

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
- View from the Farm: How a Grower Makes Decisions to Optimize Returns
- Determining the how to manage a complex international vegetable seed business
- Global Supply Chain Management
- Innovation in CPG Industry
- Role of Big Data in Retail and Distribution
- Reshaping Corporate Images in the Shifting Landscape
- 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 ten consecutive Friday mornings starting January 8, 2021 through March 12th, 2021, from 8:30 AM - 12 PM each day. Students will prepare for each session by reviewing readings and other material related to the topic. During the class meeting time, an industry 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 to 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

Grades are assigned based on participation in each session's discussion, small work group activity, and submission of papers (weekly and final synthesis).

Eight (8) Weekly Reflection two-page papers (500-1,000 words) 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% Eight 2-page Papers (one per class day) – see more information below at end of syllabus

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 well 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.

Academic Code of Conduct

All students will need uphold the standard of conduct relating to academic integrity as defined in GSM Code of Academic Conduct, <http://sja.ucdavis.edu/files/cac.pdf>.

TENTATIVE LIST OF SPEAKERS FOR WINTER 2021 FOOD & AG IMMERSION COURSE

- **H. Rao Unnava, Dean, UC Davis Graduate School of Management**
- **Harold Schmitz**, March Fund, Former Chief Scientific Officer, Mars, Inc.
- **Ejnar Knudsen**, Co-Founder & CEO, AGR Partners
- **Justin Shimek**, CEO & CTO, Mattson
- **John Foraker**, CEO & Co-Founder, Once Upon A Farm
- **David Warter**, Director of Spirit Making, E. & J. Gallo Winery
- **Matthew Weeks**, Senior Manager, Co-Manufacturing and Sourcing, E. & J. Gallo Winery
- **Andres Trillo**, Vice President, Global Head of Human Resources, HM.CLAUSE
- **Ghis Reusken**, Vice President, Global Head of Supply Chain, HM.CLAUSE
- **Ned Spang**, Associate Director, UC Davis Center for Water-Energy Efficiency, and Assistant Professor, UC Davis
- **Dan Kurzrock**, Co-Founder and Chief Grain Officer, Regrained
- **Deirdre Zimmerman**, Chief Customer Experience Officer, Raley's Supermarkets
- **Stuart Woolf**, Chairman, Woolf Farming
- **Jack Clare**, CIO, UNFI

WEEKLY REFLECTION GUIDELINES

ALL SUBMISSIONS SHOULD HAVE YOUR NAME, ASSIGNMENT TITLE, AND DATE AT THE TOP

ASSIGNMENTS ARE DUE ON THE WEDNESDAY (AT MIDNIGHT PST) FOLLOWING PRIOR WEEK'S FRIDAY IMMERSION.

There will be eight (8) short written "Weekly Reflection" assignments due during the quarter. The papers, which are expected to be between 500 and 1000 words, will provide you with an opportunity to reflect on what you learned from the previous week's speaker and case challenge and will be scored up to 10 points each (see grading criteria below). These papers must be your original work, and must recognize all quoted materials and cite all sources used in their preparation.

The assignment is designed to prove to me that you engaged thoughtfully in the case challenge immersion. If done well, each assignment should prove to be a useful "journal entry" that you can look back on long after your time during the course. The paper should include:

- 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.

It should briefly summarize the case challenge you and your team faced, describe your response to the case challenge, including both the relevant data you identified and your analysis of the situation. Be sure to take a clear stand or opinion on the case challenge and provide ideas or facts from pre-assigned material, if available, and your research during the class, to support that stand (using appropriate citations). Also, if useful, contrast your team's approach to other groups.

Do not simply repeat items from the readings or stated by the speaker, but do not ignore them altogether.

As a graduate student at UC Davis, you will be expected to employ self-editing skills to produce a professional writing style. As a reminder, those skills involved the following:

- Concise expression
- Strong paragraphs, with good topical sentences
- Logical flow
- Shorter sentences, with mixed lengths
- Direct, fast-moving sentences
- Necessary jargon only

Those skills should be in evidence in your writing for this class. While you will not receive line editing, and may or may not receive comment about your writing, it will be a factor in the grading.

Scoring Rubric

I will score the assignments as follows:

10 points if you:

- (1) clearly state your position,
- (2) support it with ideas and facts from the readings, and
- (3) write with clarity and concision.

8 points if you give me two of three

6 points if you give me one out of three

0 points if you fail to turn it in on time.

Submission

Assignments will be submitted electronically, via the course site on Canvas.

Grading for Weekly Reflection Papers

At the end of the quarter, I will drop the lowest two scores of the 8 assignments.