



Soil Science Lab (PLS 329)

COURSE SYLLABUS: Spring 2024

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Instructor: Michaela Bledsoe, M.S.
Ad Interim Instructor – Horticulture / Greenhouse Manager

Office Location: PSC 101 and AG/ET 145

Office Hours: Monday 10:00am – 11:00am
Tuesday 11:00am – 12:00pm
Wednesday 1:00pm – 2:00pm
Thursday 10:00am – 11:00am
Friday 9:00am – 10:00am (PSC)
Or by appointment

Office Phone: 903.886.5202

University Email Address: Michaela.Bledsoe@tamuc.edu

COURSE INFORMATION

Meets: 1/10/2024 – 5/10/2024
Days/Time: Thursdays, 1:00pm – 2:50pm
Location: Science Building (STC) 211

Materials – Textbooks, Readings, Supplementary Readings

Textbook(s) Required:
INTRO TO SOIL SCIENCE LAB MANUAL
Author: HARP, DERALD
Edition: 4TH
ISBN: 2818560388739
Publisher: DERALD HARP

Course Description

Students will explore laboratory techniques to determine soil physical and chemical properties that are related to plant growth. Prerequisites: PLS 115 or 1415, and Chem 1405 or 1411. (1 hour)

Prerequisites: Prerequisites: PIS 115 or 1415, and Chem 1405 or 1411.

The syllabus/schedule are subject to change.

Student Learning Outcomes

1. Introduce students to the basic concepts of soil science.
2. Develop the students' understanding and comprehension of the Web Soil Survey.
3. Develop the students' understanding and comprehension of soil sampling, soil testing procedures and results.
4. Develop the students' appreciation for the complexity and importance of soils in today's world.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Minimal Technical Skills Needed

Basic knowledge of Microsoft office (Word, Excel, and PowerPoint) and familiarity with D2L. Students will need reliable internet access to retrieve course materials from D2L and submit assignments or complete online quizzes if needed.

Instructional Methods

Lab: Presentation of concepts related to the lab topic followed by practical lab activity. Materials will be made available on the course D2L page for students to download.

Student Responsibilities or Tips for Success in the Course

Expectation of Students

1. Students are expected to attend all lectures;
2. Be on time to class;
3. Completion of assignments, exams, and projects by the due dates;
4. Late submission of assignments or make-up of quizzes, and other work in this course will only be allowed for legitimate, pre-excused absences;
5. Communicate with the instructor.

ASSESSMENTS and GRADING

Student's final grade will be based on 1,000 points total from assignments, papers, and final exams as listed below:

Course work category	Points
Midterm	100
Participation and Attendance	100
Quizzes	250
Lab Reports	250
Presentation	100
Final Exam	200

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Grade Assignment:

Letter grades for the course will be assigned according to the chart below:

Letter Grade	Point Equivalent	Percentage Equivalent
A	> 900	> 90%
B	800 – 899	80 – 89%
C	700 – 799	70 – 79%
D	600 – 699	60 – 69%
F	< 599	< 59%

TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS**LMS**

All course sections offered by Texas A&M University-Commerce have a corresponding course shell in the myLeo Online Learning Management System (LMS). Below are technical requirements

LMS Requirements:

<https://community.brightspace.com/s/article/Brightspace-Platform-Requirements>

LMS Browser Support:

https://documentation.brightspace.com/EN/brightspace/requirements/all/browser_support.htm

Zoom Video Conferencing Tool

https://inside.tamuc.edu/campuslife/CampusServices/CITESupportCenter/Zoom_Account.aspx?source=universalmenu

ACCESS AND NAVIGATION

You will need your campus-wide ID (CWID) and password to log into the course. If you do not know your CWID or have forgotten your password, contact the Center for IT Excellence (CITE) at 903.468.6000 or helpdesk@tamuc.edu.

Note: Personal computer and internet connection problems do not excuse the requirement to complete all course work in a timely and satisfactory manner. Each student needs to have a backup method to deal with these inevitable problems. These methods might include the availability of a backup PC at home or work, the temporary use of a computer at a friend's home, the local library, office service companies, Starbucks, a TAMUC campus open computer lab, etc.

