

Syllabus

PLS 4941 Practical Work Experience

Summer 2021, Sections REC1,MAIN, Class #12902,12901, Credits: 1-3, Prereq: 3AG-PLS

About your Instructor

Title: Erin Alvarez, Lecturer, M.S.

Call me: she/her, Erin, Ms. Alvarez, plant nerd

Email: erinalvarez@ufl.edu

Office phone: 352.294-1582

Forwards to my cell for calls but can't receive texts-check Canvas for my cell number and feel free to text, call, or send plant memes

Office: 2551 Fifield

Zoomoffice: <https://ufl.zoom.us/my/erinaceae>

Office Hours: I'll be in my zoomoffice and available by email, chat, or phone, no appointment necessary, on Tuesdays from 1-3:00. You can book other appointment times at <http://erinalvarez.as.me>

About the class

For this class you will work in the professional plant science environment through supervised practical experience, and we'll convene asynchronously on Canvas to discuss and reflect on your experiences and to share projects. The goal of this course is for you to gain professional experience, explore postgraduate opportunities, and reflect and communicate progress on your educational and professional development. There is no textbook or course pack. We will meet online asynchronously for discussions and to share information, there is no synchronous requirement for the course this semester.

Where can I work? You name it, with approval of course. Opportunities range from greenhouse, farm, and landscape operations to university and private industry research labs, from nonprofit organizations and extension offices to botanical gardens and government agencies and everything in between. Lists and resources of opportunities and how to search will be posted to Canvas. It is not our policy to approve work experiences with family members as employees, supervisors, or business owners. While most students find paid work to be the best option you are not required to find paid experience, and many students volunteer.

How much do I need to work? You may work as much as you choose, and a full-time or at least part-time position is most valuable to get an idea of the work environment. The minimum requirements for credit are 3 hours worked per week for 15 weeks per credit-so a total of 45 hours worked for 1 credit, 90 hours worked for two credits, or 135 hours worked for three credits. In addition to your time on the job, we have biweekly Canvas discussion posts, readings, and time spent working on your practical work experience project.

What kind of experience do I choose? My best advice is to choose an experience in which you'll work and learn the most you can. Since each of your programs, interests and goals are unique, it's up to you to plan your own work experience. Your advisors and I are here to help guide you. We encourage you to talk with peers, faculty, mentors, explore extracurricular and in-class activities, reflect on your education and previous employment along with your future goals for ideas and information as you develop a plan. Tips and resources will be available on Canvas before you register and as you complete your experiences.

What will I be doing? Working hard, learning about plant science and the professional environment, and having a meaningful experience, ideally! Your daily activities will depend entirely on where you work. As part of the class you'll use Canvas to post your activity log, engage in reflections and discussions with peers and the instructor, complete a project related to your work and personal goals, and conclude with a presentation of your experience. Each credit should equate to 160 hours of work on your experience.

How to reach me-stay in touch!

Best: texts, calls, video meetings, chats in Canvas or MS Teams, office hours, appointments

Second best: Canvas emails

The rest: UF email, voicemails (we hates them as much as you do, precious), posts to open Canvas discussions-these are good for general class input, not a quick reply from me)

Please no: emails to my personal gmail or facebook (...how? ...why? no.)

How to use office hours

This is time I set for you, no appointment needed. You can use the time for questions, explanations, advice, plant stanning, etc. During this time I'm available by zoom, text, phone, or chat.

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How to find a work experience

1. Reflect and consider what you'd like to do-talk to people, research, plan, talk to your advisor about timing
2. Find an opportunity, apply, get accepted, plan to start
3. Fill out approval form, get signatures from employer and instructor, get registered
4. Complete PLS4941 with a C average or better
5. Congratulations! Time to Celebrate!

Why am I doing this if I have had a job/know what I want to do/am awesome already/don't wanna?

Your work experience is critical to the value of your degree and it's more than a job, resume builder, or independent research experience.

For your employer, your employment allows them to mentor and tap into your skills and knowledge. Your effort makes a difference-our interns solve problems, save resources, meet labor gaps, and conduct experiments. You might rule out a career direction or end up as a regular employee, which saves effort for both you and them.

