Capstone Planning – "Plant Science Roadmap"

HOS 4918 - 1 CREDIT

[Zoom link](#)

COURSE FORMAT

This is a 100% online course. The course consists of asynchronous pre-recorded lectures for ten weeks and synchronous discussion panels for three weeks. Pre-recorded lectures will be published in Canvas on Mondays by noon. Synchronous meeting times for the three panels will take place at 4:00 PM US-EST on select Fridays (see weekly schedule) via Zoom. These panels will be recorded to allow for later viewing and completion of an assignment. Assignments will have Monday due dates.

INSTRUCTORS

Amethyst Merchant, Ph.D.	amethyst@ufl.edu
	1131 Fifield Hall
	(352) 273 – 4595
	Office hours: Tuesday 1:00 to 2:00 PM & by appointment
Gerardo Nunez, Ph.D.	g.nunez@ufl.edu
	1113 Fifield Hall
	(352) 273 - 4765
	Office hours: Tuesday 9:30 AM to 10:30 AM
Leynar Leyton Naranjo, Ph. D.	l.leytonnaranjo@ufl.edu
	North Florida REC
	(850) 875 7162
	Office hours: Wednesday 2:00 to 3:00 PM and by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Current catalog description: This course focuses on planning service learning, scientific research, cooperative extension, or industry liaison projects for students' capstone project needed in a future course for the Plant Science major. Additionally, this course aims to foster reflection of the students' academic and professional development in the major. Job searching, resume writing, interview skills, and professional life skills will be covered to aid students in finding, securing, and being successful in their future career(s).

New description given recent changes to course: This course aims to foster reflection of the students' academic and professional development in the major. Job searching, resume writing, interview skills, and professional life skills will be covered to aid students in finding, securing, and being successful in their future career(s). Additionally, this course focuses on planning service learning, scientific research, cooperative

extension, or industry liaison projects for students' capstone project needed in a future course for the Plant Science major.

COURSE PREREQUISITES

Catalog currently lists HOS 4933 – Professional Development; however, recent changes to courses due to the implementation of the Plant Science Major have placed the course content of HOS 4933 within this course. Therefore, HOS 4933 is no longer offered and overrides of this "requirement" are being implemented. Having junior or senior standing is the acting prerequisite during this period of transition.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Appraise their hard and soft skills in the context of employers' expectations in plant science.
- Develop ideas for a capstone project that leverages individual skills and interests to advance their career prospects.
- Market themselves effectively through written documents and online presence.
- Implement professional life skills at a networking event with alumni and/or employers.
- Demonstrate knowledge of the interview process, including pre-interview preparation and post-interview follow-up.
- Describe the steps necessary to apply to graduate or professional school.

LEARNING MATERIALS AND SUPPLIES – No additional cost

Textbook

There is no required textbook for this course. Instructors will provide links to useful information and handouts on Canvas within their modules.

Course Website

This course has a site in the CANVAS platform. Take time to familiarize yourself with the "Start Here" and "Syllabus" tabs on the "Home" page. You can find the instructors contact information in both of these tabs. The pre-recorded lectures, handouts, and assignments will be posted throughout the semester on the module pages. New material will be added each week every Monday by noon. You will be completing Play Posit questions as you view the pre-recorded lectures. All other assignments will need to be uploaded into CANVAS. Note that assignments are due on Mondays by 11:59pm.

COURSE GRADE

1. **PlayPosit Questions within pre-recorded lectures**   **20 points**

Ten weeks will require the viewing of interactive pre-recorded lectures. There will be several short videos each week instead of one long video. To create a more active-learning experience in this asynchronous delivery method, questions are embedded within these videos using a program called PlayPosit. Correct answers to each week's content will be worth a total of 2 points regardless of the number of questions. PlayPosit refers to questions as "bulbs". If your first answer is incorrect, you will be able to review material again and input a different answer.

