

Sustainable Farm Syllabus-Table of Contents

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Overview

Welcome to the Sustainable Farm class and lab. In this class you will learn both business skills and organic farming techniques. There are 4 sections to the class, each focusing on a specific phase of business. You'll begin by understanding the **P**lanning phase of business in weeks 1-9. During the **E**stablish phase in weeks 10-18 you will work on creating a product. The **M**arketing phase will teach you to present and place your product in weeks 19-27. Finally in the last quarter of the course you will **A**ssess the product by analyzing the successes and failures experienced along the way.

Class Format

The class consists of both lecture sessions and hands on lab. The lecture sessions focus on general business skills and require short weekly homework projects. Each of the 9 week sections will have 2 quizzes and 1 test. The lab sessions require students to work in teams on different aspects of the farm. Students will change roles or jobs in the lab every 3 weeks. Lecture sessions will generally occur on Monday, Wednesday and Thursday. Lab sessions occur on Tuesdays and Fridays. Since this is a farm, basic maintenance must be done at least every 3-4 days. In addition, there will be 1 field trip during each section that relates to the topics.

Textbooks

Plenty: Eating Locally on the 100-Mile Diet
by Alisa Smith, J.B. Mackinnon
ISBN 978-0-307-34733-6

Blue Ocean Strategy: How to Create Uncontested Market Space and Make Competition Irrelevant
by W. Chan Kim, Renée Mauborgne
ISBN 1-59139-619-0

The Thing in the Bushes: Turning Organizational Blind Spots into Competitive Advantage
by Kevin Graham Ford, James D. Osterhaus
ISBN 1-57683-228-7

Section 1 – Planning a Business

Week 1-Class overview

Lecture Topics: Overview of class structure, syllabus review, goal setting

Online research: Goal setting <http://www.about-goal-setting.com/goal-setting-tutorial.html> , Edible Schoolyard program <http://www.edibleschoolyard.org/>

Homework: Write 3 personal goal statements for this class. Each goal must be specific to a skill, behavior, or knowledge you wish to attain. You must state how you will know when you have met that goal.

Week 2-Where products come from

Lecture Topics: Manufacturing in the USA, tangible vs. intangible products, field trip to a local manufacturing plant

Online research: Vanishing farmlands article <http://www.politicsdaily.com/2010/05/28/vanishing-farmland-how-its-destablizing-americas-food-supply/>, how far food travels http://www.cuesa.org/sustainable_ag/issues/foodtravel.php, local food sources <http://www.foodroutes.org/>

Homework: Create a list of 10 common products in your home. List the product, brand and where it was manufactured. Note that 'bottled in' or 'packed in' statements are not where the product was actually made. At least 5 items on your list must be food and beverage items.

Field Trip

Week 3-Where ideas come from

Lecture Topics: Brainstorming, brilliant failures

Online research: Brainstorming <http://www.mindtools.com/brainstm.html>, Institute of brilliant failures <http://www.briljantemislukkingen.nl/EN/>

Homework: Brainstorm a list of business ideas that appeal to you. The list can include any type of business. Keep the list in the order that the idea came to you. Your list should contain 20-30 different ideas.

Quiz

Week 4-The basics of starting a business

Lecture Topics: Legal aspects, types of business entities, startup costs

Online research: 10 Steps to Starting a Business <http://www.business.gov/start/start-a-business.html>

Homework: Using one of the ideas from your list in week 3 homework, write a 1 page overview of the steps and research needed to start that business.

Week 5-Profiles of early entrepreneurs

Lecture Topics: Auto industry, cotton gin, gold rush, railroads

Online research: Edi Whitney http://inventors.about.com/od/cstartinventions/a/cotton_gin.htm, Gold rush <http://www.isu.edu/~trinmich/teacher.html>

Homework: Choose one of the early inventors or entrepreneurs discussed in class and write a 1 page review of why you think they were a success or a failure.

Week 6-Profiles of modern day entrepreneurs

Lecture Topics: Later entrepreneurs (Starbucks, Nike, Yahoo, Google, pet rock, yoyo, Frisbee, etc)

Online research: List of famous entrepreneurs

http://entrepreneurs.about.com/od/famousentrepreneurs/Famous_Entrepreneurs.htm, Effective leader building teams <http://timberry.bplans.com/2008/01/10-tips-from-st.html>,

Homework: Write a 1 page profile of a modern day entrepreneur of your choice. It should include the person's background, how they got started, and where they are today.

Quiz

Week 7-Business basics and buzzwords

Lecture Topics: Bookkeeping and check book balance, inventory control, purchase orders, other terminology

Online research: Business Dictionary <http://www.businessdictionary.com/>, Good and bad buzzwords <http://www.inc.com/magazine/20090401/the-good-the-bad-and-the-buzzy.html>

Homework: Using the instructions in your workbook, create a simple spreadsheet for inventory and sales.

Week 8-Business meeting etiquette

Lecture Topics: Participating in meetings, organizing meetings

Online research: Meeting rules <http://ezinearticles.com/?Seven-Meeting-Etiquette-Rules-for-Professionals&id=676644>,

Homework: Create a meeting agenda to discuss issues related to the lab role you are in this week.

