

## CDAE 3080 / PSS 3180: Agricultural Policy & Ethics

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[Spring 2024, Tuesday and Thursday, 8:30-9:45 AM, 110 Jeffords. Three Credit Hours.](#)

Dr. Terence Bradshaw [tbradsha@uvm.edu](mailto:tbradsha@uvm.edu). (802) 922-2591

Office hours: Tues 10:00 – 11:00 am / Weds 8:30 – 10:00 am. Jeffords 117 (main PSS office)  
*Appointments preferred. I am also available other times, please email to schedule.*

Teaching Assistant: Blair Christensen, [Blair.Christensen@uvm.edu](mailto:Blair.Christensen@uvm.edu)

### [Pre-requisites](#)

CDAE 102 (2020) or PSS 212 (3120) or equivalent. Please email the instructor if you have questions about your preparedness to take this course.

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### [Course Modality](#)

This course is being offered in an *in-person* format. Lectures and in-class activity will be held *synchronously*. That means that we meet at the times listed above, 8:30-9:45 AM, Tuesday and Thursdays. However, I that illness, religious holidays, and other life commitments may occasionally interfere with attendance. I will stream, record, and archive class meetings, but will not be running a separate course online as I would in a mixed or online modality course.

### [Course Description](#)

This course examines historical, political, ecological, technological, social, economic, and ethical facets of American agriculture, food policies, and the Farm Bill and particularly their effects at the farm level. We will cover US and Vermont agricultural policies, and examine the causes, nature, and effects of government participation in agriculture, the relationship of agriculture with the political and economic systems, environment, food system, and the impact of involved groups. Specific topics will include development of agriculture policy in the US, background of current ag programs, political nature of ag legislation, provisions in the Farm Bill, environmental programs, organic farming, farm support programs, and consumer issues related to ag and food policies. We will also examine specific Vermont agricultural issues including food labeling and EPA mandate to reduce phosphorus flow into Lake Champlain.

### [Course Learning Objectives](#)

***Live life on terms you believe in, but aspire to be humble.***

Students completing this course will:

1. Attain a basic level of knowledge of U.S. and Vermont state agriculture policies.
2. Understand the main components of the Farm Bill and other policy instruments and their effects on the agriculture sector.
3. Evaluate credibility and quality of information relating to agriculture and farm policy.
4. Use critical thinking skills to evaluate complex issues and present their positions using well-referenced written and oral arguments.

### ***Discriminate ideas - not people***

This is an active participation course. All students will be expected to contribute to class discussions; to present information to the class through various formats; and evaluate and have arguments in an oral and written setting. Therefore, this course is presented in a supportive environment where all students, staff, and guests will be encouraged and supported to speak your minds. As a policy course, content is at times expected to become

political. All points of view will be respected in this course, and intolerance shown toward faculty or other students is not acceptable. However, we expect students to consider topics with an open mind and use skepticism when evaluating claims. For graded assignments, students will be evaluated on the quality of your arguments, not on the positions that you take.

#### Contacting course instructors or TAs:

The default method for contacting the course instructor or TA is via email.

All emails should begin with the subject line “[PSS 3180]...”

This will allow for incoming messages to get flagged and not missed in overstuffed inboxes. Please use professional language in emails. Text messaging is not an appropriate method for communication with instructors and teaching assistants. My personal cell phone number is listed at the top of this syllabus, use it only in an emergency and not during or immediately prior to class meeting time.

#### Course Structure and Pedagogy

*We will use engaged learning techniques* in this course that are designed to empower students to participate in instruction and develop feedback mechanisms to improve learning and continual course development. Therefore, course expectations, topics, and methods may change based on student input. This course is designed as much to develop *critical thinking* and *argument development* as it is to deliver content on agriculture policy. Material delivery will employ a combination of readings, lectures (instructor and student-led), debates, journaling, homework, and peer review. Students are expected to be resourceful in acquiring the relevant evidence to best inform their work.

