AEC 3065: Issues in Agricultural & Life Sciences (3 credit hours)
AEC 4932/6932: Exploring Agricultural & Life Sciences Issues in Costa Rica (3 credit hours)

Spring 2021 (break week between spring and summer A/C)
April 30 – May 8, 2021
Short-Term Study Abroad

INSTRUCTORS:

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OFFICE HOURS:
By appointment as needed

CLASS MEETINGS:
2 pre-sessions – Dates TBD – Location TBD & Zoom
Study Abroad – April 30 – May 8, 2021
1 post-sessions – Date TBD – Location TBD & Zoom

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.
- Develop messages to communicate about contentious issues in agricultural and life sciences using appropriate multimedia and social media.
- Compare and contrast ALS issues relevant to Florida and Costa Rica.

Text/suggested readings: Successful students will read assigned materials **before class** and be prepared for discussion with the instructor and fellow students.
- OPTIONAL: *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 x 2 (150 each)	300
Daily Reflection Journal	200
Final Project	400
Presentation of Final Product	100
	1000

- *Issues Briefing Guides (2):* Students, individually, will be responsible for researching an assigned issue and creating a briefing guide that will be distributed to fellow students prior to departing on and after returning from the study abroad.
  - o 1. The first guide will be a Florida-based perspective on the issue.
  - o 2. The second guide will be a Costa Rica-based perspective on the issue.

- *Daily Reflection Journal:* Students will keep a daily reflection journal throughout the study abroad trip, using the prompts provided by the instructors.

- *Final Project:* Students will create a website (or online product) that captures their overall reflections from the course and the study abroad program. Students are encouraged to be creative and choose a medium that best allows them to express what they learned. Potential formats include – but are not limited to – an essay, a presentation, a poster, or a video. Students will share their reflections at the final post-session.

- *Presentation of Final Project*

UF grading policies: For information on current UF policies for assigning grade points, see **https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/grades-grading-policies/**.

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

<u>late</u>. Tardy arrivals (anything after five minutes after class starts) are counted the <u>same</u> 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/UGRD/academic-regulations/attendance-policies/**.

<u>Late assignment policy:</u> A **10-percent <u>per day</u>** deduction will be assessed for assignments turned in late. Work more than a week late (7 days) will **<u>not</u>** be accepted. This policy will be <u>strictly</u> 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/UGRD/academic-regulations/attendance-policies/**.

<u>AEC Expectations for Writing:</u>
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 <u>mandatory</u>.
- Proper sentence structure is required. This means…
  o Not using "tweet-talk" in your assignments.
  o Making sure that your sentences have a subject, verb, and (when needed) an object.
  o Not having sentence fragments.
  o 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.

<u>AEC Expectations for Design:</u>
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 <u>mandatory</u>. 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 *<u>actual</u>* 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.

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/process/student-conduct-honor-code**.

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
- *U Matter We Care*, **www.umatter.ufl.edu/**
- *Career Connections Center, First Floor JWRU, 392-1601, https://career.ufl.edu/*
- *Students with disabilities requesting accommodations*: 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 accommodation0001 Reid Hall, 352-392-8565, **https://disability.ufl.edu/**.
- *Student Complaints:*
  -Residential Course: https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/policies/student-honor-code-student-conduct-code/.
  -Online Course: http://www.distance.ufl.edu/student-complaint-process

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/ufl/. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/.

COVID-19 SAFETY PLAN: We will have face-to-face instructional sessions for those students assigned to that format. In response to COVID-19, the following policies and requirements are in place to maintain your learning environment and to enhance the safety of our in-classroom interactions:

- Students and instructors are <u>required</u> to wear a face covering (mask or similar covering) at all times they are in one of the two physical classrooms. Following and enforcing these policies and requirements are all of our responsibility. Failure to do so will lead to a report to the Office of Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution.
- This course has been assigned a physical classroom with enough capacity to maintain physical distancing (6 feet between individuals) requirements. Please utilize designated seats and maintain appropriate spacing between students.