2. Personal reflection (End of Module 2)   **20 points**

Students will identify a job, internship, or assistantship announcement that interests them. They will examine employer expectations. Then, students will consider completed courses and skills achieved to date. The comparison of employer expectations and career assets will serve as a starting point to write a 1000-word personal reflection essay. In this essay, students will outline the knowledge and skills they have acquired to date and identify knowledge and skills that they wish to acquire by the time they finish their program of study. _Due on Monday 11:59pm, February 24th._

3. Resume   **15 points**

Details of proper resume construction will be presented in pre-recorded lecture videos. Students will construct a professional resume with the objective to use this document for their Mock Interview experience and in their application to secure their capstone job, internship, or assistantship. _Due on Monday 11:59pm, March 3rd._

4. Cover Letter (End of Module 3)   **15 points**

Details about how to write an informative cover letter with the proper tone will be presented through pre-recorded lectures. Students will construct a cover letter with the objective to use this document for their Mock Interview experience and in their application to secure their capstone job, internship, or assistantship. _Due on Monday 11:59pm, March 10th._

5. Professional Networking Event   **10 points**

Students will attend a networking event (in-person or virtual) related to your field of interest and write a reflection on their experience, including the strategies you used to initiate conversations and build connections. Opportunities will be shared throughout the semester. _Due on Monday 11:59pm, March 31st._

6. Mock Interview Preparation (End of Module 4)   **14 points**

Students will choose a hypothetical job posting (as learned in module 1), create a tailored resume and cover letter (as learned in module 2), and then participate in a mock interview with a classmate. Students will provide feedback to each other on strengths and areas for improvement. _Due on Monday 11:59pm, April 21st._

7. PANEL Meetings (Three meetings)   **6 points**

Students that attend PANEL meetings synchronously will receive points for attendance (2 pts. for each meeting). Students unable to attend can view the recording of a PANEL session and answer questions about the speakers' statements and value of the presented information/insights to earn the 2 pts.

GRADING SCALE

S   =   ≥ 70%   U   =   < 70%

Additional information on current UF grading policies for assigning grade points can be found here:

- *Grading policy*, https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/grades-grading-policies/.

STUDENT AND INSTRUCTOR EXPECTATIONS

From Dr. Merchant (Lead Instructor for this course):

This is a team-taught course. We are committed to providing a welcoming atmosphere! You will be introduced to relevant topics, ideas, practices, and skill sets needed to progress through this Plant Science degree program and reach your career goals.

Instructors' Interaction Plans – Instructors will:

- Answer questions about the course posted in the "Course Questions Forum".
- Grade assignments and supply comments / feedback within two-three weeks of your submissions. Note: Dr. Merchant will grade your resume and cover letter at the same time to simulate how employers review your employment application documents. Please allow a few weeks for her to supply useful feedback given our Spring Break occurs just after submission of your cover letter.
- Be available in-person or via Zoom for office hours as posted in this syllabus. Other times by appointment. Note: Dr. Naranjo (Module 4 content) is not located on campus.
- Post announcements periodically to remind you to complete assignments, but you must remember that assignments are usually due 2 weeks after material about their requirements is presented.
- Request your feedback about this course in midterm and end-of-term evaluations so we may continuously improve student experiences within the course. Your feedback is important!
- Respond to "email" in Canvas messaging within 48 hours during weekdays.

Note: Assume we will <u>not</u> be available to answer emails or messages over weekends. Please understand that email responses may take longer during an instructor's intense research periods or travel to conferences.

For this course to run smoothly, we expect students to:

- Have a computer, camera (phone cameras meet requirement), and relatively stable internet connection.
- Check Canvas for new lectures with embedded PlayPosit questions, assignments, and announcements every Monday after noon.
- Answer any questions and compose all assignments in your own words. The copying of material (cut and paste) from the internet or each other is plagiarism. Plagiarism results in a zero for that assignment and serious repercussions for your future at UF. Do not plagiarize!
- Be responsible for keeping up with due dates. **All assignments will be due on Mondays by 11:59pm.** Each assignment's instructions will contain the due date.
- Submit work early if assignments are completed.
- Verify that assignments are successfully uploaded/submitted to Canvas.
- **Contact instructors by messaging / "email" within Canvas if you have any questions or concerns.** If you send an email directly through Gatormail (Microsoft Outlook), our response could be severely delayed. If you have a question about an assignment, please contact the instructor in charge of that assignment before contacting Dr. Merchant.