COMMUNICATION AND SUPPORT

If you have any questions or are having difficulties with the course material, please contact your Instructor.

The syllabus/schedule are subject to change.

Technical Support

If you are having technical difficulty with any part of Brightspace, please contact Brightspace Technical Support at 1-877-325-7778. Other support options can be found here:

<https://community.brightspace.com/support/s/contactsupport>

COURSE AND UNIVERSITY PROCEDURES/POLICIES

Course Specific Procedures/Policies

Attendance:

Students are expected to attend class to complete labs and assignments/quizzes. Attendance is factored into the final grade evaluation. If an assessment is missed then it will be considered an incomplete assignment. (Please see the make-up section for additional procedures).

Makeup:

There will be **no** make-ups offered for any coursework missed without legitimate reasons. The decision to offer make-up material will be made by the instructor based on the situation. Please contact the instructor for help if you have difficulty meeting the deadline in advance. Also, please notify the instructor of any issues as soon as possible before grade posting (normally within one week) if you miss the due date.

- Assignments will be graded the week following submission. Assignments not submitted will be recorded as a zero.
- Assignments are not accepted via email, only D2L.
- The student must contact the instructor immediately with a valid excuse for assignments not submitted to receive full credit. Valid excuses include severe illness, natural disasters, and unforeseen circumstances that prevent timely submission. Unforeseen circumstances will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.
 - o 1 day late - 10% penalty
 - o 2 days to 1 week late - 25% penalty
 - o More than 1 week late - 50% penalty

Lab Safety/Health:

The use of tobacco products during class time is strictly prohibited. The lab may involve chemicals and sharp instruments. Closed-toed shoes, gloves, safety glasses, and long pants/long-sleeved shirts may be required for some lab activities. If you are reading this, thank you for reading the syllabus. Please email me telling me that you read the syllabus to receive five bonus points. The instructor will let you know in advance if any special PPE (personal protective equipment) is required.

Extra Credit:

Extra credit opportunities will be made available throughout the course.

Withdrawal:

Please contact the instructor before proceeding with the withdrawal process.

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Syllabus Change Policy

The syllabus is a guide. Circumstances and events, such as student progress, may make it necessary for the instructor to modify the syllabus during the semester. Any changes made to the syllabus will be announced in advance.

University Specific Procedures

Student Conduct

All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment. The Code of Student Conduct is described in detail in the [Student Guidebook](#).

<http://www.tamuc.edu/Admissions/oneStopShop/undergraduateAdmissions/studentGuidebook.aspx>

Students should also consult the Rules of Netiquette for more information regarding how to interact with students in an online forum:

<https://www.britannica.com/topic/netiquette>

TAMUC Attendance

For more information about the attendance policy please visit the [Attendance](#) webpage and [Procedures 13.99.99.R0.01](#)

<http://www.tamuc.edu/admissions/registrar/generalInformation/attendance.aspx>

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/13students/academic/13.99.99.R0.01.pdf>

Academic Integrity

Students at Texas A&M University-Commerce are expected to maintain high standards of integrity and honesty in all of their scholastic work. For more details and the definition of academic dishonesty see the following procedures:

[Undergraduate Academic Dishonesty 13.99.99.R0.03](#)

[Undergraduate Student Academic Dishonesty Form](#)

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/documents/13.99.99.R0.03UndergraduateStudentAcademicDishonestyForm.pdf>

[Graduate Student Academic Dishonesty Form](#)

<http://www.tamuc.edu/academics/graduateschool/faculty/GraduateStudentAcademicDishonestyFormold.pdf>

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/13students/undergraduates/13.99.99.R0.03UndergraduateAcademicDishonesty.pdf>

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Students with Disabilities-- ADA Statement

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact:

Office of Student Disability Resources and Services

Texas A&M University-Commerce

Velma K. Waters Library Rm 162

Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835

Fax (903) 468-8148

Email: studentdisabilityservices@tamuc.edu

Website: [Office of Student Disability Resources and Services](#)

<http://www.tamuc.edu/campusLife/campusServices/studentDisabilityResourcesAndServices/>

Nondiscrimination Notice

Texas A&M University-Commerce will comply in the classroom, and in online courses, with all federal and state laws prohibiting discrimination and related retaliation on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, age, genetic information or veteran status. Further, an environment free from discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression will be maintained.