Week 9-Business plans

Lecture Topics: Components of a business plan, using templates for writing business plans

Online research: Business template <http://web.sba.gov/busplantemplate/BizPlanStart.cfm>

Homework: Using the template provided write a high level business plan for you're the business you outlined in week 4.

Section 1 Exam

Section 2 – Establishing a product

Week 10-Product review

Lecture Topics: Brainstorming products to sell, choosing the right products, understanding scope

Online research: <http://www.localharvest.org/>,
<http://www.sustainabletable.org/issues/eatlocal/#localvsust>, <http://foodinc.com>,
http://www.theurbanfarmers.org/The_Urban_Farmers/Welcome.html

Homework: Create an overview of a farm product you wish to introduce. Include why it is a good choice, what challenges you will face, who your biggest competitors are.

Week 11-Inventions, patents and trademarks

Lecture Topics: How to protect your product, Patents, Trademarks, and Copyrights

Online research: <http://www.edisonnation.com/pages/searches>,
<http://www.legalzoom.com/trademarks-patents-copyrights/trademarks-patents-copyrights.html>,
<http://tess2.uspto.gov/>

Homework: Research the web for inventors who lost or struggled protecting their product and write a 1 page overview. For an example see the story on variable windshield wipers in your workbook.

Week 12-Researching competitors

Lecture Topics: Successful sustainable farms, local and distant competitors, tools for business research

Online research: Dunn and Bradstreet <http://www.dnb.com/us/>, find local farms
<http://www.localharvest.org/>

Homework: Select 3 products of a competitor and write a paragraph on the competitive advantages that your product has.

Quiz

Week 13-Pricing and positioning your products

Lecture Topics: Positioning products, supply and demand and price, field trip to a local supermarket to research prices

Online research: Search on "how to price products"

Homework: Find 3 online articles on how to price products and write 1 paragraph on each article summarizing the advice.

Field Trip

Week 14-Setting production goals

Lecture Topics: Estimating man hours, streamlining the production process

Online research: Wiki on man hours <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Man-hour>

Homework: Write 1 page on the production process for a specific product the farm produces. Highlight areas where time could be saved by changing the process.

Week 15-Delegation of work

Lecture Topics: Resource planning, using skills and talents to advantage, understanding scope of tasks

Online research: Article on how to delegate work
<http://www.zeromillion.com/business/management/delegating-work.html>, tips on delegating
<http://www.powerhomebiz.com/062005/delegate.htm>

Homework: Choose 3 farm tasks and write statements for each on how you would delegate and explain these to another team member.

Quiz

Week 16-Managing resources

Lecture Topics: Basic supervision techniques, what makes a great leader,

Online research: Search online for "what makes a great leader"

Homework: Using the worksheet provided do a self assessment of your leadership skills. Write specific objectives for areas you need to improve and how you might do it. For areas of strength explain how those can be used to your advantage.

Week 17-Understanding process flow

Lecture Topics: Why are processes needed, how to write a process flow, what's the difference in process and procedures

Online research: How to streamline a purchasing process

http://www.ehow.com/how_5456399_streamline-purchasing-process.html

Homework: Choose a process used on the farm and write 1 page on the process flow, your choice of formats.

Week 18-Teambuilding

Lecture Topics: How to build teams, team building activities in class, cultural sensitivity

Online research: Team building activities <http://wilderdom.com/games/InitiativeGames.html>, activities <http://www.businessballs.com/teambuilding.htm>

Homework: Review the online team building activities then write a 1 page plan to integrate that activity in class.

Section 2 Exam

Section 3 – Marketing your product and yourself

Week 19-The marketing plan

Lecture Topics: Review sample marketing plans, How to write a marketing plan

Online research: Sample marketing plans http://www.mplans.com/sample_marketing_plans/, elements of marketing plans <http://www.zeromillion.com/marketing/templateplan.html>

Homework: Using the template provided write a marketing plan for a product group within the farm.

Week 20-Branding and corporate identity

Lecture Topics: Successful branding examples (Nike, Citibank, Paul Newman products), Elements of creating a 'brand'

Online research: wiki on corporate identity http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Corporate_identity, quick brand tools <http://www.brandsoftheworld.com/>

Homework: Choose 1 element of branding and write a 1 page assessment of the farms brand. Be sure to include what is working well and where improvements can be made.

Week 21-Internet presence

Lecture Topics: Elements of a good website, types of web presence, content management systems, SEO (Search Engine Optimization)

Online research: Portfolio of great web designs <http://www.mezzoblue.com/zengarden/alldesigns/>, content management systems compared <http://www.cmsmatrix.org/matrix/cms-matrix>

Homework: Create a list of functional elements the farm might use on the web. Describe how each would benefit the business.

Quiz

Week 22-Social Media Marketing

Lecture Topics: Types of Social Media Marketing, Creating a social media campaign

Online research: Article marketing <http://www.zamdoo.co.uk/article-marketing-for-content-distribution-and-back-links>, other social media <http://ping.fm>, <http://mashable.com/>, <http://izea.com/>

Homework: Choose your favorite form of social media marketing and write a 1 page overview of how it can be implemented for the farm.

