



**PLS 597- Agronomic Special Topics**  
**Spring 2024 Syllabus**

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**Course Information**

**Instructor:** Dr. Grace Flusche Ogden

**E-mail:** grace.ogden@tamuc.edu

**Office:** AGET 249

**Office Hours:** MW 10-10:50 am

**Preferred form of communication:** Email

**Expected response time:** 72 hours

**Lecture Meeting time/Place:** Online based course- no set meeting time

**Course Purpose:** Welcome to PLS 597! This course is designed to introduce students to multiple topics in agronomy, particularly those that are new/emerging.

**Course Text:** None required. Any reading material necessary will be provided as electronically on D2L.

**Learning Objectives**

- Describe soil health initiatives and their societal impact
- Classify soil health measurement parameters and understand their application
- Explain the concept of cover crops and crop rotations
- Define GMO crops and their purpose in agronomy
- Explain soil fertility and nutrient management
- Analyze socially important issues involving soils, GMO crops, and soil amendments

**Grading**

**Course Grading:** Grades will be based on quizzes, homework, assignments, and four exams. A total of 650 points will be available throughout the semester, with only 600 points counting toward the student's final grade.

A= 535-600

B= 471-535

C= 411-470

D= 361-410

F= <360

| <b>Course Work Category</b> | <b># of opportunities available</b> | <b>Available Points</b> | <b>Maximum Points</b> |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| <b>Quizzes</b>              | <b>~10</b>                          | <b>~150</b>             | <b>100</b>            |
| <b>Papers</b>               | <b>3</b>                            | <b>300</b>              | <b>300</b>            |
| <b>Group Project</b>        | <b>1</b>                            | <b>200</b>              | <b>200</b>            |
| <b>Total</b>                | <b>14</b>                           | <b>650</b>              | <b>600</b>            |

**Grade Disputes:** Students have seven days from the date of any grade assessment to dispute their grade. Email Dr. Ogden with “PLS 597 Grade Dispute” in the subject line. It is the student’s responsibility to check their grades on D2L regularly. If you think there is an error, you must alert Dr. Ogden within a week.

### **Course Work**

**Quizzes:** Approximately 10 quizzes will be given throughout the semester. 150 points worth of quizzes will be available throughout the semester, only 100 points count toward final grade. Quizzes may be given via D2L or in-class.

**Papers:** Three papers will be assigned based on major topics in class. The current schedule is as follows: Paper 1- Soil health across Texas, Paper 2- GMOs & sustainability, Paper 3- Soil amendments, biologicals, and the science behind them. Each paper should be 3-5 pages long and have a minimum of 10 citations. Use ASA-CSSA-SSSA citation style- you can use this as resource for your citations

<https://www.agronomy.org/files/publications/style/chapter-01.pdf>.

**Group Project:** Students will be split into groups of two for group projects. The purpose of your group project is to construct an extension-style presentation over a topic covered in this course. The presentation should be 12-15 minutes long, feature scientific-based information over the topic of your choice, and be suitable for presenting to the general public. Presentation may utilize PowerPoint, hands-on demonstrations, mini-workshops, video, or other creative forms of work. Group projects are due April 26. Students will submit peer evaluations for their group projects and evaluations will be considered when assigning each individual student’s grade for the project (be a good group member!!!). The group project is worth 200 points.

**Late work policy:** All assignments (other than your group project) must be submitted on or before April 19 at 11:59 pm for grading consideration. I reserve the right to change this policy or set a certain amount of assignments (2-3) that I will grade one week past the due date. Use this policy wisely. You do not have to email me to receive this grace period, just turn in your work.

### **Expectations**

1. View the course on D2L 2-3 times per week and keep up with class material.
2. Ask for help when you need it!
3. Be kind. Respect others. Engage in civil and relevant discussion.
4. **Academic Honesty.** See Texas A&M University-Commerce Academic Honesty policy at the end of the syllabus.

**Correspondence:** E-mail is the best (only) way to contact me, besides coming to my office. Office visits are encouraged! ☺

Please put “PLS 597” in the subject line of all emails pertaining to class. Include your full name in your email.

## **Mandatory University Addendums to Syllabus**

### 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](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](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](mailto: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.

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**

### 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.

### 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 Procedure 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/document/13.99.99.R0.03UndergraduateStudentAcademicDishonestyForm.pdf>

Graduate Student Academic Dishonesty Form

<http://www.tamuc.edu/academics/graduateschool/faculty/GraduateStudentAcademicDishonestyForm1.d.pdf>

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

### 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](mailto: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/34SafetyEmployeesAndStudents/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.

#### 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](http://www.tamuc.edu/counsel)

#### Use of AI in Coursework

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