AEC 3065: Issues in Agricultural & Life Sciences (3 credit hours)

Fall 2019
Tuesdays 4 (10:40 – 11:30 am), Thursdays 3-4 (9:35 – 11:30 am)

INSTRUCTOR:
Becky Raulerson, M.S.
122 Bryant Hall
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Cell Phone: 386-547-3409
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Course website: On Canvas

OFFICE HOURS:
Tuesdays/Thursdays 12:30 – 1:30 pm
By appointment as needed

CLASS MEETS in 205 Rolfs 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) OR AEC 3033C Research and Business Writing in Agricultural and Life Sciences (or equivalent)

Required: Purchase Top Hat student package ($20 per student). Top Hat will send instructions.

Optional text/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 Tegl & Irani.
  o You will need this textbook for other communications courses in the department.
• Other course readings will be provided as needed either in class or on Canvas
E-mail: Students are **REQUIRED** to be able to send and receive e-mail. Canvas will be used.

Canvas: This course is managed on Canvas, although this is not an online course. Grades and files can be found on Canvas.

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:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Issues Fact Sheet (individual)</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaker reflections (10 x 30 pts -- individual)</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crisis communication plan (individual)</td>
<td>250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>End-of-Course Assessment</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attendance</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation (Top Hat)</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1000

- **Issues Fact Sheet**: Students, individually, will be responsible for researching an assigned issue and creating a fact sheet that includes information about the issue and multiple stakeholders’ perceptions, as well as resources used. This will be turned in as an assignment on Canvas.

- **Speaker/Case Study Reflections**: Students will provide written reflections on the presentations/case studies in class. A total of 10 reflections will be counted out of 12 possible opportunities. You may use extra guest speakers to make up speaker reflections missed earlier in the semester. If more than 10 reflections are completed, the top 10 scoring reflections will be used to calculate final grade. These will be turned in as assignments on Canvas.

- **Crisis Communication Plan**: Students will choose an issue and create a strategic crisis communication plan in preparation of a crisis. This will be turned in as a printed hard copy.

- **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:** 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 via Top Hat.
  - Fifty points of “Participation/Attendance” will be based on in-class participation.
  - You should be in class and on time in order to actively participate in class. If you are absent or tardy, it will be counted as an absence.
  - **Late/tardy 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
• **Top Hat Participation:** Fifty points will be assigned as participation points throughout the semester using the Top Hat interactive technology in class.

**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. 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 (7 days) 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.
  - 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:
  o Microsoft PowerPoint
  o Microsoft Word
  o Adobe Photoshop (photographs)
  o Adobe Illustrator (graphics). This software program is taught only in AEC 4035. The expectations for actual graphic design in other courses will be minimal.
  o Adobe InDesign (print layout)
  o WordPress (Web)
  o 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 will be required to use a cellular device or laptop in class as part of the Top Hat interactive technology. Otherwise, students are asked to put away their cellular devices. Unless students are taking speaker notes on their laptops or are asked to complete a Top Hat activity, laptops should be OFF during class. If students are found to be Facebooking or texting or working on assignments for other courses, 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/ 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/
• Students with disabilities requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/) by providing appropriate documentation. Once registered, students will receive an accommodation letter which must be presented to the
instructor when requesting accommodation. Students with disabilities should follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester."

