



HOS 3285
The Organic Debate: Organic Agriculture Development and Regulations

1 credit

100% online asynchronous

Fall 2022

Stay Safe and Healthy!

Instructor: Dr. Xin Zhao, Professor, Horticultural Sciences Department

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Office Hours: By appointment. Please use email within E-learning (Canvas) for class-related communications.

Prereq: BSC 2005 or equivalent.

Course Description

Organic farming is a rapidly developing production system. This introductory course provides a critical analysis of organic agriculture growth, consumer perceptions, and regulations at the national and international levels. This course also focuses on organic agriculture transdisciplinary innovations and challenges in advancing environmental, economic, and social sustainability of food production.

Learning Objectives

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

- Explain the history of organic farming and the key principles of organic agriculture.
- Describe the major components of organic standards and certification process.
- Apply the systems approach to organic crop and livestock production.
- Evaluate the growth of organic farming and its role in developing sustainable agriculture and food systems
- Critically assess organic agriculture research and consumer perceptions of organic agriculture.
- Examine major challenges and critical areas for future development in organic farming to improve food security and long-term sustainability.

Textbook

There are no required textbooks for this online course. Journal articles, book chapters, websites, videos, and other materials will be collectively used.

Class Format

- E-learning (<http://elearning.ufl.edu/>) is the platform for this online course and course content is organized in different Modules. In order to facilitate a smooth flow, Modules will be unlocked and made available to students according to the class module schedule listed on the last page of this course syllabus. Basically, a new Module will not be unlocked until completion of the previous

Module. Once unlocked, the Module will be accessible throughout the semester.

- This is not a traditional lecture-based class. A variety of approaches and activities are used in this online course with the central goal of enhancing student engagement, active learning, and teacher-learner interactions. We encourage you to establish self-expectation at the beginning of the semester and monitor your learning progress in class during the semester to achieve your goals of learning. Please feel free to reach out to the instructor if you have any questions or concerns. You are expected to navigate through the course E-learning site on a weekly basis (at least 😊) to complete all class activities and assignments throughout the semester in order to enjoy an exciting and fruitful journey of exploring organic agriculture and successfully accomplish the course learning objectives.
- Although we cannot meet face-to-face in this online setting, there will be opportunities for you to meet your instructor and teaching assistants “in-person” via Zoom during the semester. So, please stay tuned and look out for those Zoom help session announcements in E-learning.

Course Assessment Components and Grading:

1. Syllabus Quiz

This quiz is ungraded and does not count toward your course grade; however, you will need to answer ALL questions correctly in order to proceed to Module 1. Multiple choice and true or false questions are included in this quiz. There are 3 attempts available, and each attempt is timed to 20 minutes.

2. Module Quizzes

240 points (6 × 40 points)

There will be six online open-book quizzes during the semester. On average, each quiz will be worth 40 points. Multiple choice, true or false, matching, and short essay questions may be included in the quizzes. Each quiz will be timed to at least 40 minutes. Two attempts are available for each quiz and the highest score will be recorded as the quiz grade. Students can refer to lecture videos, handouts, personal notes, and other reference materials, but each student must work individually and independently. A study guide will be provided for each quiz. Quiz release and due dates will be indicated in each Module and on the course calendar. Each quiz will be available in the E-learning portal for 5 days before the due date.

3. Online Discussion Assignments

140 points (7 × 20 points)

During the introduction week and each learning Module, students will write ONE original post based on a given prompt. Prompts will be directly related to topics covered in each Module. In addition, students should reply to at least ONE other student’s post. Students will not be able to read posts from peers in the class until they have already submitted their own posts on the discussion board. Participation in discussion threads is meant to foster critical thinking, reflection, and collaboration among peers. Detailed assignment descriptions and requirements can be found in E-learning using the Assignments tab once the assignment is released. Discussion prompts and due dates for discussion posts will be indicated in each Module and on the course calendar.

4. SWOT Analysis Assignments

100 points (2 × 50 points)

A SWOT analysis is used to assess the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats within the context of a business, organization, or individual. Both internal and external factors are examined in

SWOT analysis. A SWOT analysis informs the decision-making process and serves as a useful tool for achieving short-term and long-term goals. The main purpose is to identify positive factors that work synergistically to maintain the farming sustainability and potential problems that need to be addressed in order to improve the long-term sustainability of the farming operation. Potential solutions and recommendations for future improvement also need to be developed by performing the SWOT analysis. The first SWOT analysis is a group assignment while the second SWOT analysis needs to be conducted individually. Detailed assignment description and requirements can be found in E-learning using the Assignments tab once the assignment is released and through the link provided in the appropriate Module. Due dates will also be indicated on the course calendar.

