

FRE 302 SMALL BUSINESS MANAGEMENT IN AGRI-FOOD INDUSTRIES - 2025

Instructor: Dr. Karen W. Taylor, PhD, MBA, P.Ag. | UBC Food & Resource Economics
Office Hours: **In Person:** M 10:00 am to 11:00 am (office MCML on 3rd floor) and **On Zoom:** Thursdays TBD
Email: kw.taylor@ubc.ca (or via Canvas)

CLASS SCHEDULE

Monday & Wednesday, 8:30 - 10:00 am – In-Person Course

CLASS SITES/PLATFORMS

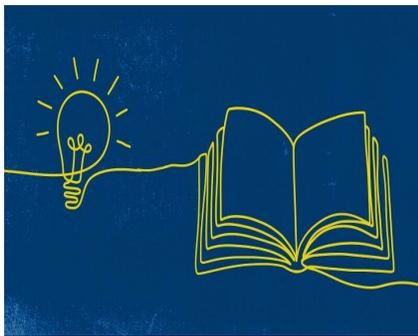
Platform	Access	Use
UBC Canvas	FRE 302 Course Canvas	Access Course Materials
Piazza Wiki style Q&A discussion forum set up in Canvas	Course Canvas> Menu > Piazza	Participation/Idea Sharing/Q& A. Minimizes redundant email re: questions and builds a collective knowledge base that can be accessed over the term.
Google Sheets	Link to add/edit	In-Class Cases and Questions
iClicker	Go to iClicker and set up account	Attendance and In-Class Polls
Mentimeter	-	In-Class Polls

COURSE DESCRIPTION

FRE 302 Small Business Management in Agri-Food Industries introduces students to **sustainable entrepreneurship in the food and agribusiness sector** including **principles of sustainable business planning with an emphasis in the areas of financial statement development, financing, market analysis & strategies, and sustainability management & reporting**. Emphasis will be placed on the environmental aspect of sustainability management.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Understand and articulate the concept of sustainable entrepreneurship including its principles, goals, and significance in contemporary business environment and the applications in the food and agribusiness sector.
- Identify the scope and major characteristics of the food and agribusiness sector.
- Describe the major elements of a sustainable business plan, business pitch, and business planning process.
- Identify best practices in developing a comprehensive business plan integrating sustainability with the business concept, production/operations, financial, and marketing viability.
- Identify opportunities for sustainable practices within a business operations and management context, incorporating environmental, social and governance strategies.
- Identify opportunities and challenges for firms when they operate a sustainable business.
- Develop a rubric to evaluate secondary business research sources and AI engines results commonly used to develop business plans.
- Describe the major legal structures and identify the criteria used to select the legal structure that “fits” a business.
- Develop, use, and interpret key financial statements (balance sheet, net income, and cash flow), financial ratios, and key performance indicators important in business planning and viability assessment.
- Identify and describe the major financing options, challenges, and tradeoffs for sustainable businesses in the food and agribusiness sector
- Describe and use market analysis (industry and competitive) frameworks/models best suited in business plans.
- Identify and develop marketing strategies useful in sustainable business plans.



Strategies for Getting the Most from the Assigned Readings, Videos, and Podcast material

1. **Skim:** Skim the material to define the main topic/s, level of difficulty, and time required for the reading.
2. **Familiarize yourself with the core points you should get from the material.** Identify the points by asking yourself:
 - a. **What do I already know about this subject?**
AND
 - b. **What do I need to get out of this reading?**
 - c. Use the Course Learning Outcomes, Lecture notes Content topic listing (found on the first slide) and Questions (found on the last slide) as a guide to identify the core points. Research has shown that when students concentrate on a select purpose for reading (i.e., research evaluation criteria or KPIs for food businesses) they increase both their speed and comprehension.
3. **Read the Material with Purpose:** You will remember more if you read with questions in your mind, rather than adopting the ‘sponge’ approach (e.g., simply trying to absorb everything). Read, view , or listen (**and take notes**) while keeping in mind the core points.
4. **Test Your Comprehension:** Three ways to test comprehension:
 - i. After you read a section of the textbook summarize the main points in a few sentences
 - ii. Create a mind map of the main points of a reading,
 - iii. Try to answer questions at end of course lecture slides

EVALUATION

Assignments (Best 2 of 3) (Individual)	10
In-Class Activities (Best 4 of 6) (Individual)	8
Business Plan Case (teams)	20
Participation (Individual)	10
Midterm (Individual)	20
Final Exam (Individual)	32
	100%

ASSIGNMENTS (BEST 2 OF 3 COUNTED TOWARD GRADE)

Objectives: To provide students with the opportunity to practice applying course concepts/models and encourage a practical understanding of the concepts that goes beyond memorization.

