Undergraduate Seminar
Plant Sciences 3130

INSTRUCTORS: Dr. Anne McKendry    Dr. David Trinklein
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OFFICE HOURS: We are happy to meet with you but ask that you contact us via e-mail to schedule an appointment.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

1) To evaluate a topic critically and express these critical evaluations orally.

2) To become proficient at exchanging ideas, posing questions, and defending a point.

3) To develop the student's ability to organize and present thoughts orally.

4) To gain experience in small group communication.

COURSE FORMAT:

Each student will be required to participate in a panel debate as well as present a formal seminar.

1) Panel debate. Students will be assigned (at random) to a discussion panel. Each panel will select from a list provided a topic relative to agriculture. The first three members of the panel (in order of selection) will be expected to advance the topic (as true or valid); the remaining three members are to challenge the topic (as false or invalid). At the time of the panel's presentation to the class, each panel member is to speak for a minimum five to seven minutes concerning their topic. Following these presentations, there will be five to ten minutes devoted to rebuttal between panel members. Thereafter, the audience will be encouraged to challenge panel members concerning their positions. During the final five minutes of class, panel members will be allowed to voice their personal opinion, if differs from the opinion assigned to them.

A two page (typed) paper summarizing each member's position on the topic is due the date of their oral presentation.

2) Formal seminar. Each student will present a formal seminar 15-20 minutes in duration.

Students will be expected to turn in the title of their formal seminar by February 14. Your adviser represents a good source of assistance in selecting a topic, should you need help. The use of PowerPoint is encouraged but not required. If PowerPoint is used, please bring your presentation on either a flash drive or CD—an IBM platform computer will be provided.

Class periods during which formal seminars are presented will consist of three formal seminars per period. The students who gave presentations the week previous will serve to introduce current speakers and should gather biographical information about them before class begins.
GRADING:

The semester grade will be based 40% on the formal seminar and 40% on the advocacy/defense discussion and paper. Grading of the formal seminar will be done by students and the seminar coordinators. Subject matter, quality of material presented, visual aids, and professionalism will all be judged.

Attendance and class participation are essential for a successful seminar. Therefore, participation will account for 20% of the grade. Additionally, students will be allowed one unexcused absence. Additional absences will detract from a student's grade at the rate of one +/- letter-grade reduction per unexcused absence.

STATEMENT FOR ACADEMIC HONESTY:

Academic honesty is fundamental to the activities and principles of a university. All members of the academic community must be confident that each person’s work has been responsibly and honorably acquired, developed, and presented. Any effort to gain an advantage not given to all students is dishonest whether or not the effort is successful. The academic community regards academic dishonesty as an extremely serious matter, with serious consequences that range from probation to expulsion from school. When in doubt about plagiarism, paraphrasing, quoting or collaboration, consult your instructors.

STATE FOR A.D.A.:

If you have special needs as addressed by the Americans with Disabilities Act (A.D.A.) and need assistance, please notify the Office of Disability Services, A048 Brady Commons or your instructors immediately. Reasonable efforts will be made to accommodate your special needs.

INTELLECTUAL PLURALISM:

The University community welcomes intellectual diversity and respects student rights. Students who have questions concerning the quality of instruction in this class may address concerns to either the Divisional Director of the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities (http://osrr.missouri.edu/). All students will have the opportunity to submit an anonymous evaluation of the instructors at the end of the course.

COURSE SCHEDULE:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Orientation; Group assignments; Discussion topic selections</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Lecture on presentation methods, visual aids, etc.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3-6</td>
<td>Panel discussions on topics selected by discussion groups from approved list</td>
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<tr>
<td>7-16</td>
<td>Formal seminars presented on topics approved by instructors</td>
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