

PLS 4941: Practical Work Experience in Horticultural Therapy

Credits: 1-3

Environmental Horticulture Department

Instructor:

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(352) 294-5003

Office Hours by appointment at the greenhouse, via phone, or online.

Course Description:

In this course students will work in a supervised setting for a program that uses plants for the wellbeing and/or advancement of special participant groups. While each student in the course will likely be interning at different programs and sites, students in the course will connect asynchronously through Canvas to discuss and reflect upon their internship experiences. During the internship experience students will complete a project related to their work that will help deepen engagement and learning as well as help the student's clients and/or program facility.

As stated by the National Association of Colleges and Employers, an internship is:

a form of experiential learning that integrates knowledge and theory learned in the classroom with practical application and skills development in a professional setting. Internships give students the opportunity to gain valuable applied experience and make connections in professional fields they are considering for career paths and give employers the opportunity to guide and evaluate talent.

Course Objectives:

- Connect course content with practical application in a real-world work environment
- Synthesize knowledge from courses and life experience to address challenges and develop solutions
- Strengthen communication, leadership, and interpersonal skills in a therapeutic setting
- Demonstrate appropriate workplace behaviors, including reliability, accountability, and teamwork
- Gain insight on organizational structure, documentation styles, and program delivery
- Understanding and adhering to the ethical standards of the horticultural therapy profession and the specific organization
- Develop a better understanding of personal and professional strengths, weaknesses, and areas for improvement while increasing confidence in abilities and potential as a professional

- Reflect and evaluate internship experience in relation to personal, educational, and career goals

Professional Registration:

If you plan to use these internship hours toward the American Horticultural Therapy Association internship requirements, you must consult with the faculty advisor several months ahead of time to ensure you have an AHTA-approved internship supervisor and are prepared for the AHTA requirements, which are different than those for PLS 4941. You may work on both internship requirements simultaneously, but it is up to you to make sure you understand and fulfill each set of requirements. See the [AHTA Professional Registration Policies & Procedures](#) for more information. We are happy to help you sort through the options.

General Course Activities:

- Internship introduction
- Reflection on former interns' advice
- Internship goals
- Hours log
- Internship project ideas
- Halfway point reflections
- Supervisor mid-point evaluations
- Project promotion
- Advice to future interns
- Learning reflection
- Supervisor final evaluation

Expected Work Hours:

Students are expected to devote **a minimum of three hours per week of actual work at the internship site for each credit hour** in which they are enrolled. Students should carefully discuss with their faculty adviser the time expectations for completing the internship to ensure an adequate learning experience. Students may register for 1-3 credit hours per semester for an eventual completion of 3 credit hours.

Assessment:

Students will receive a final grade of satisfactory (S) or unsatisfactory (U) in this course based on the degree to which they meet expectations both at the internship site and in the Canvas community. Expectations are to be established by the faculty adviser, onsite supervisor, and student prior to the student's enrollment in this course. The agreed-upon expectations will be reflected in the Practical Work Experience Contract signed by all three parties. The onsite supervisor will complete an evaluation form at the end of the internship course period.

Course Website:

This course is conducted online. Assignments and activities can be accessed in Canvas, at UF e-learning (elearning.ufl.edu). Students should check the site regularly to keep up with any information, announcements, or discussions taking place. The student's UF Gatorlink username and password are necessary to log into the system.

Course Communications:

All class members are expected to follow the rules of common courtesy in all communications, written and verbal. Guidelines for these rules can be accessed at https://cise.ufl.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/15/2019/08/CISE_Netiquette_Guide.pdf

General questions of relevance to the whole class should be posted to the course's discussion board or Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) section. Please check for answers there before emailing the instructor. Private questions should be sent to the instructor via Canvas mail.

Services for Students with Disabilities:

Students with disabilities requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, <https://disability.ufl.edu/students/get-started/>). Once registered, students will receive an accommodation letter that must be presented to the instructor when requesting accommodation. 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.

Inclusion Statement

The Certificate in Horticultural Therapy Program at the University of Florida is committed to fostering an inclusive, equitable, and welcoming environment for all students, staff, and participants. We recognize that diversity in all its forms—including race, ethnicity, culture, language, gender, sexual orientation, age, ability, religion, socioeconomic background, and lived experience—enriches our program and strengthens the field of horticultural therapy.

We are dedicated to creating a space where differences are celebrated, voices from marginalized communities are amplified, and barriers to participation are actively addressed. We strive to ensure that our teaching, research, and practices reflect a deep respect for the unique identities and experiences of those we serve.

Through ongoing dialogue, training, and reflection, we will continue to evolve as a program that centers equity, access, and inclusion in every aspect of our work. We believe that the healing power of nature is for everyone, and we are committed to making that vision a reality.

Land Acknowledgement:

The Certificate in Horticultural Therapy Program at the University of Florida, based at Wilmot Gardens, acknowledges that for thousands of years, the area now known as Florida has been, and continues to be, home to many Native Nations. We recognize that the University of Florida campus, including Wilmot Gardens, is located on the ancestral territory of the Potano and Seminole peoples.

The Potano, of Timucua affiliation, lived in the Alachua region from before European arrival until the early 1700s, when their towns were destroyed. The Seminole, also known as the Alachua Seminole, established towns here shortly after but were forcibly removed during the Seminole Wars.

We honor the past, present, and future Native residents and cultures of Florida. We also recognize the wisdom of Indigenous ways of knowing, which have long taught about the healing power of nature. Their traditions—rooted in respect, reciprocity, and stewardship—serve as a foundation for our work in horticultural therapy.

As a program, we are committed to honoring Indigenous knowledge and ensuring that we do so with integrity and respect. We will work to amplify Indigenous voices, build meaningful partnerships, and educate ourselves and others about their contributions without appropriating or misrepresenting their teachings. Our approach centers on listening, learning, and practicing reciprocity, so that our work reflects the values of respect and care that Indigenous peoples have long upheld.

Academic Resources and Policies:

A complete list of [UF's academic policies and resources](https://syllabus.ufl.edu/syllabus-policy/uf-syllabus-policy-links/), including health and wellness resources, can be found here: <https://syllabus.ufl.edu/syllabus-policy/uf-syllabus-policy-links/>