

# General Education Course Proposal

Proposed Course: Ag Ec 1      Introductory Agri. Economics      Units 3  
Prefix      No.      Title

Department: Agricultural Economics      School: Agricultural Sciences & Technology

**GE Category (Indicate one category only):**

Foundation: A1\_\_\_; A2\_\_\_; A3\_\_\_; B4\_\_\_  
 Breadth: B1\_\_\_; B2\_\_\_; C1\_\_\_; C2\_\_\_; D X; E\_\_\_  
 Integration: B\_\_\_; C\_\_\_; D\_\_\_; International/Multicultural\_\_\_

Existing Course X; Revised Course \_\_\_; New Course \_\_\_

Course Included in Current GE Program X (Since 1970)

New courses require the Undergraduate Course Proposal form in addition to this form.

Revised courses require the Undergraduate Course Change Request in addition to this form.

\* Ag Ec 1 is an existing course in G.E.; it is not being revised -- hence no Course Change Request Form Submitted.

**Proposed catalog description:** Limit course description to 40 words using succinct phrases. Include prerequisites, limitations, lecture/lab hours. Indicate former course number, e.g., (Former Biol 105)

Microeconomic principles of resource allocation, production, cost analysis, and market equilibrium with primary application to farms and agribusiness firms; supply and demand in commodity pricing under perfect and imperfect competition; survey of agricultural management and marketing problems and issues.

Enrollment limit per section: none/C1 (average range is 30-35 fourth week enrollment)

Expected number of sections per semester – Year 1 4; Year 3 4 (historically steady state)

**Attachments:**

1. A statement presenting the ways in which this course meets the Specifications provided in the appropriate section of the General Education Policy as well as in the Policies for Inclusion and Evaluation of General Education Courses.
2. A statement of elements common to all sections of this course, identifying content, objectives, required student activities, grading policy, representative texts, and an approximate schedule for the course. Required student activities include such things as papers, research projects, homework, laboratory and/or studio performance, recitations, participation, attendance, and exams.
3. A typical syllabus for a particular offering of the course.
4. Any special cost factors associated with this course.

**Approval for Inclusion in General Education**

David Smith  
 Department Chair      3/13/98  
 Date

[Signature]  
 School Curriculum Committee      3/24/98  
 Date

[Signature]  
 School Dean      3/24/98  
 Date

[Signature]  
 General Education Subcommittee      12/15/98  
 Date

[Signature]  
 Associate Provost      12/22/98  
 Date

1/14/98

UNSOLICITED REVISED SUBMISSION (SEPT. 25, 1998)

THIS COURSE PROPOSAL WAS NOT RETURNED TO THE DEPARTMENT FOR CLARIFICATIONS BY THE G.E. COMMITTEE.

## ATTACHMENT 2

2. COMMON COURSE ELEMENTS: “Content, Objectives, required student activities, grading policy, representative texts, and approximate schedule” (across all sections). [General Education Course Proposal Form--Attachment Required]

(a) Course Content:

INTRODUCTION: The Economics Discipline

- Social Science Inquiry & The Discipline of Economics
- Microeconomics distinguished from Macroeconomics
- Agricultural Economics Field Delineated
- Scientific Method in Social Science & Economics Methodology
- Theory, Models, Laws, Principles in Explaining Human Behavior
- Market Institutions & Government Institutions in the Economy.
- Fundamental Concepts of The Economic Way of Thinking

COMPETITIVE MARKET: Equilibrium Price/Quantity Analysis

- Consumer Demand
- Producer Supply
- Elasticities of Demand & Supply
- Buyer-Seller Market Exchange of farm commodities
- Competitive Model Assumptions

PRODUCTION ECONOMICS: Technical & Economic Efficiency

- Physical Production Functions (inputs, output) in Agriculture
- Value & Cost Relations

PRICE THEORY: Efficient Allocation of Resources

- Profit Maximization & Loss Minimization by Firms
- Short Run vs Long Run Analysis in farm enterprise planning

IMPERFECT COMPETITION: Industry Structure, Conduct, Performance

- Monopoly, oligopoly practices and outcomes in the Food Industries
- Government Anti-Trust Measures & Agricultural Exceptions

AGRICULTURAL SECTOR: Problems & Issues

- Farm Problem in a Global Economy
- Farmer & Consumer Subsidy Programs
- Government Regulation of Food & Fiber Industries

NOTE: A copy of this G.E. proposal, inclusive of the typical syllabus (and related handouts on Schedule of Course Topics, Reading Assignments, and Writing Task--as examples) will be distributed to each member of the department as well as to each

instructor assigned to teach Ag Ec 1. This will serve as a reference guide to teaching the course consistently across sections.

(b) Instructional Objectives

The following are broad-based instructional goals for the course:

- Enable students to appreciate the power and limits of the economics discipline to explain human behavior as it relates to the production, exchange, and consumption of goods and services.
- Have students understand the application of the Scientific Method of inquiry in Social Sciences regarding the generation of knowledge to explain behavior as exemplified by Economic theory, models, principles, and concepts.
- Expose students to the philosophical debate about the interplay and balance of market and governmental institutions in terms of behavioral incentives for actions by participants in the economy.
- Illustrate to students the operation of competitive markets (agricultural commodities being the classic case in *all* economics textbooks) and non-competitive markets (farm inputs and agribusiness products) as well as the effects of government regulation and subsidies.
- Encourage students to examine ostensible economic problems and issues from a multidisciplinary perspective--as social scientists do through interdisciplinary subfields involving economics (i.e., economic anthropology, economic geography, economic history, and political economy). This would include the multicultural aspects of economic performance across different ethnic groups worldwide. [See discussion in Attachment 1, Specification 3]

(c) Required Student Activities

- Textbook Reading Assignments
- Learning Feedback Exercises (e.g., problem sets, quizzes, etc.)
- Midterm Exams
- Comprehensive Final exam
- 2000 Word Writing Requirement (10-20% of Course Grade)

(d) Grading Policy

- Instructor Discretion in setting letter grade standards
- Point-basis for course requirements specified
- Percentage value/weight of each requirement delineated

(e) Representative Texts

- *Agricultural Economics and Agribusiness* by Gail Cramer, et. al. John Wiley & Sons 1997
- *Economics of Resources, Agriculture, and Food* by Wesley Seitz, et. al. McGraw-Hill 1994

(f) Approximate Schedule

Week	Subject-Matter
1	Introduction to the “Economic Way of Thinking”
2	Introduction to the Economic Method of Inquiry
3	Consumer Demand Theory
4	Producer Supply Theory
5	Elasticities of Demand & Supply
6	Competitive Market Equilibrium Analysis
7	(Review & Midterm I)
8	Production Functions
9	Value Functions
10	Cost & Revenue Functions Schedules & Graphs
11	Profit Maximization/Loss Minimization Rules
12	Short Run & Long Run Resource Allocations
13	(Review & Midterm II)
14	Non Competitive Market Models
15	Agricultural Sector Challenges
16	(Comprehensive Final Exam)

NOTE: The subject matter of microeconomics lends itself to a linear approach, whereby week-by-week there is a building block of concepts and principles that gradually become integrated in the combined interactive analysis of the market (supply and demand--first half of course) and the production (costs and revenues--second half of course). The course culminates in the last two weeks when the interactive analysis is applied to examining the effects of farm assistance programs and food assistance programs of government and also of public regulation of agricultural industries. Many of the issues of economics and of agriculture are distributed throughout the course. The final examination is, of course, comprehensive in nature.

Commitment: Because Ag Ec 1 has long functioned as a service course for General Education and to majors across both the School of Agriculture and the School of Business, there has always been a high degree of quality control. The department is pledged to continue that tradition, for which it is justifiably proud. The department will submit its course to the G.E. Subcommittee and/or Provost for periodic evaluation in meeting specifications and criteria.

## ATTACHMENT 3

### 3. TYPICAL SYLLABUS:

See attached set of documents for Ag Ec 1 entitled:

- (i) Course Information syllabus
- (ii) Tentative Schedule of Topics
- (iii) Required Reading Assignments
- (iv) Writing Task

These materials by Prof. John Shields, Acting Chair of the Department of Agricultural Economics, are representative of the current and future offering of Ag Ec 1. They provide detailed evidence about the organization and content of the course in support of the "Area Specifications" in Attachment 1 and the "Common Elements" in Attachment 2.

Historically the three to four sections of this course have been taught each semester by the same professors to ensure uniformity and continuity. While the Ag Ec 1 course materials are for 1998, they do incorporate the requirements of the new G.E. Program. (Note: All faculty assigned to teach this course will be given a thorough orientation to the G.E. guidelines and each person's syllabus will be reviewed yearly for conformity by the Department Chair. Also, the course will meet the prescriptions of the University Policy on Syllabus and Grading.) The chair will annually convene a meeting of all Ag Ec 1 instructors to review and preview the teaching of this course.

