

Senior Capstone Experience

A A E 500 Agricultural and Applied Economics
3 Credits - Spring 2025



Time and Location: Tuesdays & Thursdays 1:00-2:15pm – Mechanical Engineering room 1163

Instructor: Jeremy Beach (jpbeach@wisc.edu)

Office: 223 Taylor Hall

Phone (608) 262-9485

Office hours: By appointment in 223 Taylor Hall

Course Description: Teaches students how to apply economic theory to economic problems, utilize quantitative techniques in economic analyses, and communicate findings and results of economic analyses.

Pre-reqs: Senior standing and (declared in Agricultural & Applied Economics, B.S. or Agricultural Business Management, B.S.)

Course Learning Outcomes:

- Understand how to apply economic and agricultural business theories and tools to real world applied economic and agricultural business situations.
- Write a comprehensive consultant report that uses the tools of applied economics and agricultural business to answer project topic questions and clearly communicates the results of analysis and data.
- Provide an oral summary presentation on project topic to project partners and classmates.
- Develop skills in teamwork, effective project management, efficient time management, and oral and written communication.
- Develop life-long learning strategies in applied economics and agricultural business.

Course Credit Hours: This 3-credit class meets for two, 75-minute class periods each week over the spring semester with the expected time investment of 45 hours of work per credit hour. One credit will be earned through the 45 hours of in-person learning during class periods including partner presentations, project team in-class work, project team in-class presentations, and class discussions. The other two credits are earned through students' independent project work (reading, researching, analyzing, writing, practicing, etc.) outside of class periods. The instructor will provide substantive feedback on student's learning outcomes during in-person class periods and outside of class periods.

Campus Services

Additional campus services to help you succeed at UW-Madison include:

- [University Health Services](#)
- [Undergraduate Academic Advising and Career Services](#)
- [Office of the Registrar](#)
- [Office of Student Financial Aid](#)
- [Dean of Students Office](#)

Course Evaluations

Students will be provided with an opportunity to evaluate this course and your learning experience. Student participation is an integral component of this course, and your confidential feedback is important to me. I strongly encourage you to participate in the course evaluation.

Digital Course Evaluation (AEFIS)

UW-Madison uses a digital course evaluation survey tool called [AEFIS](#). For this course, you will receive an official email two weeks prior to the end of the semester, notifying you that your course evaluation is available. In the email you will receive a link to log into the course evaluation with your NetID. Evaluations are anonymous. Your participation is an integral component of this course, and your feedback is important to me. I strongly encourage you to participate in the course evaluation.

Students' Rules, Rights & Responsibilities

Diversity & Inclusion Statement

[Diversity](#) is a source of strength, creativity, and innovation for UW-Madison. We value the contributions of each person and respect the profound ways their identity, culture, background, experience, status, abilities, and opinion enrich the university community. We commit ourselves to the pursuit of excellence in teaching, research, outreach, and diversity as inextricably linked goals. The University of Wisconsin-Madison fulfills its public mission by creating a welcoming and inclusive community for people from every background – people who as students, faculty, and staff serve Wisconsin and the world.

Academic Integrity Statement

By virtue of enrollment, each student agrees to uphold the high academic standards of the University of Wisconsin-Madison; academic misconduct is behavior that negatively impacts the integrity of the institution. Cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, unauthorized collaboration, and helping others commit these previously listed acts are examples of misconduct which may result in disciplinary action. Examples of disciplinary action include, but is not limited to, failure on the assignment/course, written reprimand, disciplinary probation, suspension, or expulsion.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities Statement

The University of Wisconsin-Madison supports the right of all enrolled students to a full and equal educational opportunity. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Wisconsin State Statute (36.12), and UW-Madison policy ([UW-855](#)) require the university to provide reasonable accommodations to students with disabilities to access and participate in its academic programs and educational services. Faculty and students share responsibility in the accommodation process. Students are expected to inform faculty [me] of their need for instructional accommodations during the beginning of the semester, or as soon as possible after being approved for accommodations. Faculty [I], will work either directly with the student [you] or in coordination with the McBurney Center to provide reasonable instructional and course-related accommodations. Disability information, including instructional accommodations as part of a student's educational record, is confidential and protected under FERPA. (See: [McBurney Disability Resource Center](#))

Academic Calendar & Religious Observances

Graded Work:

This course, and your work as a part of it, is primarily centered around a group consulting project based on a topic presented by a real-world business, organization, or individual. After students have been placed in project groups with their team members, all remaining graded assignments will be based on a sequence of deliverable written reports and oral presentations. Each student team member will receive the same grade for assigned written reports and oral presentations. Written graded assignments, other than *Attendance and Participation* (see Rubric on page 4), will be submitted through the Canvas course website. All oral presentations will be made during designated in-class periods. (Note: Ten percent (10%) of an assignment's grade will be deducted for each day that an assignment is late beyond the due date).

