

## Issues in Agricultural & Life Sciences

### AEC3065

Spring 2025 - 3 credit hours

#### Instructor

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#### Teaching Assistant

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Office hours: By appointment

#### Class Times & Location

This course is asynchronous, fully online. The course is facilitated via Canvas. Assignments are typically due on Sundays by 11:59pm, unless otherwise indicated.

#### Course Organization

Within Canvas, the course is organized by weekly modules. Each module will officially begin on the Monday of each week unless different instructions are provided, students may complete the coursework at their own pace within this weekly timeframe.

#### Course 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.

#### Course Objectives

After this course, the student should 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.

## AEC-CLD Statement of Purpose

- 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.

## Requirements

### Textbook:

Students are expected to purchase the text online via Perusall, an online platform that we will utilize to not only read the text but also annotate together as a class. Texts acquired from sources other than Perusall will not be eligible for use within the platform. For more information, please review the Perusall Information page within Canvas.

- The Communication Scarcity in Agriculture (1st Edition), by Jessica Eise and Whitney Hodde
  - \$54.99 | Perpetual online access
  - \$32.99 | 365-day online access
  - \$27.50 | 180-day online access

Additional assigned readings will be provided to students free of charge.

### Technology:

To succeed in this course, you must have access to the following technology:

- Desktop Computer or Laptop
  - Audio Capabilities
  - Webcam and Microphone for synchronous sessions
- Optional - Virtual reality headset compatible with immersive and 360° video formats.
- Microsoft Office Programs
  - [Microsoft Privacy Statement](#)
  - [Microsoft Accessibility Information](#)
  - Word - [Microsoft 365 basics video training](#)
- Adobe Reader
  - [Acrobat tutorials](#)
  - [Adobe Privacy Statement](#)
  - [Adobe Accessibility Statement](#)
- Zoom
  - [Zoom Privacy Policy](#)
  - [Zoom Accessibility Information](#)
- Internet Connection with access to Canvas
  - Canvas is the course management system at the University of Florida in which students will find course content, links to video lectures, assignments, quizzes, discussions, and grades. The use of this system will vary by instructor, but the following videos describe the most common tools in Canvas. The [full student guide](#) is provided if you have additional questions.
    - [Canvas Privacy Policy](#)

- [Canvas Accessibility Standards](#)
- **Web Browser - Chrome** is the preferred browser for Canvas. If you do not have Chrome, you can [download it](#).
- University of Florida Email
  - Students are expected to check their my.ufl emails daily. View the [Student Computing Requirements](#) page for information on technology requirements and expectations.

### Prerequisite Knowledge:

There are no pre-requisite courses required to take AEC3065. There is no prerequisite agricultural knowledge or experience required to be successful in the course.

### Expected Technical & Digital Literacy Skills:

Minimum skills required:

- Proficiency in utilizing Canvas and navigating the internet effectively.
- Competence in using email for communication purposes, including sending and receiving messages and managing attachments.
- Familiarity with commonly used word processing applications (such as Microsoft Word or Google Docs), including the ability to create, edit, and format documents.
- Basic computer skills, including understanding fundamental operations like file management, using menus and toolbars, and navigating between different applications.
- Using online search tools for specific academic purposes, including the ability to use search criteria, keywords, and filters.
- Analyzing digital information for credibility, currency, and bias.

### Instructor Team Communication & Feedback

**Communication** - The instructor and teaching assistant are committed to responding to your Canvas and email messages **within 24 hours** when feasible during the work week, Monday through Friday, *except holidays*. The major assignments will be graded, with *meaningful feedback* provided, **within one week of their submission**.

**Individual Learner Interaction** – Education extends beyond the mere transmission of knowledge; it involves providing valuable feedback and maintaining ongoing communication with the learner. The instructor is committed to engaging in one-on-one interactions with each student. This may manifest as detailed feedback on assignment submissions, responses to discussion board posts, or personalized Canvas messages to check in on the student's progress in the course.

**Office Hours** - Although the instructor and teaching assistant both will have busy semesters, we are both more than happy to accommodate a Zoom meeting by appointment. Canvas "Inbox" email or regular email are the best ways to communicate, as instructors will not always be in their physical offices with their phones for most of the semester. Please reach out with any requests.

### Assignments

Below, you will find information regarding the course's assignments and their point values, the grading scale, and more. All assignments in this course are individual assignments. Written assignments must be typed. Assignments must be submitted in the required format to receive full credit. Assignment requirements are available in Canvas.

Visit [UF's webpage for grades and grading policies](#). for more information regarding grading policies for assignment grade points.

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.

### Assignment Descriptions:

**Introduction and Background Post (30 points)** - Students will introduce themselves in a discussion board post. In addition, students will share relevant details about their background as it relates to agriculture, natural resources, and life sciences.

**Perspective Journal (140 points, 10 points each week)** - Students will contribute to a personal perspective journal with weekly prompts. The purpose of the perspective journal is to identify any potential biases and reflect on perceptions of issues in agriculture and life sciences.

**Textbook Readings in Perusall (130 points, 10 points each week)** – Students will use Perusall to read the textbook while leaving comments/thoughts using provided prompts. This activity will help students share their own perspectives and comments about the textbook with other students.