REQUIRED TECHNOLOGY

Technology required to view and complete materials and assignments include:

- **CANVAS** – Our course uses this management learning system. If you do not see HOS 4918 in your version of Canvas, please alert Dr. Merchant so she can fix the problem. Visit the home page to begin exploring course orientation material. The course will be divided into 5 modules. Clicking on a Modules tab will allow you to see the materials and assignments for that module.
- **Microsoft Office** – Will allow for viewing of stand-alone Microsoft PowerPoint lectures and pdf documents. Can use Microsoft Word documents or text boxes within Canvas to craft and submit some assignments.
- **Google Chrome** – Use this browser to view Canvas and course videos.
- **PlayPosit** – PlayPosit videos need to be viewed in Chrome to assure proper play and submission of question answers. You will <u>not</u> need to download PlayPosit software.

COMMUNICATION GUIDELINES

- Use the "Course Questions Forum" board to post and get answers to general course and assignment questions that others may have as well.
- Use "Canvas Inbox" (messaging tool) to send instructors questions that are specifically about your grades, assignments, accommodations, emergency situations, or any other highly sensitive situations you choose to share. **Using email through Canvas assures your instructors will see and respond quickly to your email.**
- A respectful tone is required by all community members in any form of communication.

- o Video interactions should present a respectful tone in body language and verbal communication.
- o Written communication through email, both formal and informal, should use the official language of instruction rather than popular online abbreviations and graphic elements (no emojis) such as those often used in social media.
- o Use correct spelling, punctuation, and grammar.

TECHNICAL SUPPORT

UF Computing Help Desk: The UF Help Desk is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

> https://helpdesk.ufl.edu/   OR   (352) 392 – 4357

When you contact the UF Help Desk, a ticket number will be created. This is so if the problem you experience is not resolved during that call others can be alerted to find a solution.

COURSE POLICIES

Attendance and Make-up Policy

Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university policies that can be found at:

- *UF Attendance policy*, https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/attendance-policies/

Late completion of assignments will be allowed for documented emergencies and acceptable reasons per UF's policy. Work must be made up to earn points. In other words, an excused absence does NOT excuse the work. **Documentation is required to make up late work.**

Zoom Etiquette

Students are expected to be respectful learners. As such, you should arrive to and leave from class on time during PANEL meetings. You are encouraged to turn your camera on and keep it on for the duration of our class, but your microphone should be muted. Be ready to ask and answer questions using your microphone (unmute). The chat feature must be used exclusively for course-related communication. Links and files should be shared and transferred using Canvas and email as appropriate (Zoom is not an acceptable method for assignment submission).

Challenging a Grade

All discrepancies in grading must be resolved within 7 days of the grade being posted in canvas. Grade disputes older than 7 days old will not be entertained unless a proper excuse is provided (see attendance policy).

Written Communication

Effective written communication is essential for student and professional success. Whether you go on to become a horticulturist, an accountant, or a CEO, written communication will be a critical skill in your toolbox. Thus, we place great emphasis on coaching and participating in professional, context-specific written

communication. Proper spelling, grammar, and punctuation are expected in all course assignments. You are encouraged to use the resources provided by the UF Writing Studio to develop or enhance your writing skills. Free one-on-one tutoring (live and on-line) is available to enrolled students.

• *UF Writing Studio*, 302 Tigert Hall, 846-1138**,** www.writing.ufl.edu/writing-studio/

Email

Email will be the main means of communication between us. Hence, it is critical that all course-related emails are polite, professional, and as different from a text message as possible. Send emails via Canvas. Our goal is to reply to all emails within 2 business days of receiving them. For additional recommendations, consult:

• *Email etiquette*, https://www.inc.com/business-insider/email-etiquette-rules.html

Academic Honesty

UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states "We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: "On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment." The Conduct Code specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. See the UF Conduct Code website for more information. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor or TAs in this class.   It is assumed that you will complete all work independently in each course unless the instructor provides explicit permission for you to collaborate on course tasks (e.g. assignments, papers, quizzes, exams). It is your individual responsibility to know and comply with all university policies and procedures regarding academic integrity and the Student Honor Code. Violations of the Honor Code at the University of Florida will not be tolerated. Violations will be reported to the Dean of Students Office for consideration of disciplinary action. For more information regarding the Student Honor Code, please see: (New Link: https://policy.ufl.edu/regulation/4-040/)

In this course, use of generative AI tools (such as ChatGTP) is considered a breach of the academic honesty policy. All work submitted for grading must be original, and uniquely yours.

