

# PLS 4950 Plant Science Capstone

Summer 21

Class #19819,12930; Sections MAIN, 42D6; 100% Online, 3 Credits

## About your Instructor

Erin Alvarez, Lecturer, M.S.  
she/her, Erin, Ms. Alvarez, plant nerd  
[erinalvarez@ufl.edu](mailto: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 or call*

*Office:* 2551 Fifield

*Zoomffice:* <https://ufl.zoom.us/my/erinaceae>, direct dial 404-498-8099

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

## Course (catalog) Description

Students will identify a problem or topic in plant sciences and develop a poster and oral presentation about this problem or topic. This course will discuss the following topics: how to develop a research question and hypothesis, how to complete a reliable literature review, the importance of peer review, and how to present results and findings for a particular audience.

## Course Prerequisites

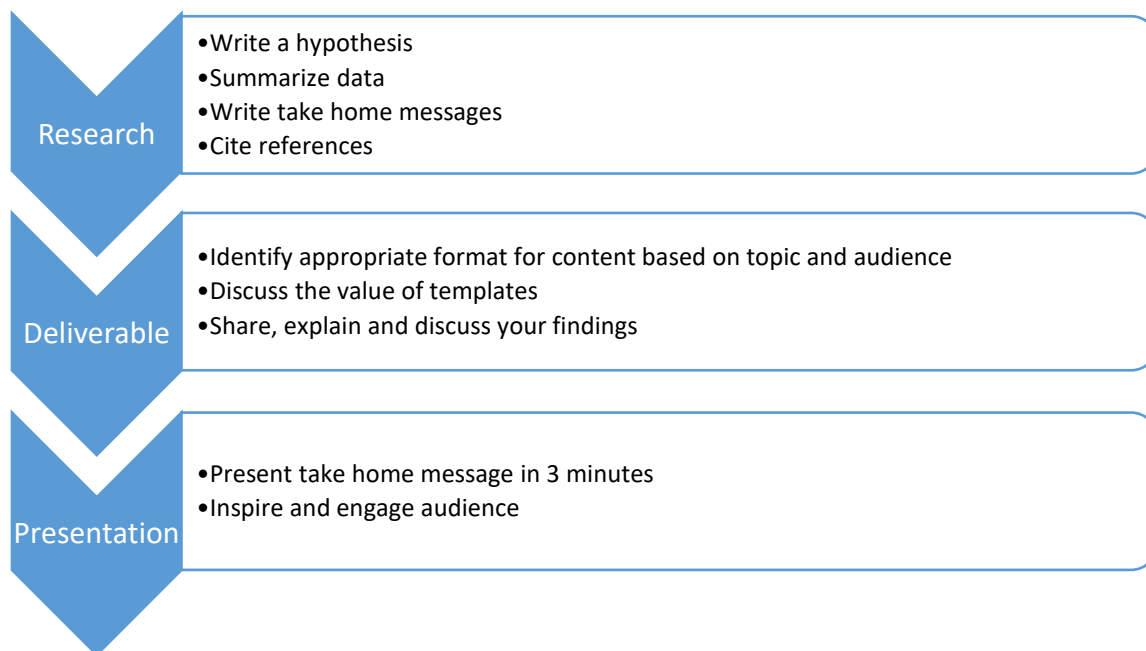
PLS3004C and PLS4941.

## Course Overview

This course is designed to help students identify a problem or topic in plant sciences and to develop a report and presentation about this problem or topic. At the end of the semester, students will present on a topic, issue, or problem in plant science. Presentations will be in the format of the student's choosing and will be scheduled online or live in Gainesville, depending on the semester.

## Course Goals:

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



## How to reach me-stay in touch!

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

**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 aside on my calendar for you, no appointment needed. You can use the time for questions, explanations, advice, plant stanning, etc. I'm available by zoom, text, phone, or chat.

# PLS 4950 Plant Science Capstone

Summer 21

Class #19819,12930; Sections MAIN, 42D6; 100% Online, 3 Credits

## What you will do for your Capstone project in this course:

1. Find a question or issue for which you want to find a solution or an answer-this will become your Capstone project!
2. Find a faculty mentor or advisor to help you on your way, you will also have your peers and instructor here for support.
3. Review the syllabus and course requirements, set a goal for your final semester to register for this course, finish and present your Capstone project.
4. Complete the three check-ins, video presentation, poster, and project deliverable to submit to Canvas for grading and course credit.
5. Invite your friends, family, faculty, and funders to view your Capstone seminar presentations live on Zoom Friday, August 6<sup>th</sup> from 3-5 pm (details provided in Canvas)!

