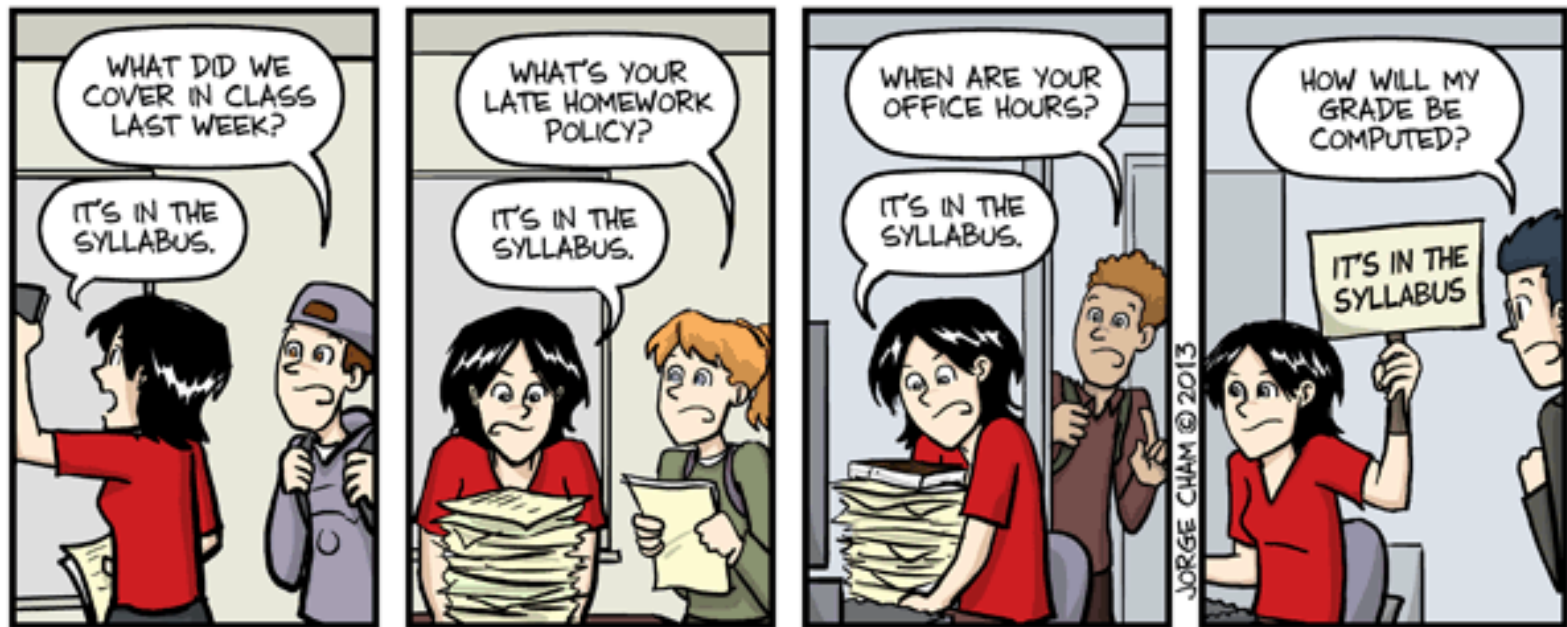


Impact of Learner-Centered Syllabus Design on Comprehension and Retention of Course Information

NACTA

University of Georgia

June 17, 2015



IT'S IN THE SYLLABUS

This message brought to you by every instructor that ever lived.

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Fall Course Syllabus

- Which classes are you teaching for the fall?
- Are **your syllabi** written for the fall semester?
 - Did you actually read and change anything substantial from the last time you taught the course?
 - Why or Why not?

Class ConductLate Assignments

1. All assignments are due at the beginning of class on the day noted in the syllabus unless instructed otherwise.
2. If assignments are not handed in under the previous condition, they will not receive a grade, although they still must be handed in to receive a final grade for the class.
3. An assignment due on a day you miss should be turned in prior to your planned absence or by a friend at the beginning of class the day the assignment is due. In the case of an excused illness or emergency, an assignment can be handed in the day immediately following your excused absence. If your absence is not excused, your homework will not receive a grade, although it must be handed in to receive a final grade for the course.

