



## AEC 4065: Issues in Agricultural & Life Sciences (3 credit hours)

Spring 2015, Section 0022  
M 3-4 (9:35 – 11:30), W 4 (10:40 – 11:30)

### **INSTRUCTOR:**

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### **TA:**

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**OFFICE HOURS:**  
By appointment as needed

### **OFFICE HOURS:**

MW 12:45 – 1:45 pm  
By appointment as needed

### **CLASS MEETS** in **2349 Turlington Hall.**

**Course outline and general description:** The course is designed to educate students about major issues in agricultural and life sciences (ALS) and to expose students to a variety of methods used to effectively communicate, inform, and influence decisions about these ALS issues. All discussions and activities are planned to involve you in "real world" ways.

**Objectives:** After this course, the student will be able to:

- Recognize and analyze current issues in agricultural and life sciences (ALS).
- Recognize and separate facts, fiction, and opinion.
- Recognize contentious issues in agricultural and life sciences and facilitate consensus building and conflict management.
- Recognize components of crisis and risk communication management in ALS.
- Develop a crisis communication plan for contentious issues in ALS.

**Prerequisites:** AEC 3030C Effective Oral Communication (or equivalent) **and** AEC 3033C Research and Business Writing in Agricultural and Life Sciences (or equivalent)

**Text/suggested readings:** Successful students will read assigned materials **before class** and be prepared for discussion with the instructor and fellow students.

- *Agricultural Communications in Action: A Hands-On Approach* by Telg & Irani.
  - You will need this textbook for other communications courses in the department.
- Other course readings will be provided as needed.

**E-mail:** Students are **REQUIRED** to be able to send and receive **e-mail**.



**Grading: All out-of-class written assignments MUST be typed.** Following is the grading scale and assignments:

**Grading Scale**

- A = 930-1000
- A- = 900-929
- B+ = 860-899
- B = 830-859
- B- = 800-829
- C+ = 760-799
- C = 730-759
- C- = 700-729
- D+ = 660-699
- D = 630-659
- D- = 600-629
- E = 599 and below

**BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF COURSE ASSIGNMENTS:**

Issues briefing guide (group)	150
Speaker reflections (10 x 20 pts -- individual)	200
Crisis communication plan (individual)	250
End-of-Course Assessment	300
Attendance/participation	100
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	1000

-  • *Issues Briefing Guide:* Students, in small groups, will be responsible for researching an assigned issue and creating a briefing guide that will be distributed to fellow students prior to guest speakers' discussion. The student groups will then lead the "prep" discussion on the Monday prior to a speaker's presentation on Wednesday.
- *Speaker Reflections:* Students will provide written reflections on the presentations of 10 guest speakers. You may use extra guest speakers to make up speaker reflections missed earlier in the semester. If more than 10 speaker reflections are completed, the top 10 scoring reflections will be used to calculate final grade.
-  • *Crisis Communication Plan:* Students will choose an issue and create a strategic communication plan in preparation of a crisis.
- *End-of-Course Assessment:* Assessment will cover any material taught in class, any material in the textbook, and any information from guest speakers. Students who know they will be absent for the assessment must make arrangements to take it prior to the scheduled assessment time.
- *Attendance/in-class/participation:* Students are expected to actively participate in class and to be present at all class periods. Attendance is **mandatory**. Attendance will be taken each class.
  - **Fifty points** of "Participation/Attendance" will be based on in-class participation. The other **50 points** will be based on attendance and tardies.
  - You should be in class and on time in order to actively participate in class. If you are **absent or tardy repeatedly**, you will **not** receive full or possibly **any** in-class participation credits.
  - **Late or Absent**
    - 0-2 = 0 points deducted

- 3 = 10 points deducted
- 4 = 20 points deducted
- 5 = 30 points deducted
- 6 = 40 points deducted
- 7+ = 50 points deducted

**UF grading policies:** For information on current UF policies for assigning grade points, see <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>.

