

Course Syllabus

SWS 6950: Professional Development in Soil, Water, and Ecosystem Sciences [2 credit hours]

Instructor:	Dr. Sam Smidt
Email:	ssmidt@ufl.edu
Office Phone:	352-294-3120
Office Location:	McCarty A, G153
Office Hours:	M and W, 2:00-2:50pm, or by appointment
Course Format:	Hybrid: Can be attended in person for on-campus students or through Zoom for distance students. Live attendance is required.
Course Time:	3:00-3:50pm, M and W
Course Location:	TBD, announced at the beginning of the semester.
Course Website:	https://elearning.ufl.edu/
Seminar Website:	https://mediasite.video.ufl.edu/Mediasite/Catalog/catalogs/swsseminars
Course Description:	This course serves as a professional development component to graduate coursework in soil and water sciences and related fields. Topics include common skills and challenges in academia and professional employment. This course is available to both MS and PhD students and is offered every fall and spring semester.
Required Texts:	No textbook is required. Students will be asked to download articles, book chapters, and reports throughout the semester (see Reading List).
Communication:	Direct communication will come through official University of Florida email via Canvas. Each student is responsible for these messages, and emails should be checked daily.
Canvas:	All grades, content, and resources will be posted to the course site.
General Policies:	Assignments are to be individual own work unless otherwise stated. All relevant content will be made available through the course website. Students must receive instructor approval prior to any late activity. This course is designed on respect; disrespectful actions will be resolved as necessary.
Course Evaluation:	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/ .

Course Structure

This course meets regularly in-person during the week, and all content follows the course schedule.

Course Objectives

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

1. Identify university resources available to graduate students in the Soil and Water Sciences Department or related disciplines.
2. Discuss diverse academia issues that students commonly encounter during a graduate career.
3. Develop useful products for graduate or professional tasks (e.g., CV, poster, thesis proposal).
4. Make accurate and efficient oral presentations.
5. Build mentoring and teaching skills.
6. Develop collegiality among faculty, students, and colleagues.

Course Grades

Presentation Critiques:	20 points total, 20% of total grade	20 Points
Assignments:	10 points each, 5 assignments, 50% of your total grade	50 points
Course Participation:	10 points each, 3 assessments, 30% of your total grade	30 Points
	TOTAL	100 Points

Grade Description

Presentation Critiques:	Each student will provide a ½ page (single spaced) critique of an assigned seminar presentation. We will openly discuss these critiques in-person during the course. Rubrics focused on critique quality and insight will be provided for determining grades.
Assignments:	Assignments are listed on the course schedule and will be discussed in class. All assignment details and grading rubrics will be posted to the course website.
Course Participation:	Students are expected to participate in lecture through insightful discussion. Rubrics highlighting expectations will be discussed at the beginning of the semester, and assessments will be conducted three times throughout the semester.

Grading Scale

A : 93 – 100%	B+ : 88 – 89.9%	C+ : 78 – 79.9%	D+ : 68 – 69.9%	F : <60%
A- : 90 – 92.9%	B: 83 – 87.9%	C: 73 – 77.9%	D: 63 – 67.9%	
	B- : 80 – 82.9%	C- : 70 – 72.9%	D- : 60 – 62.9%	

Academic Integrity: As a UF student, you have committed to 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.”* Furthermore, as part of your obligation to uphold the

Honor Code, you should report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. Violations of the Honor Code will be reported to the Dean of Students Office for consideration of disciplinary action. For more information regarding the Student Honor Code, please see: <https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/policies/student-honor-code-student-conduct-code/>.

Students with Disabilities:

The Disability Resource Center coordinates the needed accommodations of students with disabilities. 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.

Attendance:

Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university policies that can be found in the online catalog at: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/attendance-policies/>.

**Grade Points:
Software Use:**

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/grades-grading-policies/>. 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
 Counseling Services
 Groups and Workshops
 Outreach and Consultation
 Self-Help Library
 Wellness Coaching

*U Matter We Care, www.umatter.ufl.edu/

*Career Connections Center, First Floor JWRU, 392-1601, <https://career.ufl.edu/>.

Student Complaints:

Residential Course: <https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/>

Online Course: <http://www.distance.ufl.edu/student-complaint-process>

This is an example. Refer to the updated course schedule for more details.

Course Schedule			
<i>WEEK #</i>	<i>TOPIC</i>	<i>ASSIGNMENT</i>	<i>DUE DATE</i>
1 M	UF Resources		
1 W	Developing a CV	CV Draft	9/2 (2W)
2 M	Leadership	Stakeholder Statement	9/21 (5M)
2 W	Guest Visit (CALs Leadership Institute)		
3 M	<i>NO CLASS: Labor Day</i>		
3 W	Ethics/ Guest Visit (UF Div. of Student Affairs)		
4 M	Quality Teaching		
4 W	Guest Visit (AEC Department)	Participation Survey	
5 M	Poster Presentations		
5 W	Guest Visit (Recent Alum)		
6 M	Oral Presentations	3-Slide Presentation	10/19 (9M)
6 W	Guest Visit (UF AEC Department)		
7 M	Navigating a Conference		
7 W	Guest Visit (Professional Organization Rep.)		
8 M	Academia Employment	Cover Letter	11/9 (12M)
8 W	Guest Visit (External Professor)	Participation Survey	
9 M	Industry Employment		
9 W	Guest Visit (External Professional)		
10 M	Government Employment		
10 W	Guest Visit (External Gov't Employee)		
11 M	Extension Employment		
11 W	Guest Visit (UF IFAS Extension)		
12 M	Time Management		
12 W	<i>NO CLASS: Veterans' Day</i>	Participation Survey	
13 M	Science Communication		
13 W	Guest Visit ("SciComm" Rep.)		
14 M	Social Media/ Guest Visit (Recognized User)	Topic Summary	12/9 (16W)
14 W	<i>NO CLASS: Thanksgiving</i>		
15 M	Networking		
15 W	Guest Visit (CALs Administrator)		
16 M	Work-Life Balance		
16 W	Guest Visit (UF Mindfulness)		

Reading List

Donelan, H. (2016). Social media for professional development and networking opportunities in academia. *Journal of Further and Higher Education*, 40(5), 706-729.

Evans, T. M., Bira, L., Gastelum, J. B., Weiss, L. T., & Vanderford, N. L. (2018). Evidence for a mental health crisis in graduate education. *Nature biotechnology*, 36(3), 282.

McNeal, K. S., & Petcovic, H. L. (2017). Sparking conversations about graduate programs in geoscience education research. *Journal of Geoscience Education*, 65(4), 399-406.

Muindi, F., & Keller, J. B. (2015). Emerging network of resources for exploring paths beyond academia. *Nature biotechnology*, 33(7), 775.

Zarnetske, J. P., & Zarnetske, P. L. (2015). Strategies for creating a conspicuous, effective, and memorable poster presentation. *GSA Today*, 25(5), 66-68.