This experience connects you to the professional environment, provides experiences and a venue in which to apply and deepen your understanding of concepts learned in classes, offers time and an opportunity to refine and conduct capstone or other undergraduate research, explore areas of plant science you find interesting, decide your post-graduation plans, and might give you good stories to tell later: "Kids, back in my day we worked during hurricanes, were paid with rocks, and ate leaves for lunch. We also wrecked forklifts."

Course communication

Since this course doesn't meet for lectures regularly, we may not have an opportunity to talk synchronously but we will be interacting throughout the semester. Please check in with me early and often-even if you just want to talk about plants. We will have Canvas discussions, journal posts, and polls to check in on your experiences but please don't wait until then to reach out, offer feedback, or ask questions. Professional communication information and guidelines for class netiquette and input will be posted to Canvas.

How to access the course and what technology you will need

This class is entirely online. You'll need a computer, tablet, or phone with internet access and a way to take and post photos, videos, and create documents and slide decks, via [UF e-learning](#)-log in with your gatorlink credentials. All class resources, videos, readings assignments, grades, and the current schedule and syllabus can be found on the Canvas site. *Note: dates may change during the semester-please refer to the detailed course schedule posted to Canvas for most updated dates and course information.* You'll also need to find a professional experience ahead of time, arrange for your personal living arrangements, logistics and any required materials for the position. If I can help advise you, please don't hesitate to ask.

Before you start working and/or can register for course credit you must submit an experience approval form, be approved, and then we'll register you for your respective credits. The form responses let me know that you have an approved experience ready before you start the semester, then Danae Perry will register you. The approval form can be found [here](#), on Canvas, or by contacting Danae Perry or me.

Assessments & Grading aka What do I turn in?

This course is S/U, so a C or better (≥ 262 points) earns an S, a lower grade (< 262 points) earns a U and no credit. Grades will not be rounded up, and there is no extra credit.



UF grading policies: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/grades-grading-policies/>

Complete the assignments as you work through the semester. If you register for a different semester than the one/s in which you work, or if you complete your work experience requirement at different locations or over multiple semesters, you can access Canvas throughout your program to fulfill your course requirements. You may also choose to complete the log and projects as you work over multiple semesters, and then take your entire experience into consideration for your project and presentation in your final semester of work experience. I'll be happy to talk with you about different possibilities.

Assignments and Due Dates, Late Policy

Assignments will all be due Fridays by 6 pm unless otherwise noted. It is in your best interest to keep up the sequence of assignments as listed here, as one builds into the next and all of them will help with your final project and presentation. You will use peer feedback, mid-semester check ins, and your personal and supervisor evaluations to reflect on your experience overall and prepare for your Capstone, professional portfolio, and postgraduate work. Every due date will have a no-questions-asked 48-hour grace period to submit without penalty or explanation except where otherwise noted (e.g., Final Project and Presentation, Supervisor/Self Evaluations do not apply).

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Discussions: activities and reflections (6 @ 30 pts each)

180 points

As you work, it's best practice to keep a log of your work experiences-this can be daily entries or a weekly digest and can be narrative, video, bullet point notes, blogs, or format that works for you to document what you do in the workplace. Your log should include photos. Most students find it easiest to keep a log on their phone and some prefer a notebook-the location and format are up to you. The purpose of this is to document what you learn, do, and think about the experience so that you can use your entries for the Activity Log assignments. These are different each time but will include a work summary since your last post, a response to a discussion prompt, reflection, and the chance to interact with peers around your experiences and a theme related to our course goals.

1. *Log 1 discussion and introduction*: introduce yourself, your work, how you found the position and what you hope to learn, summarize your activities so far, submit as a video or post with photos.
2. *Log 2 discussion and project brainstorming*: summarize activities since log 1, discuss any problems, situations, topics, or issues you identify in the workplace or industry that might be interesting to investigate for your project, submit as a podcast, blog post, or article.
3. *Log 3 discussion and degree program reflection*: summarize activities since log 2, reflect on what aspects of your coursework and/or extracurricular activities are relevant to your work experience.
4. *Log 4 discussion, project idea summary presentation*: summarize activities since log 3, offer a 15 word or less summary of your project in written or video format.
5. *Log 5 discussion and next steps reflection*: summarize activities since log 4 and reflect on your semester of work experience and the remainder of your degree program-especially any thoughts about Capstone projects-submit as a writeup, video, slide deck.
6. *Log 6 highlight reel and advice to next semester's students*: in a video or blog post with photos, present a highlight reel overview of your entire work experience and conclude with your advice for the plant science students in future semesters.