Working with Others on an Assignment: You may work with other students, but **you must turn in your own individual assignment**. If you have an answer that is too close to another student's answer, you will both be given a 0 in the question &/or assignment without recourse and this will be handled according to the policies of the program/university.

Assignment Schedule: Due dates/times will also be posted on Canvas. Assignments will be posted approximately 7 to 10 days prior to the due date. Solutions to assignments will be posted to Canvas shortly after the due date/time.

Late assignments are not accepted. That means there are no partial scores for late submissions, no makeup assignments, and no reallocation of marks, do-overs, or extra credit options.

Best 2 of 3 Assignment grades counted as your score: Three assignments will be provided during the course. You can complete all 3 assignments and I will use the best 2 of 3 scores or you can complete only 2 assignments and I will use those 2 grades to compute your assignment grade. Your choice. No need to decide ahead of time.

Excel must be used for all financial-based assignments.

Format for Assignments:

Title page with course number, assignment number, student name and UBC number

Answers provided in the correct order and PDF format. Be sure that your answers from excel worksheets are readable – often they are much too small to read.

Excel files must also be uploaded with assignment.

Be sure to show your work on all assignments - not just a single answer.

Messy or disorganized assignments are not acceptable and will result in either a zero or reduced grade.

EXAMS

Objectives: Exams are a form of learning activity that motivate students to study and uptake course content. In addition, exams provide feedback that students can then use to improve their understanding.

Exam Length and Format: Exam format will include short answers and computational questions. Examinations will be closed books and closed notes. All exams will be cumulative. The midterm will be 80 minutes during class time and the final exam (TBA 2 to 3 hours). Exams dates will be posted on the UBC Exam Schedule.

Calculator Use: During the midterm and final exam, students will be permitted to use a basic non-scientific calculator. The calculator must NOT be capable of storing text or alphanumeric data or provide Internet connectivity. Non-regulation calculators will be removed, and no replacement calculator will be provided. Students will not be permitted to use programmable calculators even if you clear all programs out of the memory of the calculator.

Unable to Write Exam Due to Illness: If you are unable to take an examination, you must have a verifiable doctor's note, contact the course instructor before or immediately after the scheduled exam date/time and present documentation explaining your absence. If the excuse is considered legitimate, then the weight of the exam will be transferred to the final exam. There will be no makeup midterm examinations.

PARTICIPATION

Objectives: To encourage students to be engaged with the course material and contribute their knowledge to the collective. You will be asked to log your participation via Canvas survey every 3 weeks.

Avenues to Demonstrate Course Engagement

Opportunities for students to display course engagement:

“In the News” Wednesday: Students are encouraged to submit current news/events/articles (via Piazza by Tuesday 8pm) that are connected to our current lecture topics. We will take a select set of this class on Wednesday. **Post the title, 2 to 3 sentence summary, web link and reasons why it is connected to the current FRE 302 topic.** See example on Piazza.

Ask Quality Questions During Lectures: Quality questions leverage course content, facilitate high-level thinking, and engage other students in active listening and critical thinking.

Active contribution: Provide comments/follow-up questions/answers, responses for assignments, cases, lecture questions, volunteer as scribe for Google doc and cases in class, and comment on Piazza articles and questions.

Active discussion /contribution: Via Google sheet and In-Class for Cases and Lecture Questions or small group break-out discussion sessions.

Quick write: Students will be asked to spend a minute quietly writing a short answer in response to a question or prompt during class and then volunteer to share their answers with everyone.

Jigsaw strategy. When working on cases, groups of students will be asked to become "experts" on a small section of knowledge, and then will be asked to content to the rest of the class.

