Instructor: Dr. Michael Maurer
Email: maurerma@sfasu.edu
Office: AG 119
Office Hours: MW 9:00 – 10:00 & 11:00 to 12:00; TR 9:30 to 10:30 am or by appointment.
Department: Agriculture
Class Meeting time and place: TR 11:00 – 1:30 pm Agriculture Bldg. Room 118.

Course Description: A course investigating the tools of research, problem formulation and analysis, common research design, common errors in research, and instrumentation and sampling techniques.

Student Learning Outcomes:
1. Demonstrate an understanding of the experimental design and application in the development of research projects
2. Demonstrate the ability to obtain, synthesize and express scientific material in proper scientific format.
3. Demonstrate an understanding of professionalism in an academic setting as preparation for a professional career in agriculture.
4. Demonstrate the ability to critically think about scientific issues as well as communicate in both written and oral forms.

References:
2. SFA’s thesis guide and forms. It may be downloaded from graduate school website.
3. Steen Library – Getting started on a great literature review.

Course Requirements:
1. Complete Thesis Proposal Draft: If you already have a thesis proposal to your committee, a similar process will be expected for a research topic of interest, approved by your Research Committee Chair. The draft will be developed in sections, with different due dates as the semester continues. (60% of course grade).
2. Oral Presentation of Thesis proposal (10% of course grade).
3. Poster (20% of course grade).
4. Class Assignments as assigned. (10% of course grade). If none, then this grade contribution will be shifted to the above proposal.
Course Calendar:
Topic
1. Introduction to course (1 week)
2. Professional Behavior and Responsibilities of Graduate Students in ATCOFA (1 week).
3. Proposals Parts of proposal, proposal development, literature review development, plagiarism, etc. (5 weeks)
4. Experimental Design and Sampling Design (3 weeks)
5. Oral and Poster Presentations: Approaches, figures vs maps, methodology for creating tables. (5 weeks)

Due dates:
1. References September 3, 2020
2. Proposal outline September 17, 2020
3. Proposal draft September 24, 2020
4. Complete proposal October 8, 2020
5. Poster October 1, 2020
6. Proposal presentation October 8 or 13, 2020

COVID-19 MASK POLICY
Masks (cloth face coverings) must be worn over the nose and mouth at all times in this class and appropriate physical distancing must be observed. Students not wearing a mask and/or not observing appropriate physical distancing will be asked to leave the class. All incidents of not wearing a mask and/or not observing appropriate physical distancing will be reported to the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities. Students who are reported for multiple infractions of not wearing a mask and/or not observing appropriate physical distancing may be subject to disciplinary actions.

Classroom Behavior:
Students are expected to assist in maintaining a classroom environment which is conductive to learning. In order to assure that all students have an opportunity to gain from time spent in class, unless otherwise approved by the instructor, students are prohibited from eating in class, making offensive remarks, reading newspapers, sleeping or engaging in any other form of distraction. Inappropriate behavior in the classroom shall result in, minimally, a request to leave the classroom.

Disruptive, distracting, or disrespectful behavior will not be tolerated. Students who disrupt the learning environment may be asked to leave class and may be subject to judicial, academic, or other penalties. The instructor shall have full discretion over what behavior is appropriate/inappropriate in the classroom.
**Responsible Use of Technology:**
It is expected that all students will only use cell phones, PDAs, laptop computers, MP3 players and other technology outside of class time or when appropriate in class. Answering a cell phone, texting, listening to music or using a laptop computer for matters unrelated to the course may be grounds for dismissal from class or other penalties.

**Class Attendance**
Regular and punctual attendance is expected for all classes, laboratories, and other activities for which a student is registered. If a student has excessive absences, the instructor reserves the right not to give individual tutoring, special consideration regarding make-up work, or other help the student needs because of missing class. Attendance will also play a crucial role in decisions concerning borderline final grades.