#### Required Course Materials:

***A right to know comes with a responsibility to learn.***

There is no required textbook for this course. Readings will be placed on Brightspace as assigned. Readings recommended by guest speakers will also be posted as assigned. Not all of the resources needed to complete this course will be given to students. It is your responsibility to familiarize yourself with the literature and other sources to best study farm policy. We encourage students to use the UVM Library [Agriculture Research Guide](#) when sourcing evidence to reference and use in papers, presentations, and other course outputs.

#### Sources and Citations

All work must include appropriate citations. Please consider the quality of sources and provide complete information in APA (<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/section/2/10/>) or another appropriate format. Websites may be acceptable sources of information, but consider blogs, sites without credited authors, and commercial sites as lower in quality than reputable University, Extension, and government sites.

Readings for each week’s classes will be posted to Brightspace by the previous Friday. Reading reactions will be required in the weekly journal entries. Those reactions are intended to spark discussion from the readings that will be continued during some classes. Please complete readings and reactions on-time and be prepared for classroom discussion.

#### Guest Speakers:

***Enjoy people.***

The inclusion of numerous guest speakers provides a seminar component to this course, and introduces students to people who are involved in agriculture and agriculture policy that you might not otherwise have access to. Guest speakers are donating their time to this course. Please show them respect, and plan to be in-class by 8:30 on guest lecturer days. The course will draw on the experience of outside speakers which may include Congressional aides; representatives from the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food, and Markets, UVM Extension and other

departments; and advocacy groups including NOFA-VT and Rural Vermont. Speakers will address and answer questions on the Farm Bill, nutritional programs, organic agriculture, and controversial agriculture/food/policy topics.

### Course topics

This is an interactive, dynamic course. As such, topics and course schedule will change according to student's interests, speaker availability, and where we are in a particular topic in relation to other course activities. Weekly material will be posted under *Weekly modules* in Brightspace and will be updated at least two weeks prior to class. Very broadly speaking, course topics may include: general U.S. government and civics; Vermont politics; the U.S. Farm Bill; the demographics and production statistics of the agriculture sector; commodity crop production; organic and regenerative agriculture; dairy farming and its importance to Vermont; agricultural labor; environmental issues surrounding farming; animal welfare; biotechnology, and other topics. Students are encouraged to participate in course and topic development and selection.

### Brightspace and other electronic communications:

***Pay attention to what's going on around you.***

Please read this technology check list to make sure you are ready for classes. <https://www.uvm.edu/it/kb/student-technology-resources/>. Students should contact the Helpline (802-656-2604) for support with technical issues.

**Please bring a web-enabled phone, tablet, or laptop to class with you.**

This course uses four digital platforms. UVM Brightspace (BSp) is the primary tool for course management and all materials will be posted, assignments submitted, and grading conducted via that system. Assignments should not be turned in as paper copies unless otherwise stated. *Assignments will not be accepted via cloud services such as Google Docs.* Please read that again.

All course meetings will be streamed to the MS Teams PSS3180A Agricultural Policy and Ethics channel. Our class sessions will be recorded for students in the class to refer back to, and for enrolled students who are unable to attend live. Students who participate with their camera engaged or utilize a profile image are agreeing to have their video or image recorded. If you are unwilling to consent to have your profile or video image recorded, be sure to keep your camera off and do not use a profile image. Likewise, students who un-mute during class and participate orally are agreeing to have their voices recorded. If you are not willing to consent to have your voice recorded during class, you will need to keep your mute button activated and communicate exclusively using the chat feature, which allows students to type questions and comments live.

We will use MS Forms either through the Teams app or through your browser for collecting real-time data.

Finally, we will use Yellowdig (YD) in lieu of BSp Discussion Board for asynchronous discussions and community-building. YD should be accessed from within BSp.

Students are expected to pay attention in class and to not use electronic communications for non-course purposes. However, we are well-into the 21<sup>st</sup> century and computers and phones are critically important methods for acquiring and sharing information. I may poll the class during meetings to provide input on certain topics, so the ability to contribute in real-time will be valuable. Again, please bring your laptops and phones to use for these purposes. Cell phones should always be muted in class, and thumbs should not be idly scrolling screens.