Week 23-eCommerce

Lecture Topics: Forms of eCommerce, Shopping cart systems, How to get your products on home shopping network

Online research: Google analytics <http://www.google.com/analytics/features.html>, well run company <http://www.zappos.com/>, comparison of shopping cart systems <http://shopping-cart-review.toptenreviews.com/>

Homework: Choose one of the shopping cart systems and write a 1 page overview of the features, benefits and cost.

Week 24-Sales presentations

Lecture Topics: Creating a product presentation, How to reach and pitch large stores (Wal-Mart, Costco, Sams club), class presentations

Online research: How to create a presentation http://www.esmalloffice.com/SBR_template.cfm?DocNumber=PL12_3900.htm

Homework: Choose 1 product from the farm and create a 3 minute presentation about that product. You will present your presentation to the class.

Quiz

Week 25-Advertising media

Lecture Topics: Various forms of advertising (magazines, newspaper, radio, billboards etc), field trip to a local advertising agency

Online research: Types of advertising <http://www.buzzle.com/articles/different-types-of-advertising.html>, 8 types of advertising http://advertising.suite101.com/article.cfm/types_of_advertising

Homework: Compare and contrast 2 very different forms of advertising in a 1 page overview.

Field Trip

Week 26-Public relations

Lecture Topics: Overview of Public Relations, Key PR concepts and techniques

Online research: PR overview http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Public_relations, Public Relations society of America <http://www.prsa.org/>

Homework: Read the local newspaper or watch the local news on TV and identify 3 stories that were the result of a company's PR efforts. Write 1 paragraph describing each of the stories and how it promotes the company. See the examples in your workbook.

Week 27-Networking

Lecture Topics: How networking works, building a professional network, local networking opportunities

Online research: Business networking overview http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_networking, Global networking directory <http://www.bni.com/>, resources for finding network groups <http://www.rileyguide.com/support.html>

Homework: Find 1 local networking opportunity and write a 1 page plan on how you can promote the farm through networking with that group.

Section 3 Exam

Section 4 – Assessing Business

Week 28-Reviewing progress against goals

Lecture Topics: Ways to track progress, adjusting goals and objectives, the time / cost / scope triangle

Online research: Project management triangle http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Project_triangle, progress cards for tracking <http://www.progresscards.com/NCSCA.pdf>

Homework: Refer to the farm project goals set at the beginning of the course. Choose one of the goals and use the template provided to assess progress against the goal.

Week 29-Benchmarking against similar businesses

Lecture Topics: What is benchmarking, how to find business to use for benchmarking, benchmarking techniques.

Online research: About benchmarking <http://www.benchnet.com/wib.htm>

Homework: Select one of the competitors you or a classmate used in the week 12 exercise and then use the template to record benchmarking data against that company.

Week 30-Understanding customer feedback

Lecture Topics: How to gather customer feedback, Assessing customer comments, Overview of customer service

Online research: Ways to get customer feedback <http://www.allbusiness.com/sales/customer-service/4301195-1.html>, utilizing customer feedback <http://www.destinationcrm.com/Articles/Web-Exclusives/Viewpoints/9-Ways-to-Successfully-Manage-Customer-Feedback-66492.aspx>

Homework: Create 10 questions to be used on a customer feedback card for the farm. The questions can be multiple choice, a rating system, or free text format.

Quiz

Week 31-Employee performance ratings

Lecture Topics: Review of common performance review cycles, field trip to a local company HR department

Online research: Tips of performance reviews
<http://www.businessmanagementdaily.com/glp/25459/performance-review-examples.html>

Homework: Using the form provided rate 2 members of your work team. As a group of 3 you will deliver the reviews to one another.

Field Trip

Week 32-Reporting tools

Lecture Topics: Types of business reports, using data in reports, Overview of reporting tools, ways to display and interpret information

Online research: General report writing <http://www.howtobooks.co.uk/business/reports/report-writing.asp>,

Homework: Using the template provided fill in the basics of a quarterly report for the farm.

Week 33-Assessing profit centers

Lecture Topics: Assessing multiple profit centers, reporting on profit center contributions to overall business.

Online research: Search for farms with multiple profit centers.

Homework: Locate a farm with multiple profit centers and write a 1 page discussion of how the profit centers are separate, linked and contribute to the whole of the business.

Quiz

Week 34-Annual reports

Lecture Topics: Purpose of annual reports, Components of annual reports, Review sample annual reports

Online research: How to read an annual report <http://www.wisebread.com/how-to-read-an-annual-report>

Homework: Review a sample annual report and write a 1 page report of the purpose and how the report meets the purpose.

Week 35-Final class assessments

Lecture Topics: Review year long class; assess profit/loss, final exam

Online research: none

Homework: Study for final exam

Final Exam

Week 36-Class summary and celebration

Lecture Topics: Project debriefings, feedback on class, congratulations to us!

Online research: none

Homework: Congratulate yourself!