

I. General Information

Class Meetings

- Fall 2023
- MWF 8th period (3:00 - 3:50)
- Location: [Larsen 310](#)

Instructor

- Misti Sharp, PhD
- 1189 McCarty Hall A
- Office Hours: Mondays and Fridays from 10:00 am – 11:00 am and [by appointment](#)
- mistisharp@ufl.edu or 352-294-7632

Teaching Assistant

- Solomon Ajoseh
- Office Hours: tbd
- tbd

Course Description

This class explores the global disconnect between humans and the food, water, and natural resource systems on which we depend. Wicked problems such as food insecurity, climate change, and mass extinction abound leaving many hopeless about the future. Can we reconnect humanity with our natural world through international tourism? This class uses systems thinking and the fields of agribusiness, ecology, tourism, rural sociology, and economics to explore opportunities in agritourism across the world to reconnect humans with our agri-food-eco systems.

Quest and General Education Credit

- Quest 2
- Social & Behavioral Sciences
- International

This course accomplishes the [Quest](#) and [General Education](#) objectives of the subject areas listed above. A minimum grade of C is required for [Quest](#) and [General Education](#) credit. Courses intended to satisfy [Quest](#) and [General Education](#) requirements cannot be taken S-U.

Required Readings and Materials

- **Readings:** While there is no required textbook, readings are provided in the pages of eLearning for each module (e.g. Pages → View all Pages → Module 1: Food Systems Introduction). You are

expected to read all assigned readings in preparation for class discussions and participation quizzes. Readings, lectures, and class discussions form the basis of module assessments.

- **E-learning:** can be accessed via <http://elearning.ufl.edu> using your Gatorlink username and password. If you are having difficulties accessing E-learning, please contact the UF Computing Help Desk by calling (352)-392-HELP or email helpdesk@ufl.edu. This will be where you submit some of your work and where I will post grades on a regular basis.
- **Canva Account:** Canva is a free online graphic design software. Some projects in this class may benefit from the design tools and templates in Canva. To sign up for Canva:
 - Open an internet browser and navigate to <https://www.canva.com/>.
 - Click on the Sign up for free and get started icon in the center of the page.
 - Sign in with Google or enter your email and create a password.
 - Click Agree and create my Account.
- **Plectica Account:** The Cabrera Research Lab at Cornell University provides Plectica as a free, online mind mapping app. Students will be expected to sign up for a Plectica Account to access the software app via the internet. This will be used for course projects. Sign up for Plectica:
 - Open an internet browser and navigate to <https://www.plectica.com/>.
 - Click on the Sign up for free and get started icon in the center of the page.
 - Sign in with Google or enter your email and create a password.
 - Click Agree and create my Account
- **Office 365:** More specifically, this class will use Microsoft **teams**, forms, powerpoint, one-note, etc which are all freely available to UF students and Faculty. To Install Microsoft Teams:
 - Open an internet browser and navigate to <https://cloud.it.ufl.edu/collaboration-tools/office-365/>
 - Click on *Teams* and then *Get the Windows App* if you have sufficient space. If you don't have sufficient space, simply choose "Use the web app instead."

II. Graded Work

Description of Graded Work

Module Assessments (500 points): There are 5 modules in this course and for each module there is an assessment that requires you to reflect on course content through True/False questions and creatively apply what you have learned in each module. Each of these assessments is worth 100 points. These assessments are described briefly in the schedule and fully on eLearning. Rubrics will be provided for each of these assignments in eLearning.

Cumulative Assignment (200 points): For the final course deliverable, you must plan an international excursion which is centered around agri-food-eco tourism. This must include a complete cost estimate including an environmental impact assessment. You must locally source all equipment, training, etc. required for a fulfilling experience. This excursion plan will be presented in the form of a report with a summary of all activities, links to websites, and all tables the figures must be properly cited. Within the plan, you should consider the needs of a typical American (bathroom access, 3 meals a day, etc) and market the excursion to Americans.