### Camera policy

It is my opinion that forcing students who attend class remotely to use your cameras is an invasion of your privacy. I will not *require* that students use cameras when logging in to class.

*However*, I strongly encourage you to share your camera when speaking if you feel comfortable and have equipment and sufficient bandwidth. This is an interactive course, and some of what makes it unique is lost when we are speaking with black blobs denoted only by two letters. Remote learning and meetings are the new normal, and will be for long after this pandemic is over. As with other skills we hope to hone in this course, appropriate video conferencing etiquette is something we all need to develop. Students may use blurring backgrounds or conference from spaces on-campus if needed.

### Attendance Policy and Classroom Environment Expectations:

All students are expected to attend class and participate in discussion. Students are specifically expected to attend, arrive on time, and show respect for guest speakers who are often volunteering their time. Tardiness and absences will affect the professionalism component of your grade.

1. Of course, we will be flexible around any health (including mental health) issues. However, they may not be used as a blanket excuse for poor participation. I am *very* accommodating, but please set something up with me if you need assistance.
2. If you are ill and missing only one day of classes, you can contact class professors by phone or e-mail directly and leave a clear message including your name, and that you are ill and will be missing the class.
3. If you are ill for 2 or more classes or experiencing a personal problem that will cause you to miss more than a day of classes, you must contact Whitney Northrop in the CALS Student Services Office or Student Services in your college. She will notify the instructors for you, but you will also need to work with your instructors to discuss his/her expectations in reference to your absence.
4. It is important that you as the student (not your advisor and not your parent) contact Student Services directly if at all possible. By doing so, we will have a very clear understanding of the nature of the illness or problem and how we can best help you.

### Required check-in

All students will schedule and complete a 10-minute check-in with the course instructor at least once during the course. These are meant to help students gauge where they are at in the course, talk about school and /or professional development, or just get to know one another.

### Grading Criteria/Policies:

***Love your work. Work your love. Get your work done.***

Graded materials will consist of a combination of objective instruments (tests and quizzes) and subjective writings (presentation, reflections and essays). The purpose of the assignments is to give you an opportunity to present your views with supporting arguments. *You will be graded on the how you present your supporting statements, not on your views.*

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|---|-----|-------------------------|-----|
| ○ Essays                                | 25% | ○ Engagement, includes: | 20% |
| ○ Journal reflections (Discussion tool) | 25% | ▪ Group BSp discussion  |     |
| ○ Surveys                               | 5%  | ▪ Classroom discussion  |     |
| ○ Quizzes, includes:                    | 25% | ▪ Attendance            |     |
| ▪ Online BSp quizzes                    |     | ▪ Check-in              |     |
| ▪ In-class Teams quizzes                |     |                         |     |

- All grading will be completed on Brightspace. Grading rubrics for assignments will be available and viewable.
- Late assignments: As an iterative and reflection-driven course, it is important to keep up with the assignments. That said, life is complicated and sometimes we all need some flexibility.
  - IF YOU NEED EXTRA TIME ON AN ASSIGNMENT, just go to this form and propose a new due date: <https://go.uvm.edu/24tbspringlateassignments>. It's that simple. Some assignments that are required for a later one cannot have extensions, I'll let you know in class.
  - If assignments are turned in past the new, agreed-upon due date, they will automatically be deducted 10% of the total grade for each day late. No assignments will be accepted after five days unless the absence has been approved by CALS Student Services.
- This course uses the standard Brightspace grading schema to convert numeric to letter grades. Numeric grades are not rounded to the next highest integer: an 89.9 is not a 90.

