

Course Syllabus

This is an example syllabus for the Rural Grocery Transition Specialist Course. Changes are made for each course offering and this may not be the most current version. If you have questions, please reach out to rgi-learn@ksu.edu.

Course Information

Online Learning Management System

The Online Learning Management System used for this course is called Canvas Pro. Course access will open one week prior to the course start date. Set up your access prior to the start of the course using the instructions below.

- **New customers:** Soon after registering for the course, you will receive a course confirmation invitation email from notifications@instructure.com. Follow the link in this email to finish the registration process. Once completed, select the **Rural Grocery Transition Specialist** tile on your Canvas Dashboard for course access. The course materials will become available one week prior to the Kickoff Session.
- **Returning customers:** Use the QR code (right) to sign in using your email and password to log in and access the Rural Grocery Transition Specialist course.



Synchronous Sessions

There are four required synchronous sessions. These occur on Tuesdays from 10 AM to 12 PM (Central Time) in weeks 2, 4, 7, and 10. An optional come-and-go work session will also be offered in week 12 for students to work on assignments. The final (optional) session takes place after the end of the course for participants to share their experiences and interact with other Rural Grocery Transition Specialists from previous cohorts. All synchronous sessions are held on Zoom. Links can be found on the course home page in Canvas.

Session Name	Week	Date	Time (same for each required session)
Kickoff Session	Week 2	Jan. 27, 2026	Listed by Time Zone:
Week 4 Session	Week 4	Feb. 10, 2026	- 11:00 AM to 1:00 PM Eastern
Midpoint Session	Week 7	March 3, 2026	- 10:00 AM to 12:00 PM Central
Week 10 Session	Week 10	March 24, 2026	- 9:00 AM to 11:00 AM Mountain
Optional Work Session	Week 12	April 7, 2026	- 8:00 AM to 10:00 AM Pacific
RGTS Alumni Connect Session	Week 14	April 28, 2026	

Course Co-Facilitators

- Clara Misenhelter, clarawicoff@ksu.edu
- Carly Whorton, carlywhorton@gmail.com

Grading and Assignments

Each module has at least one homework or discussion board assignment. A total of 360 points will be assigned throughout the course.

- An overall score of **75%** is required to earn the Rural Grocery Transition Specialist microcredential and digital badge from Kansas State University. All assignments must be submitted to receive the microcredential and digital badge.
- Assignments submitted more than one week after their published deadline will receive an automatic deduction of five points. (The final deadline of April 19, 2026 at 11:59 PM is a firm deadline without this grace period.)
- All due dates are on Sundays at 11:59 PM.
- Please note: access to the next module is dependent on assignments being submitted. Once submitted, the course materials in the next module will be available. This ensures that assignments are completed throughout the course.

Example Course Schedule

While there are four synchronous sessions throughout the course, much of the coursework will be completed on your own time. The timeline below provides a suggested schedule for you to follow in order to complete the entire program on time.

Module	Week	Dates	Hours Spent	Estimated Progress Made
Canvas course will be available starting January 12th .				
Orientation	1	January 19-25	1.0	Open Canvas course, review onboarding and introductory material in Orientation Module, and complete pre-work for Kickoff Session.
	2	January 26 - February 1	2.5	Attend Program Kickoff Session on Jan. 27th. Begin watching Module 1 videos. Schedule first cohort conversation.
Module 1	3	February 2-8	2.0	Finish Module 1 materials, complete homework assignment, and respond to discussion board. Complete first cohort conversation. Complete pre-work for Week 4 Session.
	Assignments for Module 1 Due 2/8/26 (unless otherwise noted)			
Module 2	4	February 9-15	3.5	Attend Week 4 Session on Feb. 10th. Watch Module 2 videos, complete Clifton Strengths assessment, and respond to the discussion boards for Module 2.
Module 3	5	February 16-22	1.5	Watch Module 3 videos, do the homework, and respond to the discussion board for Module 3.
Assignments for Modules 2 & 3 Due 3/1/26 (unless otherwise noted)				
Module 4	6	February 23 - March 1	2.0	Watch Module 4 videos and start the Module 4 homework. Complete pre-work for Midpoint Session.
	7	March 2-8	3.0	Attend Midpoint Session on March 3rd. Finish homework and respond to the discussion board for Module 4. Schedule second cohort conversation.
Module 5	8	March 9-15	2.0	Get started on watching Module 5 videos and on homework for Module 5.
	9	March 16-22	1.5	Finish the homework and discussion board for Module 5. Complete second cohort conversation. Complete pre-work for Week 10 Session.
Assignments for Modules 4 & 5 Due 3/22/26 (unless otherwise noted)				
Module 6	10	March 23-29	2.5	Attend Week 10 Session on March 24th. Get started on Module 6 videos.
	11	March 30 - April 5	2.0	Finish Module 6 videos, homework, and discussion board.
Module 7	12	April 6-12	1.5	Begin watching Module 7 videos. Attend optional come-and-go Work Session on April 7th.
	13	April 13-19	2.0	Complete Module 7 videos and homework, respond to final discussion board, and complete the course evaluation survey.
Assignments for Modules 6 & 7 Due 4/19/26 (unless otherwise noted)				
Attend (optional) RGTS Alumni Connect session on April 28th at 10:30 AM Central Time .				
Total Program			27 hours	

Course Outline

Orientation Module: Course Introduction

Topics

- Course Overview
- Course Logistics
- Syllabus
 - Meet the Teaching Team
 - Canvas Usability
- Pre-Course Survey
- Rural Grocery Primer
- Have Questions?
- Orientation (**Kickoff Session**)

Assignments

Assignment Name	Total Points	Due Date
Cohort Conversations #1	20	2/8/26 at 11:59 PM Central
Cohort Conversations #2	20	3/22/26 at 11:59 PM Central

Note: It is helpful to review the materials in the Orientation Module ahead of the kickoff session. Course access will be available at least two weeks prior to the kickoff session.