Responsive Lecture: Students work in groups or individual to generate, and rank, questions based on course material (perhaps from lecture or reading) for the instructor to answer. Each group submits their questions. After class, the instructor reviews and organizes the questions, and then responds to the top-ranked question at the next class.

Answer Polls: in-class or online.

Attendance and Polls: in class via iClicker.

Participation Rubric

Category	Exceptional 4	Proficient 3	Satisfactory/Fair 2	Unacceptable 1
Frequency of participation	Student initiates contributions regularly during class /online platforms.	Student initiates contribution semi-regularly during class /online platforms.	Students make an occasional contribution.	Students do not attend many lectures or do not initiate any contributions.
Quality of comments	Contributions are always insightful & constructive; uses appropriate terminology. Contributions balanced between general impressions, opinions and specific, thoughtful criticisms or questions.	Contributions are mostly insightful & constructive; mostly use appropriate terminology. Occasionally comments are too general or not relevant to the discussion.	Contributions are sometimes constructive, with occasional signs of insight. Student does not use appropriate terminology; comments not always relevant to the discussion.	Contributions are uninformative, lacking in appropriate terminology. Heavy reliance on opinion & personal taste, e.g. "I love it," "I hate it," "It is bad."
Overall, in-class interaction	Student listens attentively to others and builds on their remarks; is respectful and supportive of others; has positive attitude; stays focused on the topic and alert.	Student is mostly attentive to others, and any criticism is done respectfully. Stays mostly focused on the topic and has a generally positive attitude.	Student often or occasionally makes disruptive remarks or is inattentive while others speak; may need reminders to appreciate others' contributions and to stay focused on class.	Student rarely listens to others; is regularly distracted while others speak or does not pay attention. Student is often critical of the work or ideas of others and rarely behaves in a respectful manner.

BUSINESS PLAN CASE (GROUP MAX 4 INDIVIDUALS)

Objectives: To provide students with the opportunity to apply the sustainability, business concept, production/operations, financial, and marketing principles gained in the course to a real-world business idea and to obtain practice in professional business communication.

Groups: The **business plan group should consist of 4 individuals**. Peer evaluation of group members will be complete midway and at the end of the project. Groups will not be assigned, and you are free to develop your own groups based on shared interest and expertise. Create a Group in Canvas with your business plan partners.

Business Idea: You will be required to identify a business idea that fits the sustainable entrepreneur concept and is associated with the food and agribusiness sector and then develop a business case.

Deliverables: A handout outlining dates and drafts for the business plan case will be provided in the third week of class. Deliverables due dates will be staged throughout the term as connected with course topics. A project rubric will be provided.

IN-CLASS ACTIVITIES (INDIVIDUAL)

Objectives: To encourage students to engage in class, increase awareness of the type of exam questions to expect, and provide practice developing clear and concise answers to abstract and concept questions.

Individual 10 minute in-class activities will be completed throughout the term. These will not be announced ahead of time and must be completed individually and without the use of course materials in approximately 10 minutes and submitted at the end of the class during which they were assigned.

Grading Rubric: 0 missing information/poor; 0.5 adequate but needs details/work; 1 satisfactory.

Late submissions will not be accepted. There are no do-overs or extra credit for missed activities. If you miss an activity for any reason, you will receive a grade of 0 in that activity.

Grade Allocation: Your grade will be assessed using the best four grades of the six activities, with each activity contributing equally to the 8 %.

Solutions: Posted shortly after the in-class activity has been completed.

SUCCESS FACTORS FOR FRE 302

Complete Assigned Tasks and Materials



This course utilizes a range of teaching tools/techniques designed to support your gain of knowledge. Specific teaching tools/ techniques include assigned readings/podcasts/videos, structured lecture notes, cases, assignments, hot topic current articles, in-class activities, participation activities, exams, and concept questions during class and included in the lecture slides. Read the assigned materials and skim the lecture slides before class so you know what we are covering in the lecture. Complete all assigned tasks. **This will** support your knowledge gain and increase efficiency of exam study time!

Participate in Class



Actively participate in class discussions, Canvas discussions, Piazza, cases, and polls and respond to questions by instructor and other students. **This will** engage you in the course content to promote easier knowledge gain. **Plus**, when you speak up in class, you learn to express your ideas in a way that others can understand and when you ask questions, you learn how to obtain information to enhance their own understanding of a topic.