**Issue Research Activities (200 points, 100 points each)** - Students will conduct research on select issues based on the prompts provided. This assignment is helpful in preparation for the issue fact sheet assignment.

**Issue Fact Sheet (200 points)** - Students will create a fact sheet that includes information about the issue and multiple stakeholders' perceptions, as well as resources used.

**Infographic (150 points)** - Students will design an infographic that highlights valuable or misunderstood information regarding a select issue.

**Crisis Communication Assignment (150 points)** - Students will analyze a crisis that has previously happened to a company/organization and detail components of the communication that happened during the crisis.

### Course Schedule:

<b>Week 1 -</b> Jan 13 – Jan 19	Topic	Course Introduction - What do I know about issues in agricultural and life sciences?
	Readings	The Communication Scarcity in Agriculture, Foreword, Preface, Introduction
	Due	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Watch instructor and TA's introduction videos <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Introduction and Background Post <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Perspective Journal Entry #1 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Perusall Reading Activity #1
<b>Week 2 -</b> Jan 20 - Jan 26	Topic	What influences my perception of issues in agricultural and life sciences?
	Readings	The Communication Scarcity in Agriculture, Chapter 1

	Due	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Perspective Journal Entry #2 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Perusall Reading Activity #2 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Issue Research Activity #1
<b>Week 3 -</b> Jan 27 - Feb 2	Topic	Perspectives from the Field: Immersive Videos
	Readings	The Communication Scarcity in Agriculture, Chapter 2
	Due	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Immersive Video 1 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Perspective Journal Entry #3 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Perusall Reading Activity #3
<b>Week 4 -</b> Feb 3 - Feb 9	Topic	Perspectives from the Field: Immersive Videos (continued)
	Readings	The Communication Scarcity in Agriculture, Chapter 3
	Due	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Immersive Video 2 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Perspective Journal Entry #4 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Perusall Reading Activity #4 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Issue Research Activity #2
<b>Week 5 -</b> Feb 10 - Feb 16	Topic	Perspectives from the Field: Immersive Videos (continued)
	Readings	The Communication Scarcity in Agriculture, Chapter 4
	Due	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Immersive Video 3 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Perspective Journal Entry #5 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Perusall Reading Activity #5
<b>Week 6 -</b> Feb 17 - Feb 23	Topic	What does it mean to frame my agricultural and life sciences issue?
	Readings	The Communication Scarcity in Agriculture, Chapter 5
	Due	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Watch the instructor's video on framing <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Perspective Journal Entry #6 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Perusall Reading Activity #6 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Issue Fact Sheet Assignment
<b>Week 7 -</b> Feb 24 - Mar 2	Topic	Where do natural resources fit into agricultural and life sciences?

	Readings	The Communication Scarcity in Agriculture, Chapter 6
	Due	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Watch the instructor video on Florida State Parks <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> iVisit 3D tour of Nature Coast Biological Research Station <a href="https://thevisitproject.com/uf-ifas-nature-coast-biological-station/">(https://thevisitproject.com/uf-ifas-nature-coast-biological-station/)</a> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Perspective Journal Entry #7 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Perusall Reading Activity #7
<b>Week 8 -</b> Mar 3 - Mar 9	Topic	Agricultural and Natural Resources Case Study: Invasive Species/Citrus Greening
	Readings	The Communication Scarcity in Agriculture, Chapter 7
	Due	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Watch instructor's video on Invasive Species & Citrus Greening <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Perspective Journal Entry #8 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Perusall Reading Activity #8
<b>Week 9 -</b> Mar 10 - Mar 16	Topic	Has my perception changed?
	Readings	The Communication Scarcity in Agriculture, Chapter 8
	Due	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Perspective Journal Entry #9 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Infographic Assignment <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Perusall Reading Activity #9
<b>Week 10 -</b> Mar 17 - Mar 23	Topic	<b>SPRING BREAK</b>
<b>Week 11-</b> Mar 24 - Mar 30	Topic	What is the role of Science Communication in all of this?
	Readings	The Communication Scarcity in Agriculture, Chapter 9
	Due	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Visit the Streaming Science website (streamingscience.com) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Perspective Journal Entry #11 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Perusall Reading Activity #10
<b>Week 12 -</b> Mar 31 - Apr 6	Topic	How do I include a diversity of stakeholder perspectives when considering agricultural and life sciences issues?
	Readings	The Communication Scarcity in Agriculture, Chapter 10

	Due	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Farm Labor Video (Ismelda Alvarez's perspective) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Perspective Journal Entry #12 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Perusall Reading Activity #11
<b>Week 13 -</b> Apr 7 - Apr 13	Topic	We're all in this together
	Readings	The Communication Scarcity in Agriculture, Chapter 11
	Due	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Perspective Journal Entry #13 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Perusall Reading Activity #12
<b>Week 14 -</b> Apr 14 - Apr 20	Topic	Risk & Crisis Communication in agricultural and life sciences
	Readings	Agricultural and Natural Resources Communications (free textbook) – Risk & Crisis Communication Chapter
	Due	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Watch the YouTube video on the Tylenol Murders <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Watch the instructor's video on Crisis Communication <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Perspective Journal Entry #14 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Perusall Reading Activity #13 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Crisis Communication Assignment
<b>Week 15 -</b> Apr 21 - Apr 23	Topic	Course Summary - How can I contribute positively to the dialogue?
	Readings	None
	Due	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Watch instructor's semester wrap-up video <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Perspective Journal Entry #15

