

AREC 478: AGRICULTURAL & NATURAL RESOURCE POLICY
Fall 2011 COURSE SYLLABUS

Instructor: Dr. Gregory Graff, Associate Professor, Agricultural and Resource Economics
Office: Clark B-328
Office hours: Tuesdays 11:00 –12:00 or by appointment
Office phone: (970) 491-4028
E-mail: gregory.graff@colostate.edu

TA: Chris Appleby, graduate student, Agricultural and Resource Economics
Office: Clark B-309
Office hours: Mondays 12:30 –1:30 or by appointment
Phone: (970) 576-6400
E-mail: christopher.appleby@colostate.edu

Class Time/Place: Tuesday and Thursday 9:30-10:45, 146 Gifford

Course website: <http://hoag.agsci.colostate.edu/arec478/fall/>

Course Objectives:

1. *Policy Analysis*—To understand what policies are, why they are needed, and how they are made: who the policy participants are, how policies are implemented, and how they impact the economy and society.
2. *Agricultural and Resource Issues*—To study problems in agriculture and natural resources that merit policy consideration.
3. *U.S. Policies*—To familiarize you with domestic U.S. agricultural and resource policies.
4. *Policy Applications*—To apply your newfound analysis skills to address one particular policy problem.

What I expect from you:	What you should expect from me:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • attend class regularly and participate in discussions • complete all reading assignments before class • treat your classmates with respect • type all assignments, and FOLLOW directions • honor deadlines 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • come to class prepared • make the class interesting • treat you with fairness and respect • be clear about assignments and grading • honor deadlines

Grading: Your grade will be based on two mid-term exams, a participation activity, a “policy proposal,” and homework assignments as follow:

Two midterm exams	50% (25% each)
Homework assignments	10%
Participation (Choose one)	10%
News article summaries	
Policy-oriented student organization	
“Ask an Ag Economist” paper/class presentation	
Policy Proposal (Final Project)	
Group Presentation & Debate	10%
Individual Paper	<u>20%</u>
Total	100%

Midterms: Midterms I and II will draw primarily on class lectures, required readings, and homework assignments. They consist of three parts: (1) fill in the blank definitions, (2) short answer, and (3) long answer. The midterms tend to follow closely from the homework assignments. The second midterm is not comprehensive; it focuses on lectures and homework assignments after the first midterm. Midterms may *not* be made up if missed without my *prior* approval. You may bring a single (8 ½ x 11) page of *handwritten* notes (both sides) to a midterm. See the course website's semester schedule for the dates of the midterms.

Homework Assignments: A series of homework assignments will be given out over the semester. These will be handed back to you, and answer keys will be provided. The purpose of the homework is to improve your understanding of the lectures and prepare you for the midterms. You will do much better in the course if you do them and review them. The homework assignments will be worth a total of 10% of your final grade. See the course website's semester schedule for exact homework assignments and due dates.

Participation Activity: Policy is a contact sport. The best way to learn about policy issues affecting us today is to participate in the debate. This course lets you choose a participation activity by which to raise your awareness and get engaged. Choose one of options A, B, or C:

News Article Summaries (OPTION A): Students choosing this option must summarize a newspaper or magazine article every other week that (1) covers an agricultural, environmental, or natural resource policy issue and (2) provides an illustration or example related to one of the particular topics covered in lecture that week. The summary should be 1 page typewritten, and it will not be accepted otherwise. Include at the top of the page: your name, the DATE submitted, the title of the article, and the publication in which the article appeared. Staple a copy of the article to the summary (no credit without it). Summarize the information provided in the article (in your own words—do not simply plagiarize the article) and comment on (1) your thoughts about the issue, (2) the way the author(s) addressed it, and (3) how it relates to a topic we covered in class that week. You may skip the first two weeks and weeks with midterms or policy presentations, resulting in **a total of eight submissions due** (See course website's semester schedule page for due dates). Summaries are due Fridays by 5:00 p.m. and will not be returned.

Involvement in a Policy Relevant Club (OPTION B): A number of student organizations at CSU provide good exposure to real world policy issues, such as the CSU chapter of Farm Bureau, Farmers Union, Americans for Informed Democracy, College Republicans, Young Democrats, etc.) For your participation activity, you may choose to be actively involved in such a student organization for the semester. The organization must be both registered with the university (<http://lscdolby.sc.colostate.edu/studentorg/orglist.asp>) and approved by me at the start of the semester. (Please note: Involvement in fraternities and sororities, social, athletic, or judging activities cannot be used to meet this option.) Your grade will depend on the extent of your involvement. You may have one excused absence from regular meetings/events of the club (include dated letter/e-mail from the advisor excusing you). You will lose 20 percent of your total points for each unexcused absence. You also must participate in at least one committee or special event organized by the club. Turn in a letter to me by the final day of class summarizing your attendance and activities for the semester: 1 page, written by you, and signed by you *and by the faculty advisor of the club, along with his/her name, e-mail and phone number.*

"Ask an Ag Economist" paper and in-class policy briefing (OPTION C): From weeks 3 through 11 we will have a weekly opportunity for student policy briefing in class titled "Ask an Ag Economist." This is styled after the popular book, *Freakonomics* (<http://freakonomics.blogs.nytimes.com/>). I have posted a signup sheet on my door. This option is

open to the six people to sign up, on a first-come first-serve basis. *Guidelines will be given in class when we have an example policy briefing by the instructor.* You will be asked to prepare a 3-page paper that answer the question for which you signed up. The paper will include a 300-word executive summary. On your assigned day you will deliver a policy brief in front of the class by reading your 300-word summary and then taking questions for 5-10 minutes. *A copy of your 3-page paper with your 300-word executive summary is due to the instructor 2 days before the class in which you present.*

Policy Proposal Final Projects:

Presentations and Debates: At the end of the semester, we will have a series of six in class policy presentations each followed by a short debate. Every student is responsible for signing up to join one of the six teams to do *one* of these presentations ***by the end of the fifth week of class.*** As a team you will develop and present a proposal for a new policy or policy reform that will help solve a problem in agriculture or natural resource management (water, fish & game, land use, etc).

Each team is responsible for getting together on your own and determining how you will present your information. You must develop a policy ***proposal***, as we will have defined it over the course of the semester, regarding the topic for which you signed up. You will have 40 minutes to make your case to the class. Then I will present arguments from an opposing viewpoint for about 10-15 minutes. You will then have some time for rebuttal. All people in the group must speak, but you can use any approach that you want to make your point. *See the policy proposal guidelines for more information about requirements.* The presentation is worth 10% of your final grade. You will be graded both by me and your peers from the rest of the class (which is one reason why attendance is mandatory during the presentation & debates.)

Individual Papers: In addition to your group presentation, each person in the group must individually submit a 5-page typewritten report ***one week*** after your group's presentation. You must stick to the same topic of your presentation and support the same side of the issue that your group supported. This report is worth 20% points toward your final grade and must be your own work. Again, *see the 'policy presentations' page on the course website for more information about requirements.*

Late assignments: Assignments are due by 5:00 p.m. of the specified business day. Late assignments are reduced by 10% *per business day.*

Attendance: You are expected in each class. Years of our experience finds that performance on midterms in this class is highly correlated with your presence in class. *****NOTE: A total of 5% points, or half a letter grade, will be deducted for any unexcused absence during the policy presentations & debates (the last six classes of the semester).***