

# **Crop Ecology - Web AGR 5511 (3 Credits) – Fall 2017**

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**Course description:** Crop Ecology examines underlying ecological processes in agricultural systems, focusing on interactions between crops and their abiotic and biotic environments. Emphasis will be placed on current challenges and problems in agriculture and how agroecology can help to address these challenges. Course content is intended to encourage student advancement in literacy, numeracy, written and oral communication and independence of thought.

**Course objectives:** To explain how the abiotic environment affects crop performance and articulate how human management alters these relations; To identify and analyze challenges and problems in agricultural systems and devise ideas and management practices to help solve these problems; To apply crop ecophysiological principles to predict responses of agricultural systems to global change; To discuss and summarize ecological services provided by agricultural systems; To explain and provide representative management practices that can enhance ecological services from agricultural systems. To compare and contrast arguments for sustainable intensification of agriculture as they relate to global food security.

**Class Schedule:** Course content will be provided through the UF e-Learning canvas platform. Although the content is delivered asynchronously, it will be provided in sections or modules that you will have approximately 18 days to complete. Once you complete each module, the content for the next module will be made available. You will find links to all the material on the class home page.

**Office Hours:** Students are encouraged to contact the instructor by e-mail ([jerickson@ufl.edu](mailto:jerickson@ufl.edu)) or phone 352-294-3792 as needed to address questions regarding course content and management. I will also occasionally use the discussion board tool to address student questions related to course content. Pressing issues or non-content related issues can be addressed through email. I also strongly encourage students to interact with each other through the collaborative tools provided by the e-Learning system.

## **Course Textbook:**

There is no required textbook for the course. I will, however, refer to the following books throughout the course. Other additional readings, generally from the primary literature, will also be provided.

*"Crop ecology: productivity and management in agricultural systems"*, D. J. Connor, R. S. Loomis and K.G. Cassman. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Cambridge University Press. 2011. 562 pp.

*“Agroecology. The ecology of sustainable food systems”*, S. R. Gliessman. CRC Press. 2007.

**Instructional approach:** Dr. Erickson will provide all instructional content. If you are having any problems with the course or need assistance, don't wait until late in the semester to contact the instructor. The sooner we begin to address the problem, the more likely you will achieve a satisfactory outcome.

Students are responsible for all material covered in the lecture modules, readings, and all other assigned materials. Keeping up with the material is important for mastering course content. You will also be expected to complete assignments and exams on time.

Quizzes will be available on the dates indicated on your class homepage and will be available through the e-Learning system for a limited time. The quizzes must be completed by the indicated due date and time. Once you begin a quiz you will have a fixed amount of time to complete all the questions. You will not be given credit for questions not completed during the allotted time. The quizzes will emphasize material covered in that module, but some material on the quizzes could be comprehensive as we build on concepts in previous modules. Quizzes will be closed book (any necessary formulas/equations will be provided in the exam). Class notes, search engines, cell phones, assistance from others, etc. are NOT allowed for the quizzes.

**Attendance:** Students are responsible for understanding all material provided through Canvas. Students are also responsible for meeting deadlines for assignments, literature reflections, quizzes, proposal, etc. as indicated in the course schedule. There will be no make-up quizzes or assignments except for excused emergencies. Make-up work should be arranged prior to the excused expected absence if possible (e.g., university-sanctioned events), or as soon as possible for unexpected excused absences (e.g., illness or death in the immediate family).

**Grading:** There will be a total of 575 points for the class. The six quizzes will count 50 points each for a total of 300 points. The total point value of two simulation assignments will be worth 50 points (2 at 25 points each). You will also be required to submit a SARE graduate student proposal on a topic of interest to you (hopefully tied to your research project) related to crop ecology that will be approved by the instructor for 100 points and you will submit an abstract and bibliography prior to moving forward with the proposal for 25 points. You will be responsible for peer reviewing and ranking proposals for 25 points also. There will also be two literature reflection assignments for a total of 50 points. Throughout the semester there will be questions (5 total) posted on the discussion board related to your readings and content that you will be expected to respond to for 5 points each for a total of 25 points.

<u>Item</u>	<u>Points</u>
Quizzes (6)	300
Assignments (2)	50

Discussion board questions (5)	25
Proposal abstract and bibliography	25
Proposal	100
Proposal peer review	25
Literature reflections (2)	<u>50</u>
Total	575

Assigned exercises, proposals, discussion questions, literature reflections, and quizzes will be graded based on completeness, conciseness, clarity, effort, organization, and originality and/or as indicated in rubrics where provided.

Students attaining the following percentages are guaranteed at least the following grades:

A 93 - 100%	A- 90 - 92%	B+ 87 - 89%	B 83 - 86%
B- 80 - 82%	C+ 77 - 79	C 73 - 76%	C- 70 - 72%
D+ 67 - 69%	D 63 - 66%	D- 60 - 62%	E <60%

For information on current UF policies for assigning grade points, see <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx> [Links to an external site.](#)

### **Accommodations for Students with Disabilities**

Students with disabilities requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, [www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/](http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/) [\(Links to an external site.\)](#) [Links to an external site.](#)) [\(Links to an external site.\)](#) [Links to an external site.](#) by providing appropriate documentation. Once registered, students will receive an accommodation letter which must be presented to the instructor when requesting accommodation. Students with disabilities should follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester.

### **Online Course Evaluation Process**

Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing online evaluation at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu> [\(Links to an external site.\)](#) [Links to an external site.](#) Evaluations are typically open during the last two or three weeks of the semester, but students will be given specific times when they are open. Summary results of these assessments are available to students at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu/results/> [\(Links to an external site.\)](#) [Links to an external site.](#)

### **Academic Honesty**

In 1995 the UF student body enacted an honor code and voluntarily committed itself to the highest standards of honesty and integrity. When students enroll at the university, they commit themselves to the standard drafted and enacted by students, which states "We, the members of

the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honesty and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code." On all work submitted for credit by students at the university, the following pledge is either required or implied: **"On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment."** The Honor Code (<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/>) specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. Furthermore, you are obliged to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor or TAs in this class.

It is assumed all work in this course will be completed independently unless the assignment is defined as a group project, in writing by the instructor.

## **Campus Resources**

### Health and Wellness

- U Matter, We Care: If you or a friend is in distress, please contact [umatter@ufl.edu](mailto:umatter@ufl.edu) or 352 392-1575 so that a team member can reach out to the student.
- Counseling and Wellness Center: <http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc/Default.aspx>, ([Links to an external site.](#))[Links to an external site.](#) 352 392-1575; and the University Police Department: 352 392-1111.
- Sexual Assault Recovery Services (SARS): Student Health Care Center, 352 392-1161.

### Academic Resources

- E-learning technical support, 352 392-4357 (select option 2) or e-mail to [Learning-support@ufl.edu](mailto:Learning-support@ufl.edu). <https://lss.at.ufl.edu/help.shtml> ([Links to an external site.](#))[Links to an external site.](#)
- Career Resource Center, Reitz Union, 352 392-1601. Career assistance and counseling. <http://www.crc.ufl.edu/> ([Links to an external site.](#))[Links to an external site.](#)
- Library Support, <http://cms.uflib.ufl.edu/ask> ([Links to an external site.](#))[Links to an external site.](#) Various ways to receive assistance with respect to using the libraries or finding resources.
- Writing Studio, 302 Tigert Hall, 352 846-1138. Help brainstorming, formatting, and writing papers. <http://writing.ufl.edu/writing-studio/> ([Links to an external site.](#))