SYLLABUS

Department: Agriculture  
Course No.: IU 301  
New: Spring 2004

Course Title: Historical Perspective: American Agriculture

I. Catalog Description and Credit Hours:
   Historical development of America’s agriculture and the interplay of economic, political, biological and cultural environments of modern America. [(3)]

II. Interdisciplinary Nature of the Course:
   Agricultural development is a cause as well as a consequence of economic development. Agriculture, especially food and fiber production, is the basic foundation for the successful economic development of most industrialized/developed countries. The successful development of a productive agriculture: 1) prevents society-wide starvation and 2) frees people for the development of other socioeconomic aspects desired by that society.
   However, Agriculture does not develop independently of other socioeconomic systems. The political system a society adapts and uses, is another major factor influencing agriculture development and the overall economic development of that country.
   This course provides students the opportunity to study these systems in an integrated manner to better appreciate the history of the United States and Agriculture development. The use of economic resources (land, water, timber, labor, etc.) by the earlier settlers in order to survive and develop agriculture integrates subject matter and principles of the “economic” and “living” systems. The subject matter and principles from “political” system becomes integrated when the student studies the influence of public policy and political conflict upon how and who uses resources in a society. The students will learn to integrate and apply subject matter and principles of the “economic, political and living systems” throughout the course in the historical analysis of American Agriculture to learn: 1) the complexity of the agriculture development process and 2) whence the modern agriculture of the 1990’s comes and the direction in which it is trending.

III. Prerequisites: Completion of one course of each from the Economic, Living and Political Systems categories.

IV. Purpose or Objectives of the Course: The course is designed to enable the student to:
   A. Appreciate the significance of agriculture in the development of the United States of America, develop an appreciation of the long, difficult process of agriculture development and to realize the dramatic changes which are continuing to occur. (Objectives 2, 4)
B. Identify human and physical resources needed to develop and support a productive agriculture necessary for a highly developed society. *(Objectives 1, 5, & 6)*

C. Understand the paralleled development of agriculture with other disciplines chronicling their co-dependence especially economics, political science and technology. *(Objectives 4, 6)*

D. Appreciate the philosophies of selected statesmen who were influential in early land settlement policies and the development of the American agriculture industry. *(Objective 4)*

E. Analyze and critically evaluate the influences of culture, biological and natural factors upon early-adopted agriculture enterprises and farming practices in the United States and be able to relate them with the current status of many developing countries. *(Objectives 2, 3, 4, 5, & 6)*

F. Improve their critical thinking, problem solving and decision making skills by understanding the experiences of others in the past and utilizing these experiences to influence a progressive future for agriculture and society. *(Objectives 7, 9)*

V. Expectations of Students:

A. Regular class attendance, preparation, participation, in class discussion, completion of assignments in a timely manner, and peer evaluation of presentations.

B. Demonstrate their understanding of the topics of discussion and be able to integrate the material on examinations and class activities.

C. Research and write on a selected topic of historical importance to agriculture and present a critical analysis of the impact it had upon the development of a modern agriculture and highly developed society. *(See item XII)*

D. To participate in a group investigative project and make a 5-7 minute oral presentation (each project member) using appropriate visual aids and multimedia. The project will integrate economic, living and political systems knowledge and approaches to historical and current developments in Agriculture. *(See item XII)*

VI. Course Outline (U.S. Obj. to be met in Parentheses)  
Class Hours

A. An overview of the course  
1

B. An Introduction: Pre-Columbus Agriculture *(4, 5)*  
2

1. Beginning of Time?
2. The Bible Record: A source of Agriculture History

3. The invention of the wheel and pulley 4000 B.C.

4. Indians of Mexico 2500 B.C.

C. A Historical Analysis of the development of American Agriculture: A chronological History

1. The Colonial Period: A.D. 1607-1775 (4, 5, & 6) 5
   a. The settlement of the thirteen colonies
   b. Early years in the colonies
      1) The early settlers and their background
      2) Their new environment and hardships encountered
      3) Land distribution
      4) The adoption of the farmer lifestyle
      5) The labor supply and its scarcity
   c. The State of Agriculture: 1700
      1) The uncertainty of a food supply and survival
      2) Animal husbandry practices
      3) Crop production practices
      4) Development of trade, markets and public policy

