1. Contact Information & Office Hours

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2. Course Overview

When completing projects or assignments, groups hold the potential to be more productive, creative, and motivated than individuals working alone. This is because groups allow for the delegation of roles and responsibilities, pooling of knowledge and abilities, sharing of diverse perspectives, and holding of one another accountable—among other benefits. Past research has shown that student engagement in group activities can help build related skills, and that these skills are becoming increasingly valuable in the workplace. However, group work can also have a downside—and may even backfire—when not designed, coordinated, and assessed in a way that promotes meaningful teamwork and collaboration. Reflection on effective versus ineffective elements of group work, as well as possible causes and diagnoses, can furthermore help to reinforce students’ acquisition of key collaboration skills and group leadership abilities.

Given the demonstrated benefits of group work and reflection, students selected for the CSU-Premier Farm Credit Student Board of Directors have the option of enrolling for one credit of AREC 496 (Group Study). The choice to register for the credit is optional. Each student director can decide individually if they want to register for the credit or not. The course objectives for students who do enroll are three-fold: (i) apply agricultural business skills to a real-world project in a team-based environment, (ii) gain professional development experience in the agricultural business and finance sectors through purposeful interaction with cooperating agencies and professionals, and (iii) assess/compare/contrast effective versus ineffective elements of the group project undertaken as well as discuss possible causes and diagnoses for these outcomes.
Note that all student directors are expected to contribute equally to the group project and related presentations regardless of whether they register for credit or not. However, students who do register for AREC 496 (Group Study) will be required to complete some academic work that is in addition to the assigned group project and regular meetings/activities. Typically, 50 hours of engagement in creditable activity is required per credit hour earned. Therefore, in order to meet the stated course objectives, student responsibilities upon enrolling in the course will entail: (i) participation in regular CSU-Premier Farm Credit Student Board activities, (ii) completion of a Weekly Reflection Journal, and (iii) completion of a group study reflection paper. The specific criteria used to ensure that these responsibilities are met are provided in the following section.

3. Criteria for Satisfactory Completion

The criteria to demonstrate your satisfactory completion of 1 credit of AREC 496 are:

I. Participation in CSU-PFC Student Board Activities
   a. Group meetings (kickoff, final presentations) (14-16 hours)
   b. Immersion opportunities (Farm tours, job shadows) (6-8 hours)
   c. Completion of a group project (20+ hours)

II. Completion of a Weekly Reflection Journal (3-4 hours)
   Typical entries include . . .
   a. What did you experience this week?
   b. How does this relate to your previous coursework? Compare/contrast.
   c. What did you learn in regards to group work? What was effective? Ineffective?
   d. Other notable observations, particularly around group study dimensions

III. Completion of a Group Study Reflection Paper (5 pages per credit is general expectation)
   a. Introduction & Background (1-2 pages)
      i. Describe the CSU-PFC Student Board of Directors
      ii. Provide general information about Premier Farm Credit
      iii. Provide a brief summary and timeline of key activities and experiences
           (e.g., group study project, meetings, presentations)
   b. Group Project Reflection (3-4 pages)
      i. What are the benefits/advantages and costs/disadvantages of group study? (Treat as academic question, not a personal one. Use supporting articles)
      ii. How did your group organize itself to complete the project? What elements did you find to be effective or ineffective?
      iii. How did your own experience align with what you wrote in III.b.i? Did the benefits/advantages or costs/disadvantages dominate your experience? How? Why?
      iv. In what ways did the group work help you prepare for future experiences?
   c. Conclusions (1 page or less)
      i. Brief recap/summary
      ii. Would you recommend group study to future student directors?
      iii. How did the group study experience add value to your education?
      iv. How did the group project add value to the cooperator organization?
4. Requirements and Policies

- Students must register for AREC 496 during the spring term within which the assigned group project will be completed.
- Grading will be on a satisfactory/unsatisfactory (S/U) basis only.
- The credit will be graded by an on-campus instructor(s) who has agreed to supervise the group activity.
- Registering for the credit may impact the fees that you pay (and possibly your tuition) depending on your credit load with and without the group study credit added. There is a tuition and fees calculator if this is a concern for you: http://tuition.colostate.edu/Main.aspx

5. Accommodations

If you are a student who will need accommodations in this class due to a disability or chronic health condition, please make an appointment with me to discuss your individual needs. Any accommodation must be discussed in a timely manner (at least two weeks) prior to implementation. A verifying letter of accommodation from Resources for Disabled Students is required before any accommodation can be provided.

