

Seminar in Contemporary Issues in Forest Resources and Conservation

FOR 4020 (1 credit) Fall 2011

Instructor

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Office Hours: Mondays 9:30-10:30am
and Wednesdays 3:00-4:00pm

Teaching Assistant (TA)

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Office Hours: Thursdays 12:00 noon -1:55pm

Class Hours: Thursdays 1:55 – 3:50 pm, Room 222 Newins-Zeigler Hall

Course Objectives: At the end of this course, each student will be able to:

- Describe concepts, organizations and people involved in several contemporary issues;
- Use critical thinking and lead discussions presenting both sides of controversial issues;
- Make improved presentations and engage in persuasive dialog related to resolving conflicts;
- Prepare better professional curriculum vitae (CV) and cover letters for jobs; and
- Use the Marston Science Library and UF Libraries website to locate electronic and print resources for presentations and future work.

Course Structure and Attendance Policy

- Each student will choose one contemporary issue and will become familiar with the topic including biological, social and political dimensions, along with the key institutions, stakeholders and people involved in and affected by the issue.
- The student will understand the differing perspectives that varying groups have about the issue and will be able to explain the rationales of those perspectives.
- Each student will make a 20-minute presentation to the group about his/her issue and then lead the ensuing 10-minute discussion about that issue.
- All students will actively participate in the discussion about each issue, and will write a one-paragraph summary (in class, by hand) of the issues presented.
- As the focus of this course is discussion and communication, attendance at and active participation during all sessions are expected and count toward 10% of grade. One unexcused absence is permitted. Each additional unexcused absence will reduce this part of your grade by 5%. Excused absences (e.g., attendance at one academic conference, doctor, military duty, etc.) will be addressed on a case-by-case basis.
- Separately from the contemporary issue discussions, each student will develop a curriculum vitae (CV) or résumé and write a cover letter or personal statement tailored to a specific job announcement or a dream job. This exercise also may be undertaken with graduate school as an objective, if the student prefers.

Content of Powerpoint Presentation

(These can be in any order and intermingled as appropriate to convey your key messages)

- Define the contemporary issue and its relevance to society and natural resources.
- Describe the biological, social, political and environmental dimensions of the issue, considering a range of scales where appropriate (e.g., local, regional, and global).

- Highlight the key institutions, agencies, organizations, laws, and regulations involved in the issue.
- Present the differing perspectives and opinions about the issue and their rationale, without presenting your bias—the audience should not know your position on the issue, if you have one.
- Provide at least 5 credible citations from the literature in addition to URLs for references available on the Web. (Note that Wikipedia and other secondary or non-peer-reviewed sources are not allowed.)
- List brief citations to your references on each slide where appropriate, and provide a list of the full citation as one of the final slides in your presentation.

****Notes on Presentations****

1. Do not choose a broad theme like “climate change”, but rather a more narrow part of that theme, such as cap-and-trade systems or REDD
2. Please provide your presentation to the instructor on a USB drive no later than the beginning of the class during which it is scheduled.

Textbook and Required Reading: No textbook; Five readings for the presentation.

Evaluation of Student Performance

1. **Presentation (40%)**
 - a. Five credible sources used to develop presentation (5%)
 - b. Powerpoint slides (15%)
 - c. Presentation (15%)
 - d. Leading discussion (5%)
2. **Participating in Discussions (40%)**
 - a. Attendance and active involvement (10%)
 - b. One-paragraph summaries of each student or guest presentations (30%)
 - i. Paragraph summaries will be graded on a 1-10 point scale
 - ii. Excused vs. unexcused absences
3. **Curriculum Vitae (CV) and Cover Letter (20%) - Due Thursday November 10.**
 - a. Tailored CV (10%)
 - b. Cover letter (10%)
 - c. Late assignment policy: If the CV/cover letter assignment is turned in in late, 15 points out of 100 will be deducted from the grade for each week past the initial due date.