Design your own work experience

20 points

Write a position description for your ideal plant science undergraduate work experience opportunity and post to our class job board, then apply to your favorite posted position.

Personal and supervisor feedback (2 @ 25 points each)

50 points

Submit personal and supervisor statements offering input on the work *experience* (via Google forms, templates found and discussed on Canvas). Unless you request otherwise, I will share your supervisor feedback with you alone.

Practical Work Experience Project

60 points

For your project you will solve a problem or answer a question related to your experience and write up your findings in a format suitable for inclusion in an e-portfolio. It may be an article, poster, newsletter, website, extension publication, policy paper, training curriculum or educational materials, etc. The final format should be relevant to your work experience and contribute to your goals for the course and work experience. 10 points of this will be a draft of your project idea you'll submit ahead of time for feedback.

Final Presentation

50 points

Present your internship experience in 10- to 15-minutes via narrated slide deck, video, or equivalent format. This will include an overview of your workplace, personal experience, and reflection summary.

Total Possible Course Points:

350 points

Sample Class Schedule (final dates listed on Canvas, may vary depending on semester)

Week	Activity/Due	Su 21 Dates
1	Canvas profile update, introductory post,	5/10-14
2	Log 1 Discussion: Activities and internship introduction	5/17-21
3	Peer feedback Log 1, Log 2: Discussion and project brainstorming	5/24-28
4	Peer feedback on Log 2, Q&A sessions	5/31-6/4
5	Log 3: Activities and degree program reflection	6/7-11
6	Peer feedback on Log 3 and project draft idea development	6/14-18
7	<i>Summer Break!</i>	6/21-25
8	Log 4: Discussion and project idea presentation	6/28-7/2
9	Peer feedback on Log 4, Introduce personal and supervisor evaluation	7/6-9
10	Log 5: Discussion and next steps, Q&A sessions	7/12-16
11	Peer feedback on Log 5, Design your own work experience due	7/19-23
12	Log 6: Highlight reel and advice to future students, apply to DYoe	7/26-30
13	Final Project & Presentations, Self and Supervisor Evaluations due	8/2-6

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Course feedback

Feedback is important to me and it's crucial for making this course meet our degree program and student needs! Each semester I use your input to improve the course and look forward to constructive comments both informally and formally via GatorEvals. Please note that course evaluations are a professional academic tool, not a social media post or Amazon review. Find guidance on how to give feedback here:

<http://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/> You'll be automatically notified when the evaluation period opens and can complete evaluations through the email you receive from GatorEvals, in the Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via <http://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/>. Summaries of course evaluation results are available at <http://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/>.

Attendance and Make-up Work

This is a professional experience and your attendance at your place of work is expected to be exemplary. There will be no required scheduled class attendance, but course submissions will have due dates. Your active participation is key to your success in the course, and each aspect of the class is designed to support your learning. If you know you will be unable to participate, please let me know by email as soon as possible. If you are unable to complete your internship or your project effort or work hours do not meet the credit hour requirements, we will reassess your registration status or internship proposal based on the situation and decide the best way to proceed. Make up work and extensions will be permitted when the absence is university-approved or otherwise approved by the instructor. Requirements are consistent with university policies that can be found at: <http://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/attendance-policies/> Most deadlines are flexible in this course, and since you're working with peers it's especially important to communicate if you are having issues submitting on time. Please reach out to me if you have challenges or concerns, we can work on a solution!

Accommodations

Wherever possible I try to design the course to be accessible for everyone. If I can do anything differently please don't hesitate to talk with me about it-let me know what I can do to make your learning experience more effective! If you aren't already registered but would like to arrange for any particular accommodation connect with the disability Resource Center by visiting <https://disability.ufl.edu>. They notify instructors when you register automatically but I am happy to talk with you individually if you like, or we don't have to talk about it if that's better.

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. 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 wellbeing 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.

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- 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 Success Initiative, <http://studentsuccess.ufl.edu>
- Student Complaints:
- Residential Course: <https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/policies/student-honor-code-studentconduct-code>
 - Online Course: <http://www.distance.ufl.edu/student-complaint-process>