Experiential Learning/Field Trip Reflection Assignments (200 points): Each module there will be a required experiential learning or field trip activity that you will have to participate in, produce a creative work for, and reflect on. Each of these assignments will be worth 40 points. See rubric in eLearning for more details on how the 40 points are distributed for each of these reflection assignments.

Participation (100 points): The learning cycle has four components: experiencing, reflecting, thinking, and acting (Kolb 1984). As such, this course is designed to engage you all in four of those components each time we meet. You will read the readings each class, come to class to participate in discussions and activities, and at the end of each class, there will be an exit ticket to help you reflect on what we have learned. Participation (either through an activity or an exit ticket) will be graded based on the following rubric. There will be one grade assigned per module for this participation category (i.e. 20 points per module will be in participation).



Source: [Home | Experience Based Learning Systems, LLC \(learningfromexperience.com\)](http://learningfromexperience.com)

Participation Rubric

	High Quality-100%	Average-75%	Needs Improvement-50%
Informed: Shows evidence of having done the assigned work.			
Thoughtful: Shows evidence of having understood and considered issues raised.			
Considerate: Takes the perspective others into account.			

Grade Composition

Component	Points	% of Grade
Module Assignments (1 assignment per module)	500 points (100 points each)	50%
Cumulative Assignment	200 points	20%
Experiential Learning/Field Trip Reflections (1 assignment per module)	200 points (40 points each)	20%
Participation (1 grade per module)	100 points (20 points each)	10%
Total	1000 points	100%

Grading Scale

For information on how UF assigns grade points, visit: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/grades-grading-policies/>

A	94 – 100%		C	74 – 76.9%
A-	90 – 93.9%		C-	70 – 73.9%
B+	87 – 89.9%		D+	67 – 69.9%
B	84 – 86.9%		D	64 – 66.9%
B-	80 – 83.9%		D-	60 – 63.9%
C+	77 – 79.9%		E	<60

III. Annotated Weekly Schedule

See an up-to-date schedule online:

https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1LJXwIHlxWniEM88VuvHpXKtmky_zyEpZlBl8f6i36zg/edit?usp=sharing

Week	Topics, Homework, and Assignments
Module 1: Introduction	
Week 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Topic: Introduction—Are we disconnected from our natural world? • Summary: There is a growing disconnect between humans and the natural systems on which we depend. This week we explore the drivers of this disconnect locally and globally and hypothesize about the potential long-term implications of this trend. We introduce ideas explored throughout the class including ecosystems, food systems, and tourism.
Week 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Topic: The Urban/Rural Divide and Regional Economies • Summary: Everyone eats food, lives in shelters, and wears clothing made from natural materials provided predominately by our rural communities. Nevertheless, our rural communities are troubled by poor access to services and struggle to make ends meet. This week explores what is meant by the term “family farm” or “subsistence farming” in the US and around the world. • Experiential Learning Assignment: Visit a farmer’s market and talk to a real farmer! Due on Friday, September 1st.
Week 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Topic: How do we engage in agriculture? • Summary: Agriculture is all around us and yet there seems to be a disconnect between consumers and the food that they eat. In many ways, food has become polarized as we consider what, how, and how much food to eat. • Assignment: Module 1 Assignment due on Friday, September 8th. Using Canva or another creative program, create a mind map about food and your life (examples provided in class).
Module 2: Wicked Problems in Agriculture	
Week 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Topic: Market failures