**Textbook:** none required, we will have links to helpful reading and other material in Canvas.

## Additional Reading (Sources)

Van Wageningen, R. 1991. *Writing a Thesis Substance and Style*, Prentice Hall, Englewood Cliffs, NJ. ISBN 0-13-971086-8

Carey, Stephen S. 2004. *A Beginner's Guide to Scientific Method, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition*. Thomson Wadsworth ISBN 0-534-58450-0

Gladon, R.J., W.R. Graves, and J.M. Kelly. 2011. *Getting Published in the Life Sciences*. John Wiley and Sons, Inc., Hoboken, NJ. ISBN978-1-118-01716-6

Hofmann, A.H. 2014. *Scientific Writing and Communication, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition*. Oxford University Press, New York. ISBN 978-0-19-994756-0

Schimmel, J. 2012. *Writing Science*. Oxford University Press Inc., New York. ISBN 978-0-19-976023-7

Day, R.A. 1994. *How to Write and Publish a Scientific Paper, 4<sup>th</sup> edition*. Oryx Press, Phoenix, AZ ISBN0-89774-865-4

Day, R.A. 1992. *Scientific English, A Guide for Scientists and Other Professionals*. Oryx Press, Phoenix AZ ISBN0-89774-722-4

[\[Top\]](#)

## Acceptable Course Participation

This is an independent asynchronous course supported by content in Canvas. The course content is meant to support you as you develop your project and includes readings, worksheets, videos, and other material relevant to the development and completion of the capstone project. We will use discussions, online group and individual meetings, independent work at each students' own pace, a written deliverable writeup of the capstone project, and a final oral and poster presentation. All work must be complete and sent by the final due date for credit to be received. Checkpoints will be set up through the semester where we'll talk about your hypothesis, basic deliverable idea with format, project outline and preliminary sources, and your project and poster draft. These are meant to give everyone an opportunity to receive feedback from your peers and me so that you can adjust course as necessary. If you are working with a faculty mentor outside of class, you'll still need to check in on Canvas about your project-you may involve other faculty members as you wish but it's not required. If you like I'm happy to offer edits or discuss your project in addition to the check-ins. It is up to you to pace yourself accordingly to allow for feedback and reflection at each step to build to your final submissions.

Not all capstone projects will look the same. The goal is to meet the objectives listed above and in the syllabus, and for you to complete a project that enhances and encapsulates the critical information, experiences, and knowledge you gained during your degree program that will help you in your next steps after your degree program.

# PLS 4950 Plant Science Capstone

Summer 21

Class #19819,12930; Sections MAIN, 42D6; 100% Online, 3 Credits

## Assessment

This course has required and optional assignments, based on your need as you progress through the course. You can find both below and on Canvas.

The accepted format for assignments are doc, pdf, ppt, directly into the Canvas submission box, as a url to a live online document (e.g., gsuite, wix site, etc.) or as otherwise noted on the assignments. If there is a problem with the class Canvas page or computer malfunctions occur, you can email your assignments to me directly if you are concerned about meeting deadlines. Please inform me of these situations when you notice them so that I can correct or adjust as needed.

## Activities

*Optional, Ungraded, complete as needed*

Module activities are meant to be completed in sequence *as needed* to guide you as you develop your capstone project. These are not required. No point values will be assigned, you'll receive feedback as necessary. Most students find it helpful to complete them when they need additional support in that area for their projects.

## Check-ins

*Required, Graded, worth a total of 50 points*

Three check-in meetings and submission due dates will be posted during the semester and are worth a total of 50 points. The dates will be posted to Canvas.

1. Hypothesis and topic idea, elevator pitch 10 points
2. Project format idea and outline, early sources 20 points
3. Project and poster draft, proposal 20 points

## Major Assignments

*Required, Graded, worth a total of 300 points*

Detailed descriptions, due dates, and grading guidelines are posted on Canvas.

