

Syllabus for MGT 290-2, Food and Agriculture Industry Immersion

Course Description

This course introduces students to the many facets of the food and agricultural industry and provides a framework for understanding the complex forces that shape and drive it. Drawing upon the deep expertise of UC Davis as well as connections to industry experts, each session will take a deep dive into a particular issue. Topics to be covered include:

- Historic Perspective of innovation in the Food Industry & Future Challenges
- Developing Brands for Shifting Consumer Demand
- Innovation in Food Waste, Preservation & Recycling
- Big Data and its Influence on Decision Making in Agtech
- Determining the Best Path to Market Scalability While Evolving a Corporate Culture in the Seed Industry
- Global Supply Chain Management
- Innovation in CPG Industry
- Role of Big Data in Retail
- Food Innovation and Impact of Organics
- Product Development and Brand Creation

Drawing on background readings, speakers' presentations and other media, students will learn about a topic or case study, discuss it in class, tackle a specific problem in small groups of MBA and PhD students, and then present their findings. Students will be given opportunities to develop cross-functional solutions to problems facing the industry.

Learning Objective

Feeding the world is a critical challenge facing us all as the global population continues to grow, resources remain finite and the environment is vulnerable. Success will require the application of extraordinary leadership and management skills as well as innovative approaches to the food supply system. The objective of this course is to increase the student's practical knowledge of the operations and sustainable practices in the food and agriculture industry and gain hands-on experience in solving industry-specific problems. Introducing students to academic and industry experts will help them develop their effectiveness in this area.

Course Structure

The course will meet for 10 sessions to be held on five consecutive Fridays starting January 12, 2018 through February 9, 2018, from 9AM - 4 PM each day. Students will prepare for each session by reviewing readings and other material related to the topic. There will be a morning session and afternoon session every Friday that class is held, in addition to a lunchtime discussion. During the class meeting time, an expert will provide background and context to lead the discussion. At the end of the discussion, students will break up into small groups to tackle a specific industry challenge or opportunity related to the topic and develop a solution to deal with the issue. Each group will present their recommendation and receive feedback on their proposed solution from the industry expert.

Student Assignments

Participation in each session's discussion, small work group, and submission of papers (weekly and final synthesis).

Five two-page papers consisting of:

- a. A brief summary of what the speaker discussed.
- b. The managerial problem that was discussed in class.
- c. The different solutions you heard from your classmates.
- d. The solution that appealed to you the most and the reason why it appealed to you.

An 8-10 page final synthesis paper that includes the following:

- a. What are the important lessons you learned from the various speakers? You can categorize the problems discussed by various speakers any way you want to, and explain the types of solutions that were discussed in class for each category of problems. For example, if the problem dealt with supply chains, you should discuss solutions that were presented with respect to supply chains (e.g., usage of technology, supplier contracting processes, building redundancy into the supply system).
- b. Select one speaker who made the most impact on you. What part of the material covered by the speaker affected you? Explain why.
- c. How does this course affect what you do (or plan to do) in the future? Be specific in your response.

Grading

40% Class Participation (discussion groups, presentations)

30% Five 2-page Papers (one per class day)

30% Final Paper

Absences/Makeup Work

Students will be able to make up work for **one** excused absence that is either school related (e.g. Buffet trip) or related to a job search (e.g. interview). The instructor must be notified in advance of the planned absence. No other absences will be excused and if the student is absent he/she will receive a zero for all work in that session. As this class requires in-class participation and the writing assignments are based on discussions which occur in-class, attendance is mandatory.