Take Notes During Class

Write down questions you still have about the topic, examples noted in class, case answers, Q/A from class, and select content noted as being important or unimportant. **This will** help you focus on the main concepts, eliminate less important topics, and improve your comprehension and retention of material.



Be an Active Learner

Be an active learner - push yourself to ask questions, pay attention, complete quality in-class activities, come to office hours with quality questions, be organized, and use strong time management skills. Too many students just “watch” the lecture. **This will** increase your uptake of the material and decrease your study time.



Collaborate with Others

Practice leadership skills by taking a moderator/leader role in a group discussion and teamwork skills by encouraging group members to participate and contribute. **This will** allow you to develop collaboration skills useful for your future career and gain new perspectives during discussions and group projects.

COURSE POLICIES

GENERAL POLICIES

Recordings

Classes are designed as and are intended to be in-person. However, if the classroom allows, the Instructor will request to have classes recorded automatically. (Link will be provided to students through Canvas).

Copyright

All materials of this course (course handouts, lecture slides, assessments, course readings, etc.) are the intellectual property of the instructor or licensed to be used in this course by the copyright owner. Redistribution of these materials by any means without permission of the copyright holder(s) constitutes a breach of copyright and may lead to academic discipline and could be subject to legal action. Further, audio or video recording of classes are not permitted without the prior consent of the instructor.

Respectfulness in the Classroom

Students are expected to be respectful of their colleagues at all times, including instructor, course TAs, and student cohort. This means being attentive and conscious of words and actions and their impact on others, listening to people with an open mind, treating all class members equally and understanding diversity.

Respect for Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion

LFS strives to promote an intellectual community that is enhanced by diversity along various dimensions including status as a First Nation, Métis, Inuit, or Indigenous person, race, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, political beliefs, social class, and/or disability. It is expected that all students and members of our community conduct themselves with empathy and respect for others.

Centre for Accessibility

The [Centre for Accessibility](#) (CfA) facilitates disability-related accommodations and programming initiatives designed to remove barriers for students with disabilities and ongoing medical conditions. If you are registered with the CfA and are eligible for exam accommodations, it is your responsibility to let Olivier Ntwali, Academic Program Coordinator, and each of your Course Instructors know. You should book your exam writing with the CFA using its [exam reservation system](#): for midterm exams or quizzes, at least 7 days in advance; and final exams, 7 days before the start of the formal exam period.

USING GENERATIVE ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI) TOOLS (CHATGPT, BARD, OR OTHER GENERATIVE AI MODELS)

Together, we will use ChatGPT in FRE 302 to conduct and evaluate business research, check grammar and logic, and develop outlines as a way of testing ChatGPT as a research assistant tool. However, in order to develop your own FRE 302 competencies, I will request that you **DO NOT** use AI to develop your business case or assignment content, conduct analysis, and/or create presentation content unless it is specified in the assignment as being OK to use AI.

To Note: Using these models to generate content or conduct analysis for assessments without proper citation and/or if asked not to use AI, is considered plagiarism and academic misconduct. If students are encouraged to use AI for select uses for submitted assessment, they must cite the AI generator using citations consistent with the UBC Academic Honesty Standards. (Note: The use of AI is changing, and the Instructor may advise students of changes to policies and/or recommendations during the course.)

TURN IT IN ACCESS & REQUIRED USE

Students should check all their assignments/papers/group case for plagiarism prior to submission. This can be done by submitting materials to the Turnitin service and reviewing the similarity index reports. Instructions for this will be provided with the business case.

To note:

- You do not have to upload the turn it in report with your submission – this is for your use.
- The Instructor/Course Assistant will submit all assignments/papers/group reports to Turnitin.

ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT

Academic honesty is essential to the continued functioning of The University of British Columbia as an institution of higher learning and research. All UBC students are expected to behave as honest and responsible members of an academic community. Breach of those expectations or failure to follow the appropriate policies, principles, rules, and guidelines of the University with respect to academic honesty may result in disciplinary action.