**ATTENDANCE:** Given the importance of class discussion and participation in demonstrations and exercises, it is not possible for a student to perform satisfactorily in the course without regular attendance. Students are **required** to attend class and to be in class **on time**. Only documented doctor's excuses or UF-approved activities will be excused. Students are still responsible for making up excused work in a timely manner. Students who are repeatedly absent, even with a doctor's excuse, will find it difficult to succeed in this course. (**NOTE:** A note from the Student Health Care Center is not considered an "official" excuse.) Students' grades will be lowered if they repeatedly miss class or are late. Tardy arrivals (anything after five minutes after class starts) are counted the same as absences. Students who miss an exam for an excused absence will be allowed to take a make-up, but it will be a slightly different exam. Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments and other work are consistent with university policies that can be found at: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>.

**Late assignment policy:** A **10-percent per day** deduction will be assessed for assignments turned in late. Work more than a week late will **not** be accepted. This policy will be strictly enforced. Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments and other work are consistent with university policies that can be found at: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>.

#### **AEC Expectations for Writing:**

In all courses in the Department of Agricultural Education and Communication's Communication and Leadership Development (CLD) specialization, the following **writing** standards are expected to be followed, unless otherwise specified for a particular writing assignment. Not following these writing standards will result in substantially lower grades on writing assignments.

- Proper grammar and punctuation are mandatory.
- Proper sentence structure is required. This means...
  - Not using "tweet-talk" in your assignments.
  - Making sure that your sentences have a subject, verb, and (when needed) an object.
  - Not having sentence fragments.
  - And anything else that would pertain to "proper sentence structure."
- No use of first person (I, me, my, mine, our) unless denoted within the assignment rubric.
- NO use of contractions.
- Good thoughts/content throughout the writing assignment.
- For assignments that require citations, use American Psychological Association style. Proper APA citation and reference document is expected.
- For assignments that are more reporter-style articles (news stories, news releases, public relations writing), you are expected to follow Associated Press Style, as discussed in AEC 4031.

#### **AEC Expectations for Design:**

In all courses in the Department of Agricultural Education and Communication's Communication and Leadership Development (CLD) specialization, the following **design** standards are expected to be

followed, unless otherwise specified for a particular writing assignment. Not following these design standards will result in substantially lower grades on design-related assignments.

- Proper grammar, punctuation, and sentence structure are mandatory. Although these are design assignments, writing has to be perfect so as not to detract from the design.
- For assignments that feature more reporter-style articles (news stories, news releases, public relations writing), you are expected to follow Associated Press Style, as discussed in AEC 4031.
- Use the proper photographic settings for the assignment (300 ppi for printed photos; 72 ppi for Web). Pixilated photos will result in lower grades.
- Students should not use copyrighted materials for design assignments. For example you may not “borrow” a graphic or design. Commercial artwork that is purchased may be used for assignments. Similarly, you may use *ideas* for a graphic/design assignment, but the use of the actual graphic/design is not acceptable.
- The following minimal design skills are expected to be demonstrated on all design assignments. The ability to resize an image, create documents in multiple columns, insert a graphic on a page, insert text with a graphic, alter the color of text and/or graphics. Additionally, the student should have moderate ability with the following software in order to complete design assignments:
  - Microsoft PowerPoint
  - Microsoft Word
  - Adobe Photoshop (photographs)
  - Adobe Illustrator (graphics). This software program is taught only in AEC 4035. The expectations for actual graphic design in other courses will be minimal.
  - Adobe InDesign (print layout)
  - WordPress (Web)
  - Final Cut Express or Pro X (video)

The University of Florida has an agreement with Lynda.com to provide FREE online tutorials to students and faculty on many software programs. If you feel “rusty” with any program, after being introduced to it in an AEC course, it is **highly recommended** that you take it upon yourself to go through some of the Lynda.com tutorials: <http://www.it.ufl.edu/training/>. Click on the Lynda.com yellow box on the right side of the screen.