Quizzes and Exams

- 1a. Exams and quizzes missed because of an excused absence will be handled on an individual basis by the instructor. If an exam or quiz is to be missed for any reason, you should contact the instructor or teaching assistant prior to the scheduled date of that exam or quiz. Failure to do so will result in a zero score for that particular quiz or exam. Please communicate.
- 1b. Exams and quizzes that are missed because of an unexcused absence cannot be made up; a zero score will be recorded in the grade book.

Attendance Policy:

There is no formal attendance policy for this class. If you are going to miss class please notify Dr. Harris in person or via an email. There is a strong positive correlation between a student's grade and number of days in attendance. All students are responsible for material covered in class on days they are absent.

preneurship, Erwin McGraw-Hill,
course)

or rural based product or idea from
in many areas. This course
elivery/selling of a product with
irms operating in rural / isolated
opportunities, information gathering
strategy, organizational plan and
ention will also be given to the lack
strategies for overcoming these

d firms will find difficult times in
d their share of agriculture markets
firms will have to develop new
n objective of this course is to
hallenges facing an entrepreneur in
course is to understand the process

Syllabi Components

Learner-Centered Goals

- Intended goals and
-
-
-
-
- College and instructor policies
- Assessment procedures

Content Elements

- Basic course Info
-
-
-
-
- Special Needs Students
- Course Calendar
- Important Dates
- Miscellaneous

So what is the learner-centered style difference?

Objective

- Impact of learner-centered syllabus design on student comprehension and retention of course information.
 - Policies and procedures

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Design

- 2 sections of Intro Ag Econ class
 - Core requirement for ag sciences majors
 - 2 treatments of syllabus
 - One section received traditional syllabus while the other received the learner-centered syllabus design
 - Both syllabi followed university required content format
- First day of class similar set-up
 - Intros, course set-up, class activity, syllabus
 - Syllabus quiz announced for beginning of next class period

Syllabus Quiz

- Focused on most important class policies and procedures
 - 12 questions
 - MC and short answer
- *Which item is the single largest component of your grade this semester?*
- *Which of the following is NOT one of our course objectives?*
- *Say you are sick and miss an exam. Describe the professor's policy on making up this exam.*

Traditional Syllabus

AGR 130 COURSE SYLLABUS

Class Time and Location:

AGR 130-01 TR 8:00am – 9:15am Oakley AS 204S Dr. Michelle Santiago
AGR 130-02 TR 9:30am – 10:45am Oakley AS 204S Dr. Michelle Santiago

Instructor:

Dr. Michelle Santiago

Office: 215 Oakley Applied Science South

Email: msantiago1@murraystate.edu

Virtual Office Hours: Mondays, 2-3:30pm; Tuesdays and Thursdays, 12:30-2pm; By Appointment

DEPARTMENT: Agricultural Sciences

COURSE PREFIX: AGR

COURSE NUMBER: 130

CREDIT HOURS: 3

I. TITLE: Agricultural Economics

II. **COURSE DESCRIPTION AND PREREQUISITE(S):** A study of fundamental principles of economics as applied to agriculture. Attention is given to resource use, economic growth, production fundamentals, economic institutions, and agriculture in relation to national and world economic problems.

Prerequisite(s): None, although college-level math readiness is needed; familiarity with computers and the internet will also be needed.

III. COURSE OBJECTIVES:

This course is designed to approach agricultural economics from a broad perspective -- to assist students in applying economic principles to their academic areas within agriculture, such as (but not limited to): agribusiness,

Learner-Centered Syllabus

Michelle Santiago, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor
Huston School of Agriculture

Office: 215 Oakley Applied Sciences South
Phone: 270-809-6932
Email: msantiago1@murraystate.edu

The best way to contact me is through email or my office hours. My **Office Hours** this semester will be **Mondays from 2-3:30pm; Tuesdays and Thursdays from 12:30-2pm**. Please plan to come by to talk about the material or with questions about assignments! If my posted hours do not work with your class schedule, send me an email and we can arrange an individual time to meet.

