

AEC 6932: Effectively Communicating Agricultural and Natural Resources Policy Issues SPRING 2025 FRIDAY 3-4th periods (9:30-11:30)



Instructor

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Teaching Assistant

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Class Times

Fridays (3-4th periods, 9:30-11:30 a.m.)

Location 107 Bryant Space Science Center

Office Hours

TELG: F 8:30-9:30 a.m. and by appointment LUNDY: TH 10:30-11:30 a.m. and by appointment

Course Description

The course is designed to educate students about major policy issues in agriculture and natural resources (ANR) and to expose students to a variety of methods used to effectively communicate, inform, and influence decisions about these issues. All discussions and activities are planned to involve you in "real world" ways. This is a co-taught undergraduate/graduate course.

Course Objectives

After this course, the student should be able to:

- Recognize and analyze topical policy issues in agriculture and natural resources and facilitate consensus building and issues management.
- Develop messages to communicate about topical policy issues in agriculture and natural resources using appropriate media.

Course Design

This is an in-person course. Zoom may be available – on a case-by-case basis – for students to use to access live content. The course has materials available through Canvas.

NOTE: All field trips are MANDATORY.

Requirements

Textbook:

Successful students will read assigned materials **before class** and be prepared for discussion with the instructor and fellow students. The main readings for this class are from *Writing Public Policy: A Practical Guide to Communicating in the Policy Making Process (6th Edition)* by Catherine F. Smith (<u>REQUIRED</u>).

Some readings will come from *Agricultural and Natural Resources Communications* (<u>https://anrcommunications.org/</u>) This is a **free** online publication. **Online readings** may also be assigned throughout the semester.

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
- Microsoft Word <u>Microsoft 365 basics video training</u>
- Adobe Reader <u>Acrobat tutorials</u>
- Zoom Zoom Privacy Policy
- 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 <u>full student guide</u> is provided if you have additional questions.
 - View <u>Canvas Privacy Policy</u>
- 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 <u>Student Computing</u> <u>Requirements</u> page for information on technology requirements and expectations.

Equipment and Bryant Space Science Center Mac Lab:

Food and drink are **NOT** permitted in the computer lab. Only water in a container that has a screw-on lid or can be closed is permitted.

Minimum Technical Skills:

Minimum technical 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.
- Ability to perform online research using a variety of search engines and library databases.

Instructor Response & Feedback

The instructor and graders 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**. Quizzes are graded automatically upon submission.

Assignments

Assignment Points & Explanation:

	Total Score	Your Score
Message Box, Communication Points, Storytelling	150	
Issues Presentation + One-pager 1	150	
Issues Presentation + One-pager 2	200	
Reflection 1	100	
Reflection 2	100	
Reflection 3	125	
Quizzes (5 x 20)	100	
Interview with a Political Leader/Communicator	100	
Participation	75	
	1100	

- Message Box, Communication Points, & Storytelling: In preparation for the Issues Presentations and One-Pager assignment, students will complete the handouts provided in class to help them develop their "issues" assignment.
- Issue Presentations and One-Pager: Students will select an agricultural and life sciences policy issue. Students will create a one-pager, based on instructions provided in class, as a "leave-behind" on the agricultural or life sciences policy or issue that the student selects to analyze. Students will present their one-pager as they would to a policymaker or leader in a one-on-one setting. Students will have the opportunity to revise their one-pager and presentation and do a second submission later in the semester.
- *Reflections (3) and Participation*: Students will provide three thoughtful reflections on guests and/or overall topics. Students also will be assessed on their participation in class and during their interactions with speakers. It is expected that students take notes and interact with guest speakers.
- *Quizzes (5)*: There will be five quizzes on the assigned readings and course materials. These will be due **prior** to class every other week. A sixth quiz will be conducted near the end of the semster; students will be able to make up one quiz by taking the sixth quiz OR drop their lowest quiz grade.
- Interview with a Political Leader/Communicator: Students will identify a Political Leader/ Communicator with whom to conduct an interview via Zoom. A list of suggested questions will be provided. Students will supplement with questions relevant to the interviewee's work.

Course Grading:

All written assignments MUST be typed. Following is the grading scale and assignments:

Grading Scale A = 1023-1100 A- = 990-1022 B+ = 946-989 B = 913-945 B- = 880-912 C+ = 836-879 C = 803-835 C- = 770-802 D+ = 726-769 D = 693-725 D- = 660-692 E = 659 and below

Further information about UF grading policies can be found here: <u>https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/grades-grading-policies/</u>

Late Assignment Policy:

A <u>**10-percent per day**</u> deduction will be assessed for assignments turned in late. Work more than a week late will <u>**not**</u> be accepted. This policy will be <u>strictly</u> enforced.