**DIGITAL DEVICES (cell phones, iPads, laptops):** Students are asked to turn off their cellular phones before entering the classroom. Unless students are taking notes on their laptops, laptops should be OFF during class. If students are found to be Facebooking or texting, they will be asked to turn off their digital device.

**PROFESSIONALISM STATEMENT:** Educators and learners are professionals guided by specific values and engaging in particular behaviors. These values and behaviors include respect, cooperation, active participation, intellectual inquiry, punctuality, and regular attendance. In addition to what you know and can do, you will be evaluated on your growth as a professional. Professional characteristics on which you will be judged include punctuality, attendance, collegial attitude, and participation. Because this course relies extensively on discussion and other class interactions, attendance is crucial to your success and that of your classmates. If you are ill or an emergency occurs, contact your instructor PRIOR TO the scheduled class time; otherwise, your attendance and participation are firm expectations.

**STATEMENT ABOUT PLAGIARISM:** A student who represents another’s work as the original work of the student is plagiarizing. If you do *not* think you will get caught plagiarizing, you are **wrong**. Plagiarism

will be dealt with up to the full extent of the UF Honor Code, including a zero for the assignment and possibly a zero for the entire semester. A full explanation of plagiarism and its consequences can be found at <http://web.uflib.ufl.edu/msl/07b/studentplagiarism.html>.

## **Academic Honesty, Software Use, UF Counseling Services, Services for Students with Disabilities**

### **Academic Honesty**

As a student at the University of Florida, you have committed yourself to uphold the Honor Code, which includes the following pledge: *"We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honesty and integrity."* You are expected to exhibit behavior consistent with this commitment to the UF academic community, and on all work submitted for credit at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: *"On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment."*

It is assumed that you will complete all work independently in each course unless the instructor provides explicit permission for you to collaborate on course tasks (e.g. assignments, papers, quizzes, exams). Furthermore, as part of your obligation to uphold the Honor Code, you should report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. It is your individual responsibility to know and comply with all university policies and procedures regarding academic integrity and the Student Honor Code. Violations of the Honor Code at the University of Florida will not be tolerated. Violations will be reported to the Dean of Students Office for consideration of disciplinary action. For more information regarding the Student Honor Code, please see:  
<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/SCCR/honorcodes/honorcode.php>.

### **Software Use**

All faculty, staff and students of the university are required and expected to obey the laws and legal agreements governing software use. Failure to do so can lead to monetary damages and/or criminal penalties for the individual violator. Because such violations are also against university policies and rules, disciplinary action will be taken as appropriate.

### **Campus Helping Resources**

Students experiencing crises or personal problems that interfere with their general well-being are encouraged to utilize the university's counseling resources. The Counseling & Wellness Center provides confidential counseling services at no cost for currently enrolled students. Resources are available on campus for students having personal problems or lacking clear career or academic goals, which interfere with their academic performance.

- *University Counseling & Wellness Center, 3190 Radio Road, 352-392-1575, [www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc/](http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc/) Counseling Services Groups and Workshops Outreach and Consultation Self-Help Library Training Programs Community Provider Database*
- *Career Resource Center, First Floor JWRU, 392-1601, [www.crc.ufl.edu/](http://www.crc.ufl.edu/) **Services for Students with Disabilities** The Disability Resource Center coordinates the needed accommodations of students with disabilities. This includes registering disabilities, recommending academic accommodations within the classroom, accessing special adaptive computer equipment, providing interpretation services and mediating faculty-student disability related issues. Students requesting classroom accommodation must first register with the Dean of Students Office. The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to the Instructor when requesting accommodation 0001 Reid Hall, 352-392-8565, [www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/](http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/) **Recommended Statement for Distance Courses** The following statement is recommended for all distance-delivered courses but is not required. Each online distance learning program has a process for, and will make every attempt to resolve, student complaints within its academic and administrative departments at the program level. See <http://distance.ufl.edu/student-complaints> for more details.*

## Course schedule

**\*\*Since we like to discuss current trends and topics, this schedule does not include extra article readings that may be assigned and discussed throughout the semester.**