Week	Topics, Homework, and Assignments
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summary: Farming systems (including those in the ocean) are dependent on clean water, air, and adequate nutrients. At the same time, these are depleted as we continue to push at the carrying capacity of our natural world. This week, we are introduced to concepts about our social ecological systems where we must consider users, resource units, resource systems, and governance systems along with their interactions.
Week 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Topic: Wicked Problems • Summary: Wicked problems are those problems that are involve multiple competing dimensions including health, economics, and social systems where the solutions often lead to unintended consequences as other parts of the inter-connected system becomes disrupted. This week considers the finite nature of our earth systems and the implications for mankind. • Experiential Learning Assignment: Visit the Springs (such as Ichetucknee, Boulware, Poe, etc), a beach or a local park and create a brochure informing others of the ways that we can change our behavior to protect our natural resources. Due on Friday, September 22nd.
Week 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Topic: Issues of food security • Summary: We struggle locally and globally with feeding our growing population; to exacerbate this issue, the World Health Organization has declared obesity a global epidemic! Throughout the week we discuss the interactions between people and food and how we can work towards a future where no one is hungry. • Assignment: Module 2 Assignment due on September 29th. Consider potential solutions to wicked problems society faces (global hunger, climate change, disease, etc) and do a benefit-cost analysis for those solutions. Reflect on why society has not managed to address the problem. Due on Friday, September 29th.
Module 3: Food Systems	
Week 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Topic: Food Systems Introduction • Summary: All food systems begin in a local context but not all food is destined to stay in that community. When food is produced at scale, it becomes largely disconnected from this local context and yet, locally grown food provides an anchor for a community to thrive. This week differentiates between a food system and a sustainable food system and draws attention to more than just the supply chain.
Week 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Topic: From Field to Fork • Summary: This week, we take a closer look at the impacts of locally grown food and consider why our food system is the way that it is. Two of the three days this week will be spent visiting our school garden and reflecting on the impacts of a local food resource on the surrounding community. • Experiential Learning Assignment: Assignment co-created with Field and Fork due on Monday, October 16th.
Week 9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Topic: Market structures in agriculture • Summary: To overcome the challenges for “small” or “local” agriculture, some market structures such as community supported agriculture (CSA), farmer’s markets, and farm to table events have risen to increase the profitability of LGF. These unique market structures will be discussed in detail making comparisons in these market

Week	Topics, Homework, and Assignments
	<p>structures (short supply chain) to “traditional” food market structure (long supply chain).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assignment: Module 3 Assignment (infographic of your meal using LGF) due on Monday, October 22nd.
Module 4: Agricultural Tourism	
Week 10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Topic: Farm Profitability • Summary: Farm margins are small and shrinking every day. This week defines what is meant by “profitability” and looks at data related to farm profitability. We explore the experience economy, branding, and direct marketing opportunities as opportunities to improve farm profitability.
Week 11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Topic: Food and agrarian culture • Summary: Food culture encompasses the way we cultivate, prepare, serve, and eat food. It truly brings people together in an way that is both educational but also spiritual. This week we explore how non-pecuniary things like heritage, culture, and diet influence our views on food and an agrarian society. • Experiential Learning Assignment: Attend and reflect on a fall festival in Gainesville or elsewhere in Florida. Gainesville options include “Buy a Pumpkin, Feed a Child”, Amber Brooks Farm, Coon Hollo, or Roger’s farm. The assignment is due on Friday, November 3rd.
Week 12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Topic: Farm policy • Summary: Our agricultural policies can make or break an industry and create incentive structures that can either help or hurt the local food movement. This week explores more nuance in agricultural policies with case studies specific to breweries and alcohol taxation policies across US states. • Assignments: Module 4 Assignment due Monday, November 13th (presentation of an agritourism operation)
Module 5: Sustainable Eco and Agritourism	
Week 13 – Week 14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Topic: Development through tourism • Summary: Many of the wicked problems that society faces boil down to the problems of inequality. How we define “sustainable” development is important because assuming that economic growth leads to universal benefits fails to recognize the challenges associated with meeting the needs of today balanced against the needs of tomorrow. This week begins to tie course topics together in this final module.
Week 15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Topic: Ecotourism • Summary: Tiktok videos of catastrophe, celebrities making films about climate change, and a thirst for the “experience” economy bring to light ideas about environmental stewardship to the public eye. At the same time, there is degradation that occurs anytime someone visits a natural site. This week, we explore how to care for the environment as we degrade it. • Experiential Learning Assignment: Reflect on the sustainability of tourism venues that you are familiar with and how they help or hurt current and future generations. Due on Wednesday, November 29th.
Week 16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Topic: Bringing people together—solutions for wicked problems

Week	Topics, Homework, and Assignments
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summary: This week, we will discuss how we can create a better world through a reconnection of people to the environment. • Assignment: Module 5 assessment due on Wednesday, December 6th. In this assessment, you will need to evaluate different perspectives viewpoints on agri and eco-tourism as a solution to wicked problems.
Your final excursion presentations are due on eLearning on Monday, December 11 th by noon.	

