess a student's preparedness and performance during panel assignments and general participation throughout the course.

Emergency Procedures

Many types of emergencies can occur on campus; instructions for specific emergencies such as severe weather, active shooter, or fire can be found at **emergency.uark.edu**.

Severe Weather (Tornado Warning):

- Follow the directions of the instructor or emergency personnel
- Seek shelter in the basement or interior room or hallway on the lowest floor, putting as many walls as possible between you and the outside
- If you are in a multi-story building, and you cannot get to the lowest floor, pick a hallway in the center of the building
- Stay in the center of the room, away from exterior walls, windows, and doors

Violence / Active Shooter (CADD):

- **CALL**- 9-1-1
- **AVOID**- If possible, self-evacuate to a safe area outside the building. Follow directions of police officers.
- **DENY**- Barricade the door with desk, chairs, bookcases or any items. Move to a place inside the room where you are not visible. Turn off the lights and remain quiet. Remain there until told by police it's safe.
- **DEFEND**- Use chairs, desks, cell phones or whatever is immediately available to distract and/or defend yourself and others from attack.

Modifications

This syllabus may be revised or updated throughout the semester. Students will be notified via email and/or in class sessions if there are revisions or updates to the syllabus.