

ALS 5934

**Fall
2020
Syllabus**

GRADUATE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Exploring non-technical soft skills



to enhance workforce readiness

Synchronous

**On-Line via
Zoom**

Monday Period 6-7

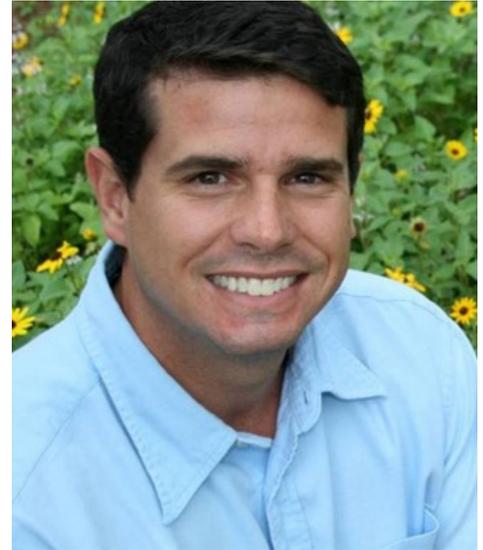
12:50-2:45 PM

Table of Contents

About the Instructor and Contact Information	3
Course Goals and Objectives	4
Course Expectations	5
Attendance and Make Up Policy	5
Assessments and Grading Information	5
Description of Assessments	6
Course Schedule	7
University Policies	9

About the instructor

Hi everybody! I am a professor of Environmental Horticulture with 14 years of experience as a faculty member at UF. I also serve as Graduate Coordinator for the department and started in this role in 2017. I work with amazing graduate students in this capacity and the experience has fortified a long-held belief that academicians must do more to enhance the workforce readiness of all our graduate students. I embarked on enhancing my professional development as a graduate student (M.S. UF, 2001; Ph.D. University of Hawaii, 2006) and even published a few papers on this subject. I am excited to share my enthusiasm for graduate student professional development with you and look forward to a great semester together.



Here is my instructional philosophy: My role as an instructor for graduate level courses is to act as a catalyst for new knowledge and understanding. I work cooperatively with students to guide their thinking when necessary and create an open learning atmosphere where: 1) calls for clarification of ideas and concepts are expected; 2) free expression of divergent viewpoints are necessary; and 3) robust interchange occurs between all members of the class. In short, I expect students to take full responsibility for their education. I will work hard to enhance your education by using a variety of teaching methods designed for actively engaging students in course concepts.

Contact Information

The best way to reach me is via email at hепerez@ufl.edu.

My goal is to respond to course related matters within 24 - 48 hours.

Office phone = 352-273-4503

Office Address: 2047 IFAS Research Drive, 32611, Building 0550, Room 103

<http://campusmap.ufl.edu/>
(type 0550 in search bar)

I probably will not be in the office much this semester given the current pandemic status.

Virtual office hours: TBD in class

We will connect via Zoom for virtual office hours.

I will provide a link once we establish a mutually agreeable time.

Some facts to reflect on...

Where will you end up after graduation???

Another **40%** work in other settings:

23% industry

11% government

7% other sectors

Did you know: only about

50%

of Ph.D. students end up in a tenure-track position

20%

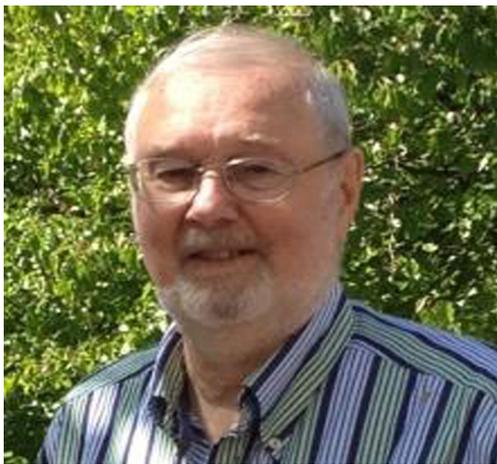
This represents the proportion of biological science Ph.D.s not working in the field.

In the biological sciences **40%** hold faculty position **10** years after receiving their Ph.D.

These facts are from **2001**.

Not much research for MS grads... sorry!

