

AGEC 115

DECISION TOOLS

FOR AGRICULTURAL ECONOMICS
& AGRIBUSINESS

SPRING 2020

INSTRUCTOR: Hannah Elizabeth Shear
heshear@ksu.edu

Office Hours:
10:30-11:30am M&W
314 Waters Hall

Catalog and Course Descriptions:

Development of foundational computer-based empirical skills that address economic and business issues in food and agriculture. Students will learn how to model information on an issue or problem using mathematical spreadsheets to find relevant answers for decision makers and stakeholders.

AGEC 115 intensively utilizes spreadsheet software (Excel®) to address quantitative problems and issues related to agricultural economics and agribusiness. This course is not simply an introduction to Excel®. The purpose of this course is to develop student proficiency in the use of Excel®. That also requires the development of a mathematical way of thinking and knowing how to use such knowledge and skill to structure spreadsheets to address quantitative problems, most especially those found in agribusiness and agricultural economics. To develop proficiency requires thoughtful practice.

Prerequisites:

None, but it is strongly encouraged that students have successfully completed college algebra and that they have some experience in using Excel®. If you have no experience with Excel®, then you may need extra practice and study time in the first few weeks of the course.

Course Role in the Undergraduate Program:

AGEC 115 is a prerequisite for AGEC 501 – Data Analysis and Optimization. It is a recommended prerequisite for AGEC 500 – Production Economics and for AGEC 513 – Agricultural Finance.

Required Laptop Computer, USB Flash Drive, and Software:

A laptop computer is required for this course, and you are required to bring your laptop to every class period for the course. You are also required to have Microsoft Excel® 2013 or newer for PC and/or Microsoft Excel® 2011 or newer for Mac. You should also have a USB flash drive that you bring to class.

Suggested Textbook:

No textbook is required for the course. An optional text that you may have an interest in is the following: Walkenbach, John. Microsoft Excel® 2013 Bible. Indianapolis: John Wiley & Sons, Inc, 2013.

You are expected to develop and expand your analytical skills to be able to structure spreadsheets to solve specified problems that answer specific decision-making questions. You will be able to display data using appropriate charting tools available in Excel® and learn how to fit a trend line to two-variable relationships.

This is not intended to be a push-this-key-now type of course.

Finally, you will be able to interpret results, and to integrate simple spreadsheets into broader decision-making frameworks and to discuss the relevance and appropriateness for decisions.

Course Learning Objectives:

Students completing this course will be proficient in

- Entering data and formulas,
- Navigating through spreadsheets,
- Elementary mathematical modeling and the quantitative way of thinking,
- Selecting and using built-in functions,
- Charting data, in using certain functions available through the Developer, and
- Transforming agricultural and agribusiness problems into spreadsheet models for analysis..

Grading:

Grades will be assigned on a 90/80/70/60 scale for A/B/C/D/F, respectively. You should not expect percentages or points to be rounded in this course.

Your final course grade will be derived based on the following weighting system:

1. Attendance 10%
2. Assignments 30%
3. Quizzes 20%
4. Exams 40%

I encourage you to work and study together, discuss the material, and review for the quizzes and exams together. However, all work that is submitted for a grade should be your work so that it reflects your own understanding and not copied from someone else! You are not permitted under any circumstances to share or provide to another student your Excel® file or work. If you are having trouble accessing a file from Canvas, then you must contact the instructor.

Attendance:

Attendance is expected at every class period. Seating will be assigned so that I can learn each of your names and to facilitate paper distribution. You are individually responsible for all assignments, quizzes, and exams completed for this class, and these assessments are generally planned to be completed during class periods.

Participation:

Students are expected to participate in class. Positive participation means speaking so that everyone can hear, asking appropriate questions, replying to questions, contributing ideas and participating in discussion without dominating it, and helping others. The students in this class have a variety of skills that vary from person to person, so helping others with the exception of copying and cheating is encouraged. Helping someone may pay off for you later. Positive participation creates a supportive learning environment in which other students feel comfortable asking questions and everyone contributes to the discussion.

Positive participation requires that students come prepared for class. This means distilling the terminology and major concepts, techniques, having points of personal interest in mind for discussion, having questions in mind for ideas that are unclear, knowing what the day's topics will be and what assignments are due, and bringing appropriate texts, materials, and tools for the day's class.

Assignments:

Eight assignments will be given during the semester. Assignments will be posted to the class website on KSOL Canvas. Generally, assignments will be completed as in-class assignments. Completed assignments will be submitted in Canvas. Assignments will only be accepted by USB flash drive or email by very rare exception. If you are not able to finish an assignment during the class period or you miss an assignment class period, then your assignment is due no later than the assignment due date which will likely be that evening. Turning in a late assignment will reduce the grade earned by one half. Once an answer key is posted, late submissions will no longer be accepted. Late assignments will generally not be accepted beyond 24 hours after the due date. You must see me directly to be able to earn credit for a missed assignment. If for some reason you cannot finish an assignment on time, then please contact me immediately.

I encourage you to work together with others on assignments, but each student is expected to turn in his/her own work. You are not permitted under any circumstances to share or provide to another student your Excel® file or work.

Quizzes:

There will be three announced quizzes in the course. These quizzes are intended to help prepare you for an exam. In general, no make-up quizzes will be given and you must be in attendance to earn credit. There may be other announced and unannounced quizzes during the semester.