**GRADING SCHEMA USED FOR THIS COURSE**

	minus (-)		plus(+)
A	90-93.9	94-96.9	97-100
B	80-83.9	84-86.9	87-89.9
C	70-73.9	74-76.9	77-79.9
D	60-63.9	64-66.9	67-69.9
F	<60		

- As a rule, I do not negotiate with students over minor grade corrections on assignments. For every student who feels they received a subjectively low grade on an assignment, there are multiple students who likely received a subjectively high grade. If you feel like there was an egregious grading error on any given assignment, by all means discuss it with me, but it is highly unlikely that the grade will change unless a strong and compelling case is made. In my experience after assigning hundreds of course grades, any student can achieve a high grade in my courses by simply staying up on readings, attending and participating in class, and completing assignments on-time and according to the instructions.
- If you would like to contest a grade, please follow the procedures outlined in this policy: <https://www.uvm.edu/policies/student/gradeappeals.pdf>.
- For information on grading and GPA calculation, go to <https://www.uvm.edu/registrar/grades>.

Assessments (Graded Work):

- ***ALL ASSIGNMENTS ARE DUE EACH SUNDAY BY midnight.***
- Surveys: There will be two short, non-graded surveys held at the beginning and end of the course to help assess student learning outcomes and to guide future course development. Answers on surveys are anonymous, we only see whether the survey was taken or not.
- Journal reflections: There will be written weekly reflection assignments collected in your course journal. Journals may have a specific prompt, based on topics and material from the previous week. Reflections should be 300-500 words (unless stated otherwise). Reflections will be submitted weekly through the Brightspace Discussion function. Journals will be graded every three weeks. Students are expected to complete two journals every three weeks.
- Essays: There will be three essays that will explore course topics more in-depth. All essays must be grammatically correct; use good writing form (e.g., do not use long run-on paragraphs; check your spelling; use appropriate citations; use appropriate rhetorical and narrative development skills).
- Discussion Board:  
*If you are going to be on a bandwagon, at least know the music.*

News of the Day has moved to a 21st century, online format. We will use BSp as our course discussion board. The discussion board is meant to be a place to share news on Agriculture and Policy. Stories can be current, as it is important to keep up on the events that are unfolding; recent, as there is plenty of material from the past few months and years that is relevant; or historic, and those older pieces should be accompanied by some reflection or analysis as to why it matters today. I'm looking for appropriate posting skills (language, grammar, formatting), critical thinking, and respectful discussion. Some posts will carry over into class lectures, and some may be prompted by material covered in-class.

Students are expected to earn twenty-five YD points each week. Points are awarded for:

- New post (min 40 words): 8 points
- Comment on another's post (minimum 20 words): 6 points
- Comments received: 2 points
- Any reaction received: 1 point

Students may also use YD for community building in this course. This is your space to share amongst your peers, all respectful posts that contribute to the class community will be counted toward weekly point totals.

Yellowdig starts the first week of class.

- Assessments: There will be a number of unannounced, short quizzes (combined for 25% of total assessments grade) and three longer online (Brightspace) quizzes (worth combined 75% of total Assessments grade) that will assess retention of important facts pertinent to the policy discussions we will be having in class and in our writings. Students will have an opportunity to provide input on what facts are deemed "important". Unexcused absences on quiz days will receive a zero for those. Points for the assessments will be weighted relative to the length and complexity of the material.

In addition to the standard discussion board, students will have an opportunity to select important facts that they feel should be understood by all students in the course by writing suggested quiz questions in a dedicated space in the Discussion Boards section. Posting questions themselves do not affect your grade, but they certainly inform you and your classmates of what should be studied. *Because many of the course question will be pulled from this forum that is open to and viewable by all students in the course, I will not offer a separate study guide for the online quizzes.*

- Presentations: Each student will present orally to the class during the semester. Details on presentations will be presented in the first two weeks of the course. Graded presentations will take one of two forms:
  - Issue debate. Debates will be conducted between teams on a specific resolution that will be presented at least two weeks prior to the class in which the debate is presented.
  - Mini-lecture. Students may make a substantive in-class presentation on a topic of interest to Agricultural Policy and Ethics.
  - Your choice. Give testimony at a public forum; record a podcast; attend and meaningfully participate in a rally.