**Excused Absences**
Students may be excused from attendance for certain reasons, among these are absences related to health, family emergencies, and student participation in certain university-sponsored events. However, students are responsible for notifying their instructors in advance whenever possible for excusable absences.

Students are responsible for providing timely documentation satisfactory to the instructor for each absence. Students with acceptable excuses may be permitted to make up work for absences to a maximum of three weeks of a semester when the nature of the work missed permits. Whether excused or unexcused, a student is still responsible for all course content and assignments.

**Academic Integrity (A-9.1)**
Academic integrity is a responsibility of all university faculty and students. Faculty members promote academic integrity in multiple ways including instruction on the components of academic honesty, as well as abiding by university policy on penalties for cheating and plagiarism.

**Definition of Academic Dishonesty**
Academic dishonesty includes both cheating and plagiarism. Cheating includes but is not limited to (1) using or attempting to use unauthorized materials to aid in achieving a better grade on a component of a class; (2) the falsification or invention of any information, including citations, on an assigned exercise; and/or (3) helping or attempting to help another in an act of cheating or plagiarism. Plagiarism is presenting the words or ideas of another person as if they were your own. Examples of plagiarism are (1) submitting an assignment as if it were one's own work when, in fact, it is at least partly the work of another; (2) submitting a work that has been purchased or otherwise obtained from an Internet source or another source; and (3) incorporating the words or ideas of an author into one's paper without giving the author due credit.
Integrity and professionalism are expected at this level of education. Unauthorized collaboration on assignments or projects, as well as dishonesty on exams and quizzes will not be tolerated. Suspected cases of cheating or plagiarism in class and labs as well as grade disputes and appeals will be handled according to the academic regulations of the University. **If it is determined cheating occurred, the student will be dismissed and fail the course**

**Withheld Grades Semester Grades Policy (A-54)**
Ordinarily, at the discretion of the instructor of record and with the approval of the academic chair/director, a grade of WH will be assigned only if the student cannot complete the course work because of unavoidable circumstances. Students must complete the work within one calendar year from the end of the semester in which they receive a WH, or the grade automatically becomes an F. If students register for the same course in future terms the WH will automatically become an F and will be counted as a repeated course for the purpose of computing the grade point average.

**Students with Disabilities**
To obtain disability related accommodations, alternate formats and/or auxiliary aids, students with disabilities must contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS), Human Services Building, and Room 325, 468-3004 / 468-1004 (TDD) as early as possible in the semester. Once verified, ODS will notify the course instructor and outline the accommodation and/or auxiliary aids to be provided. Failure to request services in a timely manner may delay your accommodations. For additional information, go to [http://www.sfasu.edu/disabilityservices/](http://www.sfasu.edu/disabilityservices/)

**Attendance Policy:** Class attendance is expected except for valid excuses. Students are expected as part of their responsibilities to complete the on-line course evaluation via MySFA.

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Cheating or plagiarism will result in at least a “zero” on the assignment in question, and possibly an “F” for the course. Students are urged to make sure they do their own work, make sure the papers they write use quotes only when necessary, are cited correctly, and most importantly, are in their own words!

SFA Policy A-9.1 defines what constitutes cheating and plagiarism. While the policy does appear to allow for the cutting and pasting of information from a published source as long as proper credit is given, those actions will not be allowed in the thesis proposal unless written approval by your Research Committee Chair is provided to me. Each proposal must be written so that the words are those of the student.

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Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs):

1. The student will communicate an understanding of scientific discovery and the diffusion of information as it applies to the industry of agriculture.
2. The student will demonstrate competence in the major technical subject matter areas of their graduate program.
3. The student will exhibit problem solving skills based on quantitative and analytical reasoning.
4. The student will demonstrate effective communication skills. Students will demonstrate competence in both written and oral communications.
5. The student will exhibit leadership and other interpersonal skills needed for career placement and advancement.
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<td>Understanding the Agriculture Industry</td>
<td>Competence in subject matter</td>
<td>Problem Solving Skills</td>
<td>Communications Skills</td>
<td>Leadership Skills</td>
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