## ATTACHMENTS 4 & 5

4. SPECIAL COST FACTORS:

There are none associated with the delivery of this course on campus.

5. WRITING REQUIREMENT:

The written assignment(s) will be in full conformity with "General Education Writing Requirements" approved by the Academic Senate in Spring 1998. [Pages 26-31 of the General Education Program Document]

The writing requirement of choice by the department is either one long or two short research papers involving an "initial draft" that will be critiqued by the instructor and a revised and/or extended "final report" incorporating feedback provided by the professor. The feedback will cover organization of the report, grammar and punctuation, clarity of communication, and quality of analysis about the topic. Students will be expected to utilize a manual of style as well as a grammar/punctuation guide--plus a dictionary and thesaurus.

The 2000 word requirement will be enforced. English 1 Composition will be recommended as a prior or concurrent course. Use of the English Writing Center for consultation will be specifically encouraged. The department chair will periodically check on the nature of writing assignments given and sample student papers to read.

The topics will be difficult contemporary problems and issues for which there is much readily available information, but yet have not been satisfactorily resolved--thereby, forcing students to struggle intellectually with content and write up a rigorous analysis that has no preconceived answer. The topics chosen have been and will continue to be related to the students role as an informed citizen who will have opportunities to vote (or otherwise express opinion) on these civic matters--most of which will be related to agriculture, food, and the environment.

[See also Attachment 1, (c) Policies for Inclusion and Evaluation of G.E. Courses, #5 Criteria for Evaluation regarding "Integration of the General Education into the course. Refer to Attachment 3 Typical Syllabus, "Writing Assignment" handout for a detailed description of what is expected of students.]

Catalog Description:

Microeconomic principles of resource allocation, production, cost analysis and market price equilibrium with primary application to the agricultural sector; supply and demand in commodity pricing under perfect and imperfect competition; survey of agricultural management, marketing, and policy issues.

Course Structure:

- ◆ INTRODUCTION: The Economics Discipline
- ◆ PRICE MECHANISM: Laws of Competitive Market Exchange
- ◆ PRODUCTION ECONOMICS: Optimum Input Utilization
- ◆ PROFIT MAXIMIZATION: Optimum Output Production
- ◆ AGRICULTURAL SECTOR POLICY: Problems, Issues, Resolutions

(Note: see separate "Tentative Schedule of Topics" for detailed course content.)

General Education Status:

Ag Ec 1 is a social science course that qualifies as a General Education Breadth discipline (Division #8 Social, Economic, and Political Systems). "PURPOSE: to understand and analyze the basic principles underlying human social behavior. REQUIREMENT: (1) Introduce students to the methodologies and analytical concepts necessary to evaluate society today and promote more effective participation in the human community; and (2) study the influence of major social, cultural, economic, and political forces on societal behavior and institutions..."

**ELIGIBILITY:** Courses qualifying for General Education status "must focus on basic skills and fundamental knowledge, rather than specialized content" and "must broadly cover the subject, exploring major ideas, themes, and concepts."

**OBJECTIVES:** "General Education Breadth Requirements are to be designed so that, taken with the major-depth program...[they] provide means whereby graduates:

- A. Will have achieved the ability to think clearly and logically, to find and critically examine information, to communicate orally and in writing, and to perform quantitative functions;
- B. Will have acquired appreciable knowledge about...how human society has developed and how it now functions...;
- C. Will have come to an understanding and appreciation of the principles, methodologies, value systems, and thought processes employed in human inquiries."

[Source: General Education Handbook]

G.E. Writing Requirement:

This Course must meet the university's policy establishing the minimum writing requirement of "2000 words of writing in every course in Breadth Divisions 2-9. Writing is to include:

- essays
- essay examinations
- journals or lab books.

At least one half of the written material is to be in the form of a multi- paragraph (i.e., a sustained) argument."

**INTERPRETATION:** "The requirement could be satisfied by a single assignment" (of the length indicated), if there is "provision in the assignment for feedback from the instructor and required revisions."

**EVALUATION:** "The focus of the feedback should be on content, accuracy, completeness, and clarity of expression. Feedback on style, grammar, and mechanical aspects of composition is not necessary in all breadth courses; whether to provide this sort of feedback (in noncomposition courses) should be at the discretion of the instructor."

**GOALS:** "The goals of the Breadth Writing Requirement [are]

- A. To improve our students' competence in writing clearly and communicating effectively.
- B. To enhance learning of the subject matter represented in the Breadth divisions.
- C. To encourage students. . .to take increasingly greater responsibility for their own learning and to engage in disciplined, independent thinking about complex subject matters.
- D. To expose students to the written analytical and critical aspects of the methodologies of the Breadth subject disciplines..."

[Source: General education Handbook]

[Note: See handout entitled "**Writing Task**" for the detailed description of the assignment in this course that meets these requirements.]

Prerequisite:

None (English 1 Composition is recommended)

Time & Place:

MWF 12:10-1:00 p.m., Ag Mech 102  
TuTh 12:45-2:00 p.m., Ag Mech 102

Class Attendance:

Responsibility--Student presence is expected and highly advisable, but NOT mandatory. However, the student is held strictly accountable for all class lectures, course handouts, reading assignments, problem sets, research paper guidelines, and announcements concerning exam dates and report due dates. The "buddy system" for note-taking and obtaining handouts by a classmate in case of absence is a sensible safeguard against missing important information affecting your final course grade. [Advice: Never ask an instructor the insulting question: "Will I/did I miss anything important?"]

Penalty--No formal point deduction for absences occurs to adversely affect the student's course grade. However, it has been this instructor's observation that student performance on exams is lowered by one letter grade for every two days absent. History also indicates that students who cut class regularly end up dropping out of the course and receiving the failure-equivalent grade of 'U' for unauthorized non-completion of all course requirements.

Time Commitment:

A minimum of 2 hours of study time for each hour of class time is expected of average students to earn a satisfactory performance grade 'C' in this course. (Extra hours must be budgeted to meet the writing assignment required of this general education course.) Consult the bookstore study aid section for books on how to study effectively and to efficiently allocate your time.

Student Conduct:

A university policy on "Disruptive Classroom Behavior" governs conduct conducive to student learning and the responsible exercise of academic freedom (see Schedule of Courses and University Catalog).

Additional rules of this instructor for maintaining a positive educational environment are:

- 1) A student shall not enter a class more than five minutes late;
- 2) A student shall not leave class before the end of the period without prior notice to the professor;
- 3) A student shall not cause a distraction in class that interferes with the educational process;
- 4) A student shall not wear a cap/hat during exams/tests.

Instructor:

Professor John R. Shields

Office: Leon S. Peters Business Bldg., Room 307 (in South Wing)

Phone: 278-2809 (Voice Mail messages; state your phone # slowly/clearly)  
(Dept. Secretary, located in PBB 302, can be reached at 278-2949)

E-Mail: johnshi@csufresno.edu



Office Hours: Tuesday 2:00-5:00 p.m.  
 Wednesday 3:00-5:00 p.m.  
 Or by appointment (at a mutually convenient time)

Required Textbooks: Economics of Resources, Agriculture, and Food, by Wesley D. Seitz, et. al. McGraw-Hill, Inc. (1994) \$78.75 New hardbound; \$59.10 used [Required] (Two copies of this text are on reserve in the library--one for a 2-hour loan, the other for overnight checkout)

(NOTE: This book is an introductory text in its broad coverage and thorough exposition of fundamental economic principles. While the book emphasizes the application of these principles in addressing agriculture and food sector problems and issues, it also cites examples from the general economy for a broader context of understanding. Given the text's survey of principal areas of agricultural economics that relate to core courses in the agricultural business major and minor, agricultural students are encouraged to retain this text as a basic reference for your program of study [i.e., especially Part Four: Macroeconomic Relationships (in Ag Ec 2 Agri. Sector Analysis), and Part Five: Public Policy & Agriculture (in Ag Ec 150 Agri. & Food Policy)].

The Goof Proofer: How to avoid the Most Embarrassing Errors in Your Speaking and Writing, by Stephen J. Manhard. Collier Books, MacMillan Publishing Co. (1998) \$5.95 paperback [Required]

Supplementary Text: Principles of Microeconomics by Karl E. Case and Ray C. Fair, Prentice Hall Publishers (1992 edition) [Recommended only as a study aid supplement to clarify the textbook and lectures. (Copies of this text are on reserve in the library. It is not for sale in the bookstore.)]

Reading Assignments: Chapters (and selected pages thereof) are assigned as course progresses. [See instructor's handout "**Reading Assignments**" for weekly coverage of topics.]

