



PLS 309: Soil Science

Fall 2026 Syllabus

Course Information

Instructor: Dr. Grace Flusche Ogden

Office: AGET 249

Office Hours:

AGET 249- MW 10-10:50

Virtual appointments available by request.

Preferred form of communication: Email

E-mail: grace.ogden@etamu.edu

Expected response time: 48 hours

Class time & Place: MW 9-9:50, TBD

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. The 2nd edition is acceptable.

Learning Objectives

- 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 important soil biota
- Describe agronomically important soil characteristics
- Define soil chemical properties & processes
- Analyze socially important issues involving soils
- Understand how society & soils interact
- Apply course content to the 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	Maximum Points
Quizzes	~ 20	400
Assignments	~6	300
Exams	3	300
Total		1000

Grade Disputes: Students have seven 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 a week.

Course Work

Quizzes: Approximately 20 quizzes will be given throughout the semester. Quizzes may be given via D2L or in-class. Quiz content will be composed of material from previous class lectures, field trips, hands-on experiences, or guest lectures.

Assignments: Six assignments will be given throughout the semester.

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 administered via D2L.

Late work policy: All assignments (except your final exam) must be submitted on or before November 20, 2026 by 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.

Class Policy on Use of Artificial Intelligence: You may use AI or AI-enabled software to create study questions, evaluate the clarity of your work, or other supportive actions. You may not use AI to generate work that you turn in as your own original thought. If I suspect submitted work was completed by or heavily influenced by AI, I will email you via the email address you’ve listed on D2L to discuss the matter with you and offer a resubmission opportunity *if time allows*. If you do not respond to my email within the specified time frame (default of 3 business days), I will assign a 0 to the work.

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. Office visits are encouraged! ☺

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

Tentative Schedule

Topic	Assignment
Syllabus	Review Syllabus
Fundamental Concepts & Definitions	Quiz (1) Soil Careers & Interests Assignment
Soil Formation & Development	Quizzes (3) Soil Series Description Assignment
Naming & Classification of Soils	Quizzes (3) Soil Profile Drawing Assignment
Exam 1 available on D2L tentative due date: September 18	DO NOT USE AI
Soil as a Three-Phase System	Quiz (1)
Soil Physical Properties	Quizzes (6) Soil Sampling Assignment
Soil Biology	Quiz (1) Soil Biology Assignment
Exam 2 available on D2L tentative due date: October 30	DO NOT USE AI
Soil Chemistry	Quizzes (3)
Soil Fertility	Quiz (1)
Soil Erosion & It's Control	Quiz (1) Soil in the News Reflection
Course Review	Soil Science Review Quiz Course Evaluation
Final Exam available on D2L due date: December 9	DO NOT USE AI