2. The Westward Movement (4, 5, 6, & 9) 8
   a. Breaking out of the Atlantic Seaboard: A.D. 1775-1820
      1) Land distribution policies
      2) Major routes used in the westward movement
      3) The pioneer farmer
         a) Possessions
            i. Economic problems
            ii. Land distribution and ownership policy
            iii. Credit and high interest rates
            iv. Lack of markets for agriculture produce
   b. Pioneering to Commercialization: A.D. 1820-1860
      1) Land distribution and changing public policy
      2) Slavery
      3) Political developments of the 1850’s
      4) Early agricultural mechanization
      5) Agricultural developments
         a) The South
         b) In the Northwest
         c) Along the Atlantic Seaboard
      6) Commercial agriculture production in surplus – 1860’s
   c. The last frontier: A.D. 1860-1897
      1) Physical and environmental features of the west
2) 1862 Homestead Act
   a) Encourages westward movement
   b) Shortcomings
3) The Land settlement boom of the 1870’s
4) Technological developments
   a) Drudgery of farm work reduced
   b) Productivity increases
   c) Economic opportunities improve
   d) Overproduction
      i. Problems
      ii. Potential solutions
3. The 20th Century and developments in Agriculture
   (4, 5, 6, 7, & 8)
   a. Prosperity and depression
      1) The Golden Age of America Agriculture
      2) Economic depression years of 1929-1933
   b. Major public policy affecting agriculture
      1) Conservation and land
      2) The Land Grant System
      3) Agricultural Experiment Stations and Research
      4) The State-Federal Cooperative Extension Service
      5) Agricultural Cooperatives
      6) The Farm Credit System
      7) The Agriculture Adjustment Act
   c. Social structure of the “Old” South
   d. Slavery and a labor supply for agriculture
   e. Agriculture developments and specialization
      1) The Cotton Belt
      2) The Tobacco Industry
      3) The Corn Belt
      4) The Wheat Belt
      5) Cattle Ranching
      6) The Swine Industry
      7) Dairy Production
      8) Horticulture Production
   f. Mechanized Agriculture
      1) The rise and demise of Horsepower (Horses & Mules)
      2) Mechanization of farming
      3) Soil fertility (Past and Present)
      4) Farm Chemicals
      5) New Opportunities
         a) The oil seed crops, including the soybean
         b) Horticulture and truck farming
         c) Agriculture developments in California and water rights
      6) The technology revolution and agriculture surplus
g. Development and Growth of Transportation
   1) Canals and River ways
   2) The Railroad
   3) Road systems and the Truck

D. Modern Agriculture in the 20th Century
   1. Technological Revolution (4, 6, 7, & 8)
      a. The internal combustion engine
      b. Soil and water conservation
      c. Genetics and plant breeding
      d. Animal breeding and biotechnology
      e. Synthetic fertilizers
      f. Farm chemicals … successes and failures
   2. The New Deal and Rural Electrification (4, 6, & 7)
   3. International Trade and U.S.A. Agriculture (4, 5, 6, & 9)
   4. The Role of Government relative to Agriculture (4, 6, & 7)
   5. Computerization (6 & 7)
   6. The Development of “Agribusiness” and the decline of the family farm
      (4, 6, 7, 8, & 9)

E. Agriculture moves into the 21st Century
   1. Consumerism (4, 5, 6, & 9)
   2. Biotechnology (4, 5, 6, 7, & 9)
      a. Modern advances
         1) Reducing costs of production
         2) Promotion of greater productivity
         3) Adding value to Agriculture products
      b. Concerns
         1) Regulation
         2) Patents
         3) Transgenic species interaction
         4) Legal implications

F. Successes/Failures of U.S.A. Agriculture and their lessons for Developing
   Countries (4, 6, 7, & 9)

G. Class presentations and Exams

VII. Textbook and References:
      Agriculture. Univ. of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, Minnesota.
   B. References:
         Literature. N.Y. Copyright 1905, 1906.
         1939

VIII. Basis for Student Evaluation:
A. Examinations: Two one-hour ......................................................40%
   Final ....................................................................20%
B. Research Paper .............................................................................15%
C. Group Investigation Project and Oral Presentation .....................20%
D. Class participation, peer evaluation, etc. .................................5%

IX. Justification for Inclusion in the University Studies Program:
A. Objective 1: Demonstrate the ability to locate and gather information.

   Emphasis: Significant

   Content: Students will be required to locate, collect and analyze information which demonstrates the inter-disciplinary nature of agriculture with economic, living and political systems. They will gather information pertaining to the history of agriculture, analyze the information, contrasting and comparing it to today's agriculture and our modern society. Their findings will be presented in written and/or oral form. Resource materials for such an investigation are The Journal of Agriculture History (Southeast Library), Smithsonian Institute web site, and course text. Locations of these references will be shared in the course. Additionally, an abundance of information is on the web concerning the significance of historical events on modern agriculture.