IV. Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs)

At the end of this course, students will be expected to have achieved the [Quest](#) and [General Education](#) learning outcomes as follows:

Content: <i>Students demonstrate competence in the terminology, concepts, theories and methodologies used within the discipline(s).</i>	
<p>Define agritourism, ecotourism and gastro tourism domestically and internationally.</p> <p>Identify characteristics of social ecological systems domestically and internationally.</p> <p>Define a sustainable food system and identify challenges in achieving a sustainable food system</p> <p>Create a budget for an agri-eco-gastro tourism excursion in an international context utilizing as many local resources as possible and minimizing environmental degradation.</p> <p>Achieved through lectures, readings, weekly assignments, and the final excursion presentation.</p>	N, S
Critical Thinking: <i>Students carefully and logically analyze information from multiple perspectives and develop reasoned solutions to problems within the discipline(s).</i>	
<p>Create mental models that capture the complexity and hope within our social-ecological-systems to solve some of the biggest problems facing humanity.</p> <p>Contribute to a roundtable discussion on a wicked problem related to our food and/or ecosystems.</p> <p>Achieved through module assignments and class discussions/readings.</p>	S
Communication: <i>Students communicate knowledge, ideas and reasoning clearly and effectively in written and oral forms appropriate to the discipline(s).</i>	
<p>Communicate avenues of progress for a wicked problem and relate to diverse perspectives relevant to a problem in an international context.</p> <p>Reflect on excursions and connect experiences to the course material in a written format</p> <p>Make presentations about experiences, phenomena, and plans in both formal (presentations) and informal (class discussion) ways.</p>	N, S

Achieved through module assignments, reflection journals, and final excursion report.	
Connection: <i>Students connect course content with meaningful critical reflection on their intellectual, personal, and professional development at UF and beyond.</i>	
Engage with our natural and agri-food system by taking excursions and reflecting on these experiences.	S
Incorporate readings from the course into creative works and intellectual discourse.	
Achieved through participating and reflecting on at least 4 of the experiential learning opportunities and participating in classroom discussions/assignments.	
<p>N – International Designation -- this designation is always in conjunction with another program area. Courses with International should demonstrate that a majority of the course addresses International content and engagement and it should be a substantial, defining feature of the course. International courses promote the development of students’ global and intercultural awareness. Students examine the cultural, economic, geographic, historical, political, and/or social experiences and processes that characterize the contemporary world, and thereby comprehend the trends, challenges, and opportunities that affect communities around the world. Students analyze and reflect on the ways in which cultural, economic, political, and/or social systems and beliefs mediate their own and other people’s understanding of an increasingly connected world.</p> <p>S – Social and Behavioral Sciences Designation -- Social and behavioral science courses provide instruction in the history, key themes, principles, terminology, and underlying theory or methodologies used in the social and behavioral sciences. Students will learn to identify, describe, and explain social institutions, structures or processes. These courses emphasize the effective application of accepted problem-solving techniques. Students will apply formal and informal qualitative or quantitative analysis to examine the processes and means by which individuals make personal and group decisions, as well as the evaluation of opinions, outcomes, or human behavior. Students are expected to assess and analyze ethical perspectives in individual and societal decisions.</p>	

V. Quest Learning Experiences

1. Details of Experiential Learning Component

As mentioned above, you must participate in at least 5 experiential learning opportunities either independently or with a group. The following are the assignments and their associated due dates:

Module 1 Experiential Learning Reflection: Visit a local farmer’s market and talk to a local farmer. In Gainesville there are several options that are fairly easy to get to: [Shopping - Events in Gainesville and What's Good in Alachua County, FL \(visitgainesville.com\)](#). You must ask each farmer at least 5 questions about 1) how long they have been farming 2) what kinds of goods do they produce 3) do they have any special farming practices or varieties that make their products unique 4) why they decided to get into farming 5) whether they ever host people on their farm or educate the public about agriculture and why or why not. After interviewing the farmer and taking pictures of the event and farm stands, reflect on that conversation and the experience of visiting the farmer’s market. Finally, create a “map” of the farmer’s market that reflects the character of the place and the market participants using [canva or another program](#). More details will be provided on eLearning including a grading rubric.