Campus Concealed Carry Statement

Texas Senate Bill - 11 (Government Code 411.2031, et al.) authorizes the carrying of a concealed handgun in Texas A&M University-Commerce buildings only by persons who have been issued and are in possession of a Texas License to Carry a Handgun. Qualified law enforcement officers or those who are otherwise authorized to carry a concealed handgun in the State of Texas are also permitted to do so. Pursuant to Penal Code (PC) 46.035 and A&M-Commerce Rule 34.06.02.R1, license holders may not carry a concealed handgun in restricted locations.

For a list of locations, please refer to the [Carrying Concealed Handguns On Campus](#) document and/or consult your event organizer.

Web url:

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/34SafetyOfEmployeesAndStudents/34.06.02.R1.pdf>

Pursuant to PC 46.035, the open carrying of handguns is prohibited on all A&M-Commerce campuses. Report violations to the University Police Department at 903-886-5868 or 9-1-1.

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A&M-Commerce Supports Students' Mental Health

The Counseling Center at A&M-Commerce, located in the Halladay Building, Room 203, offers counseling services, educational programming, and connection to community resources for students. Students have 24/7 access to the Counseling Center's crisis assessment services by calling 903-886-5145. For more information regarding Counseling Center events and confidential services, please visit www.tamuc.edu/counsel

AI use policy

Texas A&M University-Commerce acknowledges that there are legitimate uses of Artificial Intelligence, ChatBots, or other software that has the capacity to generate text, or suggest replacements for text beyond individual words, as determined by the instructor of the course.

Any use of such software must be documented. Any undocumented use of such software constitutes an instance of academic dishonesty (plagiarism).

Individual instructors may disallow entirely the use of such software for individual assignments or for the entire course. Students should be aware of such requirements and follow their instructors' guidelines. If no instructions are provided the student should assume that the use of such software is disallowed.

In any case, students are fully responsible for the content of any assignment they submit, regardless of whether they used an AI, in any way. This specifically includes cases in which the AI plagiarized another text or misrepresented sources.

13.99.99.R0.03 Undergraduate Academic Dishonesty
13.99.99.R0.10 Graduate Student Academic Dishonesty

COURSE OUTLINE / CALENDAR

Week 1 (1/10 – 1/14)	- Syllabus, Intro, Lab Safety, Lego Exercise
Week 2	- Rock and Minerals, Soil Weathering

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(1/15 – 1/21)	
Week 3 (1/22 – 1/28)	- Soil Survey, Soil Profiles, and Horizons
Week 4 (1/29 – 2/4)	- Soil Color and Texture
Week 5 (2/5 – 2/11)	- Soil Texture II
Week 6 (2/12 – 2/18)	- Bulk Density
Week 7 (2/19 – 2/25)	- Particle Density
Week 8 (2/26 – 3/3)	- Soil Water I
Week 9 (3/4 – 3/10)	- Soil Water II and Midterm
Week 10 (3/11 – 3/17)	- Spring Break
Week 11 (3/18 – 3/24)	- Soil Organic Matter and Humus
Week 12 (3/25 – 3/31)	- Soil pH
Week 13 (4/1 – 4/7)	- Soil EC
Week 14 (4/8 – 4/14)	- Soil Nutrition
Week 15 (4/15 – 4/21)	- Presentation Workday / Make-up
Week 16 (4/22 – 4/28)	- Presentations
Week 17 (4/29 – 5/5)	- Finals Review
Week 18 (5/6 – 5/10)	- Final Exam

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