Instructional Goals: The instructor's major aims for the course are:

- A) Have students understand the application of the Scientific Method of inquiry in Social Sciences regarding the generation of knowledge to explain behavior as exemplified by Economic theory, models, laws, principles, and concepts.
- B) Enable students to appreciate the power and limits of the economics discipline to explain human behavior as it relates to the production, exchange, and consumption of goods and services.
- C) Expose students to the philosophical debate about the interplay and balance of market and governmental institutions in terms of behavioral incentives for actions by participants in the economy.
- D) Illustrate to students the operation of competitive markets (agricultural commodities being the classic case) and non-competitive markets (farm inputs and agribusiness products) as well as the effects of government regulation and subsidies.

Learning Objectives: Students, upon completion of course, should be able to:

- A) Regarding Subject Matter
  - 1) understand and distinguish relevant principles underlying the competitive market forces of producer supply and consumer demand in determining the equilibrium price and quantity of a product exchanged between sellers and buyers. (Section I of course)

- 2) understand production economics principles of technical and economic efficiency in determining the optimum utilization of inputs in producing output. (Section II of course)
  - 3) understand profit maximization & loss minimization principles for producer decision-making about the optimum amount of output. (Section III of course)
  - 4) conceptualize and give definition to economic problems, as well as formulate and clarify issues related to the resolution of such problems through market and government institutions and mechanisms with emphasis on the agricultural sector. (Section IV of course)
- B) Regarding Technical Skills
- 1) apply fundamental economic principles in making rational choices as consumers of food on the demand side of the market and in making rational decisions as producers of food on the supply side of the market. (Section I of course)
  - 2) Design a field experiment, controlling for many variables while examining data on output as successive units of variable input are applied to plots; then decide optimum input and output levels. (Section II of course)
  - 3) Determine the potential profitability of an enterprise utilizing a total or a marginal analysis in deciding the optimum level of production. (Section III of course)
  - 4) Participate in public dialog as an informed citizen about economic problems and issues involving the functioning of markets and the effects of government intervention. (Section IV of course)
- C) Regarding Cognitive Processes
- 1) Think critically (analytically), by relying principally on established precepts and primarily invoking deductive (theory based) reasoning, to visualize familiar problems with great clarity in established ways.
  - 2) Think creatively (synthetically), by mainly developing new perspectives and invoking inductive (observation/experienced based) reasoning, to insightfully conceptualize old problems in alternative ways--thereby generating different types of solutions.
- D) Regarding Written Communication
- 1) Write English with proper grammar, correct punctuation, right mechanics, accurate spelling, appropriate words, suitable style, acceptable phraseology, logical paragraphing--avoiding the most common errors.
  - 2) Construct reports that conform to manual of style requirements (title page, table of contents, headings in text, bibliography, footnotes, etc.) and reflect clear organization through use of a multi-level outline.
  - 3) Demonstrate organization of thought and logical reasoning and the ability to synthesize information efficiently, integrate ideas effectively, evaluate evidence objectively, and argue a conclusion persuasively.

Instructional Mode:

The subject matter is taught principally through lectures, student textbook readings, class discussion, and regular feedback quizzes. Microeconomic principles are first taught conceptually, next symbolically, then mathematically, and finally graphically to reinforce learning--with examples primarily from the agricultural sector, but also from the general economy (and even from everyday

life that draws upon student real world experience and appeals intuitively to prior knowledge and common sense understandings). The interface of the food and fiber system with the national economy and international markets is also featured.

[Note: The required textbook is an instructional aid for student learning. The course is NOT taught directly out of the textbook. The instructor supplements textbook coverage of topics in classroom presentations.]

Learning Disabilities:

Students with certifiable learning disabilities or other handicaps are responsible for identifying themselves to the university (i.e., Services for Students with Disabilities, located in the Library) and to the instructor so that reasonable accommodation can be made for effective learning and evaluation within the course. Such academic adjustments are provided for under the Americans With Disabilities Act and the Rehabilitation Act.

Quizzes:

Non-Credit, self-corrected feedback quizzes are given periodically to help students monitor their learning progress.  
[See below: Tutorial Help]

Examinations:

There are two midterm exams and a comprehensive final exam that are required on agricultural economics course content. A typical exam contains the following type questions: true-false, multiple choice, matching terms, math relationships, concept definitions, graphical analysis, and/or short-answer essays. (Note: A special two hour review period outside regular class time will be arranged before each examination.) See the "Tentative Schedule of Topics" handout for the approximate **dates** of the exams. The exact dates will be announced one week in advance of the exams.

In partial fulfillment of the General Education Writing Requirement this instructor gives an English test which is given near the end of the course based on English capsules of the most common mistakes ("goofs") found in the required text (The Goof Proofer) and exhibited by CSU Fresno students (Instructor's list of examples). Many of these are reviewed in class. It is expected that none of these errors will appear in the term paper [see Research Report]. This required test is tentatively scheduled for **Mid-November**. [Note: A *diagnostic test* will be given early in the semester for the purpose of giving students feedback on their entry knowledge of common English mistakes.]

Makeup Exams:

Scheduled Conflicts--Special arrangements for a makeup exam can be made for legitimate reasons (e.g., animal judging team trips, jury duty, etc.), provided one week's notice is given with official written explanation of the activity and dates from the responsible supervising person (e.g., team faculty advisor, court officer, etc.)

Unscheduled Events--If a sudden unexpected occurrence (e.g., incapacitating accident, dangerous fog conditions, etc.) happens immediately before the exam, you must: (1) notify the instructor or the department secretary prior to the exam period (or as soon as you are physically capable of doing so) of your inability to take the exam at the appointed hour, (2) arrange to take the exam as soon as possible thereafter (preferably the same or next day), and (3) submit a legitimate and fully documented explanation of the event (e.g., emergency hospital admission form, etc.). Makeup exams will NOT be given for unexcused absences. The instructor retains the option of scheduling a makeup any time during the term and of changing the exam format (e.g., all essay, entirely oral, take home written).

Research Report:

A Term Paper that challenges students to think critically (i.e., analytically) and creatively (i.e., synthetically) about a current societal problem with economic implications and ethical concerns will be assigned. It shall be 10-12 pages typed. (See separate guidelines entitled "**Writing Task**" for meeting the General Education writing requirement for this Breadth Division #8 course.)

**Due Date**--An *initial* draft submitted to the instructor for ungraded critique/feedback, is due by Friday, **October 9** by 5:00 p.m. The revised *final* report is due Tuesday, **December 1** by 5:00 p.m. in the department office (PBB 302).

**Late Penalty:** Five points will be deducted for every school day the initial draft and the final report are late--up to a maximum of 25 points off for each deadline (for a possible total of 50 points off). The late *initial* draft paper and the *final* research report may NOT be submitted AFTER one week past the due date; thereafter a grade of F = 0 is recorded for the assignment.

**CAUTION:** A course grade of "U" (unauthorized incomplete) is issued if the writing requirement is not completed, not done in the prescribed manner, or not submitted by the deadlines-- regardless of points accumulated on the midterm and final exams and the English Test.

Grade Weighting:

Midterm I	25%
Midterm II	25%
Final Exam (comprehensive)	25%
English Test	5%
Research Report	20%
	<u>100%</u>

Grading System:

A total of 100 points are possible on each exam/test and paper. A minimum standard of A=90, B=80, C=70, D=60, F=0-59 is used to judge student performance. The standard is adjusted downward for degree of difficulty, depending upon the item analysis of class performance on each question on an exam (e.g., A=84, B=74, etc.). No adjustment is made in the standard for writing assignments. [Note: A course grade of "U" (unauthorized incomplete) is issued if any course requirement is not fulfilled.]

[Note: The 'I' course grade of incomplete is rarely given by this instructor.]

Course Drops:

**Eligibility**--Following the official deadline for normal class drops (i.e., during the 2nd week of classes), withdrawal from the course for "serious and compelling reasons" will not be approved by the instructor **IF** the student has missed exams, has not completed assignments, and/or is failing the class.

**Approval**--The instructor will not sign the course drop form without verification of the serious and compelling reasons (i.e., documentation such as a doctor's letter) and a formal memorandum from the student satisfactorily justifying the withdrawal request from this particular course (as opposed to others you are not dropping). NOTE: The last date to drop a course for "serious and compelling" reasons is the end of the 11th week.

Tutorial Help:

**Subject Matter:** Consult the university's Tutorial Services at the Learning Resource Center and request a tutor for microeconomics, if regular help is needed. (Note: The instructor, of course, is also available after class, during office hours, and by appointment to clarify lecture material.)