Software Use

All faculty, staff and students of the university are required and expected to obey the laws and legal agreements governing software use. Failure to do so can lead to monetary damages and/or criminal penalties for the individual violator. Because such violations are also against university policies and rules, disciplinary action will be taken when appropriate.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities who experience learning barriers and would like to request academic accommodations should connect with the Disability Resource Center. See the "Get Started With the DRC" webpage on the Disability Resource Center site. It is important for students to share their accommodation letter with their instructor and discuss their access needs, as early as possible in the semester.

The Disability Resource Center coordinates the needed accommodations for students with disabilities. This includes registering disabilities, recommending academic accommodations within the classroom, accessing special adaptive computer equipment, providing interpretation services and mediating faculty-student disability related issues.

Campus Helping Resources

Students experiencing crises or personal problems that interfere with their general well-being are encouraged to utilize the university's counseling resources. The Counseling & Wellness Center provides confidential counseling services at no cost for currently enrolled students. Resources are available on campus for students having personal problems or lacking clear career or academic goals, which interfere with their academic performance.

Whole Gator App

The Whole Gator website and app connects UF students with resources dedicated to supporting overall health and well-being. In addition to many of the resources below it also has strategies to practice self-care. https://one.uf.edu/whole-gator/topics

Health and Wellness

- U Matter, We Care: If you or someone you know is in distress, please contact umatter@ufl.edu, 352-392-1575, or visit U Matter, We Care website to refer or report a concern and a team member will reach out to the student in distress.
- Counseling and Wellness Center: Visit the Counseling and Wellness Center website or call 352-392-1575 for information on crisis services as well as noncrisis services.
- Student Health Care Center: Call 352-392-1161 for 24/7 information to help you find the care you need, or visit the Student Health Care Center website.
- University Police Department: Visit UF Police Department website or call 352392-1111 (or 9-1-1 for emergencies).
- *Sexual Assault Recovery Services (SARS),* Student Health Care Center, 392-1161.
- UF Health Shands Emergency Room / Trauma Center: For immediate medical care call 352-733-0111 or go to the emergency room at 1515 SW Archer Road, Gainesville, FL 32608; Visit the UF Health Emergency Room and Trauma Center website.
- GatorWell Health Promotion Services: For prevention services focused on optimal wellbeing, including Wellness Coaching for Academic Success, visit the GatorWell website or call 352-273- 4450.
- Student Success Initiative, http://studentsuccess.ufl.edu.

Academic Resources

- E-learning technical support: Contact the UF Computing Help Desk at 352-3924357 or via e-mail at helpdesk@ufl.edu.
- Career Connections Center: Reitz Union Suite 1300, 352-392-1601. Career assistance and counseling services. If you would like orientation on choosing a major, finding an internship, or planning your career, we encourage you to use this on-campus resource group. www.career.ufl.edu
- Library Support: Various ways to receive assistance with respect to using the libraries or finding resources. Call 866-281-6309 or email ask@ufl.libanswers.com for more information.
- Teaching Center: 1317 Turlington Hall, 352-392-2010 or to make an appointment 352- 392-6420. General study skills and tutoring.
- Writing Studio: Daytime (9:30am-3:30pm): 2215 Turlington Hall, 352-846-1138 | Evening (5:00pm-7:00pm): 1545 W University Avenue (Library West, Rm. 339). Help brainstorming, formatting, and writing papers.
- Academic Complaints: Office of the Ombuds; Visit the Complaint Portal webpage for more information.
- Enrollment Management Complaints (Registrar, Financial Aid, Admissions): View the Student Complaint Procedure webpage for more information.

