

Current Issues in Agronomy: Capstone Course for M.S. in Agronomy Distance Education Curriculum (A01-smith103947-Poster)

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Abstract:

'Current Issues in Agronomy', piloted in 2001, was designed as the capstone course for Iowa State University's M.S. in Agronomy Distance Education program. Goals of the course are to: 1: introduce a pertinent set of agricultural issues and illustrate their underlying technical, social, and ethical components, 2. help students learn to evaluate data and information sources for applicability, bias, and quality, 3. induce students to logically and critically assess these agricultural issues, and 4. provide students the opportunity to research agricultural issues, define the problem(s), develop potential solutions, and communicate that information in a professional manner. The course is delivered via the Internet and CD_ROM and is directed to adult distance learners. Students address the focus issues with a variety of techniques including argument analysis, research papers, memos, decision case analysis, persuasive letters, and a term project addressing an important agricultural issue of their choice in their profession. Student evaluations emphasize the challenge and depth presented beyond other courses and the value of improving their writing and critical thinking skills.

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