**English Writing:** Students who need assistance in basic writing are referred to: (1) Writing Lab Course (1 unit) [English Dept. 278-2553, in the Peters Business Bldg. Room 382] AND/OR the drop-in Writing Center located in the Education Bldg. (Room 184); (2) Tutorial Services [Learning Resource Center, 278-3052, in the Laboratory School Bldg. room 137]; and/or (3) Educational Opportunity Program [(for low income students only), Student Affairs 278-3021, Joyal Administration Bldg. Room 230]

**Academic Survival:** Students needing to review efficient study habits as well as effective note-taking skills and test-taking techniques should consider enrolling in the 1 unit course UNIV 020TR "Academic Survival Skills". This course is designed for student's on/near academic probation.

Academic Honesty:

University Policy & Procedures on Cheating and Plagiarism  
[Source: Academic Policy Manual (Dean of Student Affairs Office and any academic Department Office)]

**Philosophy:** Honesty and integrity are two of the most important values of the university in its pursuit and dissemination of truth and knowledge. Faculty and students share the responsibility for maintaining the probity of the educational experience and preserving high standards of excellence. Academic dishonesty--cheating and plagiarism--is unacceptable behavior morally, ethically and legally; and it cannot be justified or tolerated. To do otherwise undermines the ideals and purposes of higher education and severs the bonds of respect and trust between teacher, student and society. Cheating and plagiarism compromise the process of fair and equitable evaluation of all students' academic performance and erode the quality and value of degrees conferred by the university. Students engaging in such practices are denying themselves the benefit of an instructor's accurate assessment and feedback, thereby hindering their academic and personal development. Moreover, intellectual dishonesty reinforces the false idea that success in life, personally and professionally, can come to those who deviate from community norms and who lack the requisite expertise in their chosen careers.

**Definitions:** **Cheating** is the actual or attempted practice of fraudulent or deceptive acts for the purpose of improving one's grade or obtaining course credit; such acts also include assisting another student to do so. Typically, such acts occur in relation to examinations. However, it is the intent of this definition that the term "cheating" not be limited to examination situations only, but that it include any and all actions by a student that are intended to gain an unearned academic advantage by fraudulent or deceptive means. This would include forging official forms (e.g., grade sheets) and documents (e.g., transcripts). [See Appendix A Examples of Cheating in the policy.]

**Plagiarism** is a specific form of cheating which consists of the misuse of the published and/or unpublished works of others by misrepresenting the material (i.e., their intellectual property) so used as one's own work. [See Appendix B Examples of Plagiarism in the policy.]

\* \* \* \* \*

Instructor Disclaimer:

In the event of extenuating circumstances, changes in the course syllabus may occur. Students will be informed of such changes that may be necessary (especially coverage of the "Tentative Schedule of Topics" which can slip depending on the pace of instruction and learning). Implementation of such changes will be done in a manner to minimize prejudicial effects that might be considered unfair to students already committed to the course (i.e., after class drop deadline.)

Week of      Subject Matter Covered

INTRODUCTION: THE ECONOMICS DISCIPLINE

A.      ECONOMIC WAY OF THINKING

Syllabus: Course Information; Topic Schedule; Reading Assignments; Writing Requirement

Aug 23

What is an Economic Perspective? Fundamental Concepts & Principles of Economic Thinking: Free vs Economic Goods, Needs and Wants, Limited Productive Resources (natural, labor, capital, entrepreneurship); Scarcity and Choice, Value and Price; Direct Cost vs Opportunity Cost, Production Possibilities Frontier, Comparative Advantage (specialization and trade), Open vs Closed economies, Barter (direct) exchange and Monetized (indirect) exchange; Self-Interest and the Common Good, Producer vs Consumer Sovereignty; Societal Economic Goals (growth, efficiency, equity, stability, security, freedom, full employment) and Tradeoffs in production and distribution (zero-sum vs. positive-sum game); Marginal Analysis of benefits and costs.

What is Economics? Micro vs Macro Economics; 3 Basic Economic Questions about Products (what to produce?), Resources (how to produce?), and their Distribution (who obtains products?); Alternative Allocation Systems (traditional, feudal, command, market models) and mixed economy; Circular Flow Diagram (model of the market economy); Proper Role of Government in a market economy.

What is Managerial Economics? Relevance of economic theory to analyzing real world problems: Application of economic principles to business and household decision-making, whereby it is assumed producers maximize profits and consumers maximize satisfaction (i.e., utility) within constraints.

What is Agricultural Economics? Farm Production and Food Distribution System: Agricultural sector, subsectors, industries, firms, and consumers; Interface with the General Economy.

B.      ECONOMIC METHOD OF INQUIRY

Aug 30

Economics discipline as a Social Science: The Scientific Method and empirical research; data (observation) vs information (analysis); Formulation and testing of hypothesis, construction and application of theory, model (through Inductive & Deductive reasoning)  
Pitfalls of Reasoning: Tautology/Truism; Post Hoc Fallacy; Fallacy of Composition; correlation vs. causation; subjectivity; Failure to keep other things equal (ceteris paribus).  
Scope of Economic Theory: Generalization explaining and predicting human behavior; Assumptions of Economics (e.g., rational decision-making, incentives matter, individuals economize and optimize); limitations of discipline's explanatory and predictive power.  
Cross-disciplinary relationships with philosophy, psychology, sociology, mathematics; Inter-disciplinary sub-fields of economic anthropology, economic geography, economic history, political economy within related Social Sciences.  
Positive(descriptive) vs Normative (prescriptive) economics [interplay of facts, beliefs, values]  
Role of Social, Political, Economic Institutions (Formal Official Rules & Informal Cultural Constraints that determine sets of choices in exchange and production) & Organizations (Social, Political, Economic Bodies that are agents for change of institutions) in enabling the Capitalistic market economy to function effectively, efficiently and equitably.  
Preconditions for establishment and maintenance of market system in a global economy: Private Property Rights, Free Enterprise, Genuine Competition, Rule-of-Law, Strong Judiciary, Free Press, Information Access, Transparent Business Transactions, Incorruptible Government/Bureaucracy, Banking Oversight, Democratic Values, Societal Stability, Ingrained Market Institutions, Independent Organizations, Prudent Public Policy, Political Will—all of which contribute to investor certainty & consumer confidence!

- Sept 6 Analytical Models: simplified representation of reality that abstracts the essential features from the extraneous and makes assumptions about variable relationships. Principles and laws expressed functionally, mathematically, and graphically. Models tested for simplicity, generalizability, robustness  
 Functional Notation:  $y=f(x)$  where 'y' is the dependent/response variable and 'x' is the independent/explanatory variable;  $y=f(x_1/x_2/x_3/x_4)$  involving ceterus paribus  
 Graph Quadrants and data plotting: Positive and Negative slopes; algebraic expression ( $Y=a+bx$ ) of line slope and intercept.
- [Diagnostic English Test on common 'goofs' is administered]
- I. PRICE MECHANISM: LAWS OF COMPETITIVE MARKET EXCHANGE
- A. CONSUMER DEMAND
- Effective Demand: Consumer willingness and ability to buy a certain amount of product (i.e., good or service) at a given price  
 Consumer Preferences: Demand Schedule (table), Demand Curve (graph) of product price and its corresponding quantity demanded [holding constant the influence of other variables]  
 Law of Demand: "Change in Quantity Demanded" (movement along the schedule/curve) for a product by an individual consumer in response to a change in the price [Giffen Good exception]  
 Theory of Choice: Principle of Diminishing Marginal Utility in relation to value/price of products; Substitution Effect & Income Effect of a consumer "change in quantity demanded"  
 Aggregation of individual demand schedules/curves into a single market demand schedule/curve  
 Forces Affecting Demand: Demand Function  $D=f(P/I,A,T,P_c,P_s,X\$/B,E,G)$  "Change in Demand" (transformation of the schedule/shift of the curve)
- [Term Paper Topic is explored in class during the third week based on library reserve readings]
- Sept 13 Own-price Elasticity of Demand: Formula calculation of the coefficient of elasticity; interpretation  
 Coefficient classification: Perfectly elastic  $E=00$ , Elastic  $E>1$ , Unitary Elastic  $E=1$ , Inelastic  $E<1$ , perfectly inelastic  $E=0$
- Determinants influencing elasticity (degree of quantity response to a price change): available substitutes, necessity, importance, cheapness, short/long run adjustment period  
 Total Revenue [ $P \cdot Q = TR$ ] response to price change under elastic, unitary elastic, and inelastic conditions: Corresponding pricing strategies for different elasticity's to maximize TR
- Cross-Price Elasticity of demand (between two products): substitutes ( $E=+\#$ ), complements ( $E=-\#$ ), no relationship ( $E=0$ )  
 Income elasticity of demand: Normal (necessity, luxury) goods ( $E=+\#$ ) Inferior goods ( $E=-\#$ ), Engel curve (for necessity, luxury)
- B. PRODUCER SUPPLY
- Sept 20 Effective Supply: producer ability and willingness to sell a certain amount of product at a given price  
 Producer Preferences: Supply Schedule (table), Supply Curve (graph) of product price and its corresponding quantity supplied [holding constant the influence of other variables]  
 Law of Supply: "Change in Quantity Supplied (movement along the schedule/curve) of a product by an individual producer in response to a change in the price  
 Aggregation of individual supply schedules/curves into a single market supply schedule/curve

Forces affecting Supply: Supply Function  $S=f(P/T, P_i, W, B, D, P_s, \#_s, E, G)$  "Change in Supply" (transformation of the schedule/shift of the curve),

[Term Paper Format and Style Guideline is explained in class during fifth week.]

