



AGRICULTURAL
EDUCATION AND
COMMUNICATION



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

Spring 2024

Tuesdays 4 (10:40 – 11:30 am)
Thursdays 4-5 (10:40 – 12:35 pm)

INSTRUCTOR:

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Course website: On Canvas

Graduate TA:

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OFFICE HOURS:

Thursdays 12:30 – 1:30 pm
By appointment as needed

CLASS MEETS in **115 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: We will be using **Top Hat Pro** (www.tophat.com) for class participation. You will be able to submit answers to in-class questions using Apple or Android smartphones, tablets, laptops, or through text message. For instructions on how to create a Top Hat account and enroll in our Top Hat Pro course, please refer to the invitation sent to your school email address or consult Top Hat's Getting Started Guide (<https://bit.ly/31TGMIw>).

If you already have a Top Hat account, go to <https://app.tophat.com/e/412515> to be taken directly to our course. If you are new to Top Hat, follow the link in the email invitation you received or...

- Go to <https://app.tophat.com/register/student>

- Click "Search by school" and input the name of our school
- Search for our course with the following join code: [412515]
- If a paid subscription is required, it will be listed at checkout when you enroll in our Top Hat Pro course.

Should you require assistance with Top Hat at any time please contact their Support Team directly by way of email (support@tophat.com), the in-app support button, or by calling 1-888-663-5491. Specific user information may be required by their technical support team when troubleshooting issues.

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

- *Agricultural and Natural Resources Communications*, an online text found at <https://anrcommunications.org/>. Access to the text is no cost.
 - You will need this e-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.

Canvas Technology Requirements

- **Computers, Internet, and Web browsers:** Canvas runs on Windows, Mac, Linux, iOS, Android, or any other device with a modern web browser. It is recommended to use a computer less than five years old with at least 1GB of RAM. It is recommended to have a minimum Internet speed of 512kbps. It is **strongly recommended** to not use a wireless connection, phone, tablet, or notepad for critical course tasks such as exams and discussions.
- Canvas currently supports the following browsers: Chrome, Safari, Firefox, Edge. Canvas supports the last two versions of most browsers. It is **highly recommend** updating to the **newest version** of whatever browser you are using. Note that your computer's operating system may affect browser function. Failure to use one of these browsers will cause problems.
- For more information on approved computers and browsers please visit: <https://community.canvaslms.com/t5/Canvas-Basics-Guide/What-are-the-browser-and-computer-requirements-for-Canvas/ta-p/66> On this web page there is an area titled "Is My Browser up to Date?" Use it to check each computer and browser you may use in this course. There is another important area on "Browser Privacy Settings." Read the section(s) for any browser intended for use. For example, **Note that:** In browsers such as Safari, insecure content will never be displayed in the browser. Return to the page to check for updates on technology issues in Canvas.
- If you encounter technical difficulties in this course, **contact the UF Computing Help Desk** right away to troubleshoot, <https://helpdesk.ufl.edu/> or (352) 392-HELP. If the problem cannot be fixed immediately, **notify your instructor, and provide them with the Help Desk ticket number.**

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 Fact Sheet (individual)	150
Reflections (10 x 30 pts -- individual)	300
Crisis communication plan (individual)	250
End-of-Course Assessment	200
Attendance	50
<u>Participation (Top Hat)</u>	<u>50</u>

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/Documentary Reflections:* Students will provide written reflections on the presentations/case studies in class and on two documentaries. There will be a total of 10 reflections. 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 via a PDF on Canvas.
- *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/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 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/UGRD/academic-regulations/attendance-policies/>.

ZOOM: Although this course will be taught on campus, and I may record class sessions anyway via Zoom, attendance is still mandatory. This course requires a lot of in-class participation and the building of a classroom community.

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/UGRD/academic-regulations/attendance-policies/>.

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)

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 accommodation 0001 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/>.