- Follow your instructor's guidance on how to enter and exit the classroom. Practice physical distancing to the extent possible when entering and exiting the classroom. Students must maintain at least a 6-feet distance from each other as then enter and leave the room and when they are in the room.
- Sanitizing supplies are available in the classroom if you wish to wipe down your desks prior to sitting down and at the end of the class.
- Only the allowed number of students, per UF guidelines, will be allowed in the classroom at any time.
- If a student or instructor is unable to attend the class due to illness, the course will be able to be taught in an online-only format. Class meetings will take place at specified times via Zoom.
- In the event the university has to cancel in-person instruction, class meetings will continue through Zoom. Students will continue to have access to pre-recorded lectures.
- If you are experiencing COVID-19 symptoms (Click here for guidance from the CDC on symptoms of coronavirus), please use the UF Health screening system and follow the instructions on whether you are able to attend class. Click here for UF Health guidance on what to do if you have been exposed to or are experiencing Covid-19 symptoms.
  - Course materials will be provided to you with an excused absence, and you will be given a reasonable amount of time to make up work. Find more information in the university attendance policies.
- Because some class sessions of this course will be taught online, the sessions may be audio visually recorded for students in the class to refer back and for enrolled students who are unable to attend live. Students who participate with their camera engaged or utilize a profile image are agreeing to have their video or image recorded. If you are unwilling to consent to have your profile or video image recorded, be sure to keep your camera off and do not use a profile image. Likewise, students who un-mute during class and participate orally are agreeing to have their voices recorded. If you are not willing to consent to have your voice recorded during class, you will need to keep your mute button activated and communicate exclusively using the "chat" feature, which allows students to type questions and comments live. The chat will not be recorded or shared. As in all courses, unauthorized recording and unauthorized sharing of recorded materials is prohibited.

Course schedule   *Final Presession & Postsession times determinded by participants*

Day	Topics	Assignments Due
Presession 1 April 1 (or TBD) 11:00 am –3:00 pm	• Course introduction and review syllabus • Overview of food, agriculture, and natural resources systems • Thinking critically about issues facing food, agriculture, and natural resources systems • Review Issues Briefing Guide assignment	
Presession 2 April 28 (or TBD) 11:00 am –3:00 pm	• Logistics of Final Project – Communications basics • Trip logistics and overview • Review reflection journal expectations • Present Florida-perspective issues briefing guides	Issues Briefing Guide (Florida perspective)
Study Abroad Day 1 Friday, April 30	Travel Day Depart U.S and arrive in Costa Rica • San Jose Airport Pickup • Travel to Quepos • Program orientation at hotel • Optional group dinner	Reflection Journal Entry
Study Abroad Day 2 Saturday, May 1	Excursion #1 • Full day at Manuel Antonio National Park	Reflection Journal Entry
Study Abroad Day 3 Sunday, May 2	Meeting #1 • African Palm Production or Similar • Return trip to San Jose and check in at Hotel Balmoral	Reflection Journal Entry
Study Abroad Day 4 Monday, May 3	Meeting #2 & #3 • Excursion and lectures at La Paz Waterfall & Gardens (wildlife, plants, waterfalls) • Visit only farm owned by Starbucks (lecture on investigation and innovation)	Reflection Journal Entry
Study Abroad Day 5 Tuesday, May 4	Meeting #4 • Visit Earth University for lectures on community development, sustainability, and agribusiness • Sleep at Earth University	Reflection Journal Entry
Study Abroad Day 6 Wednesday, May 5	Meeting # 5 • Continue community activities at Earth University	Reflection Journal Entry
Study Abroad Day 7 Thursday, May 6	Meeting #6 • Wal-Mart in morning • Social learning activity in afternoon	Reflection Journal Entry
Study Abroad Day 8 Friday, May 7	Excursion #2 • Full day excursion to Tortuga Island, located on the Gulf of Nicoya riding on a world class catamaran yacht, breakfast and lunch are included, this island	Reflection Journal Entry

Day	Topics	Assignments Due
	provides white sand and clear calm ocean water to enjoy nature, fishes, bird, and exotic trees.	
Study Abroad Day 9 Saturday, May 8	Travel Day • Depart Costa Rica and arrive in U.S.	Reflection Journal Entry
Post-Session May 27 (or TBD) 11:00 am –3:00 pm	• Share Costa Rica-perspective issues briefing guides • Student Presentations of Final Project	*Issues Briefing Guide (Costa Rica perspective) *Final Project

*TENTATIVE