Student Complaints

- Residential Course: https://www.ombuds.ufl.edu/complaint-portal/
- Online Course: www.distance.ufl.edu/student-complaint-process

Course Evaluation Process

Student assessment of instruction is an important part of efforts to improve teaching and learning. At the end of the semester, students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course using a standard set of university and college criteria. Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available at:

- www.gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/

Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via https://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at:

- www.gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/

In-class Recording

Our PANEL class sessions will be audio visually recorded for students in the class to refer back and for enrolled students who are unable to attend live. Students who participate with their camera engaged or utilize a profile image are agreeing to have their video or image recorded. If you are unwilling to consent to have your profile or video image recorded, be sure to keep your camera off and do not use a profile image. Likewise, students who

un-mute during class and participate orally are agreeing to have their voices recorded. If you are not willing to consent to have your voice recorded during class, you will need to keep your mute button activated and communicate exclusively using the "chat" feature, which allows students to type questions and comments live. The chat will not be recorded or shared. As in all courses, unauthorized recording and unauthorized sharing of recorded materials is prohibited.

Students are allowed to record video or audio of class lectures. However, the purposes for which these recordings may be used are strictly controlled. The only allowable purposes are (1) for personal educational use, (2) in connection with a complaint to the university, or (3) as evidence in, or in preparation for, a criminal or civil proceeding. All other purposes are prohibited. Specifically, students may not publish recorded lectures without the written consent of the instructor.

A "class lecture" is an educational presentation intended to inform or teach enrolled students about a particular subject, including any instructor-led discussions that form part of the presentation, and delivered by any instructor hired or appointed by the University, or by a guest instructor, as part of a University of Florida course. A class lecture does not include lab sessions, student presentations, clinical presentations such as patient history, academic exercises involving solely student participation, assessments (quizzes, tests, exams), field trips, private conversations between students in the class or between a student and the faculty or guest lecturer during a class session.

Publication without permission of the instructor is prohibited. To "publish" means to share, transmit, circulate, distribute, or provide access to a recording, regardless of format or medium, to another person (or persons), including but not limited to another student within the same class section. Additionally, a recording, or transcript of a recording, is considered published if it is posted on or uploaded to, in whole or in part, any media platform, including but not limited to social media, book, magazine, newspaper, leaflet, or third-party note/tutoring services. A student who publishes a recording without written consent may be subject to a civil cause of action instituted by a person injured by the publication and/or discipline under UF Regulation 4.040 Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code.

HOS 4918 – Capstone Planning

Date	Delivery	Topics
Module 1: Personal Motivation and Skills Assessment (Dr. Gerardo Nunez)		
Week 1 (01/13)	Pre-recorded	Course Expectations (Dr. Amethyst Merchant)
Week 2 (01/21)	Pre-recorded	Questions to Ask Yourself When Choosing a Career
Week 3 (01/27)	Pre-recorded	Hard and Soft Skills
Week 4 (02/03)	Zoom	Friday, February 7th at 4:00 pm US-EST PANEL: Desirable Skills for Early-Career Plant Scientists
Module 2: Planning Your Capstone (Guest Lecturer Dr. Dina Liebowitz)		
Week 5 (02/10)	Pre-recorded	Ideal Course Sequence, Role of Capstone, and Kinds of Capstones
Module 3: Launching Your Career (Dr. Amethyst Merchant)		
Week 6 (02/17)	Pre-recorded	Resume Creation
Week 7 (02/24)	Pre-recorded	Cover Letter and Personal Statement Construction
Week 8 (03/03)	Pre-recorded	Networking and Job Search
Module 4: Professional Life Skills (Dr. Leynar Naranjo)		
Week 9 (03/10)	Pre-recorded	Interview Skills
Week 10 (03/24)	Zoom	PANEL: Work within Industry vs. Academia vs. Non-Profit vs. Government
Week 11 (03/31)	Pre-recorded	Professional Etiquette and Conflict Resolution
Week 12 (04/07)	Pre-recorded	Teamwork and Leadership Basics
Module 5: Going to Graduate / Professional School (Dr. Amethyst Merchant)		
Week 13 (04/14)	Pre-recorded	How to Apply (Standardized Exams, Statement of Purpose) and Funding Opportunities (TAs, RAs, scholarships, fellowships, REUs)
Week 14 (04/21)	Zoom	PANEL: Current Graduate Students answer your questions