Module 2 Experiential Learning Reflection: Visit the Springs (such as [Ichetucknee](#), [Boulware](#), [Poe](#), etc), a beach or a local park and create a [call to action Instagram post](#) informing others of the ways that

we can change our behavior to protect our natural resources. Take pictures of the location (including at least one photo with you in it) that illustrate the concerns that you have for the preservation of the resource. Reflect on the experience and why you think that the resource you accessed is worth preserving. More details will be provided on eLearning including a grading rubric.

Module 3 Experiential Learning Reflection: Visit the UF Field and Fork Gardens and create a self-guided tour of the garden that is oriented towards a special interest such as pollinators, sustainable production, global foods, mindfulness/mental health tour, bat tour (night), etc. Use [canva](#) or another visual platform to provide an overview of the tour and then go into details about each of the items that they will see/experience in the garden (see for example, the [UF self-guided tour](#) or [Austin self-guided tours](#)—although our bats are better than their bats!). Finally, reflect on the garden as a resource for the campus community and how it plays an important role in the sustainability of the UF food system. More details will be provided on eLearning including a grading rubric.

Module 4 Experiential Learning Reflection: Attend and reflect on a fall festival in Gainesville or elsewhere in Florida. Gainesville options include “[Buy a Pumpkin, Feed a Child](#)”, [Amber Brooks Farm](#), [Coon Hollo](#), or [Crossroads Farm and Apiary](#). Reflect on how the fall festival offerings display local culture, traditions, and agriculture. Create a brochure that highlights the opportunities available to you at this venue with pictures that you took at the event. More details will be provided on eLearning including a grading rubric.

Module 5 Experiential Learning Reflection: Given what you have learned through the semester about agriculture, nature, and sustainable tourism, reflect on the sustainability of one tourism venue that you are familiar with and how they help or hurt current and future generations. Using mind-mapping software/techniques (either in canva or plectica), map the reasons that the current operation is (or is not) sustainable. Next, describe how the business or entity could change their business, processes, or supply chain in order to have a more sustainable operation. More details will be provided on eLearning including a grading rubric.

2. Details of Self-Reflection Component

As described above, you must reflect on your experiential learning opportunities described above. With each reflection, you will do one creative work and provide a written reflection on your experience. While some of the experiences may have different questions for the reflection, most will follow this format:

1. Describe the operation: Where did you go and what did you do? How many other people were at the venue and what were they doing? Was there an educational component to the activity? If so, was this passive or active?
2. Reflect on your experience: How did you feel at the location? What sorts of natural amenities were there at the location and what was the quality of these amenities? Would this be an experience you would recommend to others? What do you think would be similar or different if this excursion took place in a different country? What role did “seasonality” play in the experience?
3. Assess the value of the experience: How much of your resources (time and money) did you spend at this venue? How does that compare to what the experience was worth to you? Do you think this experience would have value to others? What are the barriers that others may face to accessing this experience? How might this differ internationally?

VI. Required Policies

Attendance 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:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>

Students Requiring Accommodation

Students with disabilities who experience learning barriers and would like to request academic accommodations should connect with the disability Resource Center by visiting <https://disability.ufl.edu/students/get-started/>. 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.

UF Evaluations Process

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/>.

University Honesty Policy

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://www.dso.ufl.edu/scer/process/student-conduct-honor-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 or TAs in this class.

Counseling and Wellness Center

Contact information for the Counseling and Wellness Center: <http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/>, 392-1575; and the University Police Department: 392-1111 or 9-1-1 for emergencies.

The Writing Studio

The writing studio is committed to helping University of Florida students meet their academic and professional goals by becoming better writers. Visit the writing studio online at <http://writing.ufl.edu/writing-studio/> or in 2215 Turlington Hall for one-on-one consultations and workshops.

In-Class Recordings

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 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.