In-Class Recordings:

Students are allowed to record video or audio of class lectures. However, the purposes for which these recordings may be used are strictly controlled. The only allowable purposes are (1) for personal educational use, (2) in connection with a complaint to the university, or (3) as evidence in, or in preparation for, a criminal or civil proceeding. All other purposes are prohibited. Specifically, students may not publish recorded lectures without the written consent of the instructor. A "class lecture" is an educational presentation intended to inform or teach enrolled students about a particular subject, including any instructor-led discussions that form part of the presentation, and delivered by any instructor hired or appointed by the

University, or by a guest instructor, as part of a University of Florida course. A class lecture does not include lab sessions, student presentations, clinical presentations such as patient history, academic exercises involving solely student participation, assessments (quizzes, tests, exams), field trips, private conversations between students in the class or between a student and the faculty or lecturer during a class session. Publication without permission of the instructor is prohibited. To “publish” means to share, transmit, circulate, distribute, or provide access to a recording, regardless of format or medium, to another person (or persons), including but not limited to another student within the same class section. Additionally, a recording, or transcript of a recording, is considered published if it is posted on or uploaded to, in whole or in part, any media platform, including but not limited to social media, book, magazine, newspaper, leaflet, or third party note/tutoring services. A student who publishes a recording without written consent may be subject to a civil cause of action instituted by a person injured by the publication and/or discipline under UF Regulation 4.040 Student

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.**

Tuesdays (10:40 – 11:30 am) – 115 Rolfs Hall	Thursdays (10:40 – 12:35 pm) – 115 Rolfs Hall
January 9 TOPIC: Introduction, review syllabus What is agricultural and life sciences, natural resources?	January 11 TOPIC: What is agricultural and life sciences, natural resources? <i>Reflections (discuss rubric)</i> WATCH: Florida Agriculture http://vimeo.com/17235079 Professionalism, Zoom etiquette, & guest speaker interaction
January 16 TOPIC: Individual Concept Mapping Instructions	January 18 Guest: Dr. Stedman – Critical Thinking
January 23 TOPIC: Land-grant system GUEST SPEAKER: TBD	January 25 REVIEW: Land-grant system DUE: Reflection 1 on Land-grant system TOPIC: Critical thinking and ALS issues <i>Issues fact sheets (discuss rubric)</i>
January 30 TOPIC: Climate change GUEST SPEAKER: TBD	February 1 REVIEW: Climate change DUE: Reflection 2 on Climate change TOPIC: Critical thinking and ALS issues (continued)
February 6 TOPIC: Invasive Species-Citrus Greening Case Study	February 8 TOPIC: Invasive Species-Citrus Green Case Study (continued)
February 13 Review & Concept Map Invasive Species-Citrus Greening Case Study DUE: Reflection 3 on Invasive Species-Citrus Greening Case Study	February 15 TOPIC: Agenda setting and framing messages

Tuesdays (10:40 – 11:30 am) – 115 Rolfs Hall	Thursdays (10:40 – 12:35 pm) – 115 Rolfs Hall
February 20 TOPIC: Food security GUEST SPEAKER: TBD	February 22 TOPIC: Food security – VISIT Field & Fork Teaching Gardens and/or Pantry
February 27 TOPIC: The Blue Bell Crisis Case Study DUE: Reflection 4 on Food security	February 29 TOPIC: The Blue Bell Crisis Case Study (continued)
March 5 Review & Concept Map Blue Bell Crisis Communication Case Study DUE: Reflection 5 on Blue Bell Crisis Communication Case Study	March 7 TOPIC: Introduction: Crisis communication DUE: Issues Fact Sheet assignment
March 12 SPRING BREAK	March 14 SPRING BREAK
March 19 TOPIC: Immigration/labor GUEST SPEAKER: TBD	March 21 REVIEW: Immigration/labor DUE: Reflection 6 on Immigration/labor TOPIC: Crisis communication (continued) & Persuasion
March 26 TOPIC: Urban/rural interface & water quality/quantity GUEST SPEAKER: TBD	March 28 REVIEW: Urban/rural interface & water quality/quantity DUE: Reflection 7 on Urban/rural interface & water quality/quality TOPIC: Public Opinion and/or Political affiliation and productive conversation GUEST SPEAKER: TBD
April 2 DUE: Reflection 8 on Public Opinion and/or Political affiliation and productive conversation TOPIC: Antibiotics in Animal Agriculture Case Study	April 4 TOPIC: Antibiotics in Animal Agriculture Case Study (continued)
April 9 Review & Concept Map Antibiotics in Animal Agriculture Case Study DUE: Reflection 9 on Antibiotics in Animal Agriculture Case Study	April 11 TOPIC: Documentary Day - TBD
April 16 TOPIC: Wrap up & Review for End-of-Course Assessment (TAKE HOME) DUE: Reflection 10 on Documentary	April 18 CRISIS COMMUNICATION PLAN – WORK DAY DUE: Crisis communication plans
April 23 End-of-Course Assessment DUE – Take Home (via Canvas) TOPIC: Extra Credit Speaker Day, Course Evaluations	



we are
AEC-CLD
at the University of Florida

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

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