

GEO 3427 - Plants, Health, & Spirituality

Department of Geography - Fall 2023

Instructor: Tierney Shimansky

E-Mail: tshimansky@ufl.edu

By appointment

Office Hours: Monday: 1:45 PM- 2:30 PM

Tuesday: 2:30 PM-4:30 PM

Class Format: Online (Asynchronous)

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Plants have been used for a variety of purposes throughout the history of human existence. Whether it be healing the sick, providing sustenance, or achieving a higher state of consciousness, plants play an important role in how we communicate with the real and spiritual worlds. This course will focus on plants which have been stigmatized by the global west. More specifically, these plants exhibit mind altering properties and are often described as “drugs”. We will investigate the history of these sacred plants, tracing their lineage from their shamanistic roots to their complex place in the western world.

Additionally, we will investigate other topics that have far reaching political and environmental impacts. We will explore the role that plants, and food have on minority communities, and how food scarcity and inequality continue to impact the developed world.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

After successful completion of this course students should be able to:

- Understand origin and cultural significance of sacred plants
- Recognize role of traditional healing

- Develop opinions on complex political and environmental issues
- Describe importance of emerging organic food markets and food accessibility

TEXTBOOKS

Recommended textbooks:

- Schultes, R. (2001). *Plants of the Gods*. Inner Tradition. ISBN: 0892819790

- Winne, M. (2008). *Closing the Food Gap: Resetting the Table in the Land of Plenty*. Beacon Press. ISBN: 0807047317

EVALUATION GRADE DISTRIBUTION

Syllabus Quiz (5 points – 5%)

- A syllabus quiz will be administered via canvas. A grade of 100% is needed to unlock the course

Discussion Posts (5 points each – 15%)

- Discussion posts will be administered throughout the course via canvas. These will pertain to various topics covered each week—4 points for writing your own post (Due Sundays @ 11:59 PM) and 1 point for replying to at least one classmate (Due Sundays @ 11:59 PM).

Assignments (10 points each – 30%)

- Homework assignments will be given to help students further explore lecture materials. One week to complete each assignment (Due Fridays @ 11:59 PM). Homework assignments can also be in the form of Quizzes or take home assignments throughout the semester.

Mid-term exam (100 points – 20%)

- A open-book take home exam, covering all course contents by the day of the test, will be administered via canvas.

Final project (100 points – 30%)

- You will create two new modules on material we did not cover in this course or redo existing two modules. This includes creating lecture(s) slides, providing supplemental readings or videos, creating the discussion topic for the week, and creating the assignment for the week. You will need to complete a lesson plan for TWO modules, in total you should have two weeks' worth of materials including lectures, 2 discussion topics, and 2 assignments minimum. This option will allow students to add in material they feel like was lacking from the course and could provide additional information that is added into future courses.

GRADING SCALE & GPA EQUIVALENT

Letter	Range	GPA
A	100% to 94%	4.00
A-	< 94% to 90%	3.67
B+	< 90% to 87%	3.33
B	< 87% to 84%	3.00
B-	< 84% to 80%	2.67
C+	< 80% to 77%	2.33
C	< 77% to 74%	2.00
C-	< 74% to 70%	1.67
D+	< 70% to 67%	1.33

D	< 67% to 64%	1.00
D-	< 64% to 61%	0.67
E	< 61% to 0%	0.00

Note: A grade of C- is not a qualifying grade for major, minor, Gen Ed, or College Basic distribution credit. For further information see [UF's Grading Policy](#).

FINAL PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The final project is an opportunity for you to learn more about a topic you are interested in!

You will create two new modules on material we did not cover in this course or redo existing two modules. This includes creating lecture(s) slides, providing supplemental readings or videos, creating the discussion topic for the week, and creating the assignment for the week. You will need to complete a lesson plan for TWO modules, in total you should have two weeks' worth of materials including lectures, 2 discussion topics, and 2 assignments minimum. This option will allow students to add in material they feel like was lacking from the course and could provide additional information that is added into future courses.

The final paper/project is due on December 6th by 11:59 PM. Late submissions for the final project will be accepted but will receive a 25%-point reduction and can be submitted no later than December 8th @ 11:59 PM.

Projects received after this point will receive a zero. No exceptions will be given.

COURSE POLICIES

- *Midterm Make-up Policy:* A midterm exam missed due to excused reasons can be made up. The instructor will develop a make-up plan and schedule upon receipt of appropriate evidence.
- *Late submissions:* Late submissions for the midterm exam will not be accepted. Late submissions of assignments and discussion posts can be accepted, but 10% of the points will be deducted per day after the due date. Once an assignment closes it will not be reopened for submission without a valid reason for being submitted late. The final project is due on December 6th by 11:59 PM. Late submissions for the final project will be accepted but will

receive a 25%-point reduction and can be submitted no later than December 8th @ 11:59 PM. **Projects received after this point will receive a zero. No exceptions will be given.**

- *Grade disputes:* Should a student wish to dispute any grade received in this class (other than simple addition errors), the dispute must be in writing and be submitted to the instructor within a week of receiving the grade. The dispute should set out very clearly, the grade that the student believes the assignment should have received as well as why they believe they should have received such a grade.
- *Contacting the instructor:* Students needing to contact the course instructor should do so using Canvas' messaging platform.
- *Required Technology:* Students need to have access to a personal computer or laptop with a working webcam and microphone to access all features of the course Canvas site, and to participate in online office hours and optional live Q&A sessions. Broadband internet access is required.