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During this course we are not just going to learn facts about our economy or the theory of economics applied to agriculture. We are going to apply it to our industry and to our daily lives! I am so passionate about economics and I want to share that with you how it affects the world around you and the decisions you make each day!

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- A. Understand and use the basic language (jargon and terminology) of agricultural economics.
- B. Demonstrate a basic understanding of economic principles as applied to the student's area of interest within agriculture.
- C. Exhibit understanding of the economic decisions made by consumers and producers of food and fiber products.
- D. Identify the role of government and farm programs in establishing the well-being of farm households.
- E. Appreciate the importance of economics in your everyday life!

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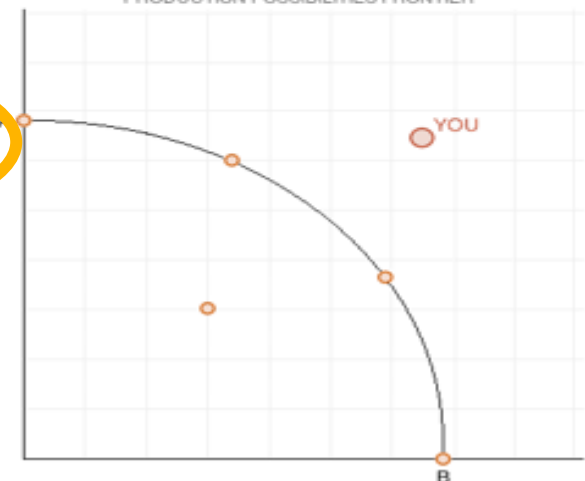
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We will go back and forth between facts, theory and application this semester! That is often what it is like in a business environment, not just to remember a fact, definition, or concept, but to apply it to make the business or product more profitable!

YOU MAKE THE IMPOSSIBLE POSSIBLE

PRODUCTION POSSIBILITIES FRONTIER



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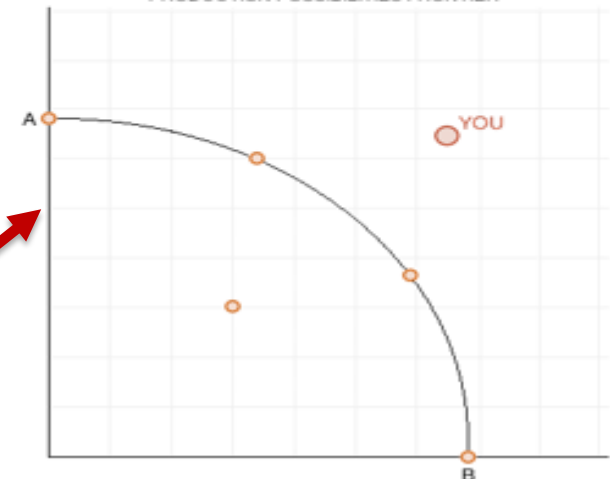
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Syllabus Comparison

V. INSTRUCTIONAL ACTIVITIES:

The class will consist of lecture/discussion sessions each week, textbook reading assignments and quizzes take-home application assignments, two regular exams, and a final exam. An economic thought process and practical applications of economic principles to agriculture will be stressed.

A. Classroom Activity – lecture, discussion, and participatory activities

B. Reading assignments—

Reading assignments will be provided through the required textbook, handouts and postings on Canvas. **READING IS CRITICAL to passing this class!** You will be expected to have read the textbook and other assigned readings, so that you may ask relevant/important questions and understand the material. You may also be required to read some current events articles, press reports, etc. to complete assignments.

C. Assignments –

Assignments are MANDATORY. Assignments will be due at the very beginning of class as they are likely to be discussed during the class period. **NO LATE WORK WILL BE ACCEPTED – NO EXCEPTIONS.** Please respect the professor's time and the effort of the other students that have completed assignments on time. Assignments must be turned in on or before the day they are due, even in the case of a University-related excused absence. The lowest assignment score will be dropped at the end of the semester. No make up homework assignments will be given

Practice exercises and/or voluntary reviews may be posted periodically to emphasize key concepts from the course material. Practice exercises are not mandatory, but will indicate material important for the exams; thus, it is HIGHLY RECOMMENDED that you complete the any practice exercises and check them against the recommended key posted.

