

## 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 about 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 become aware of which contracts must be written for them to stand up in court.

*Instructor:* Professor Aiken. *Office:* 103D Filley Hall, University of Nebraska, Lincoln NE 68583-0922. *Email:* [daiken@unl.edu](mailto: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 (but not necessarily on the weekends).

*Course procedures.* All the lectures are on Canvas; all the supplemental materials are on Canvas, and all the exams will be taken on Canvas. There are no class meetings. **There is no textbook:** your reading materials all are on Canvas.

*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

- read the reading assignment (e.g. "ch 1 legal system")
- read the lecture notes and look at the review questions
- listen to the narrated powerpoints, and
- work through the study questions for each class topic.

*Working out the review questions is worth the effort—your exam questions will be taken 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 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 will be divided into two parts. The first part (50-65 minutes long) will include multiple-choice, fill-in-the-blank, true-false and matching questions. The second part (20-25 minutes long) will include 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 course help module and also in your unit 1 module. Generally you will have two weekends (12 days) available to take each exam.

*Honors credit.* Students wishing to take the course for honors credit must prepare a 15+ page (double spaced with page numbers) research paper on a topic proposed by the student and approved by me. You must submit the paper topic by the day after exam 1; a detailed paper outline by the day after exam 2; and the honors paper on the day 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, paper, and revisions if any) will cost you one percentage point from your honors paper final grade.

*Grading policy.* Semester grades are awarded as follows:

|    |        |    |       |    |       |    |       |   |      |
|----|--------|----|-------|----|-------|----|-------|---|------|
| 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 |   |      |
| A- | 89-91  | B- | 79-81 | C- | 68-69 | D- | 50-58 |   |      |

*Reading Assignments.* Assignments are to Canvas.

| week of        | lecture topics/course activity   |
|----------------|--|
| Jan 13-17      | course overview; ch 1: legal system; ch 1A: politics & the legal system  |
| Jan 21-24      | ch 2: contracts; ch 3: torts   |
| Jan 27-31      | ch 4-5: ag labor & employment; ch 6-7: sales & product liability   |
| Feb 3-7        | <b>exam 1: you can take exam 1 any time from 8am Wed 1/29 to 11:59pm Sun 2/9.</b>  |
| Feb 10-14      | ch 8-9: real estate sales & finance; ch 10: secured transactions; <b>honors paper topic due 5pm Monday Feb 10 via email.</b>   |
| Feb 17-21      | ch 11: farm products rule; ch 12-13: farm bankruptcy & mediation   |
| Feb 24-28      | ch 14-15: business planning & partnerships; ch 16-18, corporations and cooperatives  |
| March 2-6      | <b>exam 2: you can take exam 2 any time from 8am Wed 2/26 to 11.59pm Sun 3/8.</b>  |
| March 9-13     | ch 19-20: leases & production contracts; ch 21: estate planning. <b>honors paper outline due 5pm Monday Mar 9 via email.</b>   |
| March 16-20    | ch 22: wills & probate; ch 23: property rights   |
| March 23-27    | Spring Break!  |
| Mar 30-Apr 3   | ch 24: feedlots; ch 25-26: fence laws & property taxes. <b>Note: Friday April 3 is the last day to withdraw from a course</b>  |
| April 6-10     | <b>exam 3: you can take exam 3 any time from 8am Wed 4/1 to 11.59pm Mon (not Easter Sunday) 4/13.</b>  |
| April 13-17    | ch 27-28: NRDs & drainage; ch 29-30: ag chemicals; env liabilities; climate change & ag  |
| April 20-24    | ch 31: surface water law; ch 32: ground water law; animal welfare  |
| April 27-May 1 | <b>exam 4: you can take exam 4 any time from 8am Wed 4/22 to 11.59pm Monday (not Sun!) May 4.</b> I will post your course grades on Canvas after exam 4 has been graded. Your letter grade on Canvas is your course grade. |
| May 4-8        | honors papers are due 5pm Tuesday May 5 via email attachment.  |