AEC 6932 – Spring 2021
Communicating about Agricultural and Natural Resources Research

INSTRUCTOR:
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OFFICE HOURS:
Thursday, via Zoom: https://ufl.zoom.us/j/96180187097
10 a.m. to noon
Outside of this time, I am always available by appointment.

COURSE FORMAT:
This course will be delivered entirely online. Each week's module will open by Tuesday morning at 8 a.m. Weekly assignments and discussion posts, unless otherwise noted, are due on Monday at 11:59 p.m.

COURSE DESCRIPTION:
Outreach to the public is one of the most important ways in which significant outcomes and impacts of research can be demonstrated in measurable, quantifiable terms. In addition to developing expertise in their science, researchers increasingly need to be able to convey its significance to policy makers, funders and the general public. This course will focus on the planning and production of written, digital, and visual instructional and communication materials designed to support outreach programs in the sciences. Graduate students in scientific disciplines will learn to think critically and creatively, with respect to developing outreach programs to engage the public about the importance of science. Students will learn how public engagement and outreach can be used to convey the public value of their own work.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:
Following completion of the course, the learner will be able to:
- Apply critical and creative thinking skills to engage the general public in science programs.
- Plan and design communication materials and media in several formats: print (documents, posters), computer presentations (PowerPoint), and digital (Web, photography, video and social media).
- Select media and materials to support science outreach programs.

REQUIRED TEXTS:
Baron, N. (2010). Escape from the Ivory Tower. *Island Press.*
Alda, A. (2017). If I understood you, would I have this look on my face?: My adventures in the art and science of relating and communicating. *Random House.*

Grading: The final grade for this course will be determined on a student's performance on the following projects.

Assignment	Percentage of Grade
Weekly Assignments	30
Participation in Discussion Posts	20
Podcast Interview and Reflection	10
Research Poster	10
Outreach Plan	30

Unless otherwise noted, every component will be evaluated on 100 points. Your final grade for the course will be calculated on the previous percentages, which will then lead to your final letter grade as based on the following scale:

Grade	Range	
A	100%	to 94%
A-	<94.0%	to 90%
B+	<90.0%	to 87.0%
B	<87.0%	to 84.0%
B-	<84.0%	to 80.0%
C+	<80.0%	to 77.0%
C	<77.0%	to 74.0%
C-	<74.0%	to 70.0%
D+	<70.0%	to 67.0%
D	<67.0%	to 64.0%
D-	<64.0%	to 61.0%
F	<61.0%	to 0.0%

Brief Description of Assignments:

- **_Weekly assignments_**: Students will have an assignment each week related to the week's course content. For example: On the week that we learn about social media, you may be asked to create example social media posts related to your research. **Weekly assignments, unless otherwise noted, are due on Monday at 11:59 p.m.**

- **_Discussion Posts:_** Students will participate in discussion posts each week related to the assigned readings and other materials. **Discussion posts are due on Monday at 11:59 p.m.**

- **_Podcast Interview:_** Students will participate in an interview about their research via Zoom. Following this, students will write a reflection on how they communicated and goals for future media outreach. **Interviews will be scheduled individually with each student and will take place at different points throughout the semester.**

- **_Research poster:_** Students will design a research poster that highlights their research or a topic in their field of study.

- **_Outreach plan_**: Develop a comprehensive plan to use the materials you have developed in class to engage the public in an outreach program, related to your major field of study. Students are expected to revise the materials they develop for the weekly assignments to

accompany their outreach plan. Students will digitally present their outreach plan to the class. Students will provide peer feedback to each other on the outreach plans. Outreach plans and presentations are due on **Monday, April 26 at 11:59 p.m.**

Professionalism Statement
Professional characteristics on which you will be judged in this course include Internet etiquette, collegial attitude (including use of inclusive language) and participation. This course relies extensively on written assignments, discussion and other class interactions; therefore, weekly engagement is crucial to your success.

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

Canvas: Students are **REQUIRED** to regularly access **Canvas** for course materials and course participation.

Participation Expectations:
You are expected to be an active and engaged member of this learning community. We will communicate with each other via Canvas and email. The first thing you will need to do to begin each week is to complete the assigned readings. After your reading is completed you should contribute to the discussion by first reading the posts from your colleagues and then contributing your thoughts and points. The more we all participate the deeper, thicker and more interesting the discussion will become.

Quality of Postings
Your online posts for this class should be comparable to the kinds of comments you would make in a face-to-face class. A three-page essay response or post will not lend to the quality of the discussion (because most people will not have the patience to read all of it), and likewise neither will posting "I agree!" The quality of the discussions is contingent upon the quality (not length) of the individual posts in the discussion.

University of Florida counseling services: Resources are available on campus for students having personal problems or lacking clear career and academic goals which interfere with their academic performance. These resources include:
- University Counseling Center, 301 Peabody Hall, 392-1575, personal and career counseling.
- Student Mental Health, Student Health Care Center, 392-1171, for personal counseling.
- Sexual Assault Recovery Services (SARS), Student Health Care Center, 392-1161, for sexual assault counseling.
- Career Resource Center, Reitz Union, 392-1601, career development assistance and counseling.

Software use: All faculty, staff and students of the university are required and expected to obey 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.

Accommodations for students with disabilities: 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.

<u>Academic honesty:</u> As a result of completing the registration form at the University of Florida, every student has signed the followed statement: "I understand the University of Florida expects its students to be honest in all their academic work. I agree to adhere to this commitment to academic honesty, and understand that my failure to comply with this commitment may result in disciplinary action, up to and including expulsion from the university."

We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honesty and integrity.

Course Schedule

This course will be delivered entirely online. Each week's module will open by Tuesday morning at 8 a.m. Weekly assignments and discussion posts, unless otherwise noted, are due on Monday at 11:59 p.m.

January 11	Module 1: The need for science communication
January 18	Module 2: How people make sense of science
January 25	Module 3: How people form attitudes about science
February 1	Module 4: Storytelling and science
February 8	Module 5: Communicating about risk and crisis
February 15	Module 6: Communicating science to news media
February 22	Module 7: Video storytelling for scientists
March 1	Module 8: Social media for scientists
March 8	Catch-up week
March 15	Module 9: Engaging in discussion and dialogue about science
March 22	Module 10: Effective posters and research presentations
March 29	Module 11: Evaluating communication effectiveness (reporting outreach efforts)
April 5	Module 12: Communicating science through formal and informal education
April 12	Time to meet with professor and work on final assignment
April 19	Time to meet with professor and work on final assignment
April 26	Final assignment Due