### Grading Scale:

A 930-1000

B- 800-829

D+ 660-699

A- 900-929

C+ 760-799

D 630-659

B+ 860-899

C 730-759

D- 600-629

B 830-859

C- 700-729

E 599 and below

## Academic Code of Conduct

### UF's Academic Honesty Statement:

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 dishonesty to the instructor, department chair, college dean or Student Honor Court. **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: [UF Student Code of Conduct Webpage](#).

### Plagiarism:

Academic integrity is a fundamental value in our educational community and is essential for maintaining a fair and honest learning environment. As students, you are expected to adhere to the highest standards of honesty and ethical behavior in all academic activities. To ensure that you maintain academic integrity throughout the course, please ensure all sources and text are properly referenced. Familiarize yourself with the appropriate citation style for the course (e.g., APA, MLA, Chicago) and consistently apply it to all written work. Properly citing sources not only demonstrates respect for others' intellectual contributions but is also crucial in avoiding plagiarism. Plagiarism encompasses using verbatim phrases without permission or proper attribution, quoting excessively from sources, and surpassing the 10% limit for direct quotes in an assignment. It extends to appropriating unique expressions, like short phrases or simple monikers.

### 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."
- 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.

### **Artificial Intelligence (A.I.) Use:**

Due to the importance of understanding and sharing multiple perspectives in this course, including your own, the use of an AI Generator such as ChatGPT, MidJourney, DALL-E, etc. is explicitly prohibited unless otherwise noted by the instructor. This includes text and artwork/graphics/video/audio. The information derived from these tools is based on previously published materials. Therefore, using these tools without proper citation constitutes plagiarism. Additionally, be aware that the information derived from these tools is often inaccurate or incomplete. It's imperative that all work submitted should be your own. Any assignment that is found to have been plagiarized or to have used unauthorized AI tools may receive a zero and / or be reported for academic misconduct.

At times, after communicating valid reasoning for use with the instructor, you may be given permission to use these tools. If you include material generated by an AI program, it should be cited like any other reference material (with due consideration for the quality of the reference, which may be poor). You may not submit any work generated by an AI program as your own. The best way to use AI is for idea generation, synthesis, rephrasing, essentializing and gathering information about the typical understanding of a topic. However, it should be you that guides, verifies and crafts your ultimate answers, so please don't just cut and paste without understanding. Let's leverage the tools as an extension of ourselves with a base of knowledge to make them powerful.

### **Attendance Policies**

Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments and other work are consistent with university policies that can be found at: [UF Attendance Policies](#).

### **Institutional Policies**

#### **Recording Statement**

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 guest 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 Honor Code and Student Conduct Code. [UF IN-CLASS RECORDING](#)

### 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. [UF ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY](#)

### Course Evaluations

Student assessment of instruction is an important part of efforts to improve teaching and learning. At the end of the semester, students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course using a standard set of university and college criteria. 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/>

## Student Services

### Health & Wellness

- U Matter, We Care
  - If you or someone you know is in distress, please contact [umatter@ufl.edu](mailto:umatter@ufl.edu), 352-392-1575, or visit [U Matter, We Care website](#) to refer or report a concern and a team member will reach out to the student in distress.
- Counseling and Wellness Center
  - Visit the [Counseling and Wellness Center website](#) or call 352-392-1575 for information on crisis services as well as non-crisis services.
  - 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.
- Student Health Care Center
  - Call 352-392-1161 for 24/7 information to help you find the care you need, or visit the [Student Health Care Center website](#).
- University Police Department

- Visit [UF Police Department website](#) or call 352-392-1111 (or 9-1-1 for emergencies).
- GatorWell Health Promotion Services
  - For prevention services focused on optimal wellbeing, including Wellness Coaching for Academic Success, visit the [GatorWell website](#) or call 352-273-4450.

### **Academic Resources**

- E-learning technical support
- Contact the [UF Computing Help Desk](#) at 352-392-4357 or via e-mail at [helpdesk@ufl.edu](mailto:helpdesk@ufl.edu).
- [Career Connections Center](#)
  - Reitz Union Suite 1300, 352-392-1601. Career assistance and counseling services.
- [Library Support](#)
  - Various ways to receive assistance with respect to using the libraries or finding resources.
- [Teaching Center](#)
  - Broward Hall, 352-392-2010 or to make an appointment 352-392-6420. General study skills and tutoring.
- [Writing Studio](#)
  - 2215 Turlington Hall, 352-846-1138. Help brainstorming, formatting, and writing papers.
- Student Complaints On-Campus
  - Visit the [Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code webpage](#) for more information.
- On-Line Students Complaints
  - View the [Distance Learning Student Complaint Process](#).

### **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, [UF Disability Resource Center](#).