Course Evaluations
Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available at https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens, and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via https://ufl.bluera.com/ufi/. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/.
**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.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tuesdays in 205 Rolfs Hall (10:40 – 11:30 am)</th>
<th>Thursdays in 205 Rolfs Hall (9:35 – 11:30 am)</th>
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</thead>
</table>
| **August 20**  
TOPIC: Introduction, review syllabus  
What is agricultural and life sciences, natural resources?  
WATCH: [Florida Agriculture](http://vimeo.com/17235079) | **August 22**  
TOPIC: Issues fact sheets (discuss rubric)  
Speaker reflections (discuss rubric)  
What is agricultural and life sciences, natural resources? (CONTINUED)  
WATCH: [Florida Agriculture](http://vimeo.com/17235079)  
Professionalism & guest speaker interaction  
PREP: Land-grant system |
| **August 27**  
TOPIC: Land-grant system  
GUEST SPEAKER: TBD | **August 29**  
REVIEW: Land-grant system  
DUE: Reflection 1 on land-grant system  
TOPIC: Critical thinking and ALS issues |
| **September 3**  
Discuss graded reflections (reflection 1)  
TOPIC: Climate change  
GUEST SPEAKER: TBD | **September 5**  
REVIEW: Climate change  
DUE: Reflection 2 on Climate change  
TOPIC: Agenda setting and framing messages |
| **September 10**  
TOPIC: Invasive Species-Citrus Greening Case Study | **September 12**  
TOPIC: Invasive Species-Citrus Green Case Study (continued)  
DUE: Issues Fact Sheet assignment |
| **September 17**  
DUE: Reflection 3 on Invasive Species-Citrus Greening Case Study  
TOPIC: Antibiotics in Animal Agriculture Case Study | **September 19**  
TOPIC: Antibiotics in Animal Agriculture Case Study (continued) |
| **September 24**  
DUE: Reflection 4 on Antibiotics in Animal Agriculture Case Study  
TOPIC: Small farms, Organic farms, Conventional farms (Farming size and methods)  
GUEST SPEAKER: TBD | **September 26**  
REVIEW: Small farms, Organic farms, Conventional farms (Farming size and methods)  
DUE: Reflection 5 on Small farms, Organic farms, Conventional farms (Farming size and methods)  
TOPIC: Interpreting Research – Dr. J.C. Bunch |
| **October 1**  
TOPIC: Guest speaker from UF Field & Fork Program | **October 3**  
TOPIC: Class visit to UF Field & Fork Gardens |
| **October 8**  
DUE: Reflection 6 on Field and Fork Gardens visit  
TOPIC: Water quality and quantity  
GUEST SPEAKER: TBD | **October 10**  
REVIEW: Water quality and quantity  
DUE: Reflection 7 on Water quality and quantity  
TOPIC: Research methods/public opinion  
Students assigned crisis communication plan and choose companies  
Crisis communication plan (discuss rubric) |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Tuesdays in 205 Rolfs Hall (10:40 – 11:30 am)</th>
<th>Thursdays in 205 Rolfs Hall (9:35 – 11:30 am)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>October 15</td>
<td>TOPIC: The Blue Bell Crisis Case Study</td>
<td>October 17</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>TOPIC: The Blue Bell Crisis Case Study (continued)</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>[NO CLASS MEETING – Work Online for this day]</td>
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<tr>
<td>October 22</td>
<td><strong>DUE: Reflection 8 on The Blue Bell Crisis Case Study</strong></td>
<td>October 24</td>
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<td>TOPIC: Urban/rural interface</td>
<td>REVIEW: Urban/rural interface</td>
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<td>GUEST SPEAKER: TBD</td>
<td><strong>DUE: Reflection 9 on Urban/rural interface</strong></td>
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<td>TOPIC: Introduction: Crisis communication</td>
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<tr>
<td>October 29</td>
<td>TOPIC: Food security</td>
<td>October 31</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>GUEST SPEAKER: TBD</td>
<td>REVIEW: Food security</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>DUE: Reflection 9 on Urban/rural interface</strong></td>
<td><strong>DUE: Reflection 10 on Food security</strong></td>
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<td>TOPIC: Crisis communication (continued)</td>
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<tr>
<td>November 5</td>
<td>TOPIC: Obesity and nutrition</td>
<td>November 7</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>GUEST SPEAKER: TBD</td>
<td>REVIEW: Obesity and nutrition</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>DUE: Reflection 11 on Obesity and nutrition</strong></td>
<td><strong>DUE: Reflection 10 on Urban/rural interface</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td>TOPIC: Persuasion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 12</td>
<td>TOPIC: Immigration/labor</td>
<td>November 14</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>GUEST SPEAKER: TBD</td>
<td><strong>DUE: Reflection 12 on Immigration/labor</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>DUE: Crisis communication plans</strong></td>
<td>TOPIC: Crisis Communication Plan Work Day</td>
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<td>TOPIC: Wrap up &amp; Review for End-of-Course Assessment</td>
<td>(Class will not meet. Instructor will be in office)</td>
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<tr>
<td>November 19</td>
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<td>November 21</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>DUE: Crisis communication plans</strong></td>
<td>End-of-Course Assessment</td>
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<tr>
<td>November 26</td>
<td>NO CLASS MEETING</td>
<td>November 28</td>
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<td>THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY</td>
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**December 3**

TOPIC: Return graded crisis communication plans, Extra Credit Speaker Day, Course Evaluations
We are an engaged community of diverse students and faculty.

We learn to think critically and dialogue about agricultural and natural resources issues facing Florida and our world.

We explore the varied perspectives, theories and science underlying these issues.

We build our communication and leadership skills to address evolving agricultural and natural resources issues in a multicultural society.