Synchronous Sessions

Kickoff Session – January 27, 2026

- Orientation & Course Overview

Week 4 Session – February 10, 2026

- Grocery Transition Psychology 101

Midpoint Session – March 3, 2026

- Overcoming Transition Resistance

Week 10 Session – March 24, 2026

- Strengths-Based Transitions

Week 12 Work Session (Optional) – April 7, 2026

RGTS Alumni Connect – April 28, 2026

Module 1: Assessment of Grocer Attitude & Relationship Building

Topics

- Introduction to Module 1
- Building Your Relationship with a Rural Grocer
 - Establishing the Relationship
 - How to Validate the Grocer
 - The Grocer's Next Chapter
 - Confidentiality and Apology
- Grocery Transition Psychology 101 (**Week 4 Session**)
- Transition Stories

Assignments

Assignment Name	Total Points	Due Date
Homework 1: Rural Grocery Relationship Tracking Tool	20	2/8/26 at 11:59 PM Central
Discussion Board 1	20	2/8/26 at 11:59 PM Central

Module 2: Transition Planning Foundations

Topics

- Introduction to Module 2
- Standard Transition Planning Process
 - Succession Planning - Part 1
 - Succession Planning - Part 2
- Bridging the Gap - Common Resistance to the Transition Process
- Overcoming Transition Resistance (**Midpoint Session**)
- Customizing the Transition Plan
- Importance of Planning Early
- Transition Stories

Assignments

Assignment Name	Total Points	Due Date
Homework 2: Clifton Strengths Assessment	20	3/1/26 at 11:59 PM Central
Discussion Board 2A	20	3/1/26 at 11:59 PM Central
Discussion Board 2B	20	3/1/26 at 11:59 PM Central

Module 3: Business Valuation Fundamentals

Topics

- Introduction to Module 3
- Getting Started with Business Valuation
 - Understand the Importance and Process of Business Valuation
 - Goal Setting and Managing Expectations
- Improving Business Valuation
 - Methods for Raising Business Valuation
 - Store Facelift or Remodel
 - Timeline for Revising the Value of a Business
- Transition Stories

Assignments

Assignment Name	Total Points	Due Date
Homework 3: Technical Assistance Expertise Tool	20	3/1/26 at 11:59 PM Central
Discussion Board 3	20	3/1/26 at 11:59 PM Central

Module 4: Communicating About Transition

Topics

- Introduction to Module 4
- Community: The Heart of the Matter
 - Introduction to the Community Capitals Framework
 - Applying the Community Capital Framework to Rural Grocery Transitions
- Communications
 - Building Workplace Trust
 - Communicating About Transition with Employees
 - Communicating About Transition with Community
- Strengths-Based Transitions (**Week 10 Session**)
- Transition Stories

Assignments

Assignment Name	Total Points	Due Date
Homework 4: Community Capitals Identification Tool	20	3/22/26 at 11:59 PM Central
Discussion Board 4	20	3/22/26 at 11:59 PM Central

Module 5: Finding New Ownership

Topics

- Introduction to Module 5
- Business is an Art Form
 - Ways to See the Opportunity in Business Transition
 - Options for Recruiting a Buyer
 - Ways to Dissolve Limitation in Transition Planning
- Grocery is Unique
 - Understand Grocery Operations and Responsibilities
 - Consider Skills Needed for Manager vs. Owner
- Strategies for a Smooth Transition
 - Encourage Relationship Between Seller and Buyer
 - Plan For and Troubleshoot Worst Case Scenarios
- Transition Stories

Assignments

Assignment Name	Total Points	Due Date
Homework 5A: Community Stakeholder Identification	20	3/22/26 at 11:59 PM Central
Homework 5B: Community Stakeholder Conversation	20	3/22/26 at 11:59 PM Central
Discussion Board 5	20	3/22/26 at 11:59 PM Central

Module 6: Buyer Funding & Hiring a Manager

Topics

- Introduction to Module 6
- Empathizing with the Buyer
 - Facilitate Goal Setting with the Buyer and Manage Expectations
 - Valuation and Negotiation
 - Due Diligence
- Costs & Funding
 - Costs of Buying a Business
 - Capital for Buying a New Business
 - Seller Financing
- Learning the Ropes
 - Hiring a Store Manager
 - Strategies for Store Manager Training
 - Real Stories of Store Manager Training
- Transition Stories

Assignments

Assignment Name	Total Points	Due Date
Homework 6: Rural Grocery Funding Resources Tool	20	4/19/26 at 11:59 PM Central
Discussion Board 6	20	4/19/26 at 11:59 PM Central

Module 7: Into the Future & Additional Resources

Topics

- Introduction to Module 7
- Supporting the New Owner Long-Term
 - Strategies for Building Interest (From Inside the Store)
 - Strategies for Building Interest (As a Community Supporter)

Assignments

Assignment Name	Total Points	Due Date
Homework 7: Engagement and Support Presentation	20	4/19/26 at 11:59 PM Central
Discussion Board 7	20	4/19/26 at 11:59 PM Central