Sept 27 Own-Price Elasticity of Supply: Formula calculation of the coefficient of elasticity; interpretation  
Coefficient classification: Perfectly elastic  $E = \infty$ , Elastic  $E > 1$ , Unitary Elastic  $E = 1$ , Inelastic  $E < 1$ , perfectly inelastic  $E = 0$   
Determinants influencing elasticity (degree of quantity response): production substitution, resource availability, short/long run adjustment period  
Price Flexibility: Price response to a change in available supply (reciprocal of elasticity)  
Cross-Price Elasticity of supply: substitutes ( $E = -\#$ ), complements ( $E = +\#$ ), no relationship ( $E = 0$ )

### C. MARKET OPERATION

Oct 4 Competitive market determination of equilibrium price and quantity exchanged between buyers and sellers (schedules/curves)  
Surplus (excess supply) and shortage (excess demand) situations: price rationing (auction bidding) toward supply/demand balance; market equilibrium and unmet needs/wants of consumers and producers not able to participate in market exchange activity  
"Increase/Decrease in Demand" against a stationary Supply Schedule/Curve, and the resulting "Change in Quantity Supplied" associated with a new market equilibrium price.  
"Increase/Decrease in Supply" against a stationary Demand Schedule/Curve, and the resulting "Change in Quantity Demanded" associated with a new market equilibrium price.  
Simultaneous "Increase/Decrease in Demand and Supply"; predictability of the direction of market equilibrium price and quantity exchanged between buyers and sellers.  
Influence of Own-Price elasticity's of market demand and market supply on the direction and magnitude of change in the equilibrium price and quantity exchanged between buyers and sellers, as shifts in demand and supply curves occur

[Initial Draft of term paper is due **Friday Oct. 9** by 5:00 p.m. in Agri. Econ. Office.]

Oct 11 Pure Competition Model Assumptions:  
Many producers and consumers participating in the market  
Undifferentiated product with homogeneous characteristics  
Price competition only between firms  
Easy entry and exit of firms to/from the industry  
Perfect Competition Model Assumptions:  
Full information about market conditions possessed by sellers and buyers  
Complete mobility of resources to move among enterprises

Criticism of Laissez-Faire market economy:  
Market failure to provide some goods and services to public (non-profitable activity)  
Distribution of initial capital stocks and how resulting income flows affect "Effective Demand" and consumer standard-of-living as well as "Effective Supply" and producer business growth  
Regulation of free market activity necessary for benefits of competition to be realized equitably by all levels of society in a capitalist economic system  
Taxation & Subsidies for producers and consumers to achieve societal goals  
Distribution Fairness and alternative allocation mechanisms: first-come first-served queuing, preferred customer, limited purchase, ration coupons, central command, black market.

Midterm I (and Review) [Tentatively **Thursday Oct. 15; Friday Oct. 16,**]



## II. PRODUCTION ECONOMICS: OPTIMUM INPUT UTILIZATION

## A. PHYSICAL PRODUCTION FUNCTIONS (Y,X)

Oct 18 Inputs/factors/resources of production: Natural, Human, and Manufactured  
 Production Functions:  $Y=f(x)$ ,  $Y=f(x_1, x_2, x_3, x_4, x_5, \dots, x_n)$  where Y is yield/output and X is input  
 Farm research plots for input-output analysis that generates production function  
 Production schedule (table): input-output optimization (Technical Efficiency) of the variable resource ( $x_1$ ) combined with other inputs held constant [ $Y=f(x_1/x_2, x_3, x_4, x_5 \dots x_n)$ ]

Law of Diminishing Marginal Returns (i.e., Law of Variable Proportions)  
 Stages of production: I & II border ( $APP_X$  max); II & III border ( $TPP_X$  max and  $MP_X$  zero)  
 Technical Efficiency (Productive & Allocative) versus Economic Efficiency (engineering data, plus prices of inputs and output)

B. VALUE PRODUCTION FUNCTIONS (Y,X and  $P_y, P_x$ )

Oct 25 Factor-Product decision (one variable input production function):  
 How much variable input to employ? [2-Dimension surface]  
 TOTAL (cumulative) APPROACH to determining optimal level of variable input: TVP of  $x_1$  minus TVIC of  $x_1$  = Max positive difference [aggregate analysis]  
 MARGINAL (per unit) APPROACH to determining optimal level of variable input: MVP  $x_1$  equals MIC of  $x_1$  [incremental analysis]

Factor-Factor decision: (two variable input production function) [3-Dimension space];

Product-Product decision: (two output case)[Preview of Intermediate Microeconomics]

## III. PROFIT MAXIMIZATION/LOSS MINIMIZATION: OPTIMUM OUTPUT PRODUCTION

## A. SHORT RUN (FIXED AND VARIABLE INPUTS)

Nov 1 Categories of inputs: fixed and variable in the short run; (all inputs are variable in the long run)  
 Production Cost (aggregated for all output): Total Fixed Cost + Total Variable Cost = Total Cost  
 Deciding whether or not to produce: projected Total Revenue must cover estimated Total Variable Costs

Commodity Futures Market Contract: Eliminate risk by locking in a post-harvest futures price

Total Revenue [ $P \cdot Q = TR$ ] rises by constant rate, since market price is unchanged over entire quantity

Derivation of Total Variable Cost function (TVC) from Total Physical Product function ( $TPP_X$ )  
 TOTAL (cumulative) APPROACH to profit maximizing and loss minimizing levels of output  
 Total Profit Maximization (or Loss Minimization) Rule: Total (sales) Revenue - Total (production) Cost = maximum positive difference (or minimum negative difference) [aggregate analysis]

Accounting Profit [i.e., excess of Total Revenue above Total (explicit) Cost]

Economic (pure) Profit [i.e., excess of Total Revenue above Total (explicit and implicit) Cost]

Normal Profit [i.e., Total Revenue payment of total Fixed Costs, after Total Variable Costs are paid]

Breakeven Point ( $TR = TC$ ); Shutdown Point ( $TR = TVC$ )

[English Test on "Goofs" (Textbook & Instructor's Supplemental List) **Thursday Nov. 5; Friday Nov 6.**]

- Nov 8      Production costs (per unit of output): Average Fixed Cost, Average Variable Cost, and Average Total Cost as well as Marginal Cost  
 Derivation of per unit cost functions (AVC, MC) from per unit production functions ( $APP_x, MPP_x$ )
- MARGINAL (per unit) APPROACH to profit maximizing and loss minimizing levels of output  
 Total Profit Maximization Rule: Marginal (sales) Revenue=Marginal (production) Cost  
 Approach [incremental analysis]  
 MR line derived from aggregate market equilibrium price represents the short run demand curve faced by the individual firm (i.e., producer is a "price taker" in the market)  
 Breakeven Point ( $MR=MC=ATC$ ); shutdown point ( $MR=MC=AVC$ )  
 Per Unit Economic (pure) Profit [ $(MC=MR)>ATC$ ]; per unit Normal Profit [ $(MC=MR)>AVC$ ]  
 Per Unit Loss [ $ATC > (MC=MR)$ ] when revenue is insufficient to cover all fixed costs
- Nov 15      Origin of Producer's Supply Schedule/Curve: MC curve (above AVC curve) represents the short run supply curve of the individual firm; and  
 Summation of each firm's  $MC = S$  into the Aggregate/Market Supply curve of the Industry
- B.      LONG RUN (ALL INPUTS VARIABLE)
- Characteristics of Competitive Market Producers/Sellers:  
 Price equals Marginal Revenue  
 Producer is price taker  
 Efficient allocation of resources (inputs)  
 Efficient distribution of products (output)  
 Firms produce optimal mix of products for consumers  
 Economic profit is zero in long run
- Efficient resource allocation under pure competition: supply expansion and contraction occurs by firms in profit or loss situations in response to changing market price signals
- Long Run Average Total Cost (envelope/planning) curve: Technical and Pecuniary (financial)  
 Economies and Diseconomies of Scale (Increasing and Decreasing returns to size)
- The Learning 'S' curve: new technology adoption by producers' (progressives, typical, laggards with low, medium, high per unit of output cost structures)
- Agricultural Treadmill and Economic Cannibalism (changing cost structure and the effect on aggregate supply and market prices, which determine farm survival)
- Nov 22      Midterm II (and Review) [Tentatively **Monday Nov. 23; Tuesday Nov. 24**]  
 THANKSGIVING HOLIDAYS (Wed/ Thurs/ Fri)
- IV.      AGRICULTURAL SECTOR POLICY: PROBLEMS, ISSUES AND RESOLUTIONS  
 [Application of knowledge acquired in Introduction Part A & Sections I, II, and III]
- A.      GOVERNMENT SUBSIDY
- Nov 29      Governmental intervention in Agricultural Sector markets:  
 Price ceiling on staple foods to protect low income consumers  
 Price Floor on major commodities to protect high cost producers  
 Farm programs: Price Support and commodity loan along with surplus disposal programs;  
 Income Support (target price) and deficiency payment  
 Commodity Marketing agreements/orders; input supply restrictions; price discrimination
- [Revised & Completed term paper due **Tuesday, Dec. 1** by 5:00 p.m. in Agri. Econ. office]