- **Project Proposal Paper & Presentation (due 2/18):** 1–2-page written paper/outline that summarizes the proposed plan and approach to address project topic. Paper and presentation content should include a discussion on the strategy to address the project topic, expected sequence of future tasks throughout the semester, potential assignment of tasks to group members, and identification of any potential barriers to completing tasks.
 - Group members will provide a 5-minute oral presentation (*slides not required, notes allowed*) to the class in order to gain feedback.
- **Mid-point Project Paper & Presentation (due 3/18):** 3–5-page written paper/outline that summarizes completed tasks and remaining tasks on project. Paper and presentation should address and expand on original strategy, identification of tasks, and timeline included in Project Proposal. Discussion should also be devoted to remaining tasks and plan of action including any immediate needs or potential issues that could impact the completion of project topic work.
 - Group members will provide a 5–10-minute oral presentation (*slides required, notes not allowed*) to the class in order to gain feedback.
 - Feedback on oral communication and presentation skills will be provided by instructor.
- **Final Project Presentation (starting 4/24 and ending 5/1):** 15-minute professional presentation by all group members that introduces project topic, summarizes completed tasks throughout the semester, and includes final recommendations to project partner or organization.
 - Project partners will be invited to final class periods to attend final presentations.
- **Final Project Paper (due 5/1):** 10–20-page (depending on project scope) comprehensive consultant report (template will be provided) that introduces project topic, summarizes completed tasks throughout the semester, and includes final recommendations to project partner or organization.
 - Serves as final deliverable to project partner.

Assignments & Course Grades:

- Attendance and Participation 10%
- Project Proposal Paper 5%
- Project Proposal Presentation 5%
- Mid-point Project Paper 10%
- Mid-point Project Presentation 10%
- Final Project Paper 30%
- Final Project Presentation 30%

Grading:

The course is based on a maximum of 1,000 points and the total number of points earned in all assignments, and *Attendance and Participation*, will be added together for a final course grade based on the following:

A	93-100
AB	88-92
B	83-87
BC	78-82
C	70-77
D	60-69
F	59 and below

Attendance and Participation Rubric:

Criteria	Unsatisfactory	Developing	Accomplished	Exemplary	Total
Attendance	0-19 points	20-29 points	30-49 points	50 points	/50
	5 or more absences	4 absences	3 absences	Attended all class sessions or at most 2 absences	
Participation	0-19 points	20-29 points	30-49 points	50 points	/50
	Student does not initiate contribution & needs instructor to solicit input. Does not listen to others; does not pay attention while others speak; detracts from discussion, etc.	Student initiates contribution at least in half of the class sessions. Student is often inattentive and occasionally makes disruptive comments while others are speaking.	Student initiates contribution often and is mostly attentive when others present ideas. Provides mostly insightful and constructive comments relevant to the discussion or speaker	Student initiates contributions during most if not all class sessions. Student listens attentively to other's comments, including speakers, and builds off remarks by contributing to the dialogue.	
				TOTAL	/100

Team Member Evaluations:

All student team members will be given two opportunities to provide a formal evaluation of their own performance as well as their team member's performance. The first opportunity will coincide with the Mid-point Project Paper, roughly halfway through the semester, while the second opportunity will coincide with the Final Project Paper at the end of the semester.

While these evaluations are not graded, their submission will be used as part of instructor's determination of an individual student's *Participation* grade. The instructor will hold the information collected in the evaluations confidential, but reserves the right to act on it as they deem appropriate.

Besides the two formal evaluation opportunities, students are encouraged to be in communication with instructor on an ongoing basis regarding any team member's performance and its potential impact on the other team members and the success of the project work.

Course Schedule:

Class Period	Topic	Assignment
Tuesday, January 21	Introduction to AAE 500	
Thursday, January 23	Project Partner Presentations	<i>Student Interest Survey due by 1:00pm 1/24</i>
Tuesday, January 28	Project Partner Presentations	
Thursday, January 30	Project Partner Presentations	<i>Project Preference Survey due by 1:00pm 1/31</i>
Tuesday, February 4	In-class group project work	
Thursday, February 6	In-class group project work	
Tuesday, February 11	In-class group project work	
Thursday, February 13	In-class group project work	
Tuesday, February 18	Project Proposal Presentations	<i>Project Proposal Paper due by 1:00pm</i>
Thursday, February 20	Project Proposal Presentations	
Tuesday, February 25	In-class group project work	
Thursday, February 27	In-class group project work	
Tuesday, March 4	In-class group project work	<i>Project Title & Description due by 1:00pm</i>
Thursday, March 6	In-class group project work	
Tuesday, March 11	In-class group project work	
Thursday, March 13	In-class group project work	
Tuesday, March 18	Mid-point Project Presentations	<i>Mid-point Project Paper due by 1:00pm</i>
Thursday, March 20	Mid-point Project Presentations	<i>Team Member Evaluations due by 1:00pm</i>
Tuesday, March 25	No Class - Spring Break	
Thursday, March 27	No Class - Spring Break	
Tuesday, April 1	In-class group project work	
Thursday, April 3	In-class group project work	
Tuesday, April 8	In-class group project work	
Thursday, April 10	In-class group project work	
Tuesday, April 15	In-class group project work	
Thursday, April 17	In-class group project work	
Tuesday, April 22	In-class group project work	<i>Future Plans Survey due by 1:00pm</i>
Thursday, April 24	Final Project Presentations	
Tuesday, April 29	Final Project Presentations	<i>Team Member Evaluations due by 1:00pm</i>
Thursday, May 1	Final Project Presentations	<i>Final Project Paper due by 1:00pm</i>