What are the facts like in **2020?**
More importantly...How will all of this affect **YOU???**



“I don't think the old model of training researchers is sufficient anymore...If students only learn topflight research skills, they won't get jobs when they graduate.” 2001

“< 20% of doctoral students thought they had sufficient training in workplace skills such as teamwork, collaboration, organization, and management...Technical skills acquired during graduate school account for only about 7% of the total skill set required to be successful professionals.” 2002

“Business, industry, government, and the non-profit sectors need intelligent, skilled employees. Yet, Ph.D. holders often struggle to make the transition out of the academy and into the workforce.” 2001

“A survey of 4114 doctoral students in 11 disciplines and 27 institutions found that 7 out of 10 believed they were prepared to become independent researchers. However, 60% of the respondents reported not understanding how to avoid financial and ethical conflict of interest.” 2001

“Graduate students often express concerns related to lack of career readiness in terms of acquired non-technical skills. Furthermore, the incongruity between graduate education and expansion of non-technical skills is chronic, global and multi-disciplinary. Simply put, graduate education is not keeping up with demands for professional development of non-technical skills deemed essential for entry and success in the workplace.” (Pérez, 2005, 2018 citing various sources)

Course Goal

There is a significant mismatch between graduate training programs and the acquisition of non-technical skills required for success in the workplace.

Therefore, the goal of this course is to connect graduate students with key non-technical skills so that they have an advantage when entering the workforce.

Course Objectives

By the end of the semester, successful students should be able to:

1. Self-assess level of competency in various non-technical skills
2. Differentiate between technical and non-technical workplace competencies
3. Critique the graduate training vs. professional readiness gap in terms non-technical skills acquisition
4. Evaluate several non-technical skills and demonstrate how these could enhance career readiness
5. Report on 5 or more new non-technical skills important to future career
6. Develop plan to enhance non-technical workplace

Course Expectations

- Arrive to class on time
- Digesting assigned materials ahead of time
- Share questions, perspectives and ideas during and outside of class
- Convey superior work ethic and perform to high standards
- Practice thinking within the framework of enhancing non-technical skills
- Keep an open mind

Attendance and make-up policy: Attendance is the student's responsibility. It is in your best interest to participate during every class period. If you miss class, it is your responsibility to talk with other students to discuss what you missed in class.

- All deadlines outlined in the syllabus are firm and may only be changed at the discretion of the instructor
- Two or more unexcused absences may result in a U grade.
- Late assignments are not accepted
- Your instructor will consider cases of emergency, serious illness, bereavement, or activities that fall under the Twelve-Day Rule for make-up work. You must provide official documentation for all cases.

Requirements for attendance, make-up exams, assignments and other work are consistent with UF policies found here: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>

Assessments

Assessment type	Points
2 minute video reactions (11 at 20 pts each)	220
In class presentation on new soft skills	50
Development plan	100
Total	370

Grading

This course uses the S U grading scheme, where S = satisfactory and U = unsatisfactory.

Students receive a S grade by earning $\geq 85\%$ of the total points available for assessments.

For example, students need to earn ≥ 314.5 points to receive a S ($370 \times 0.85 = 314.5$)

Grades and grade points

For more information on current UF policies for assigning grade points see:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx#suoption>

<http://gradcatalog.ufl.edu/content.php?catoid=10&navoid=2020#grades>



Description of Assessments

2 minute reaction videos (20 points each)

- Evaluate pertinent information related to non-technical workplace competencies (i.e. soft skills)
- Synthesize multiple pieces of information to form cogent discussions
- Reflect on how to apply new knowledge for professional development
- Practice being succinct yet informative

Description – Upload a 2-minute video to Canvas that captures your reaction to assigned readings and/or videos.

Structural Format (4 points)

- Video duration no more than 2 minutes
- Reaction is a coherent presentation with clear logical flow
- Reaction avoids a simple listing of concepts, terms, and themes

Clarity of Thought and Expression (6 points)

- Ideas are well-thought out, integrated, and expressed well
- Your reaction has a clear and meaningful purpose (e.g. inform, persuade or raise interesting questions) that moves in-class discussion forward
- Professionalism displayed at all times

Delineation of Core Message (10 points)

- Does the reaction video provide thoughtful reflection (e.g. personal feelings, application of new knowledge)?
- Are assigned materials central to or essential messages fully integrated into reaction video?
- Does the reaction video reflect an understanding of assigned materials and provide explanation of key points?

In class presentation of soft skills (50 points)

- Develop short (8-10 minute) in-class presentation that includes:
 - 5 or more non-technical skills, not covered in class, that would be useful for future career
 - Explain reasons for selections and how you can go about obtaining those skills

Development plan (100 points)

- Investigate Individual Development Plan (see ENH website for departmental forms)
- Construct plan to enhance non-technical workplace competencies
- Augment Professional Development component of Individual Development Plan with constructed plan
- Review and discuss Individual Development Plan with major advisor
- Submit plan to instructor for review

Course Schedule (subject to change at instructor's discretion)

Module 1: Assessing soft-skills and self-awareness

August 31st Course introduction, pre-content non-technical skills inventory, practice using class technology, in-class discussion on technical vs. non-technical workplace competencies

Refer to course website to access assigned readings and videos for class on September 14th. Upload video reactions by September 13th at 11:59pm.