Mondays (9:35 – 11:30 am)	Wednesdays (10:40 – 11:30 am)
	<p><b>January 7</b>  <b>TOPIC:</b> Introduction, review syllabus            What is agricultural and life sciences, natural resources?  <b>WATCH:</b> <i>Florida Agriculture</i>  <a href="http://vimeo.com/17235079">http://vimeo.com/17235079</a></p>
<p><b>January 12</b>  <b>TOPIC:</b> <b>Issues briefing guides (discuss rubric)</b>  <b>Speaker reflections (discuss rubric)</b>  <b>Students assigned issues briefing guide topics</b>            Professionalism &amp; guest speaker interaction            Critical thinking  <b>PREP:</b> Land-grant system</p>	<p><b>January 14</b>  <b>TOPIC:</b> Land-grant system  <b>GUEST SPEAKER:</b> TBD</p>
<p><b>January 19</b>  <b>MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR DAY - HOLIDAY</b></p>	<p><b>January 21</b>  <b>REVIEW:</b> Land-grant system  <b>TOPIC:</b> Critical thinking and ALS issues  <b>DUE: Reflection 1 on land-grant system</b></p>
<p><b>January 26</b>  <b>TOPIC:</b> Critical thinking and ALS issues (continued)            Discuss graded reflections (reflection 1)  <b>WATCH:</b> <i>Tailoring Messages to Farmers and The Message of Sustainability</i>  <b>TOPIC with GUEST SPEAKER:</b> Ag policy process, Dr. Michael Olexa, professor, Food and Resource Economics (invited)  <b>PREP:</b> Climate change  <b>DUE: Briefing guide: Climate change</b></p>	<p><b>January 28</b>  <b>TOPIC:</b> Climate change  <b>GUEST SPEAKER:</b> TBD</p>
<p><b>February 2</b>  <b>REVIEW:</b> Climate change  <b>TOPIC:</b> Agenda setting and framing messages  <b>WATCH:</b> <i>Framing the Message</i>  <b>PREP:</b> Environmental services offered by agriculture  <b>DUE: Briefing guide: Environmental services offered by agriculture</b>  <b>DUE: Reflection 2 on Climate change</b></p>	<p><b>February 4</b>  <b>TOPIC:</b> Environmental services offered by agriculture  <b>GUEST SPEAKER:</b> TBD</p>
<p><b>February 9</b>  <b>REVIEW:</b> Ag policy process  <b>TOPIC:</b> How organizations focus on issues  <b>PREP:</b> Energy - Biofuels  <b>DUE: Briefing guide: Energy - Biofuels</b>  <b>DUE: Reflection 3 on Environmental services offered by agriculture</b></p>	<p><b>February 11</b>  <b>TOPIC:</b> Energy - Biofuels  <b>GUEST SPEAKER:</b> TBD</p>