Grading Scale

≥ 90% A ; 86% - 89.9% B+; 80% - 85.9% B; 76% - 79.9% C+; 70% - 75.9% C; 66% - 69.9% D+; 60% - 65.9% D; < 60% E

For more information on current UF grading policies for assigning grade points go to <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>

Schedule

Week 1 (August 25):

- Introduction to the course
- Guidelines for Powerpoint presentations and citations
- Example Powerpoint presentation and discussion; first paragraph summary due

Week 2 (September 1):

- CV and cover letter development

Student presentation topic established (sign-up sheet)
Grading examples of paragraph summaries
Library Tour

Week 3 - 16 (September 8 – December 1):

Student and Faculty presentations and discussions

CV and cover letter assignment due Thursday November 10th.

Examples of Possible Contemporary Issues

1. Carbon trading
2. US Healthy Forest Initiative
3. Bioenergy – Biomass
4. Bioenergy - Algae
5. Carbon sequestration
6. Sustainable fisheries
7. Aquaculture for food production
8. Marine Diseases
9. Lake Eutrophication
10. Expanding wildland-urban interface
11. Private landowner rights
12. Management of off-road vehicles
13. Invasive species
14. Threatened and endangered species
15. Changing land ownership patterns and objectives
16. Landowner incentive programs
17. Preservation 2000 and Florida Forever
18. Impacts of globalization on forests
19. Deforestation
20. Forest certification
21. Demise of integrated forest products companies
22. Trends in education of forest resources and conservation
23. Genetically-modified trees
24. Fire and the world's forests
25. Forests and poverty
26. Agroforests in Florida and the world
27. Ecotourism (and forest conservation)
28. Non-timber Forest Products (NTFPs) and conservation
29. Watersheds and forests
30. Carbon as a management objective
31. Forestry as a land restoration strategy
32. Seafood Safety in a post-Deepwater Horizon Gulf
33. Potential impacts and mitigation of climate change in Florida's forests
34. Prescribed fire, smoke management, and alternatives for Florida and the WUI
35. Pros and cons of exotic species used for bioenergy (ex.: Eucalyptus, Leucaena)
36. Biocontrols: do they work?

Other Information

Academic Honesty:

The University of Florida requires all members of its community to be honest in all endeavors. Cheating, plagiarism, and other acts diminish the process of learning. When students enroll at UF they commit themselves to honesty and integrity. Your instructor fully expects you to adhere to the academic honesty guidelines you signed when you were admitted to UF. As a result of completing the registration form at the University of Florida, every student has signed the following statement: *"I understand the University of Florida expects its students to be honest in all their academic work. I agree to adhere to this commitment to academic honesty and understand that my failure to comply with this commitment may result in disciplinary action up to and including expulsion from the University."* Furthermore, on work submitted for credit by UF students, 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 to be assumed all work will be completed independently unless the assignment is defined as group project, in writing by the professor. This policy will be vigorously upheld at all times in this course.

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.

Campus Helping Resources:

Students experiencing crisis or personal problems that interfere with their general wellbeing are encouraged to utilize the university's counseling resources. Both the Counseling Center and Student Mental Health provide confidential counseling services at no cost for currently enrolled students. Resources are available on campus for students having personal or lacking clear career and academic goals, which interfere with their academic performance. The Counseling Center is located at 301 Peabody Hall (next to Criser Hall). Student Mental Health is located on the second floor of the Student Health Services in the Infirmary.

1. *University Counseling Center*, 301 Peabody Hall, 392-1575; personal and career counseling:
www.counsel.ufl.edu
2. *Student Mental Health*, Student Health Care Center, 392-1171, personal counseling:
www.hsc.ufl.edu/shcc/smhs.htm
3. *Sexual Assault Recovery Services (SARS)*, Student Health Care Center, 392-1161, sexual assault counseling;
4. *Career Resource Center*, Reitz Union, 392-1601, career development Assistance and counseling.

Students with Disabilities Act:

The Dean of Students Office coordinates the needed accommodations of students with disabilities. This includes the registration of disabilities, academic accommodations within the classroom, accessing special adaptive computer equipment, providing interpretation services, and mediating faculty-student disability related issues. *Dean of Students Office*, 202 Peabody Hall, 392-7066, www.dso.ufl.edu.