September 7th Holiday—no class

September 14th In class discussion on graduate student training vs. professional soft skills readiness gap

Refer to course website to access assigned readings and videos for class on September 21st. Upload video reactions by September 20th at 11:59pm.

Module 2: Exploring non-technical workplace competencies

September 21st In class discussion on Listening Empathically and Communicating Across Generations in the Workplace

Refer to course website to access assigned readings and videos for class on September 28th. Upload video reactions by September 27th at 11:59pm.

September 28th In class discussion on Identifying and Analyzing Problems and Being Decisive: Taking Appropriate Actions

Refer to course website to access assigned readings and videos for class on October 5th. Upload video reactions by October 4th at 11:59pm.

October 5th In class discussion on Working Well Under Pressure and Failure As Growth

Refer to course website to access assigned readings and videos for class on October 12th. Upload video reactions by October 11th at 11:59pm.

October 12th In class discussion on Setting Realistic Goals and Negotiation

Refer to course website to access assigned readings and videos for class on October 19th. Upload video reactions by October 18th at 11:59pm.

October 19th In class discussion on Conflict Resolution and Implicit Bias

Refer to course website to access assigned readings and videos for class on October 26th. Upload video reactions by October 25th at 11:59pm.

October 26th In class discussion on Communicating Across Cultures and Dealing with ambiguity

Refer to course website to access assigned readings and videos for class on November 2nd. Upload video reactions by November 1st at 11:59pm.

November 2nd In class discussion on Giving & Receiving Feedback and Emotional Intelligence

Refer to course website to access assigned readings and videos for class on November 9th. Upload video reactions by November 8th at 11:59pm.

November 9th In class discussion on What to Look for in a Workplace Mentor and Professional Networking

Refer to course website to access assigned readings and videos for class on November 16th. Upload video reactions by November 15th at 11:59pm.

November 16th In class discussion on Navigating Change and Thinking Strategically

Refer to course website to access assigned readings and videos for class on November 23rd. Upload video reactions by November 22nd at 11:59pm.

November 23rd In class discussion on Motivating Others and Having Difficult Conversations

Upload in-class presentation for class on November 30th by November 29th at 11:59pm

Module 3: Putting new knowledge into practice

November 30th Post-content skills inventory, short in-class presentations on new non-technical skills, submit draft development plan

December 7th Discuss skills development plan, write letter to future self

University policies

Electronic Device Policy: Using electronic communication devices and laptop or tablet computers during class is disruptive. Therefore, we prohibit the use of cellular telephones, messaging devices, and other electronic devices during class. In class, students are required to put phones and messaging devices on silent mode and turn off other devices. Please store all electronic devices, including computers, during class.

Academic Honesty: As a student at the University of Florida, you have committed yourself to uphold the Honor Code, which includes the following pledge: "We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honesty and integrity." You are expected to exhibit behavior consistent with this commitment to the UF academic community, and on all work submitted for credit 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."

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). Furthermore, as part of your obligation to uphold the Honor Code, you should report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. 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: <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code>.

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 as appropriate.

University of Florida Counseling Services: Students experiencing crisis or personal problems that interfere with their general well-being are encouraged to utilize the University's counseling resources. The Counseling Center and Student Mental Health provide confidential counseling services at no cost for currently enrolled students. Resources are available on campus for students having personal problems or lacking clear career and academic goals, which interfere with their academic performance.

- *U Matter, We Care:* If you or someone you know is in distress, please contact umatter@ufl.edu, 352-392-1575, or visit umatter.ufl.edu to refer or report a concern and a team member will reach out to the student in distress
- *Counseling & Wellness Center:* Visit counseling.ufl.edu/ or call 352-392-1575 for information on crisis services as well as non-crisis services.
- *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.
- *Career Connections Center,* Career assistance and counseling services. Reitz Union Suite 1300, 392-1601, www.crc.ufl.edu/

Services for Students with Disabilities: The Disability Resource Center coordinates the needed accommodations of 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. Students requesting classroom accommodation must first register with the Dean of Students Office. The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to the Instructor when requesting accommodation. 0001 Reid Hall, 352-392-8565, www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/

Online Course Evaluation 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/>