OTHER INFORMATION

- *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. 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](#)([Links to an external site.](#)) specifies 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.
- *Accommodations for students with disabilities:* 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. Contact the [Disability Resources Center](#)([Links to an external site.](#)) for information about available resources for students with disabilities.

- *Counseling and mental health resources:* Students facing difficulties completing the course or who need counseling or urgent help should contact the on-campus [Counseling and Wellness Center](#)([Links to an external site.](#)) (352-392-1575)
- *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 received 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/>.
- *Canvas help:* If you encounter any unexpected behavior (error messages, inability to login, etc.,) take a screen shot of the problem. This is important so that your instructor knows your problem is legitimate, and to assist the UF Computing Help Desk in helping you fix the problem. If you encounter problems that prevent you from taking the exam, immediately call the UF Computing Help Desk at 352 - 392 - 4357.

Syllabus Statement regarding presentation of controversial material in class and classroom decorum:

- People learn best when they are encouraged to ask questions and express their diverse opinions on course content, which may include images, texts, data, and theories from across the disciplines. This is especially true in courses that deal with provocative or contemporary issues. UF offers many such courses, in which students encounter concepts of race, color, sex, and/or national origin. We teach these important issues because understanding them is essential for anyone who seeks to make economic, cultural, and societal

contributions to today's complex world. With this in mind, we do not limit access to, or classroom discussion of, facts, ideas, and opinions—including those that some may find uncomfortable, unwelcome, disagreeable, or even offensive. In response to challenging material, students and instructors are encouraged to ask honest questions and thoughtfully engage one another's ideas. But hostility, disruptive and disrespectful behavior, and provocation for provocation's sake have no place in a classroom; reasonable people disagree reasonably. These guidelines can help instructors and students as they work together to fulfill the mission of the University of Florida, which includes the exploration of intellectual boundaries, the creation of new knowledge and the pursuit of new ideas.

COVID19 STATEMENT

- Life has been unpredictable lately. As such, it is understandable that situations may arise during the semester that may create hardship. If you become impacted by the ongoing pandemic, please contact the course instructor to provide documentation and discuss a fair course of action.

CAMPUS HELPING RESOURCES

- U Matter, We Care. (352) 292-2273. UF's umbrella program for UF's caring culture. Provides students in distress with support and coordination of the wide variety of appropriate resources. <http://umatter.ufl.edu>
- University Counseling Center & Wellness Center, 3190 Radio Rd., (352) 392-1575. Personal and career counseling, as well as therapy for anxiety, stress and mental health issues. <http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc/>
- Dean of Students Office, 202 Peabody Hall, (352) 392-1261. Among other services, the DSO assists students who are experiencing situations that compromises their ability to attend classes. This includes family emergencies and medical issues (including mental health crises). <https://www.dso.ufl.edu/care>
- Teaching Center, Broward Hall, (352) 392-2010 or (352) 392-6420. General study skills and tutoring. <http://teachingcenter.ufl.edu/>
- Writing Studio, 2215 Turlington Hall, (352) 846-1138. Help brainstorming, formatting, and writing papers. <http://writing.ufl.edu/writing-center/>.
- Career Connections Center, First Floor JWRU, (352) 392-1601, <https://career.ufl.edu/>.
- Field and Fork Pantry. Food and toiletries for students experiencing food insecurity. <https://pantry.fieldandfork.ufl.edu/>.
- UF Help Desk. (352) 392-4357. Technical support for computer issues and UF web services. <http://helpdesk.ufl.edu/>

- University Police Department, (352) 392-1111 (or 9-1-1 for emergencies). <http://www.police.ufl.edu/>
- Library Support, <http://cms.uflib.ufl.edu/ask>. Various ways to receive assistance with using the libraries or finding resources.

SUGGESTED COURSE SCHEDULE

Students should note that there may be changes to the class schedule.

<u>Week</u>	<u>Module</u>
1	Course and Syllabus Overview
2	Plants of the Gods: Introduction
3	DMT/Ayahuasca
4	Historical Uses of Cannabis
5	Peyote & Psychedelic Mushrooms
6	Iboga
7	Mindfulness and Midterm Prep
8	Take home Mid-term exam
9	Tentatively Organic Foods and GMOs
10	Tentatively Greenwashing
11	Tentatively Food Accessibility - A Geographic Approach
12	Tentatively Race, Class, and Health Disparity
13	TBD
14	Thanksgiving Break NO MATERIAL
15	Meditation
16	Final Project Due

IMPORTANT TIMES/DUE DATES TO REMEMBER

- Assignments are due Fridays at 11:59 PM
- Discussion Posts and replies due Sundays at 11:59 PM

- Midterm exam: March 5th, by 11:59 PM
- Final Project: December 6th by 11:59 PM
- Final Project Late Submission: December 8th by 11:59 PM (25% Penalty per day late)