B. GOVERNMENT REGULATION

Dec 6 Industry Structure, Conduct, and Performance: Competition vs Concentration of firms  
 Anti-trust action against collusion (farmer exemption for cooperatives and agricultural bargaining associations under 1922 Capper-Volstead Act); Government Regulation of market activity (producer marketing orders)

Imperfect Competition (in the output market): Monopoly (solo seller), and Oligopoly (few sellers) Models in the food and fiber manufacturing industries [Preview of Intermediate Microeconomics]

Imperfect Competition (in the input market): Monopsony (sole buyer) in the farm commodity processing industries

Final Exam Preparation and Faculty Consultation Period (**Thurs. Dec. 10; Fri. Dec. 11**)

Dec 13 **FINAL EXAM WEEK**  
 Wednesday Dec 16, 1:15-3:15 (MWF section)  
 Tuesday Dec 15, 1:15-3:15 (TuTH section)  
 See Schedule of Courses to confirm exam date and time of the Comprehensive Final Exam.

\* \* \* \* \*

NOTE: The above "tentative" Schedule of Topics for this course is subject to change, especially regarding the exact dates for examinations. Students will be notified one week in advance of upcoming midterm exams. Also, some topics listed may not be covered if time does not permit due to a slower than expected pace of instruction and learning.

Textbooks:                    Economics Of Resources, Agriculture, and Food by Wesley D. Seitz, et.al., McGraw-Hill, Inc. (1994) [required]

The Goof-Proofer: How to Avoid the Most Embarrassing Errors in Your Speaking and Writing by Stephen J. Manhard. Collier Books, MacMillian Publishing Co. (1987) [required]

Guidance:                    Seitz, et.al. text -- The Chapter/pages assigned match the separate handout "Tentative Schedule of Topics" (listed week by week). However, it is best to read the specific assignments **BEFORE** the instructor covers each subject in class. Next, ask the instructor for clarifications of lecture and textbook material **DURING** and after class. Then, review the readings in conjunction with your class notes immediately **AFTER** the instructor's lecture on the same and related topics. Re-write your notes! Finally, two weeks before the next exam, begin to re-read the chapters covered in the order presented by the textbook author. This pattern of study will reinforce classroom learning and improve your academic performance.

Manhard Book -- Read this simple refresher on grammar, punctuation mechanics, style, and organization at a pace of 1 per day to complete it by the of the 6th week of the semester. The instructor will supplement the book with a listing of additional "goofs" (i.e., common mistakes) exhibited by CSU Fresno students in General Education and Major Field courses at the lower and upper division levels. These concise compendiums should be referred to as you write and edit assignments. It is expected that *none* of these errors will appear in your written report. You will be tested on these English "goofs".

#### INTRODUCTION: THE ECONOMICS DISCIPLINE

<u>Week of</u>	<u>Chapter Number/Title/Pages</u>	
Aug 23	Chapter 1	Economics Defined (Pages 3-9) Agricultural Sector (Pages 9-16)
Aug 30	Handout	Scientific Method of Inquiry Economics Discipline Methodology

#### I. PRICE MECHANISM: LAWS OF COMPETITIVE MARKET EXCHANGE

<u>Week of</u>	<u>Chapter Number/Title/Pages</u>	
Sept 6	Chapter 2 Chapter 5	Utility basis of consumer Demand (Pages 21-35) Demand Curve (Pages 91-92) Changes in Demand (Pages 95-97, 99)
Sept 13	Chapter 8	Own-Price Elasticity of Demand (Pages 145-153) Cross-Price Elasticity of Demand (Pages 161-162) Income Elasticity of Demand (Pages 153-154)
Sept 20	Chapter 5	Aggregate/Market Supply curve (Pages 90-91) Changes in Supply (Pages 97-98)

Sept 27	Chapter 8	Own-Price Elasticity of Supply (Pages 155-161) Cross-Price Elasticity of Supply (Pages 161-162)
Oct 4	Chapter 5	Market Price & Quantity Equilibrium (Pages 93-95)
Oct 11	Chapter 5	Competitive Market assumptions and characteristics (Pages 101-102)

Midterm I (and Review)

## II. PRODUCTION ECONOMICS: OPTIMUM INPUT UTILIZATION

<u>Week of</u>	<u>Chapter Number/Title/Pages</u>
Oct 18	Chapter 3      Production Function (Pages 44-52) Product Curves (Pages 52-58)
Oct 25	Handout        Physical & Value Production Function

## III. PROFIT MAXIMIZATION/LOSS MINIMIZATION: OPTIMUM OUTPUT PRODUCTION

<u>Week of</u>	<u>Chapter Number/Title/Pages</u>
Nov 1	Chapter 4      Explicit & Implicit Costs (Pages 61-62) Fixed and Variable Costs (Pages 63-69) Total Approach to Profit Max (Pages 70-72)
Nov 8	Chapter 4      Marginal Approach to Profit Max (Pages 72-77)
Nov 15	Handout        Market & Producer interaction
	Chapter 4      Marginal Cost & Firm Supply (Page 77)
	Chapter 4      Long Run Costs & Supply (Pages 77-82)
	Handout        Technology Adoption 'S' curve; Agri. Treedmill
Nov 22	Midterm II (and Review)

## IV. AGRICULTURAL SECTOR POLICY: PROBLEMS, ISSUES & CONSEQUENCES

<u>Week of</u>	<u>Chapter Number/Title/Pages</u>
Nov 29	Chapter 18     Farm Problem (Pages 367-370) Government Programs (Pages 371-382)
Dec 6	Chapter 7      Imperfect Competition (Pages 122-141) Chapter 12     Agribusiness Performance (Pages 226-238)
Dec 13	Comprehensive Final Exam (See Schedule of Courses for date/time)

University Requirement:

Ag Ec 1 is a social science course that qualifies as a General Education Breadth discipline (Division #8 Social, Economic, and Political Systems) and thus must meet the university's policy establishing the minimum writing requirement of 2000 words.

Note: See instructor's "Course Information Syllabus" handout for the General Education Handbook guidance on the interpretation, evaluation, and goals of the writing requirement.

Instructor Response:

To fulfill this obligation the instructor has required students to purchase:

The Goof-Proofers: How to Avoid the 41 Most Embarrassing Errors in Your Speaking and Writing by Stephen J. Manhard, Collier Books, MacMillan Publishing Co. (New York 1998)  
Also, the instructor will provide a supplemental list of "goofs": "Common Writing Mistakes & Corrective English Capsules" compiled by John Shields, Professor, Agri. Economics Dept., CSU Fresno (Revised 1998). The document is based on observations of CSU Fresno student writing in General Education and Major courses at the lower and upper division levels. [To be reviewed and mastered by the **end of October/March.**]

The instructor will explain in class some of the more important and complex "goofs" to ensure understanding of how/why these occur and to explain proper usage.

[Note: A *diagnostic* English test (for ungraded feedback) based on "goofs" is administered during the first week of the semester. An English Test (worth 5% of course grade) will be given in **mid November/mid April**. None of these "goofs" should appear in the required Term Paper (worth 20% of course grade). The Research Report is graded on the proper use of English as well as the organization of thought, the breadth and depth of research, and quality of reasoning about the subject matter.]

