AGR 6932: PROFESSIONAL COMMUNICATION
Agronomy Department – University of Florida
Fall 2023

INSTRUCTOR:

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Office hours: by appointment

LOCATION AND TIME

Online Delivery

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course will provide students with the writing and presentation skills required to succeed in graduate school, job interviews, and their chosen career path. Topics of focus will include: crafting effective blog posts and emails, writing scientific articles, grant proposals, and white papers, avoiding plagiarism (writing and presenting), presenting scientific findings in lab meetings, conferences, or informal settings, delivering effective job talks, developing and delivering lectures/course activities, and adjusting communication style to fit your audience (writing and presenting). Content is delivered though a mix of writing assignments, presentation assignments, group discussions, and guest lectures. This course emphasizes hands-on, experiential learning, with emphasis on improving skill through in-class activities and peer-learning.

Course prerequisite: None.

JUSTIFICATION

Written and verbal communication skills are key to success in graduate school and beyond. Graduate students are required to present information to scientific and non-scientific (e.g., extension) audiences, and many employers cite that a broad range of communication skills are critical for employee success. However, many communication courses focus solely on writing and presenting published works, overlooking other key skills that are required for students to succeed in interviews and their chosen field. This course is designed to expose students to a broad range of communication modalities and enhance their communication skills for success at UF and beyond.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:
1. Effectively communicate to scientific and non-scientific audiences using appropriate language, style, and format
2. Create effective blog posts, emails, grant proposals, manuscripts, and white papers
3. Identify and avoid frequent writing and presentation errors that result in plagiarism
4. Conduct appropriate peer-reviews of scientific documents, including grant proposals and manuscripts
5. Prepare and deliver a job/research presentation
6. Create their own teaching pedagogy/philosophy for in-person and online education

CLASS FORMAT

The class will meet twice a week for one 1-hour period (Tuesday) and one 2-hour period (Thursday). Class meetings will consist of a combination of formal lectures, group discussions/activities, workshops, and student presentations. All assignments will be submitted online via CANVAS unless otherwise instructed.

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

Detailed Course Schedule:

Module 1: Writing	Topic	Assignment Due
Week 1:		
Thursday (8/24)	Lecture: Class Introduction, Writing Basics	
Week 2:		
Tuesday (8/29)	Lecture/Discussion: Grant Proposals	
Thursday (8/31)	Workshop: Correcting Grammar and Style	Correcting Grammar and Style
Week 3:		
Tuesday (9/5)	Lecture: Manuscript Writing and Peer Review	
Thursday (9/7)	Workshop: Grant Proposal Review	Grant Proposal Review
Week 4:		
Tuesday (9/12)	Lecture: White Papers and One Pagers	
Thursday (9/14)	Workshop: Paper Analysis	Paper Analysis
Week 5:		
Tuesday (9/19)	Lecture: Non-Academic Writing	
Thursday (9/21)	Workshop: Abstracts	Abstract
Week 6:		
Tuesday (9/26)	Lecture: Blog Posts and Magazine Articles	
Thursday (9/28)	Workshop: Starting your blog post	
Week 7:		
Tuesday (10/3)	Lecture: CV's and Resumes	
Thursday (10/5)	Workshop: Blog Posts	Blog Post
Week 8:		
Tuesday (10/10)	**OFF**	
Module 2: Presentations		
Thursday (10/12)	**OFF**	
Week 9:		
Tuesday (10/17)	Lecture: Cover letters & Emails	
Thursday (10/19)	Lecture: General Presentation Tips	Cover Letters and Resumes Project Topic Email
Week 10:		
Tuesday (10/24)	Lecture: Scientific Presentations	
Thursday (10/26)	Workshop: Evaluation Discussion Lecture: 5-minute Presentations	Presentation Evaluation
Week 11:		
Tuesday (10/31)	Lecture: Poster Presentations	

Thursday (11/2)	Workshop: 5-minute Presentations	5-Minute Presentations
Week 12:		
Tuesday (11/7)	Lecture: Job Talks	
Thursday (11/9)	Workshop: Poster Presentations	Poster Presentations
Week 13:		
Tuesday (11/14)	Lecture: Job Talk cont.	
Thursday (11/16)	Workshop: Conveying value and goals	Job Talk (contributions)
Week 14:		
Tuesday (11/21)	Lecture: Teaching	
Thursday (11/23)	Workshop: Pedagogy and Lectures	Teaching Demo
Week 15:		
Tuesday (11/28)	Final Project Discussion	Final Project
Thursday (11/30)		

SUGGESTED TEXT

There are no required textbooks for this course. Students will be provided with assigned content prior to each lecture from various sources including journal articles, websites, videos and reports. Suggested resources will be available via CANVAS (E-Learning). You can find a list of resources at the end of this syllabus.