### 1. Project Deliverable, 100 pts

Your project process should follow the scientific method and build on existing research, answer a question or test a hypothesis, and show a foundation based on relevant peer-reviewed literature. The project format is up to the student and what works best for the topic. It can be a traditional experimental research writeup suitable for journal publication, a case study, research proposal, curriculum, management protocol, extension program, policy paper, etc.

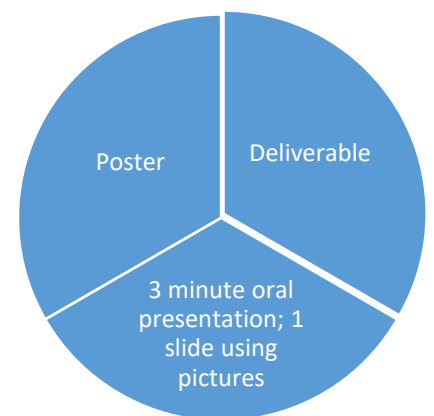
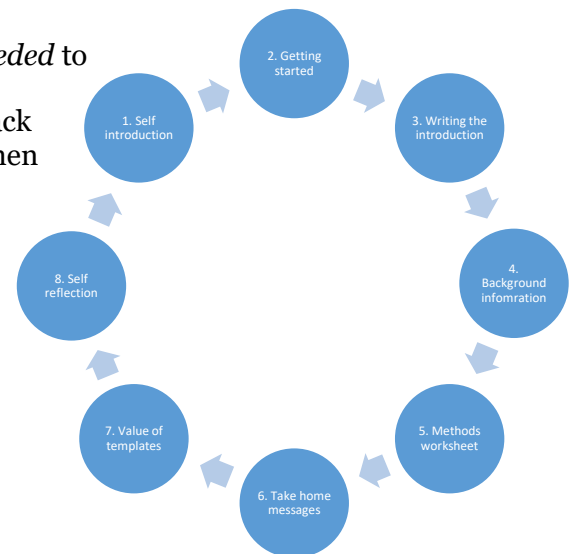
### 2. Poster, 100 pts

The poster must follow a format suitable for a research or professional conference and summarize the findings, research, and content of the deliverable. Final posters will be presented at the final capstone seminar at the end of the semester.

### 3. Flash Talk with Slide, 100 pts

The flash talk will be a 3-minute summary of your capstone project and process, presented with a single slide. Flash talks will be presented just before the poster session during the capstone seminar and recordings are posted to the Capstone website.

TOTAL POSSIBLE POINTS & GRADES = 350 pts



For information on current UF policies for assigning grade points, see [catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/grades-gradingpolicies/](http://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/grades-gradingpolicies/).

# PLS 4950 Plant Science Capstone

Summer 21

Class #19819,12930; Sections MAIN, 42D6; 100% Online, 3 Credits

## Course feedback

Feedback is important to me as well for improving this course! 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 course is online and asynchronous, so there is no attendance except at the final presentation seminar. Your active participation in the course and your project is key to your success in the course, and each aspect of the class is designed to support your learning and progress. If you know you will be unable to participate or complete the course, please let me know by email as soon as possible. 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/>

## 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.

- University Counseling & Wellness Center, 3190 Radio Road, 352-392-1575, [www.counseling.ufl.edu](http://www.counseling.ufl.edu)

# PLS 4950 Plant Science Capstone

Summer 21

Class #19819,12930; Sections MAIN, 42D6; 100% Online, 3 Credits

Counseling Services - Groups and Workshops - Outreach and Consultation - Self-Help Library - Wellness Coaching –

- U Matter We Care, [www.umatter.ufl.edu/](http://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>

## Course Schedule

<i>Week</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Topic/Activity</i>	<i>Important Dates</i>
1	6/28	Introduction, Capstone start	7/2, 5 pm or TBD: optional zoom intro
2	7/6	Hypothesis, Literature, Exp design	7/9, 5 pm: Check-in 1 due
3	7/12	Outlines, Templates, peer review	7/16, 5 pm: Check-in 2 due
4	7/19	Take home messages, flash talks	7/23, 5pm: Check-in 3 due
5	7/26	Reflection, writeups, eportfolios	<i>nothing due, work on revisions!</i>
6	8/2	Capstone Seminar final prep and project submissions	8/5, 5 pm: poster, final project due 8/6, 3-5 pm: Capstone Presentations, flash talk due (if not presented live)