IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY – DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMICS

ECON 496: TRAVEL COURSE

AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION, BUSINESS, AND TRADE IN MEXICO

COURSE ADMINISTRATION

Term: Spring 2004

Class Meetings: W 4:10-5:30 in 468D Heady Hall

Instructors: Dr. William Edwards  Dr. Sergio H. Lence
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Arne Hallam, Chair
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Course Description:
The focus of this study program is to compare agricultural production, business, and trade in Mexico and the United States. The course also discusses the history and culture of Mexico. The course consists of class lectures, projects, and visits to agribusinesses in Mexico.

Course Objective:
The course objective is to equip students with the knowledge and necessary skills to understand, interpret, and analyze issues pertinent to the relative advantages and disadvantages between the U.S. and Mexico for producing, transporting, processing, marketing, and consuming major agricultural commodities, and their role in the global market.

Additional Information:
News and other relevant course materials will be posted in the course webpage (http://www.econ.iastate.edu/classes/econ496/lence/spring2004/). This should be the primary source of course information.
Course Projects:
Ideally, the projects would help understand the relative advantages and disadvantages of U.S. and Mexican agribusinesses, especially in the context of distribution of major agricultural commodities and/or products. Some possible topics for the projects include the following:

- Commodities: Corn, feed grains, oilseeds, coffee, livestock, citrus, vegetables, sugar, flowers, etc.
- North America Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA).
- Trade regulations in the U.S. and Mexico.
- International Maize and Wheat Improvement Center (CYMMIT).
- Agricultural policies, agricultural credit, and/or agricultural research in the U.S and Mexico.
- Aztec agriculture.
- Mexican Agricultural Commodity Agency (CONASUPO).
- "Ejidos" (collective farms in Mexico).
- Mexican revolution of 1917.
- Comparison of the evolution of agriculture in the U.S. and Mexico.

The list above is not exclusive; students are encouraged to investigate other topics relevant to the objectives of the course.

Each student will select a topic/issue to complete two projects. Project 1 will tend to focus on the U.S. and will be due February 25, whereas Project 2 will concentrate on Mexico and will be due April 14 (e.g., for a student selecting corn, Project 1 will analyze the U.S. corn market and Project 2 will focus on the Mexican corn market and a comparison between the two countries). Each project will consist of a class presentation and a written report.

Grading:
The final grade for the class will be calculated using the following weights:

- Project 1: 25%
- Project 2: 50%
- Individual Participation: 25%

Individual participation involves in-class participation, class attendance, and professional participation during the trip.

Coursework:
The tentative schedule of classes is the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January 14</td>
<td>Introduction and background information (presentation by Drs. William Edwards and Sergio Lence). Information for international travelers (presentation by guest speaker Eduarda Becerra). Note: This meeting will take place in Student Health Center. Health issues for international travellers (presentation by guest speaker Mary Fosse). Tentative itinerary for trip to Mexico (presentation by Dr. William Edwards).</td>
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<tr>
<td>January 21</td>
<td>Mexican history (presentation by guest speaker Dr. Patrick Barr-Melej).</td>
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<tr>
<td>February 4</td>
<td>Mexican agriculture (presentation by guest speaker Dr. Ricardo Salvador).</td>
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<tr>
<td>February 11</td>
<td>Agricultural marketing and trade in Mexico (presentation by Dr. Sergio Lence).</td>
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<tr>
<td>February 18</td>
<td>Agricultural economy of Mexico (presentation by guest speaker Dr. David Hansen).</td>
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<tr>
<td>February 25</td>
<td>First presentation by students.</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 3</td>
<td>First presentation by students.</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 10</td>
<td>Final preparation for trip.</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 24</td>
<td>No formal meeting, consultations for student projects.</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 31</td>
<td>NAFTA (presentation by Dr. Sergio Lence).</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 7</td>
<td>Farm management in Mexico (presentation by Dr. William Edwards).</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 14</td>
<td>Second presentation by students.</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 21</td>
<td>Second presentation by students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 28</td>
<td>Final meeting.</td>
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