I. **TITLE:**

Contemporary Issues in Agriculture

II. **CATALOG DESCRIPTION:**

A course designed to increase the understanding, awareness, and critical analysis of contemporary agricultural issues and their effect upon the social, political, economic and cultural aspects of society. Topics will include environmental issues, biotechnology, animal, crop, career, economy and trade, agricultural policy, food quality, safety and international agriculture issues.

III. **PURPOSE:**

The purpose of this course is to:

A. Engage the student in a mature, thoughtful investigation of the historical, social, political, and economic aspect of a variety of agricultural issues.
B. Enhance the communication skills of students through class discussions, debates and presentations.
C. Develop critical thinking skills by gathering and validating knowledge of agricultural issues and analyzing and formulating propositions on those issues.
D. Utilize computer technology to research agriculture issues.
E. Develop an understanding of the role of agriculture and its local and global importance to society.
F. Develop an appreciation of the historical development and economic importance of agriculture.
G. Develop the ability to effectively analyze and develop their view point on agricultural issues and contribute to societal debate of those issues throughout their lifetime.

IV. **COURSE OBJECTIVES:**

After completion of this course, the student will be able to:

A. Identify and prioritize key U.S. and Global agricultural issues.
B. Conduct research to increase their knowledge about issues.
C. Analyze information to effectively communicate both sides of an issue.
D. Interact and participate in group discussion.
E. Form independent decisions utilizing critical thinking and conflict resolution skills.
F. Gain self-confidence in their ability to make rational decisions.
G. Gain knowledge in agriculture and its relation to society.

V. CONTENT OUTLINE:

A. Agricultural Issue Analysis
B. Importance and History of Agriculture
C. Agricultural Issues*
   1. Career Issues
   2. Environmental issues
      a. Water
      b. Land use
      c. Air
   3. Animal issues
   4. Crop Issues/Genetically modified crops
   5. Agricultural Biotechnology Issues
   6. Food Quality, Safety and Policy Issues
   7. Economy and Trade Issues
   8. Agricultural Policy Issues
   9. International Agricultural Issues
  10. Other Issues
*Example issues

VI. INSTRUCTIONAL ACTIVITIES:

A. Interdisciplinary guest speakers
B. Research investigations of electronic (internet) and printed media (journals)
C. Class discussions
D. Individual oral presentations
E. Team debates
F. Written reports/research papers
G. Interview of professionals
H. Role playing
I. Discussion groups on email

VII. FIELD AND CLINICAL EXPERIENCES:

As given in class.

VIII. RESOURCES:

A. TV shows “Ag Day” and “US Farm Report”
B. Internet sites: http://gopher.ag.uiuc.edu/aim/discovery/,
   http://www.agday.com
C. “Farmer’s Pride” Newspaper publication

IX. **GRADING PROCEDURES:**

| Test 1: Agricultural History          | 100 |
| Test 2: U.S. Agricultural & Food Issues | 100 |
| Test 3: Global Agricultural Issues   | 100 |
| Presentation of Ag Issues             | 50  |
| Quizzes                               | 75  |
| **Total**                             | 425 |

Grades will follow the standard grading scale:

- 90 – 100 = A
- 80 – 89 = B
- 70 – 79 = C
- 60 – 69 = D
- Below 60 = E

*Note: Quizzes may not be made up. 5 points per school day will be deducted for all late papers/projects turned in.

X. **ATTENDANCE POLICY:**

Please refer to the most current copy of the *Murray State University’s Undergraduate Bulletin and Graduate Bulletin.*

*Excessive class absences (seven or more) may result in failure of the course or the lowering of a grade.

XI. **ACADEMIC HONESTY POLICY:**

(Accepted by the MSU Board of Regents)

Cheating, plagiarism (submitting another person’s material as one’s own), or doing work for another person which will receive academic credit are all impermissible. This includes the use of unauthorized books, notebooks, or other sources in order to secure or give help during an examination, the unauthorized copying of examinations, assignments, reports, term papers, or the presentation on unacknowledged material as if it were the student’s own work. Disciplinary action may be taken beyond the academic discipline administered by the faculty member who teaches the course in which the cheating took place.

NOTE: The School of Agriculture Faculty have adopted and implemented an Academic Honesty Policy in addition to the University Honesty Policy, which can be found in the current *Undergraduate Bulletin and Graduate Bulletin.* The policy sets guidelines regarding acts of dishonesty and the procedure to follow should an event occur. It is each Agriculture student’s responsibility to obtain and read a copy of this document. The School’s Academic Honesty
Policy can be obtained by asking for a copy from any Agriculture Faculty member or the Secretary.

XII. **TEXT AND REFERENCES:**

_Saving the Planet with Pesticides and Plastics, 2nd edition._ Author: Dennis Avery. Hudson Institute.

XIII. **PREREQUISITES:**

None

XIV. **STATEMENT OF AFFIRMATIVE ACTION AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITY:**

Murray State University endorses the intent of all federal and state laws created to prohibit discrimination. Murray State University does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, religion, age, veteran status, or disability in employment, admissions, or the provision of services and provides, upon request, reasonable accommodation including auxiliary aids and services necessary to afford individuals with disabilities equal access to participate in all programs and activities. For more information, contact Sabrina Y. Dial, Director of Equal Opportunity, Murray State University, 103 Wells Hall, Murray, KY 42071-3318. Telephone: 270-809-3155 (voice), 270-809-3361 (TDD).

XV. **CELL PHONE POLICY**

The School of Agriculture recognizes that in today’s world cell phones are a familiar and often necessary form of communication for students.

It shall be the policy of the School that no cell phone usage shall be allowed in class and/or labs without the prior consent of the course instructor. This shall include verbal calling, incoming calls, email, text messaging, and use of cell phone calculators on tests and quizzes.

Cell phones must be kept on vibrate and out of sight and use (i.e. secured to a person’s belt or kept in a bag or purse away from desks and lab counters).

Should a student’s cell phone be visible, ring, or other form of unauthorized usage that is interruptive to the class or lab, the student may be asked to leave class and not return for that class/lab period.
Upon prior consent of the instructor, a student may obtain permission to use their phone in case of an emergency or in critical family situations.

This policy also includes pagers and other electronic equipment such as blackberries and/or computers/laptops.