5. Case Study Assignment

100 points

In this case study assignment, you will assume your role as a college teacher who is going to teach a class focused on a particular area of organic agriculture using the case study method. You will be developing a case study with clear learning objectives and guide the students in your class to analyze the case in order to achieve the identified learning objectives. You will choose and target a specific topic related to the role of organic agriculture, including organic regulations, in developing sustainable agriculture and food systems as well as potential challenges and issues based on a comprehensive review of scientific literature, for developing your case study report. Detailed assignment descriptions and requirements can be found in E-learning using the Assignments tab once the assignment is released and through the link provided in the appropriate Module. Due dates will also be indicated on the course calendar.

6. Organic Survey Group Project

150 points

This is a group project that allows students to examine college students' perceptions and knowledge of organic agriculture and organic foods using an online survey method. With the help of the invited survey expert, each team will actively contribute to designing an online survey instrument, i.e., an online questionnaire, in Qualtrics (<https://ufl.qualtrics.com>). The questionnaire will include questions that address the following areas: 1) collecting demographic information about respondents; 2) assessing respondents' knowledge of organic farming systems and their sustainability including both crop and livestock production systems; 3) assessing respondents' knowledge of organic certification and regulations as well as organic product labeling; 4) assessing respondents' consumption of organic foods including product types and frequency; and 5) assessing respondents' perception of organic foods and factors influencing their consumption of organic foods and purchasing decisions. This survey will target the population of undergraduate students at the University of Florida. We will work with our survey expert to obtain IRB (<http://irb.ufl.edu/irb02.html>) approval for conducting this online survey during the semester. At the end of the semester, each team will also submit a narrated Powerpoint summary report based on the preliminary results from the executed online survey. Detailed project assignment description and requirements can be found in E-learning using the Assignments tab once the assignment is released and through the link provided in the appropriate Module. Due dates will also be indicated on the course calendar.

7. Questions & Feedback (Q&F) Assignments

30 points (6 × 5 points)

This Q&F assignment creates another mechanism for promoting teacher-learner interactions so that students can ask questions and/or make suggestions in a highly encouraging environment toward improving their learning experience throughout the semester. During each Module, each student will submit their questions and/or feedback to the instructor and the instructor will respond to students in a

timely manner to help address their questions and concerns. Detailed assignment description and requirements can be found in E-learning using the Assignments tab once the assignment is released and through the link provided in the appropriate Module. Due dates will also be indicated on the course calendar.

Grading:

Activity	Points possible	Percentage of final grade
Quizzes	240	30.6
Online discussion assignment	140	18.4
Case study assignment	100	13.2
SWOT analysis assignment	100	13.2
Organic survey group project	150	19.7
Questions & feedback assignment	30	3.9
Total	760	100%

*Certain extra credit opportunities (up to 15 points) will be announced during the semester.

All points earned in the course will be summed to calculate your final grade. Letter grades will be based on the performance of each student relative to the following standard percentages (%) out of a total of 760 points:

100% – 93% (780 – 725 pts)	A	<77% – 73% (<601 – 569 pts)	C
<93% – 90% (<725 – 702 pts)	A-	<73% – 70% (<569 – 546 pts)	C-
<90% – 87% (<702 – 679 pts)	B+	<70% – 67% (<546 – 523 pts)	D+
<87% – 83% (<679 – 647 pts)	B	<67% – 63% (<523 – 491 pts)	D
<83% – 80% (<647 – 624 pts)	B-	<63% – 60% (<491 – 468 pts)	D-
<80% – 77% (<624 – 601 pts)	C+	<60% – 0% (<468 – 0 pts)	E

Please feel free to discuss your grades with the instructor at any time during the semester. Additional information on current UF grading policies for assigning grade points can be found here:

- *Grading policy*, <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>

Course Policies and Resources:

Attendance and Make-up Policy

Quiz and assignment makeups will be arranged only in the case of documented illness/emergency. Requirements for class attendance and make-up quizzes, 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/>.