<p><b>February 16</b>  <b>REVIEW:</b> Energy - Biofuels  <b>TOPIC:</b> Persuasion  <b>WATCH:</b> <i>The Persuaders</i>  <b>PREP:</b> Small farms/organic farms/conventional farms  <b>READING:</b> Chapter 15  <b>DUE: Briefing guide: Small farms/organic farms/conventional farms</b>  <b>DUE: Reflection 4 on Energy - Biofuels</b></p>	<p><b>February 18</b>  <b>TOPIC:</b> Small farms/organic farms/conventional farms  <b>GUEST SPEAKER:</b> TBD</p>
<p><b>February 23</b>  <b>REVIEW:</b> Small farms/organic farms/conventional farms  <b>TOPIC:</b> Research methods/public opinion  <b>PREP:</b> Messages about agriculture  <b>READING:</b> Chapter 3  <b>Agriculture's message not resonating with the public</b>  <a href="http://westernfarmpress.com/government/agriculture-s-message-not-resonating-public">http://westernfarmpress.com/government/agriculture-s-message-not-resonating-public</a>  <b>DUE: Briefing guide: Messages about agriculture</b>  <b>DUE: Reflection 5 on small farms/organic farms/conventional farms</b></p>	<p><b>February 25</b>  <b>TOPIC:</b> Messages about agriculture  <b>GUEST SPEAKER:</b> TBD</p>
<p><b>March 2</b>  <b>SPRING BREAK - HOLIDAY</b></p>	<p><b>March 4</b>  <b>SPRING BREAK – HOLIDAY</b></p>
<p><b>March 9</b>  <b>REVIEW:</b> Messages about agriculture  <b>TOPIC:</b> Agriculture communicated through art  <b>Students assigned crisis communication plan companies</b>  <b>Crisis communication plan (discuss rubric)</b>  <b>PREP:</b> Water quality and quantity  <b>DUE: Briefing guide: Water quality and quantity</b>  <b>DUE: Reflection 6 on Messages about agriculture</b></p>	<p><b>March 11</b>  <b>TOPIC:</b> Water quality and quantity  <b>GUEST SPEAKER:</b> TBD</p>
<p><b>March 16</b>  <b>REVIEW:</b> Water quality and quantity  <b>TOPIC:</b> Introduction: Crisis communication  <b>WATCH:</b> <i>Crisis Communication During the 2004 Florida Hurricane Season</i>  <b>PREP:</b> Urban/rural interface  <b>DUE: Briefing guide: Urban/rural interface</b>  <b>DUE: Reflection 7 on water quality and quantity</b></p>	<p><b>March 18</b>  <b>TOPIC:</b> Urban/rural interface  <b>GUEST SPEAKER:</b> TBD</p>
<p><b>March 23</b>  <b>REVIEW:</b> Urban/rural interface  <b>TOPIC:</b> Crisis communication: Part 1  <b>WATCH:</b> <i>The Canadian BSE Crisis Part 1, Part 2, and Part 3</i>  <b>PREP:</b> Food security  <b>DUE: Briefing guide: Food security</b>  <b>DUE: Reflection 8 on urban/rural interface</b></p>	<p><b>March 25</b>  <b>TOPIC:</b> Food security  <b>GUEST SPEAKER:</b> TBD</p>

<p><b>March 30</b>  <b>REVIEW:</b> Food security  <b>TOPIC:</b> Crisis communication: Part 2  <b>PREP:</b> Food safety  <b>DUE: Briefing guide: Food safety</b>  <b>DUE: Reflection 9 on food security</b></p>	<p><b>April 1</b>  <b>TOPIC:</b> Food safety  <b>GUEST SPEAKER:</b> TBD</p>
<p><b>April 6</b>  <b>REVIEW:</b> Food safety  <b>TOPIC:</b> Common ground/conflict management  <b>PREP:</b> Obesity and nutrition  <b>DUE: Briefing guide: Obesity and nutrition</b>  <b>DUE: Reflection 10 on Food safety</b></p>	<p><b>April 8</b>  <b>TOPIC:</b> Obesity and nutrition  <b>GUEST SPEAKER:</b> TBD  <b>DUE: Crisis communication plans</b></p>
<p><b>April 13</b>  <b>REVIEW:</b> Obesity and Nutrition  <b>TOPIC:</b> Social Media  Review for End-of-Course Assessment  <b>PREP:</b> Immigration/Labor  <b>DUE: Briefing guide: Immigration/labor</b>  <b>DUE: Reflection 11 on Obesity and nutrition</b></p>	<p><b>April 15</b>  <b>TOPIC:</b> Immigration/labor  <b>GUEST SPEAKER:</b> TBD</p>
<p><b>April 20</b>  <b>REVIEW:</b> Immigration/labor  <b>DUE: Reflection 12 on Immigration/labor</b>  End-of-Course Assessment</p>	<p><b>April 22</b>  <b>TOPIC:</b> Return graded crisis communication plans  Wrap up  <b>GUEST SPEAKER (EXTRA CREDIT FOR ATTENDANCE):</b> Topic and Speaker TBD</p>