   Teaching Strategies: The lecture-discussion sessions will allow the instructor to introduce many topics to the students. Individual students will identify topics in which they have a high level of interest and be encouraged to pursue additional information. Students will be directed to available resource material including library holdings and internet web pages.

   Student Assignments: Two major assignments will be emphasized to help meet this objective. 1) Students will be required to research and write on a selected topic (see Sec. V. Expectations of Students item C. Example: The Farm Credit
System (Sec. VI 3b6) could be researched as to the initial need, public policy development, the current status of the system and its influence upon agriculture productivity as we move into the 21st century. 2) To participate in a group investigative project and make a 5-7 minute oral presentation. (see Section V Expectations of Students item D. Example: The group may research a topic, develop a questionnaire and interview appropriate citizens to develop their presentations e.g. interview senior citizens relative to “Changing Agriculture from their perspective” or perhaps interview foreign students relative to the agriculture of their homeland).

Evaluation of Student Performance: The assignments will be evaluated on importance of the selected topic, thoroughness and quality of research and their ability to integrate the interdisciplinary nature of agriculture with the Economic, Living and Political Systems.

B. Objective 2: **Demonstrate capabilities for critical thinking, reasoning and analyzing.**

**Emphasis:** Significant

**Content:** The course will demonstrate how the historical description of American Agriculture provides facts and data with regard to Agriculture development. Analysis of these facts and data will provide a description of the shape and direction of the development process. From this, students can formulate hypotheses regarding the behavior of key variables and interaction among these variables, and perhaps construct a theory of development.

The course will also focus upon how decision makers in agribusiness, business and government frequently study the historical records for guidance in their decision-making processes. The historical record of agriculture development frequently provides insight regarding the causes of operational and policy error made in the past that may be avoided in the future, as well as success stories that might be duplicated. In addition, it will be demonstrated to the students, that part of the virtue of historical analysis is that it provides the student with a view of what might be reoccurring situations or processes.

**Teaching Strategies:** The lecture-discussion sessions and examinations will instruct and challenge the student to develop their critical thinking, reasoning and analytical skills.

**Student Assignments:** Reading assignments, class discussion, their written research report and their group investigative report will require them to utilize and develop their critical thinking, reasoning and analytical skills.

**Evaluation of Student Performance:** Students will be evaluated upon the quality of their skills (critical thinking, reasoning and analytical) as demonstrated on the examinations and their reports.
C. **Objective 3:** Demonstrate effective communication skills.

**Emphasis:** Significant

**Content:** The preparation of their research paper and their group investigative report will address perspectives on oral and written communications. Students will be provided guidelines for each of the activities.

**Teaching Strategies:** Lecture-discussion sessions will encourage students to respond orally to questions, scenarios and controversial comments. Examples of effective writing will be made available to the students. Students’ effort in generating a research paper outline, drafts and an eventual research paper will be emphasized. Students will be given an “evaluation form” for their oral presentation to emphasize the manner in which their presentation will be evaluated. All examinations will have essay components.

**Student Assignments:** Students will be expected to communicate effectively in classroom discussions, demonstrate effective written communication skills on exams and term paper, and demonstrate effective oral and written communication skills in drafting questions for interviews, conducting interviews and making their oral presentation before the students of the course.

**Evaluations of Student Performance:** Students will be evaluated on their communications skills by the effectiveness in which they communicate on their oral and written reports and their discussion in class.

D. **Objective 4:** Demonstrate an understanding of human experiences and the ability to relate them to the present.

**Emphasis:** Significant

**Content:** Students will study how societal needs, farming practices, public policy and natural resources are utilized (through time) to create a highly developed society. The instructor will recreate an image of life in each of the various time periods and geographical regions, demonstrate the needs of society, and relate how agriculture responded to those needs as influenced by public policy, available resources (uncleared land, water, soil fertility) and climatic factors. An example is how the people of the original 13 colonies experienced tremendous growth of the forest occupying the land for adequate food production (see Sec. VI Clb2). Whereas, as they moved westward into the Great Plains they found no trees and had no lumber to build houses and resorted to sod houses (Sec. C2A3). Human experiences in the South were dramatically different than those in the North or West relative to climate, crops capable of being produced and development of appropriate agriculture technology.
Teaching Strategies: Lecture-discussion sessions will provide the students with adequate historical material to clearly demonstrate human experiences relative to 1) early years in the colonies relative to the early settlers, their variable backgrounds and experiences faced in their new environment (see Sec. VI C1); 2) the westward movement and the hardships they encountered with the elements, the Indians and land ownership (see Sec. VI 2A); and 3) what people encounter today in the modern era of farming, travel, technology, etc.