Specific Tasks:

Each semester a new topic (usually related to the agricultural sector) is identified, based on its broad intellectual interest and its currency in the news media. The topic always involves a complex societal *problem* with controversial *issues* swirling around it (inclusive of economic implications and ethical concerns). The topic is identified during the first week of classes. In the second week students will generally familiarize themselves with the topic from monitoring the print and broadcast media and reading articles (some identified by the instructor). In the third week (after the course 'add' registration period is completed) the substance of the research report is fully explored. The instructor will make news articles available to students as the semester progresses via occasional handouts and library reserve reading folders. These may be included in the bibliography of the report. In the fifth week of the semester the format and style guideline of the research report is reviewed in detail.

Information Resources: Because of extensive newsprint, broadcast time, and magazine article coverage of facts and opinions about the topic, the students will readily find many sources of information with which to write the assigned report. Students are responsible for monitoring the media during the semester to stay abreast of current developments. Usually the topic will have previously generated much interest and analysis; so the student is also expected to search the library for background material in books, journals, and government documents as well as periodicals and newspapers. You should also surf the Internet via World Wide Web (with librarian assistance) for information and opinion. The instructor will share some bibliographic references on the topic to help students grasp the nature of the subject matter to be explored.

Usually fifteen to twenty articles are made available to students in the Reserve Reading Room on the ground floor of the library. Students should also take initiative in identifying and contacting knowledgeable professionals in private organizations and informed officials in public agencies to obtain publications and interviews about the topic. Be resourceful in finding resources!

Mini Term Paper--One writing assignment shall be completed for this course; its weighted value is **20%** of the course grade. The Introduction and Section I of the paper (along with the proposed title page, the tentative Table of Contents, and a partial bibliography) are written as an *initial draft* and then are revised based on the instructor's critique/feedback as well as the student's own second thoughts about improvements and further research. Sections II and III of the paper are then written to complete the *final report*. (NOTE: Submission of the initial draft for instructor review is *required!* And the more thorough the initial draft, the more complete the critique can be! The initial draft should reflect your best effort. The quality improvement of the final report is usually significant and positively affects the grade earned on the assignment.) All students are welcome to engage the instructor in a dialog about all sections of their papers as they are being conceptualized and written as *intermediate drafts* throughout the semester.

### **Research Report Topic--"Global Warming: Much Ado About Nothing, OR Little Ado About Something?"**

The Clinton Administration, under the leadership of Vice President Al Gore, is urging Congress to approve the "Kyoto Protocol" on global warming to reduce emissions of six sun heat-trapping greenhouse gases (particularly carbon dioxide) produced by the burning of fossil fuels. Its campaign includes generating grassroots support among the citizenry to have the United States agree to become a signatory to this treaty, which was drafted at an international conference of 160 nations in Japan during December 1-10, 1997. This treaty is a proposed solution to the threat of climate change, allegedly induced by the rise of the world's average temperature.

The U.S. would cut its 1990 level of emissions into the atmosphere by 7% over the next 10-15 years in order to help prevent disastrous climate change that could adversely affect agricultural production, raise the sea level, cause ecosystems collapse, and increase disease rates among other things. As tentative proof of the threat many observers point to the El Nino of 1998. Environmentalists, farmers, scientists, economists, manufacturers, labor unions, energy firms, and even religious groups are lobbying politicians to oppose or support the document, which is meant to toughen the Rio de Janeiro 1992 Climate Change Treaty that set a voluntary goal for 34 industrialized countries to reduce emissions back to the 1990 levels. The fight over what action to take, if any, is fierce because of the potentially devastating damage to economic interests of industries and nations.

There is also a contentious geopolitical issue regarding the Kyoto "Framework Convention:" only the advanced industrialized nations of the world would be required to lower emissions. Emerging industrialized countries, like China with over 1 billion consumers, are already exempt (1995 Berlin Agreement) --even though their increase in emissions will exacerbate the problem. In fact they are expected to account for two-thirds of global carbon dioxide emissions by 2020. There are other concerns you will also discover and have to deal with in doing this assignment; and those will be highlighted in the news media this fall leading up to another global warming conference (focused on incentive based emissions-trading rules) in Buenos Aires, Argentina in November 1998.

The challenge for you in writing this paper is to sort out the conflicting claims about the adequacy of the science, the accuracy of the data (upon which the scientific analyses are performed, conclusions are drawn, and recommendations are proffered), and the validity of the assumptions underpinning the forecast models. Because there is not unanimity that global warming is actually occurring, it will have to be addressed as a 'potential' problem.

Report Structure:

**Content:** You are to divide the paper into an Introduction plus three main sections entitled: I. Problem Definition, II. Solution Issues, and III. Action Recommended. These are the four headings you MUST use in the paper.

**Preliminary Section:** INTRODUCTION typically will clearly identify and briefly describe the topic to be explored while also explaining why the subject matter is considered important. In addition, the author normally informs the reader of the paper's purpose and how it is organized to achieve that aim. {Estimated length is one page.}

**First Section:** I. PROBLEM DEFINITION will be a comprehensive, objective Problem Statement (in declarative, not interrogative form) along with a Situational Analysis (i.e., factual background discussion) of the problem's historical origins, the current context, and future expectations. Extensive use of facts and data (raw numbers and percentages) should be employed along with other descriptive information to substantiate the magnitude and severity of the problem; but avoid hyperbole! You shall define the economic problem as an unsatisfactory (even intolerable) condition facing a *client* (i.e., individual/organization/community) that has an explicit *goal* that is not being achieved due to the presence of *obstacles* (the *root causes* of which are important to identify, but may or may not be fully known/understood), and is suffering detrimental *consequences*, which will continue until the obstacles can be overcome/circumvented/eliminated. [Beware: Consequences are merely *symptoms* of the problem; obstacles and their root causes are the heart of the problem. Caution: "The true problem" is NOT the difficulties associated with adopting/implementing a predetermined solution! Note: No mention of any possible solutions to the problem is allowed to appear in this section; although you can tease out the problem from readings about solutions, asking the question "why" the proposed solutions are needed.] {Estimated length is 3-4 pages.}

**Second Section:** II. SOLUTION ISSUES will be a comparative (similarities) and contrasting (differences) analysis of issues (i.e., debate over *alternative* solutions proposed) for addressing the problem--focusing on a separate description of each named solution (i.e., No. 1, No. 2, No. 3, etc.) and the corresponding pros and cons tradeoffs (i.e., advantages and disadvantages) between the competing responses to the problem (i.e., argued by sponsoring and opposing groups). Don't just report opinions for and against proposed solutions; be sure to cite the factual evidence and logical reasoning that undergirds such views as well as to report the *beliefs* [i.e., assertions about reality that are insufficiently supported by evidence to be conclusively established as accepted fact (truth)] and *values* [i.e., judgements whether an action is right or wrong, good or bad according to its beneficial or harmful effects and/or its support or violation of a moral/ethical standard] of the proponents and opponents of these solutions. Be sure to incorporate economic principles, social values, and political constraints as well as technical feasibility of possible solutions in your analysis. [Note: Effective solutions are formulated to address obstacles and their *root causes*. Real, permanent solutions should NOT be aimed at consequences, which may only invite or require superficial, temporary (i.e., Band-Aid) solutions (i.e., until the real, permanent solution takes full effect). Warning: Don't prematurely latch on to "a solution that is in search of a problem!" {Estimated length is 5-6 pages.}

**Third Section:** III. ACTION RECOMMENDED will reveal what conclusions you have reached regarding both the nature of the problem and the merits of proposed alternative solutions to the problem. State what recommendation you judge to be optimal--giving the reasons why you consider it the best course of action. [Note: It is permissible for you to craft a solution of your own that combines elements of the different solutions proposed by others and already analyzed in Section II.] (CAUTION: No new facts/evidence are allowed to be introduced in the concluding section of the paper to support your reasoning/arguments.) Finally, identify any difficulties you think are likely to be encountered in implementing the solution recommended; and suggest how they might be mitigated as contingencies. {Estimated length is 1-2 pages.}



Organizational Style

**Format:** The paper must be structured to include the Introduction and 3 content areas (above) as main Sections I, II and III of the paper. The outline of major and minor subsections (A.1. 2., B., C. etc.) under the main section headings will be determined by the material you select and the organization you think provides a logical flow of information and reasoning for the reader. All main headings and major/minor subheadings (along with corresponding outline letter or number) found in the Table of Contents **MUST** also be used in the body of the paper to identify where one part begins (and ends) and where the next part starts. These headings and subheadings clue the reader that the author is making a transition to another topic. It also allows the reader to see the logical framework of the writer. The headings typically are two or three words only—not long phrases or complete sentences!

**Note:** The report (right column) must be written with headings and subheadings that correspond with the Table of Contents (left column) using the following format. Notice that the main headings hug the left margin in the Table of Contents, but are centered on the text pages.

