



PLS 329L Soil Science Lab

Spring 2026 Syllabus

Course Information

Instructor: Melody Carmack

E-mail: melody.carmack@etamu.edu

Expected response time: 48 hours

Office: Agronomy Lab, room 101B

Office Hours: Thursdays 3:30 pm – 4:30 pm, E-mail to schedule by request if needed.

Lab Meeting time/Place: Thursdays 1-2:50pm, Science Building 211

Course Purpose: Students will explore laboratory techniques to determine soil physical and chemical properties that are related to plant growth.

Course Text: Intro to Soil Science Lab Manual. Author: Derald Harp. 4th edition.

Learning Outcomes

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

Grading

Course Grading: Grades will be based on quizzes, homework, assignments, and exams. A total of 800 points will be available throughout the semester.

A= 720-800

B= 640-719

C= 560-639

D= 480-559

F= <479

Course Work Category	# of opportunities available	Available Points
Quizzes	10	200
Lab Activities/Attendance	10	200
Exams	1	100
Lab reports	2	200
Presentation	1	100
Total		800

Grade Disputes: Students have seven days from the date of any grade assessment to dispute their grade. Email Ms. Carmack “PLS 329- 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 Ms. Carmack within a week.

If inappropriate use of resources, such as artificial intelligence, is suspected, Ms. Carmack will attempt to contact students with contact information provided on D2L and request a meeting to discuss student submission materials. Students may be asked to revise and resubmit materials. Please ensure your contact information is correct and your email is monitored sufficiently to process requests for meetings or revisions based on grading concerns. Ms. Carmack cannot be held liable for students who do not receive contact because of incorrect or outdated D2L contact information.

Course Work

Quizzes: Approximately 10 quizzes will be given throughout the semester. Quizzes may be given via D2L or in-class.

Lab Activities/Attendance: Attending each lab and actively engaging in the material will be worth 20 points. These points may be awarded for turning in lab activity data or by taking attendance. Excused absences will be considered- you must email Ms. Carmack to discuss excused absences.

Exams: One lab practical will be given during pre-finals week worth 100 points, with the potential for up to 10 bonus points. All exams are to be taken individually- you may not consult your peers or others about any of your exam material. Cheating will not be tolerated.

Lab reports: Students will complete two lab reports. The purpose of the lab report is to increase student mastery of scientific writing. Lab reports are expected to have the following sections: introduction, methods & materials, results, discussion, and conclusion/summary. An example lab report will be provided. Students may consult with their peers for support, but each student must submit their own, unique lab report. Plagiarism or inappropriate use of AI software will not be tolerated.

Presentation: Students will create a presentation to present near the end of the semester.

Late work policy: All assignments (except your lab practical exam) must be submitted on or before April 27 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. You do not have to email me to receive this grace period, just turn in your work.

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, where applicable. Virtual labs may be provided on D2L in situations where instruction can’t be offered in person, due to illness, weather, or other obligations.

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 East Texas A&M University 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, besides coming to my office.

Please put “PLS 329” 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 East Texas A&M University 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@etamu.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 online in the [Student Guidebook](#).

Students should also consult the [Rules of Netiquette Webpage](#) for more information regarding how to interact with students in an online forum.

ETAMU Attendance

For more information about the attendance policy, please view the [Attendance Webpage](#) and the Class Attendance Policy.

Academic Integrity

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

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

[Undergraduate Student Academic Dishonesty Form](#)

[Graduate Student Academic Dishonesty University Procedure 13.99.99.R0.10](#)

[Graduate Student Academic Dishonesty Form](#)

Use of AI in Coursework

East Texas A&M University 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.

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

East Texas A&M University

Velma K. Waters Library Rm 162

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

Fax (903) 468-8148

Email: studentdisabilityservices@etamu.edu

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

Nondiscrimination Notice

East Texas A&M University 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 East Texas A&M University 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 ETAMU 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.

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

East Texas A&M University Supports Students' Mental Health

The Counseling Center at East Texas A&M University, 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.etamu.edu/counseling-center/