A. Assignments –

Assignments are IMPORTANT. Assignments will be due at the very beginning of class as they are likely to be discussed during the class period. All assignments are due on time! Assignments can be turned in on or before the day they are due, even in the case of a University-related excused absence. In case you forget to turn in an assignment, the lowest assignment score will be dropped at the end of the semester.

Practice exercises and/or voluntary reviews may be posted before each exam. Practice exercises are suggested, but will indicate material important for the exams; thus, it is **HIGHLY RECOMMENDED** that you complete the any practice exercises and check them against the recommended key.

B. Quizzes—

Quizzes will be over the book chapters and will be posted online through Canvas. Read and review the chapter before coming to class and before taking the quiz so that you can do well! **You will have 2 attempts to take an online quiz, and your best score will be the one recorded.** Take the quiz by the posted due date for your section in order for it to be counted, even in the case of a University-related absence. The lowest quiz score will be dropped at the end of the semester.

C. Exams—

There will be 2 mid-term exams during the regular class hour, and a final during finals week. All exams will be closed book. Since the concepts in economics (and agricultural economics) tend to build on one another, the mid-term exams are cumulative during the semester, but will emphasize the most recent material. A review sheet will be available on Canvas prior to the exam or provided in class.

You may bring a 3"x5" index card to the exam with important material on both sides of the card. Use of a larger index card, a card not in your own handwriting, or multiple cards will not be allowed. Only material in your own handwriting is permitted on the card. Before the exam begins you will clear your desk of all items except your one card, writing instrument, and calculator.

If you miss one mid-term exam as a result of a University-excused absence, and I have been provided formal verification of the absence within 48 hours of the absence, you may be allowed to count the cumulative final exam score (percentage) twice: as the final exam score and in place of the missed exam. This option will only be for students that have a documented University-excused absence on file with me.

Syllabus Comparison

IX. ATTENDANCE POLICY:

Students are expected to adhere to the MSU Attendance Policy outlined in the current *MSU Bulletin*.

Attendance will be taken daily and updated on the Canvas system monthly. You are permitted two unexcused absences during the semester; attendance grades for these two absences will be adjusted at the END of the semester.

Coming to class late is a major distraction. Tardiness to class will be noted on the attendance sheet. If you are late to class for four class periods, you will receive the equivalent of one unexcused absence.

It is also disrespectful for you to leave class early unless you have spoken with the instructor about your need to leave class early prior to the beginning of class. If you leave class early without notifying me before class, then you will lose your attendance points for that day.

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Additional information about Attendance in AGR 130:

- A. Daily Attendance will be taken for a semester assignment grade. I believe you receive a lot of value out of being in class, interacting with me and your peers, and completing class activities. I am definitely willing to add assignment points to this belief. This grade will be updated monthly in Canvas.
- B. Excused absences will generally need to be documented (medical note, letter from club advisor, etc.) and a copy needs to be given to me within one week of the absence. If you know you are going to be gone, please let me know ahead of time so we can discuss turning in anything due before you leave.
- C. I know sometimes things come up that aren't excused - oversleeping, late night last night, or car wouldn't start this morning. You will be permitted two unexcused absences during the semester for these things. The attendance grades for these two unexcused absences will be adjusted in the gradebook at the end of the semester.

Analysis

- SPSS used for analysis
- Independent-samples t-test used to compare information retention between the treatments
- $N = 61$; section one, $n=33$; section two, $n=28$
- Not a significant difference in the syllabus treatments quiz scores for section:
 - one ($M= 0.67$, $SD= 0.15$), and
 - two ($M= 0.63$, $SD= 0.17$)
 - $t(59) = 1.00$, $p= 0.318$.

Analysis

- Unrelated to our objective but significant difference in comprehension for gender were found:
- Male ($M= 0.60$, $SD= 0.15$), and
- Female ($M= 0.69$, $SD= 0.16$)
- $t(59) = -2.08$, $p= 0.042$.

Thank You!

This is not a widget factory;
you are not a cog