Academic Integrity

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: <u>UF Student</u> Code of Conduct Webpage.

Plagiarism:

Plagiarism includes taking **verbatim phrases of** *just a few words* without permission or full attribution. It includes *quoting too much* from your sources, thereby substituting their expression for your own, or quoting too much from one source, effectively taking more than a *fair use* of their work. **Over quoting (direct quotes)** comprising more than 10% of any assignment will be considered plagiarism. Plagiarism includes *unique expression*, which can be a phrase of a few words or a simple moniker. Our writing is

mostly *our own expression*. When writing for science and business, we base our work on **facts** obtained from a variety of **credible sources**. We give credit where it is due. We **cite our sources** so others can access the information we present. When appropriate, we very carefully, ethically, and lawfully use others' expression of that information. We obtain permission to use our sources' expression or give full credit for a *limited, fair use,* including direct quotes.

Attendance Policies

Given the importance of class discussion and participation in laboratory 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**. Only documented doctor's excuses or UF-approved activities will be excused. Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments and other work are consistent with university policies that can be found at: <u>UF Attendance Policies</u>.

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. <u>UF IN-CLASS RECORDING</u>

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. <u>UF ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY</u>

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 <u>umatter@ufl.edu</u>, 352-392-1575, or visit <u>U Matter, We Care website</u> to refer or report a concern and a team member will reach out to the student in distress.
- Counseling and Wellness Center
 - Visit the <u>Counseling and Wellness Center website</u> 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 <u>Student</u> <u>Health Care Center website</u>.
- University Police Department
 - Visit <u>UF Police Department website</u> 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 <u>GatorWell website</u> or call 352-273-4450.

Academic Resources:

- Linked-In Learning
 - The University of Florida has an agreement with Linked-In Learning (formerly 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 Linked-In Learning tutorials available through UF e-Learning: <u>https://elearning.ufl.edu/.</u>
- E-learning technical support
- Contact the <u>UF Computing Help Desk</u> at 352-392-4357 or via e-mail at <u>helpdesk@ufl.edu.</u>
- <u>Career Connections Center</u>
 - Reitz Union Suite 1300, 352-392-1601. Career assistance and counseling services.
- Library Support
 - \circ $\,$ Various ways to receive assistance with respect to using the libraries or finding resources.
- <u>Teaching Center</u>
 - 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 <u>Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code webpage</u> for more information.
- On-Line Students Complaints
 - View the <u>Distance Learning Student Complaint Process.</u>

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, <u>UF Disability Resource Center.</u> <u>Canvas Accessibility Standards</u> <u>Zoom Accessibility Information</u>

Cours	e Schedule	
WEEK	(1 (1/17)	
	TOPIC:	COURSE OVERVIEW
		LAWS, STATUTES, AND POLICIES
	TEXT:	ANR Communications: Policy Communication
	7 7 (1 /24)	
VVEEN	(2 (1/24)	
	TOPIC:	PUBLIC POLICY IS LANGUAGE USE COMMUNICATING POLICY ISSUES W/ THE PUBLIC AND POLICYMAKERS
		COMMUNICATION POINTS, MESSAGE BOX, & STORYTELLING
	TEXT:	ANR Communications: Policy Communication
		Chapter 1: Public Policy is Language Use
	READINGS:	It takes two: Public understanding of agricultural science and agricultural scientists'
		understanding of the public
		EDIS Publication Series
		Communicating with Local Elected Officials
		Educating Your State Legislators
		Meeting with Elected Officials
		Strategies for Engaging and Communicating with Elected Officials
		Why Lobbying for Ag is a Contact Sport (by Mary Hartney. PDF from Florida
		Grower magazine, Aug. 2019)
		American Farm Bureau establishes 2023 policies
W/FFK	(3 (1/31)	
		LOCAL POLICY COMMUNICATION & LEADERSHIP
	READINGS:	Impacting Agriculture and Natural Resource Policy: County Commissioners'
	NE/IDINGS.	Decision-Making Behaviors and Communication Preferences
	FIELD TRIP:	GAINESVILLE GOVERNMENT (DOWNTOWN)
	QUIZ:	QUIZ 1: Covers materials from 1/17 and 1/24.
WEEK	(4 (2/7)	
	TOPIC:	COMMUNICATING IN POLICYMAKING
		DEFINITION: DESCRIBING THE PROBLEM
		NEWS AND PERSUASION
		DESIGNING A ONE-PAGER
	TEXT:	Chapter 2: Communicating in Policymaking
		Chapter 3: Definition: Describing the Problem
	READINGS:	A note to researchers: communicating science to policy makers and practitioners
	GUESTS:	Sarah Grace Fowler, Felicity Stewart
	ASSIGNMENT:	REFLECTION 1

WEEK 5 (2/14)

TOPIC:	GRASSROOTS POLICY COMMUNICATION & LEADERSHIP
READINGS:	Research and Policy for the Food-Delivery Revolution
	Florida Farm Bureau ADVOCACY
	Florida Farm Bureau Policy Development Handbook
	Florida Farm Bureau Policy Book
ASSIGNMENT:	COMMUNICATION POINTS, MESSAGE BOX, & STORYTELLING
FIELD TRIP:	FLORIDA FARM BUREAU
QUIZ:	QUIZ 2: Covers materials from 1/31 and 2/7.