#### Course Evaluation:

Students are expected to complete an evaluation of the course at its conclusion. Evaluations will be anonymous and confidential, and that the information gained, including constructive criticisms, will be used to improve the course. *Easter egg: on the last, open text question of the syllabus quiz, write: "bonus" for five extra points on the first essay.*

### Student Learning Accommodations:

The primary goal for this course is for students to achieve learning objectives, not to meet deadlines and complete assignments. That said, the framework provided by the coursework and due dates is important to help us achieve that goal. It is important for students to complete readings and assignments on-time and to be prepared for class discussions. However, I understand that not every student learns the same way, and we all come into this course with other responsibilities that don't go away when we walk through the classroom door. If a short-term accommodation or adjustment to an assignment or deadline will improve your success in this course, by all means please speak to me about it. *This does not mean that I will reward laziness. Flexibility is not a replacement for you completing the coursework and maintaining the trajectory of the course.*

If you have a more substantial need than a minor adjustment to course requirements, and in keeping with University policy, any student with a documented disability interested in utilizing accommodations should contact SAS, the office of Disability Services on campus. SAS works with students and faculty in an interactive process to explore reasonable and appropriate accommodations, which are communicated to faculty in an accommodation letter. All students are strongly encouraged to meet with their faculty to discuss the accommodations they plan to use in each course. A student's accommodation letter lists those accommodations that will not be implemented until the student meets with their faculty to create a plan.

Contact SAS:

A170 Living/Learning Center

802-656-7753;

[access@uvm.edu](mailto:access@uvm.edu)

[www.uvm.edu/access](http://www.uvm.edu/access)

### Green and Gold Promise:

The [Green and Gold Promise](#) clearly articulates the expectations that UVM has for students, faculty, and staff to remain compliant with all COVID-19 recommendations from the federal CDC, the State of Vermont, and the City of Burlington.

The [Code of Student Conduct](#) outlines policies related to violations of the Green and Gold Promise. Sanctions for violations include fines, educational sanctions, parent notification, probation, and suspension.

### Religious Holidays:

Students have the right to practice the religion of their choice. If you need to miss class to observe a religious holiday, please submit the dates of your absence to me in writing by the end of the second full week of classes. You will be permitted to make up work within a mutually agreed-upon time. <https://www.uvm.edu/registrar/religious-holidays>

### Academic Integrity:

The policy addresses plagiarism, fabrication, collusion, and cheating.

<https://www.uvm.edu/policies/student/acadintegrity.pdf>

### Code of Student Conduct:

<http://www.uvm.edu/policies/student/studentcode.pdf>

### FERPA Rights Disclosure:

The purpose of this policy is to communicate the rights of students regarding access to, and privacy of their student educational records as provided for in the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) of 1974.

<http://catalogue.uvm.edu/undergraduate/academicinfo/ferparightsdisclosure/>

Promoting Health & Safety:

***Look out for one other.***

The University of Vermont's number one priority is to support a healthy and safe community. Resources that may be helpful include:

- UVM CALS Student Services  
<https://www.uvm.edu/cals/student-services>
- Center for Health and Wellbeing:  
<https://www.uvm.edu/health>
- Counseling & Psychiatry Services (CAPS)  
<https://www.uvm.edu/health/CAPS>  
Phone: (802) 656-3340
- C.A.R.E.  
If you are concerned about a UVM community member or are concerned about a specific event, we encourage you to contact the Dean of Students Office (802-656-3380). If you would like to remain anonymous, you can report your concerns online by visiting the Dean of Students website at <https://www.uvm.edu/studentaffairs>

Lest any of this, especially that last section, be considered just more boilerplate syllabus talk, please let me assure you that my number-one job as a faculty member is to support my students in any way that I can.

***This course is taught in memory of Dr. Robert Parsons. His words or words inspired by him inform this syllabus and the experience we will share during this semester.***