Student Assignments: Students will be required to read the textbook and related assignments for class discussion and examinations. They are also required to interview people with an agriculture background to learn of their experiences in “changing times.”

Evaluation of Student Performance: Students are evaluated on class participation. Their interviews will be graded on questions developed and used in their interviews and their written and oral reports. Emphasis upon grading the interview/oral report project will be on their ability to gain first-hand knowledge from the agriculture background people interviewed.

E. Objective 5: Demonstrate an understanding of various cultures and their inter-relationships

Emphasis: Some

Content: Selected issues that concern slavery, farming practices, food preferences, etc. frequently have cultural ramifications. Students will study the inter-relationships between various cultures as they influenced community relations, public policy (The South favored slavery which was opposed by the North) farming practices adopted and domestic and international trade (e.g. discussion in the latter part of the course will focus on the fact that America agriculture’s export trade is hindered because of the lack of understanding various cultures of the world).

Teaching Strategies: Lecture-class discussion and assigned readings will be used to create awareness of the influence culture has had upon the development of agriculture in the United States. Lectures will emphasize the contributions of various cultures to agriculture (e.g. Rural communities basically developed around the culture of the people settling the area; Africans exported and sold as slaves had a tremendous influence upon the early success of cotton and tobacco production in the South; in turn, the tales of Booker T. Washington provided leadership in the development of the 1890 Land Grant Institution at Tuskegee, Alabama and results of research greatly enhanced the well-being of the South and improvements developed for agriculture).

Student Assignments: Reading assignments and preparation for class discussion and examinations.
Evaluation of Student Performance: Awareness of various cultures will be considered in evaluating essay questions on examinations and written research papers.

F. **Objective 6:** Demonstrate the ability to integrate the breadth and diversity of knowledge and experience.

**Emphasis:** Significant

**Content:** Agriculture is a discipline that has its basis in science and technology, but operates under the constraints of economics, public policy and societal needs. To appreciate the significance of agriculture development, one must appreciate and understand the inter-relationship of these various disciplines. An example would be the Homestead Act, which was originally developed to motivate people to move westward, utilize the land to produce greater quantities of food as people began to concentrate more in cities. However, this public policy had to be modified: 1) to prevent large companies (especially railroads) from obtaining the best land, and 2) to permit families to be able to afford the land. Another example is the “depression of the 1930’s” which led to the creation of farmer/rancher organizations, which are influential today in public policy development. To understand the full impact of these examples, and many other similar historical developments, many facets of these issues must be explored. Course content will emphasize the integration of the breadth and diversity of knowledge/experiences encountered by the people in the development of agriculture in the United States.

**Teaching Strategies:** Lectures will stress the integration of economics, living systems and political knowledge and experiences in the development of agriculture from the simplicity practiced by the Native Americans to today’s modern and complex agriculture. Students will be encouraged to understand paralleled developments in these disciplines and their influence upon each other.

**Student Assignments:** Assignments are largely focused on preparing students for satisfactory performance on examinations and in writing their research paper and conducting their group investigative report. Class discussion and assignments will provide a basis through which student initiatives will create a holistic representation of the historical period.

Evaluation of Student Performance: Evaluations will be linked with those outlined for Objectives 1, 2, and 3.

G. **Objective 7:** Demonstrate the ability to make informed, intelligent value decisions.

**Emphasis:** Considerable
Content: The history of agriculture, especially 20th century developments, offers a rich domain of dilemmas. The rise of agribusiness and the decline of the family farm, the use of synthetic insecticides, herbicides and bioengineered animal products, the importance of the New Deal initiatives and others provide an atmosphere for students 1) to define their own values, 2) to develop the ability to identify valuing issues in a dilemma, and 3) to develop rational solutions to the dilemmas posed. (Examples: The Bovine Somatrophin Hormone (BST) has been produced commercially and used to increase milk production in the dairy cow. No product has been tested greater to determine if milk from BST treated cows is safe for human consumption. Results are conclusive that such milk is safe and has not been altered in composition relative to milk produced from cows not receiving BST. The American Medical Association, Pure Food and Drug Administration, U.S.D.A., and others have endorsed BST use. However, a few consumer groups are against its use and have promoted their opposition publicly. Furthermore, the product was introduced at a time when the United States had a surplus of milk and continues to have surplus. The dilemmas are numerous: 1) should BST use be permitted?; 2) should milk produced from its use be labeled for the consumer?; 3) should high profile consumer groups be permitted to oppose its use without real justification?; 4) should this type of bio-engineered product research be encouraged and supported with public research funds?; 5) should public policy be developed?)