WEEK 6 (2/21)

TOPIC:	EVALUATION: ANALYZE AND ADVISE
	LEGISLATIVE HISTORY: KNOW THE RECORD
TEXT:	Chapter 4: Evaluation: Analyze and Advise
	Chapter 5: Legislative History: Know the Record
READINGS:	
GUEST:	Emmie Fuson Addamus

WEEK 7 (2/28)

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TOPIC:	POSITION PAPER: KNOW THE ARGUMENTS
	PETITION, PROPOSAL, LETTER: REQUEST ACTION
TEXT:	Chapter 6: Position Paper: Know the Arguments
	Chapter 7: Petition, Proposal, Letter: Request Action
	STATE AGENCY POLICY COMMUNICATION & LEADERSHIP
READINGS:	Identifying Trustworthy Experts: How Do Policymakers Find and Assess Public
	Health Researchers Worth Consulting or Collaborating With?
GUEST:	Reba Hicks
QUIZ:	QUIZ 3: Covers materials from 2/14 and 2/21.

WEEK 8 (3/7)

TOPIC:	PRESENTATIONS
ASSIGNMENT:	ISSUES PRESENTATION + ONE-PAGER (1)

WEEK 9 (3/14)

TOPIC:	BRIEF, OPINION, RESOLUTION: INFORM POLICY MAKERS
	TESTIMONY: WITNESS IN A PUBLIC HEARING
	NATURAL RESOURCES POLICY COMMUNICATION & LEADERSHIP
TEXT:	Chapter 8: Brief, Opinion, Resolution: Inform Policy Makers
	Chapter 9: Testimony: Witness in a Public Hearing
READINGS:	
GUESTS:	Katelyn Potter, Marly Fuller
ASSIGNMENT:	REFLECTION 2

WEEK 10 (3/21)

SPRING BREAK

WEEK 11 (3/28)

TOPIC:	PUBLIC COMMENT: INFLUENCE ADMINISTRATION ETHICS FOR POLICY MAKERS STATE POLICY COMMUNICATION & LEADERSHIP
TEXT:	Chapter 10: Public Comment: Influence Administration Conclusion: Ethics for Policy Makers
READINGS:	
GUEST:	Mary Ann Hooks
QUIZ:	QUIZ 4: Covers materials from 2/28, 3/7, and 3/14.
ASSIGNMENT:	INTERVIEW W/ POLITICAL LEADER/COMMUNICATOR

WEEK 12 (4/4)

TOPIC:	AGRICULTURAL ASSOCIATION POLICY COMMUNICATION & LEADERSHIP
READINGS:	
GUESTS:	Jim Handley, Mike Joyner, Tal Coley

WEEK 13 (4/11)

TOPIC:	PRESENTATIONS
ASSIGNMENT:	REFLECTION 3
ASSIGNMENT:	FINAL ISSUES PRESENTATIONS + ONE-PAGERS (2)
QUIZ:	QUIZ 5: Covers materials from 3/28 and 4/4.

WEEK 14 (4/18)

TOPIC:	PRESENTATIONS
ASSIGNMENT:	FINAL ISSUES PRESENTATIONS + ONE-PAGERS (2) + SEMESTER RECAP
QUIZ:	MAKE-UP QUIZ: Covers entire semester.

Expanded Descriptions of Course Assignments

Message Box, Communication Points, Storytelling

In preparation for the *Issues Presentations and One-Pager* assignment, students will complete the handouts provided in class to help them develop their "issues" assignment. By this time, students will have selected the issue for their Issues Presentation + One-Pager assignment. Students will complete the Message Box and the communication points and create at least a draft of a story, using the "storytelling" handout. Students will submit these completed documents for grading, so that instructors can provide feedback to students. As part of this assignment, students must also provide at least a one-paragraph description of the following:

- Topic/issue that will be presented in the *Issues Presentations and One-Pager* assignment.
- A brief summary of the major "players/stakeholders" related to the topic/issue
- The policymaker/agency that the *Issues Presentations and One-Pager* assignment will be made to
- A summary of why this topic/issue is important

One-Pager + Issues Presentation

The objective of this assignment is to give you the opportunity to translate information on a policy issue into a "**one-pager**" for a "leave behind" to a legislator or agency and to present the issue to a policymaker in a mock setting.