Exams:

Three examinations will be given during the semester. In general, make-up examinations will not be given and you must be in attendance to earn credit. If a personal emergency causes you to miss an examination or quiz, then you need to notify me as quickly as possible if you wish to request any consideration of the emergency situation, and you need to provide documentation of the emergency situation. Examples include the death of a very close family member, traffic accident on the way to the exam, and severe illness with physician's documentation. Failure to notify me in a timely manner will be deemed lack of a real emergency. Any NCAA athletic event conflicts or academic competition team conflicts need to be brought to me well in advance of the exam and must be accompanied by an official university letter from the team coach or the KSU athletics advisor if to receive any consideration.

Course Website:

The course will use K-State Online Canvas for the course, <http://public.online.ksu.edu/>. You are required to retrieve materials for the course through the course website. Scores for the graded components of this course will be recorded and posted in the KSOL Canvas gradebook. You have seven calendar days from the time a score is posted to bring any recorded score errors to my attention and to raise any grading questions.

Communications:

You are required to check your K-State e-mail regularly for class information, including details regarding assignments. Failure to check your K-State e-mail is not a valid excuse for missing critical information.

Academic Honesty:

Kansas State University has an Honor and Integrity System based on personal integrity, which is presumed to be sufficient assurance that, in academic matters, one's work is performed honestly and without unauthorized assistance. Undergraduate and graduate students, by registration, acknowledge the jurisdiction of the Honor and Integrity System. The policies and procedures of the Honor and Integrity System apply to all full and part-time students enrolled in undergraduate and graduate courses on-campus, off-campus, and via distance learning. The Honor and Integrity System website can be reached via the following URL: www.k-state.edu/honor. A component vital to the Honor and Integrity System is the inclusion of the Honor Pledge which applies to all assignments, examinations, or other course work undertaken by students. The Honor Pledge is implied, whether or not it is stated: "On my honor, as a student, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid on this academic work." A grade of XF can result from a breach of academic honesty. The F indicates failure in the course; the X indicates the reason is an Honor Pledge violation.

It is expected that all academic work in this class will be done individually by you. Do not collaborate on any academic work unless specifically approved by me. Don't cheat!

Academic Accommodations:

Students with disabilities who need classroom accommodations, access to technology, or information about emergency building/campus evacuation processes should contact the Student Access Center and/or their instructor. Services are available to students with a wide range of disabilities including, but not limited to, physical disabilities, medical conditions, learning disabilities, attention deficit disorder, depression, and anxiety. If you are a student enrolled in campus/online courses through the Manhattan or Olathe campuses, contact the Student Access Center at accesscenter@k-state.edu, 785-532-6441; or K-State Polytechnic campus, contact Academic and Student Services at polytechnicadvising@ksu.edu or call 785-826-2974.

Students who need accommodations need to speak with me during the first week of class and need to register with the Student Access Center during or before this time also.

Expectations for Classroom Conduct:

All student activities in the University, including this course, are governed by the Student Judicial Conduct Code as outlined in the Student Governing Association By Laws, Article V, Section 3, number 2. Students who engage in behavior that disrupts the learning environment may be asked to leave the class.

Campus Safety:

Kansas State University is committed to providing a safe teaching and learning environment for student and faculty members. In order to enhance your safety in the unlikely case of a campus emergency make sure that you know where and how to quickly exit your classroom and how to follow any emergency directives. To view additional campus emergency information go to the University's main page, www.k-state.edu, and click on the Emergency Information button at the very bottom of the page.

Weapons Policy:

Kansas State University prohibits the possession and use of firearms, explosives, and other weapons on any University campus, with certain limited exceptions, which include use of weapons as part of approved University Programs, use of weapons by law enforcement personnel, and the lawful concealed carrying of handguns, as provided in the weapons policy, which may be found at: <http://www.k-state.edu/police/weapons/index.html>

Copyright Notification:

Copyright 2020 Hannah E Shear as to this syllabus and all lectures. During this course students are prohibited from selling notes to or being paid for taking notes by any person or commercial firm without the express written permission of the professor teaching this course. In addition, students in this class are not authorized to provide class notes or other class-related materials to any other person or entity, other than sharing them directly with another student taking the class for purposes of studying, without prior written permission from the professor teaching this course. ***Students should also be aware that the K-State Student Conduct Code prohibits any illegal or unauthorized taking, selling, or distribution of class notes.

Students violating this provision will be subject to discipline under the conduct code, including but not limited to possible expulsion from K-State.***

Academic Freedom Statement:

Kansas State University is a community of students, faculty, and staff who work together to discover new knowledge, create new ideas, and share the results of their scholarly inquiry with the wider public. Although new ideas or research results may be controversial or challenge established views, the health and growth of any society requires frank intellectual exchange. Academic freedom protects this type of free exchange and is thus essential to any university's mission.

Moreover, academic freedom supports collaborative work in the pursuit of truth and the dissemination of knowledge in an environment of inquiry, respectful debate, and professionalism. Academic freedom is not limited to the classroom or to scientific and scholarly research, but extends to the life of the university as well as to larger social and political questions. It is the right and responsibility of the university community to engage with such issues.

Safe Zone Statement:

I am part of the SafeZone community network of trained K-State faculty/staff/students who are available to listen and support you. As a SafeZone Ally, I can help you connect with resources on campus to address problems you face that interfere with your academic success, particularly issues of sexual violence, hateful acts, or concerns faced by individuals due to sexual orientation/gender identity. My goal is to help you be successful and to maintain a safe and equitable campus.

See the "Tentative Course Schedule" for additional detailed information.

Disclaimer: The professor reserves the right to adjust the syllabus, outline and schedule at any time and will notify students if changes are made.