

AECN 256: AGRICULTURAL LAW

.Welcome to AECN256 agricultural law! The class purpose is to give students a practical introduction to the legal and policy issues Nebraska farmers, ranchers and agribusiness persons are likely to encounter in their careers. Topics include property, commercial law, water rights, environmental regulations, and estate planning. While the class focuses on Nebraska agricultural law, the issues raised in the class are common to farmers, ranchers and their agribusiness partners in at least the continental United States (and probably in Alaska & Hawaii too although I don't really know for sure). For example, in the contracts chapter we learn which contracts must be in writing in order to be legally enforceable in Nebraska. The list may be a bit different in other states, but hopefully you will learn that you need to be aware of which contracts must be written in order for them to stand up legally in court. This is true for most course topics: the general issues are the same from state to state but the legal details will vary across states.

Instructor: Professor Aiken. *Office:* 103D Filley Hall, University of Nebraska, Lincoln NE 68583-0922.
Email: daiken@unl.edu *Phone:* 402-472-1848. Please email if you have any questions at any time. I will try to respond to your email within 24 hours during the week.

Course procedures. All the lectures are on Blackboard; all the reading and supplemental materials are on Blackboard, and all the exams are taken on Blackboard. There are no class meetings and **there is no textbook.**

Exam preparation. The class topics are grouped by exam: unit one culminates in exam one, etc. My recommendation is that you follow the class schedule and (1) read the reading assignment (e.g. "ch 1 legal system") on Blackboard; (2) read the lecture notes and look at the review/study questions on Blackboard; (3) listen to the narrated powerpoints on Blackboard; and (4) work through the review/study questions for each class topic.

Working out the review/study questions is worth the effort—your exam questions are taken directly from the chapter review questions. My recommendation is that you have all the review questions answered and available when you take your exam. **If you don't have the review questions worked out in advance, you likely will have difficulty completing the exam in the allowed time. Students have flunked the course (there is no grading curve), so unless you will be satisfied with a D or an F, work out the exam questions in advance.**

Exams. Four open-book exams will be given on Blackboard during the semester. **However, you should prepare for the exams as if they were closed book. If you prepare for the typical open-book exam you will not have enough time to complete the exam.**

The exams are divided into two parts. The first part (50-65 minutes long) includes multiple-choice, fill-in-the-blank, true-false and matching questions. The second part (20-25 minutes long) is short answer questions. Your semester grade will be based entirely upon your exam average. More information regarding the process for taking the exam is in your syllabus folder and also in your unit 1 folder. Generally you will have two weekends (12 days) available to take each exam. You can raise questions about your exam score up to one week after the class grades have been posted on Blackboard.

Honors credit. Students wishing to take the course for honors credit must prepare a 15+ page (double spaced) research paper on a topic proposed by the student and approved by me. You must submit (1) the paper topic by the 5pm on the Monday after exam 1; (2) a detailed paper outline by the 5pm on the Monday after exam 2; and (3) the honors paper by 5pm on the Monday after exam 4 (email attachment in Word, WordPerfect or PDF format preferred). The paper will be graded and will be figured into your course grade as a fifth hour exam. **Each day you are late for any of the deadlines (topic, outline, and paper submission) will cost you one percentage point from your honors paper final grade.**

Grading policy. Semester grades are awarded as follows:

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|----|--------|----|-------|----|-------|----|-------|----|--------|
| A+ | 96-100 | B+ | 86-88 | C+ | 76-78 | D+ | 65-67 | F | 0-49 |
| A | 92-95 | B | 82-85 | C | 70-75 | D | 59-64 | P | 70-100 |
| A- | 89-91 | B- | 79-81 | C- | 68-69 | D- | 50-58 | NP | 0-69 |

Email etiquette: PLEASE indicate that you are in **AECN256** (or simply **256** or **ag law**) in your email subject line. In addition, please put your name in the email. Often student email names give no discernible indication of what the student's legal name is, e.g. HuskerFan1986@hotmail.com. And make sure you have your current email in Blackboard; otherwise you will miss emails during the semester. Finally, If you are responding to an email from me please include the original email message that you received in your email to me, so that I will understand your email (otherwise I may not!).

Reading Assignments. Assignments are to Blackboard.

| week of | lecture topics/course activity |
|---------------|--|
| Jan 09-13 | course overview; ch 1: legal system; ch 1A: politics & the legal system |
| Jan 17-20 | ch 2: contracts; ch 3: torts |
| Jan 23-27 | ch 4-5: ag labor & employment; ch 6-7: sales & product liability |
| Jan 30-Feb 03 | exam 1: you can take exam 1 any time from noon Wed 1/25 to 11:59pm Sun 2/05 *honors paper topics are due Mon Feb 6 by 5pm via email. |
| Feb 06-10 | ch 8-9: real estate sales & finance; ch 10: secured transactions |
| Feb 13-17 | ch 11: farm products rule; ch 12-13: farm bankruptcy & mediation |
| Feb 20-24 | ch 14-15: business planning & partnerships; ch 16-18, corporations & cooperatives |
| Feb 27-Mar 03 | exam 2: you can take exam 2 any time from noon Wed 2/22 to 11.59pm Sun 03/05 *Note: March 3 is the last day you can change to/from P/NP ; *honors paper outlines are due Mon March 6 by 5pm via email. |
| Mar 06-10 | ch 19-20: leases & production contracts; ch 21: estate planning |
| Mar 13-17 | ch 22: wills & probate; ch 23: property rights |
| Mar 27-31 | ch 24: feedlots; ch 25-26: fence laws & property taxes |
| Apr 03-07 | exam 3: you can take exam 3 any time from noon Wed 3/29 to 11.59pm Sun 4/09 *Note: April 7 is the last day to withdraw from the course |
| Apr 10-14 | ch 27-30 agricultural chemicals; environmental liabilities; global warming & agriculture |
| Apr 17-21 | ch 31: surface water law; ch 32: ground water law; animal welfare |
| Apr 24-28 | exam 4: you can take exam 4 any time from noon Wed 4/19 to 11.59pm Sun 4/30. I will post your course grades on Blackboard after exam 4 has been graded. Your letter grade on Blackboard is your course grade. |
| May 1 | honors papers are due 5pm Monday May 1 via email attachment. |