Students will do the **Issues Presentation + One-Pager** about midway through the semester. Students will then REDO this assignment at the end of the semester, using the same issue. **The goal is for students to take the comments from the first presentation and then improve their presentation at the end of the semester.**

Students will develop an "**elevator message**" (issues presentation) to present the onepager to a specific legislator or agency. The presentation will be graded based on brevity, focus, appropriate tone of the communication message, and clarity of the topic conveyed in the presentation. The **one-pager** will be graded on succinctness, focus, design, appropriate tone of the communication message, and grammar/punctuation.

<u>The scenario;</u>

You will "present" your issue (and one-pager) to an instructor in a role-play. One of us will take on the role of a decision-maker at the local, state, or national level, depending on the topic/issue you have selected. You will come into our "office" (or "virtually" via Zoom) and discuss the topic with us. After brief introductions – be sure to introduce yourself to us – you will present your topic/issue to us and provide us with the one-pager as a leave-behind. (HINT: It's always a good idea to have a copy for the decision-maker and one for yourself.)

Remember to make the "pitch." You can choose the topic/issue, and you can choose if it will be local, state, or national. You can also choose if you want us to take on the role of an elected official or a regulatory agency administrator (like the US Department of Agriculture, the Environmental Protection Agency, or the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services).

Time Limits:

For the FIRST time you present, you will have **up to THREE minutes**. For the SECOND time you present, you will have **up to FIVE minutes**. *Remember: Briefer is better.* ☺

<u>Attire</u>:

You are free to wear "regular" college clothes for the first presentation, but within <u>reason</u>. OK for jeans, but not cut-off shorts, if we can see them. (Or feel free to wear "business casual," too.) For the SECOND round, we would like to see "business casual" (nice shirt/blouse).

<u>Submit:</u>

Submit your **ONE-PAGER** through Canvas by the **BEGINNING of class today (no later than 8:30 a.m**.). Your presentation will be done either in-person (for the "in-person" section) or via Zoom.

Reflections

Students will provide a thoughtful reflection on guest speakers and/or overall topics. Students will discuss what they learned about communicating to policymakers from the speakers. There will be three reflection assignments throughout the semester. It is expected that the written reflection assignments would be at least two full pages (doublespaced). It is expected that students include specific examples from the speakers and course materials (readings, videos) as part of their reflections. The final reflection will be a synopsis of all that students learned during the semester.

To help guide your reflections, students may want to consider these questions. You don't have to use all of these questions, but they are provided to help you "reflect":

- What were the policy issues the guest speaker(s) discussed?
- What were the positions the guest speaker(s) had on the policy issue? And why?
- How does the guest speaker communicate about policy issues?
- What's in it for them?
- What are the resources of the guest speaker(s) related to the policy issue? Or what are the resources of the individuals/organizations who communicate about the policy issue?
- What did guest speaker(s) do to make the issue more (or less) visible to the public, or closer to (or farther from) government action?
- What were some specific examples from the guest speaker(s) that "spoke" to you?
- What did you learn about effectively communicating about agricultural and life sciences policies from the guest speaker(s)?
- How will you use what you learned from the guest speaker(s) after this course?
- Be sure to get the guest speaker(s) names and their organization/agency spelled correctly.

<u>GRADING</u>:

REFLECTIONS 1 and 2: 100 points each REFLECTION 3: 125 points

Quizzes

There will be five quizzes (20 points each) on the assigned readings and course materials. These will be due **prior** to class the week that the quiz is assigned. A sixth quiz will be conducted near the end of the semster; students will be able to make up one quiz by taking the sixth quiz OR drop their lowest quiz grade. Quiz content will be based on one week's worth or two weeks' worth of material (the week immediately covered AND the content of the coming week). Students are to take the quiz before class.

Participation

Students are expected to participate in class by engaging with the instructors and guest speakers.

Interview with a Political Leader/Communicator

Students will identify a **political leader/communicator** with whom to conduct <u>and record</u> an interview via Zoom. A list of suggested questions will be provided.

Students will supplement with questions relevant to the interviewee's work. In addition to submitting the **recorded interview**, students will provide a **written summary** of the major points of the interview, as well as a **reflection** on what the student learned about how the political leader/communicator effectively communicates about issues. Lastly, students will provide a link to or a copy (scanned or hard copy) of a **relevant reading** (journal article, news media piece, policy statement) to the political leader/communicator the student interviews.

Overall, students will provide the following:

- Recorded video
- Written summary of the major points of the interview: At least one page singlespaced
- Reflection on what the student learned: At least one page single-spaced
- Link to or copy of a relevant reading