<i>Table of Contents</i>	<i>Headings in Text</i>
<p>INTRODUCTION</p> <p>I. MAIN HEADING</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">A. Major Subheading</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">1. Minor Subheading</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">2. Minor Subheading</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">B. Major Subheading</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">C. Major Subheading</p> <p>II. MAIN HEADING</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">A. Major Subheading</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">B. Major Subheading</p> <p>III. MAIN HEADING</p>	<p>INTRODUCTION</p> <p style="text-align: center;">I. MAIN HEADING</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">A. Major Subheading</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">1. Minor Sub-heading</p> <p style="padding-left: 60px;">a. Tertiary Sub-heading</p> <p style="padding-left: 80px;">i. Final Sub-heading</p> <p style="padding-left: 80px;">ii.</p> <p style="padding-left: 60px;">b.</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">2.</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">B. Major Subheading</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">C.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">II. MAIN HEADING</p>

[Note #1: The rule of outlining requires that for every ‘I’ there must be at least a ‘II’, and for every ‘A’ there minimally has to be a ‘B’, and for every ‘1’ there is at least a ‘2’, etc.]

[Note #2: Every heading and subheading that is used in the Table of Contents **MUST** appear in the body of the paper as section and subsection dividers -- inclusive of their outline number or letter. Usually, the Table of Contents headings and subheadings are limited to three levels (i.e., Roman Numerals, Capitalized Letters, and Arabic Numbers.)]

[Note #3: Beyond the Table of Contents headings and subheadings, the text may also have additional fourth and fifth level subheadings (i.e., a, i) from your separate, more detailed *working outline* of the entire report. (Do NOT submit your working outline.)]

**Style:** The paper must be typed (double-spaced) on standard bond paper in legible print and dark ink. The length is **10-12 pages** (minimum, maximum range) of text, excluding title page, table of contents, and bibliography--all of which are required. Each page should have 275-300 words minimum. (The paper is expected to be around 3000 words; so use small font type and don't space letters out.) Do not type the paper in script or italics. The text pages must be numbered; however, don't number any full-page tables and figures you might insert in the text. Right, left, top and bottom margins of 1 1/4 inches are required. Papers are to be stapled in the upper left corner and handed in **WITHOUT** any plastic or cardboard covers.

**Documentation:** At least 24 worthwhile references (books, magazine/journal articles, news paper stories, private foundation (think tank) publications, government documents, university monographs, etc.) must be listed as information sources in the bibliography [4 of the 24 must be from *primary* (i.e., original) sources and should be designated with an asterisk \* in front of the author's surname; the remainder will be from *secondary* sources.] Instructor supplied

publications may be included in the bibliographic references; however, the bibliography must include at least 12 references found by the student. The bibliography also includes those studies you read and found valuable but didn't happen to cite in your footnotes.

Footnotes are required for quoted and for paraphrased data, information, and ideas. The journal style of footnote (Smith 1986, pp. 45-6), which appears in the body of the paper [not at the bottom of the page or at the end of the paper] and refers the reader to the bibliography for a full citation, is the required system. Do not number your footnotes in the text or your references in the bibliography. (Note: Bibliographic references for material found via the Internet may be a challenge due to incomplete information.) Also, do not duplicate mention of the author or the publication in the body of the paper when discussing information you obtained from the source identified in the bibliography (i.e., "Jane Smith wrote in Time Magazine that..."); the footnote (via the full bibliographic citation to which it refers) adequately performs this function.

Extensive footnoting of multiple references is necessary to avoid the charge of plagiarism; be intellectually honest and give credit where credit is due--as well as helping the reader follow up on data, information and ideas regarding their source. However, a paper written as a string of quoted sentences and/or paragraphs (even if footnoted!) is NOT appropriate, since such a report does not reflect sufficiently your analytical thought processes, your integration of facts/ideas, and your writing ability--not to mention the need to avoid disjointed "quote stringing" of different writing styles and verb tenses of various authors. [Note: Quotes are normally reserved for the following use: to appeal to an authority on the subject in making an argument; to reference a beautifully expressed thought that speaks powerfully to the topic; and to access a concise summary statement of facts/ideas that could not easily be paraphrased.]

**Important:** You should consult a Manual of Style for writing guidance on information gathering, organizational structure, presentation format, bibliographic referencing, and footnote style. (The more popular ones are by Turabian, Campbell, Chicago, M.L.A.)

[CAUTION: If instructions on topic, format, documentation, organization, content, length, language, etc. are not followed in writing the paper, then the teacher has no obligation to read the report and reserves the right to assign a numerical grade of zero. Moreover, such inadequate term papers in need of modification will not be considered on-time, even if initially submitted by the due date.]

### English Usage

Language: English proficiency is expected on papers (and exams); this means proper grammar, correct punctuation, right mechanics, accurate spelling, suitable style, appropriate words, acceptable phraseology, and logical paragraphing. Also, reports are to be written in formal 3rd person--not the conversational 1<sup>st</sup> person form (i.e., I, we, my, our, me, us), or the familiar 2<sup>nd</sup> person (i.e., you). Avoid using slang words, idiomatic sayings and colloquial expressions in writing formal reports; and don't use hyperbole! Please edit your writing to eliminate superfluous words and phrases and to avoid being repetitious. [Consult an English grammar book, a spelling guide, and a writer's manual in drafting the paper.]

Correction: English errors in grammar, punctuation, mechanics, spelling, style, wording, phraseology, and paragraphing as well as poor organization will be noted on the *initial draft* for critique/feedback. Poor communication interferes with the reader's understanding of content. Students are expected to eliminate such errors and demonstrate improved writing ability on the *final report*, which will be graded in part on English expression as well as format, organization and documentation. It is important to realize that, while subject-matter content is certainly vital, it should also be the vehicle for acquiring and demonstrating thinking and communication competencies--and for continually improving one's proficiency in these skills! Given the written instructor comments on the *initial draft* and the opportunity for further instructor feedback on *intermediate drafts*, extensive corrections and suggestions will not be made again on the *final report*-- unless requested by the student upon receiving her/his paper back with the grade.

Due Dates

The *initial draft* is to be submitted for critique/feedback by Friday, **Oct. 9**. Late initial drafts will be accepted for one week only because of the time constraints on returning critiqued papers for correction/improvement by the final due date. The revised *final report* is due Tuesday, **Dec. 1** by 5:00 p.m. in the department office (PB 302).

[Note: Give the instructor a copy of the paper; keep the original in case the copy is somehow not received or is misplaced by the instructor.]

Late Penalty: Five points will be deducted for every school day the initial draft and the final report are late--up to a maximum of 25 points off for each deadline (for a possible 50 points off). The late paper (i.e., initial draft or final report) may NOT be submitted after one week past the due date; thereafter a grade of F=0 is recorded for the assignment. **CAUTION**: A course grade of 'U' (unauthorized incomplete) is issued if the assignment is not done on the required topic, is not completed, is not submitted by the deadline, is short of the 2000 word G.E. requirement or is not done in the prescribed manner--regardless of points accumulated on the subject examinations and English Test. **FOLLOW DIRECTIONS!**

Note: *Minimal perfunctory effort* on any assignment (no matter how small or large, whether late or on-time) in order to qualify for a passing course grade (instead of a 'U'), based on points accumulated from other course requirements is NOT allowed. A best effort must be put forth to foster intellectual development and maintain self-respect. Don't be a minimalist! Ask yourself the following:

Did my *performance* match the **standards** the instructor set for the class?

Did my *effort* match the **expectations** I set for myself and others have set for me?

\* \* \* \* \*

**FAILURE TO READ AND FOLLOW THESE DIRECTIONS CAN RESULT IN A GRADE OF ZERO FOR THE ASSIGNMENT.** The instructor first checks the student report for the required (Manual of Style) organizational structure, presentation format and bibliographic referencing before reading the paper for content. English usage mistakes result in further point deductions! Even a few deviations from the instructor's directions can easily cause deductions of many points. Remember, proper *format* and *style* greatly facilitates the reader's understanding of the writer's *content*.

Consultation: The instructor is available for advice and assistance in researching, organizing, and writing the report. Please request help in the drafting process.

Timeline: Working back from the *final report* due date, you should have (at the latest)

--located most of your sources 5 weeks beforehand

--read all of your collected bibliographic material 4 weeks beforehand

--finalized your table of contents (and detailed working outline) 3 weeks beforehand

--written the rough draft of your report 2 weeks beforehand

--searched out additional bibliographic material to fill information gaps 1 week beforehand

--completed the editing and finished the typing of the paper during the last week.

Return: Term papers are normally graded and returned to students within three weeks, depending on the number and length of reports to be evaluated by the instructor in all his courses. Papers not ready for return by the final exam date will be placed in the Department Office, where they will be retained for pickup until the end of the second week of classes in the following semester. Thereafter, the papers will be discarded. The instructor reserves the right to keep or photocopy a student's paper for retention in his files.