Teaching Strategies: Lecture-discussion sessions and selected reading assignments will provide opportunities for investigating ethical considerations. Identified issues will be exploited with the teaching strategies of Objectives 2 and 6.

Student Assignments: Specific reading assignments, case studies especially, will be made prior to lecture-discussion sessions in which issues will be introduced. Students will be required to assess the subject matter, describe the issues and values involved in complex dilemmas and especially discuss in class rational solutions to dilemmas posed. Examination questions will be used to identify issues and require the students to present their values relative to the posed dilemma and to present one or more rational solutions to the dilemma.

Evaluation of Student Performance: Evaluation will be based on the students’ demonstrated ability to relate the scientific to economic and political aspects of the issues. Class participation in discussion of major issues and response to examination questions will be the major basis for evaluation. The manner in which they develop their “group investigative project” in the identification of issues and values of other will also be given consideration.

H. Objective 8: Demonstrate the ability to make informed sensitive aesthetic responses.

Emphasis: Some
Content: Rural settlement patterns of “scattered farmsteads, cluster villages and villages” are discussed. Agriculture development further demonstrates the need for change in the structure of farms as they moved from the historic “traditional farm operation” to that of a “modern commercial farm (mega-farms).”

To view nature, especially the production of plants and animals, requires little scientific knowledge, but an informed observation of the phenomenon will solicit an esthetic response. Discussion of the state of nature (living system) upon arrival of colonists and how nature had to be altered to derive a living will also enable this objective to be met.

Student Assignments: The reading assignments and class discussion will address this objective.

Evaluation of Student Performance: No major effort.

I. Objective 9: Demonstrate the ability to function responsibly in one’s natural, social and political environment.

Emphasis: Considerable

Content: Agriculture, especially in the 20th century, significantly impacted the global and local environment. Issues such as genetic engineering, synthetic chemicals for pesticide use, mechanization, labor displacement, public policy directed at agriculture production, and other issues permit opportunities to explore the balance between food production and environmental security. These issues must be addressed by all segments of society and will provide ample opportunity for the student to meet this objective.

Teaching Strategies: Lecture/discussion sessions will place considerable emphasis upon the importance of each individual becoming involved in: 1) in influencing the development of public farm policy by working with their congressman and other government officials, 2) utilizing our natural resources as efficiently as possible if they become agriculture producers, and 3) community, state and domestic projects which promote the health of our environment.

Student Assignments: Reading assignments and class discussion will be the major assignments.

Evaluation of Student Performance: Class participation will be the major means of evaluation.

X. Background:

The background and expertise for teaching this course should include:
1) Strong educational background with good working knowledge of Agricultural production practices (historical and modern), Agricultural and Agricultural-related policy, and natural/biological factors influencing agricultural productivity.

2) An understanding and ability to integrate Agriculture development with the economic, political and living systems as identified in the University Studies program at Southeast Missouri State University.

XI. Class Size:

Optimal size for this course would be 25 students per section. This size would encourage excellent class lecture/discussion with students of variable backgrounds and enable adequate time for students’ “investigative oral reports.”

UI 3xx
HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE: American Agriculture

I. Written Research Report

Each student will identify and select a historical important issue or event involving agriculture. The written report is designed to inform the reader very adequately about some historical aspect of the issue or event. The report should demonstrate an in-depth understanding by the student of at least one aspect of the issue or event.

Guidelines for Report Preparation. The following guidelines are to be used in preparation of your report:

1. Three-five page maximum … typed (double-spacing); pages required must be doubled in number if neatly hand written.
2. Use a maximum of four references.
3. The report should be prepared with a “popular” writing style that is informative, readable and easily understood by the public. The basic approach would be to develop an introduction, followed by your discussion and concluding with a summary and conclusion. Your summary/conclusion should include your personal assessment of the impact the issue or event had upon the history of the United States and Agriculture.
4. A bibliography should accompany the report.

II. Group Investigative Report

1. The students are to develop them a group of three members.
2. Develop a series of questions to interview senior citizens relative to the “Good Ole Days.” Specifically, develop questions that relate to the history of Agriculture. The questions would best be developed around a theme.
3. Each group member conducts an interview of at least one senior citizen. The group should then get together and write the report reflecting the responses received from the interviews.

4. The group will make oral presentations. The presentations are to be 10-12 minutes in length and each member is to participate.