6. Academic Integrity

This course will adhere to the CSU Academic Integrity Policy as found on the Student' Responsibilities page of the CSU General Catalog (http://catalog.colostate.edu/general-catalog/policies/students-responsibilities/#academic-integrity) and in the Student Conduct Code (https://resolutioncenter.colostate.edu/conduct-code/). At a minimum, violations will result in a grading penalty in the course and a report to the Office of Student Resolution Center. Violations can also result in failing the assignment, failing the course, or expulsion from CSU. The CSU writing center defines plagiarism this way:

“Plagiarism is the unauthorized or unacknowledged use of another person's academic or scholarly work. Done on purpose, it is cheating. Done accidentally, it is no less serious. Regardless of how it occurs, plagiarism is a theft of intellectual property and a violation of an ironclad rule demanding 'credit be given where credit is due.” CSU Writing Guides: Understanding Plagiarism (https://writing.colostate.edu/guides/). Accessed, January 14, 2019.

Of course, academic integrity means more than just avoiding plagiarism. It includes doing your own reading and studying. It also involves regular class attendance, careful consideration of all class materials, and engagement with the class and your fellow students.

7. Mental Health

Need Help? CSU is a community that cares for you. If you are struggling with drugs or alcohol and/or experiencing depression, anxiety, overwhelming stress or thoughts of hurting yourself or others please know there is help available. Counseling Services has trained professionals who
can help. Contact 970.491.6053 or go to http://health.colostate.edu. If you are concerned about a friend or peer, tell someone at by calling 970.491.1350 to discuss your concerns with a professional who can discreetly connect the distressed individual with the proper resources (http://supportandsafety.colostate.edu/tellsomeone). Rams take care of Rams. Reach out and ask for help if you or someone you know is having a difficult time.

8. Sexual Assault and Violence Elimination

CSU’s Student Sexual Harassment and Violence policy, following national guidance from the Office of Civil Rights, requires that professors follow CSU policy as a “mandatory reporter” of any personal disclosure of sexual harassment, abuse, and/or violence related experiences or incidents shared with the professor in person, via email, and/or in classroom papers or homework exercises. These disclosures include but are not limited to reports of personal relational abuse, relational/domestic violence, and stalking. While professors are often able to help students locate appropriate channels of assistance on campus (e.g., see the CSU Health Network link below), disclosure by the student to the professor requires that the professor inform appropriate CSU channels to help ensure that the student’s safety and welfare is being addressed, even if the student requests that the disclosure not be shared. For counseling support and assistance, please see The CSU HEALTH NETWORK, which includes a variety of counseling services that can be accessed at: http://www.health.colostate.edu/. And, The Sexual Assault Victim Assistance Team is a confidential resource for students that does not have a reporting requirement and that can be of great help to students who have experienced sexual assault. The web address is: https://wgac.colostate.edu/support

9. Principles of Community

The Principles of Community support the Colorado State University mission and vision of access, research, teaching, service and engagement. A collaborative, and vibrant community is a foundation for learning, critical inquiry, and discovery. Therefore, each member of the CSU community has a responsibility to uphold these principles when engaging with one another and acting on behalf of the University:

Inclusion: We create and nurture inclusive environments and welcome, value and affirm all members of our community, including their various identities, skills, ideas, talents, and contributions.

Integrity: We are accountable for our actions and will act ethically and honestly in all our interactions.

Respect: We honor the inherent dignity of all people within an environment where we are committed to freedom of expression, critical discourse, and the advancement of knowledge.

Service: We are responsible, individually and collectively, to give of our time, talents, and resources to promote the well-being of each other and the development of our local, regional, and global communities.

Social Justice: We have the right to be treated and the responsibility to treat others with fairness and equity, the duty to challenge prejudice, and to uphold the laws, policies and procedures that promote justice in all respects.