E-learning Technical Support

If you are experiencing technical difficulties with Canvas, you should immediately contact the UF Computing Help Desk. This will generate a ticket number, which documents the date and time of your

technical difficulty. Any requests to make-up late work due to technical difficulties must be accompanied by this ticket number.

- Contact the UF Computing Help Desk (<https://helpdesk.ufl.edu/>) at 352-392-4357 or via e-mail at helpdesk@ufl.edu.

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. 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.

- *Disability Resource Center*, 001 Reid Hall, (352) 392-8565, <https://disability.ufl.edu/get-started/>.

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 Honor Code (<https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/process/student-conduct-code/>) specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. Furthermore, you are obligated to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor in this class.

Online Course Evaluation Process

- Student assessment of instruction is an important part of efforts to improve teaching and learning. 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: <https://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: <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/>.

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.

Health and Wellness Resources:

- *Counseling & Wellness Center*: Visit www.counseling.ufl.edu or call 352-392-1575 for

information on crisis services as well as non-crisis services.

- *U Matter, We Care*: If you or someone you know is in distress, please contact umatter@ufl.edu, 352-392-1575, or visit www.umatter.ufl.edu to refer or report a concern and a team member will reach out to the student in distress.
- *Student Health Care Center*: Call 352-392-1161 for 24/7 information to help you find the care you need, or visit shcc.ufl.edu/.
- *University Police Department*: 352-392-1111 (or 9-1-1 for emergencies), www.police.ufl.edu.
- *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, <https://ufhealth.org/emergency-room-trauma-center>.
- *GatorWell Health Promotion Services*: For prevention services focused on optimal wellbeing, including Wellness Coaching for Academic Success, <https://gatorwell.ufsa.ufl.edu/>.

Academic Resources

- *Career Connections Center*: Career assistance and counseling services. Reitz Union Suite 1300, 352-392-1601, www.career.ufl.edu.
- *Library Support*: Various ways to receive assistance with respect to using the libraries or finding resources. <https://uflib.ufl.edu/find/ask/>.
- *Teaching Center*: Broward Hall, 352-392-2010 or to make an appointment 352- 392-6420. General study skills and tutoring. <https://teachingcenter.ufl.edu/>.
- *Writing Studio*: 2215 Turlington Hall, 352-846-1138. Help brainstorming, formatting, and writing papers. <https://writing.ufl.edu/writing-studio/>.
- *Student Complaints On-Campus*: Visit the Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code webpage for more information. <https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/policies/student-honor-%20code-student-conduct-code/>.
- *On-Line Students Complaints*: View the Distance Learning Student Complaint Process at <https://distance.ufl.edu/getting-help/student-complaint-process/>.

Tentative Class Module Schedule

Week	Module	Topic
1	Introduction & Getting Ready for the Organic Journey [unlocked on 8/24]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction and course requirements
2&3	Module 1: What does “Organic” mean? [unlocked on 9/1]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • History of organic agriculture movement • Growth of organic markets and consumer demand • USDA organic production surveys • Why regulate organic agriculture? • The National Organic Program (NOP) • Understanding organic labels • Imports and exports of organic products
4&5	Module 2: Meeting an organic certifying agent and visiting certified organic farms [unlocked on 9/15]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organic certification process • Organic certification case studies: Insights from an organic certifying agent • Transitioning to organic • Organic crop production system overview • A virtual visit to certified organic farms
6&7&8	Module 3: Organic crop production systems and practices [unlocked on 9/29]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Soil, water, and nutrient management in organic crop production and NOP standards • Disease, pest, and weed management in organic production and NOP standards • Biodiversity in organic farming • Protected culture in organic farming • Continuing our virtual visit to certified organic farms
9&10	Module 4: Organic livestock production systems [unlocked on 10/20]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NOP requirements for organic livestock production • Building a healthy organic livestock system • Integrated crop and livestock production systems • Biodynamic farming
11&12	Module 5: Organic agriculture development around the world [unlocked on 11/3]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current status of organic agriculture development worldwide • Emerging trends in global organic agriculture growth • Can organic agriculture feed the world?
13&14	Module 6: Delving deeper into the organic vs. conventional debate and envisioning the future of organic farming [unlocked on 11/17]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessing safety and quality of organic foods • Science and technology integration and innovations in organic farming • Organic agriculture research priorities • The organic struggle • Assessing long-term sustainability of organic farming
15&16	Wrapping up the journey [unlocked on 12/1]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final thoughts • Q&A • Working with team members to develop the organic survey group project report