Academic misconduct that is subject to disciplinary measures includes, but is not limited, to the following:

- **Plagiarism**, which is intellectual theft, occurs where an individual submits or presents the oral or written work of another person as his or her own. Correct citations must be provided where applicable for all reports/assignments. In all MFRE courses, material will be submitted to a service which UBC subscribes to, called TurnItIn. This service checks textual material for originality. For more information, review the [TurnItIn website](#).
- **Using Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools like ChatGPT, Bard, or other Generative AI models** to generate content or conduct analysis for evaluations, without proper citation and or if asked not to use AI, is considered plagiarism and academic misconduct. If students use AI in their submissions, they must cite the AI generator using citations consistent with the UBC Academic Honesty Standards.
- **Cheating**, which may include, but is not limited to falsification of any material subject to academic evaluation, unauthorized collaborative work; or use of unauthorized means to complete an examination.
- **Working with Others on an Assignment** You are encouraged to work with other students, but you must turn in your own individual assignment. If you have an answer that is too close to another student's answer, this will be considered academic dishonesty and this will be handled according to the MFRE and UBC policies.
- **Resubmission of Material**, submitting the same, or substantially the same, essay, presentation, or assignment more than once (whether the earlier submission was at this or another institution) unless prior approval has been obtained from the instructor(s) to whom the assignment is to be submitted.
- **Use of Academic Ghostwriting Services**, including hiring of writing or research services and submitting papers or assignments as his or her own.

Student Responsibility: Students are responsible for informing themselves of the guidelines of acceptable and non-acceptable conduct for examinations and graded assignments as presented in the UBC academic misconduct policies, Review the following web sites for details:

- UBC Academic Misconduct and Discipline (<http://www.calendar.ubc.ca/Vancouver/index.cfm?tree=3,54,111,0>)
- UBC Learning Commons web-based Academic Integrity (<http://learningcommons.ubc.ca/academic-integrity/>).

Penalties for Academic Dishonesty: The integrity of academic work depends on the honesty of all those who work in this environment and the observance of accepted conventions. Academic misconduct is treated as a serious offence at UBC and within the LFS/FRE program. Turn it in will be used in for all assignments and papers to review similarity index and academic dishonesty. Penalties for academic dishonesty are applied at the discretion of the course instructor. Incidences of academic misconduct may result in a reduction of grade or a mark of zero on the assignment or examination with more serious consequences such as a zero on the course or required withdrawal being applied if the matter is referred to the Dean's office and/or President's Advisory Committee on Student Discipline.

COURSE STRUCTURE

WEEK	TOPICS	
1/2	Sustainability and Sustainable Entrepreneurship	What is Sustainability? An Overview Sustainable Entrepreneurship: What is it? How does it differ from Entrepreneurship? Key aspects of Sustainable Entrepreneurship in the food and agribusiness sector
2/3	Food & Agribusiness Sector	Scope of the food and agribusiness sector Characteristics of the food and agribusiness sector Government policies and regulations Consumer preferences and trends Investment, market and financial characteristics Sustainable and environmental issues Challenges and opportunities for firms when they operate a sustainable business in the food and agribusiness sector.
2/3	The Sustainable Business Plan	Purpose Elements Audience Process Mistakes/Best Practices Document: Professionalism. Style, Content, Executive Summary
4	Business Model	Sustainable Products Idea Generation and Assessment Value Proposition and Critical Success Factors Target Customer Vision/Mission/Goals Legal Structures
5/6/7	Financial Management	Financial Statements: Developing balance sheet, net income, and cash flow statements for the business plan. Analysis for Business Plans: Ratios and Key Performance Indicators (KPI): Breakeven and Sensitivity Analysis
MIDTERM: Feb 26		
8/9	Market Analysis & Strategy	Business research: Sources and Evaluation of Secondary sources and AI engines Industry and Competitive Frameworks/Models 4P Strategy: price, product, promotion, and place
10	Operations and Management	Identify opportunities for sustainable practices within a business operations and management context, incorporating environmental, social and governance strategies.
11/12	Financing the Business	Major financing options, challenges, and tradeoffs for sustainable businesses in the food and agribusiness sector What are Banks Looking for? Time Value of Money: Investment, Saving, and Loans Risk: financial & business
13	Business Plan Presentation	Professional Business Writing Style, content & format of a professional business plan document. Business plan pitches.

FINAL EXAM: DATE TBD, as per UBC Exam Schedule