GRADING AND ASSIGNMENTS

Assignment	Points	% Grade
Grammar/Style Corrections	5	5
Grant Proposal Review	8	8
Paper Analysis	8	8
Write an Abstract	10	10
Blog Post	10	10
Cover Letter/Resume	10	10
Presentation Evaluation	5	5
Short Presentation	8	8
Poster Presentation	8	8
Job Talk	8	8
Teaching Demo	8	8
Final Project	12	12
Total Possible	**100**	**100**

Final Project: Students are required to give an out-of-class presentation (lab meeting, departmental/conference seminar, guest lecture) or submit a formal article or proposal (grant proposal, research proposal, EDIS publication) and submit a 1-page reflection on how they applied course material to this experience. Grading will be as follows: professional email to Dr. Prince indicating final project topic (2 pts.), completion of final project experience (4 pts), 1-page reflection (4 pts). Additional details, including an extended list of acceptable activities will be presented in class.

GRADING SCALE

Percent	Grade	Grade Points
100-94	A	4.00
<94-90	A-	3.67
<90-87	B+	3.33
<87-84	B+	3.00
<84-80	B-	2.67
<80-77	C+	2.33
<77-74	C	2.00
<74-70	C-	1.67
<70-67	D+	1.33
<67-64	D	1.00
<64-61	D-	0.67
<61	E	0.00

Note: Grade less than B- is a failing grade**.**

CLASS ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION

Your active participation is critical to your success and the quality of your experience in this course. Students are expected to attend every class meeting.

CLASS DEMEANOR

Students are expected to arrive to class on time and behave in a manner that is respectful and collegial to the instructor and to fellow students. Avoid the use of cell phones during class sessions. Diverse opinions held by other students should be respected in discussions, and, if appropriate, elevated. Conversations that do not contribute to the discussion should be avoided.

MATERIALS AND SUPPLIES FEES

There are no material fees for this course

SOFTWARE

Microsoft Office (Word, Excel, and PowerPoint) and Teams will be available to all UF students free of charge (https://helpdesk.ufl.edu/software-services/microsoft/).

It is your responsibility to make sure that your computer has the latest version of all software.

ONLINE COURSE EVALUATION PROCESS

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/.

SYLLABUS CHANGES

This syllabus is subject to change. Any changes will be announced in advance of deadlines.

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, which can be found here: https://it.ufl.edu/policies/intellectual-property/copyright/. 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.

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 accommodations 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, www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/

GETTING HELP

For issues with technical difficulties for e-Learning in Canvas, please contact the UF Help Desk at:
- Learning-support@ufl.edu
- (352) 392-HELP - select option 2
- https://lss.at.ufl.edu/help.shtml

> Any requests for make-ups due to technical issues MUST be accompanied by the ticket number received from LSS when the problem was reported to them. The ticket number will document the time and date of the problem. You MUST e-mail your instructor or TA within 24 hours of the technical difficulty if you wish to request a make-up.

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
     Counseling Services
     Groups and Workshops
     Outreach and Consultation
     Self-Help Library
     Wellness Coaching
- U Matter We Care, www.umatter.ufl.edu/
- *Career Resource Center,* First Floor JWRU, 392-1601, www.crc.ufl.edu/next-level

- Student Complaints:
   - Residential Course: https://www.dso.ufl.edu/documents/UF_Complaints_policy.pdf

HARASSMENT

UF provides an educational and working environment that is free from sex discrimination and sexual harassment for its students, staff, and faculty. http://www.hr.ufl.edu/eeo/sexharassment.htm

DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOR

Faculty, students, administrative and professional staff members, and other employees (hereinafter referred to as 'member(s)' of the university), who intentionally act to impair, interfere with, or obstruct the mission, purposes, order, operations, processes, and functions of the university shall be subject to appropriate disciplinary action by university authorities for misconduct, as set forth in the applicable rules of the Board of Regents and the university and state law governing such actions. Be advised that you can and will be dismissed from class if you engage in disruptive behavior. For more information: http://regulations.ufl.edu/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/1008.pdf

TWELVE-DAY RULE

Students who participate in official athletic or scholastic extracurricular activities are permitted twelve (12) scholastic day absences per semester without penalty. In any case, it is the student's responsibility to maintain satisfactory academic performance and attendance.

IN-CLASS RECORDING POLICY

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