



PLS 309- Soil Science

Spring 2025 Syllabus

Course Information

Instructor: Dr. Grace Flusche Ogden

E-mail: grace.ogden@tamuc.edu (preferred)

Expected response time: 72 hours

Office: AGET 249 | Twin Oaks Office

Office Hours: MW 10-10:50 at AGET 249 | Twin Oaks Office 10-12 T/TR

Course Purpose: Welcome to PLS 309! This course is designed to introduce students to the fundamentals of soil science and the impact of soils in society.

Course Text: Fundamentals of Soil Science: Lecture Notes. Author: Sergio Abit. ISBN: 9781617407796

Currently about \$33 to purchase a new version of this book through the TAMUC book store.

Topics covered

- Recall the fundamental terms and concepts of soils
- Classify soils by physical properties and soil orders
- Recognize soil formations and functions
- Explain processes associated soil as a system
- Describe agronomically important soil characteristics
- Explain soil fertility and nutrient management
- Analyze socially important issues involving soils
- Apply course content to the practical environmental impact of soils

Grading

Course Grading: Grades will be based on quizzes, homework, assignments, and four exams. A total of 1090 points will be available throughout the semester, with only 1000 points counting toward the student's final grade.

A= 900-1000

B= 800-899

C= 700-799

D= 600-699

F= <500

Course Work Category	# of opportunities available	Available Points	Maximum Points
Quizzes	23	400	350
Assignments	6	360	350
Exams	3	330	300
Total	32	1090	1000

Grade Disputes: Students have three days from the date of any grade assessment to dispute their grade. Email Dr. Ogden with “PLS 309 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 three days.

Course Work

Quizzes: Approximately 20 quizzes will be given throughout the semester. 330 points worth of quizzes will be available throughout the semester, only 300 points count toward final grade. Quizzes may be given via D2L. Quiz content will be composed of material from the textbook and virtual lectures.

Assignments: Six assignments will be given throughout the semester. These assignments are intended to mimic what you might encounter in a job and will range in format. Guidelines will be general. I will tell you when the assignment is due, where to turn it in, and the parameters I expect. In most cases you will be able to use your own creative directive to determine how you will accomplish the assignment. Assignments will be focused on developing your *career competency*.

Exams: Three (3) exams will be administered. Each exam will be worth 100 points, with the potential for up to 10 bonus points. Exams will be given during regularly scheduled class periods. You are expected to take the exam without help from your peers, textbook, notes, or other materials unless otherwise noted.

Late work policy: All assignments except your soil science review quiz and final exam will be due by April 25 at 11:59pm.

Expectations

1. Come to class prepared.
2. Arrive on time to class and stay for the duration of class.
3. Ask for help when you need it!
4. Be kind. Respect others. Engage in civil and relevant discussion.
5. **Academic Honesty.** See Texas A&M University-Commerce Academic Honesty policy at the end of the syllabus.

Classroom conduct: Students who engage in behavior that disrupts the learning environment may be asked to leave class.

Correspondence: E-mail is the best (only) way to contact me.

Please put “PLS 309” in the subject line of all emails pertaining to class. Include your full name in your email.

A note about lab: For many of you, PLS 329 (Intro to Soil Sci LAB) is a degree requirement. Dr. Derald Harp currently leads PLS 329. While we will make every effort to make lecture and lab cohesive, there may be times lab and lecture may deviate from each other. With this in mind, please treat them as separate courses. I will equip you the best I can for lab and welcome any questions regarding lab or lecture. I will happily serve as a resource for any student with plant or soil interest.

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

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.

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

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

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