Instructor: Dr. Michael Maurer
Email: maurerma@sfasu.edu
Office: AG 119
Office Hours: MW 9:00 to 9:50 am, TR 8:00 to 10:00 am or by appointment.
Department: Agriculture
Class Meeting time and place: TR 11:00 to 12:15 pm Agriculture Bldg. Room 108.

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. Infographic. (10% of course grade).
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 Sept 12, 2023
2. Infographic Sept 19, 2023
3. Proposal outline Sept 26, 2023
4. Proposal draft Oct 24, 2023
5. Complete proposal Nov 14, 2023
6. Poster October 10, 2023
7. Proposal presentation Dec 5 or 7, 2023

Classroom Behavior:

Students are expected to assist in maintaining a classroom environment which is conducive 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 (4.1)**
The Code of Student Conduct and Academic Integrity outlines the prohibited conduct by any student enrolled in a course at SFA. It is the responsibility of all members of all faculty, staff, and students to adhere to and uphold this policy.

Articles IV, VI, and VII of the new Code of Student Conduct and Academic Integrity outline the violations and procedures concerning academic conduct, including cheating, plagiarism, collusion, and misrepresentation. Cheating includes, but is not limited to: (1) Copying from the test paper (or other assignment) of another student, (2) Possession and/or use during a test of materials that are not authorized by the person giving the test, (3) Using, obtaining, or attempting to obtain by any means the whole or any part of a non-administered test, test key, homework solution, or computer program, or using a test that has been administered in prior classes or semesters without permission of the Faculty member, (4) Substituting for another person, or permitting another person to substitute for one’s self, to take a test, (5) Falsifying research data, laboratory reports, and/or other records or academic work offered for credit, (6) Using any sort of unauthorized resources or technology in completion of educational activities.

Plagiarism is the appropriation of material that is attributable in whole or in part to another source or the use of one’s own previous work in another context without citing that it was used previously, without any indication of the original source, including words, ideas, illustrations, structure, computer code, and other expression or media, and presenting that material as one’s own academic work being offered for credit or in conjunction with a program course or degree requirements.

Collusion is the unauthorized collaboration with another person in preparing academic assignments offered for credit or collaboration with another person to commit a violation of any provision of the rules on academic dishonesty, including disclosing and/or distributing the contents of an exam.
Misrepresentation is providing false grades or résumés; providing false or misleading information in an effort to receive a postponement or an extension on a test, quiz, or other assignment for the purpose of obtaining an academic or financial benefit for oneself or another individual or to injure another student academically or financially.

Withheld Grades Semester Grades Policy (5.5)
Please copy and paste the following information regarding Withheld Grades into your syllabus. Add additional information as needed to meet your departmental or course needs.

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 coursework 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 to compute the grade point average. For additional information, go to https://www.sfasu.edu/policies/course-grades-5.5.pdf.

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/.

Mental Health
SFASU values students’ mental health and the role it plays in academic and overall student success. SFA provides a variety of resources to support students mental health and wellness. Many of these resources are free, and all of them are confidential.

On-campus Resources:
SFASU Counseling Services
https://www.sfasu.edu/counselingservices
3rd Floor Rusk Building
936-468-2401
SFASU Human Services Counseling Clinic
http://www.sfasu.edu/humanservices/139.asp
Human Services Room 202
936-468-1041

Crisis Resources:
Burke 24-hour crisis line 1(800) 392-8343
Suicide Prevention Lifeline 1(800) 273-TALK (8255)
Crisis Text Line: Text HELLO to 741-741
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.

### M.S. Agriculture Program Learning Outcomes

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<th>Course</th>
<th>PLO 1</th>
<th>PLO 2</th>
<th>PLO 3</th>
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<th>PLO 5</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<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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<td>M</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>I</td>
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B-Basic  I-Intermediate  A-Advanced  M-Mastery