

**Syllabus** (subject to revisions/improvement)

**Conservation and Development Practicum**

**LAS 6938 or AFS 6905 (sections 046D & 11GB), Fall 2012**

**Course description:** This course builds skills and competence in applied, professional work in sustainable development through a guided analysis of the summer field practicum projects. Students will gain hands on experience in the analysis of information and the interpretation of results utilizing diverse methodological approaches, linking findings across disciplines and scales. Students will gain collaborative exposure to the analysis of results utilizing the wide host of methodologies employed during their 2012 field practicum projects. This exposure will provide students with a broader understanding of methodologies and the challenges with associated with their use in diverse development contexts. Each student will also be required to provide leadership to one class session of the course in an area he/she possesses experience and knowledge.

**Instructor**

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Dr. Grenville Barnes and Dr. Richard Rheingans are also instructors of the course. Other faculty members will also be invited to contribute to the course.

Office Hours: I have an open door policy when in my office. My official office hours will be from 2 to 5 pm on Tuesday. Please also feel free to call or send me an email to coordinate a meeting at another time.

**Goal and deliverables**

The primary goal of this course is to facilitate the analysis of the summer field practicum projects and results, and prepare a complete first draft of the final report. Students will be required to develop and present two deliverables:

1. Poster to be presented in a poster session at the end of the term.
2. First complete draft of the report of the field practicum. The document *“Indications for the preparation of the Field Practicum final report”* has been sent to MDP students to provide detailed information and what constitutes a field practicum final report.

## Course meeting times and location

Thursdays from 10:40 am to 1:40 pm in Ustler 104

## Required texts/readings

Required readings and other resources will be assigned during the semester to provide information on the analysis of results from methodologies utilized. These readings will also serve to facilitate classroom discussion and activities. Students will be required to consult and use additional literature as references to strengthen the contextual/conceptual frameworks and discussion sections of the field practicum final report. Students will be asked to recommend readings for the session they will lead. All readings and references will be posted on Sakai.

## Class format and policies

Important indications for the class are as follows:

- **Students with Disabilities Act:** The Dean of Students Office coordinates the needed accommodations of students with disabilities. This includes the registration of disabilities, academic accommodations within the classroom, accessing special adaptive computer equipment, providing interpretation services, and mediating faculty-student disability related issues. *Dean of Students Office*, 202 Peabody Hall, 392-7066, [www.dso.ufl.edu](http://www.dso.ufl.edu)
- **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.
- **Campus Helping Resources:** Students experiencing crisis or personal problems that interfere with their general wellbeing are encouraged to utilize the university's counseling resources. Both 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. The Counseling Center is located at 301 Peabody Hall (next to Criser Hall). Student Mental Health is located on the second floor of the Student Health Services in the Infirmary.

1. *University Counseling Center*, 301 Peabody Hall, 392-1575; personal and career counseling: [www.counsel.ufl.edu](http://www.counsel.ufl.edu)

2. *Student Mental Health*, Student Health Care Center, 392-1171, personal counseling: [www.hsc.ufl.edu/shcc/smhs.htm](http://www.hsc.ufl.edu/shcc/smhs.htm)

3. *Sexual Assault Recovery Services (SARS)*, Student Health Care Center, 392-1161, sexual assault counseling; and

4. *Career Resource Center*, Reitz Union, 392-1601, career development assistance and counseling.

- **Academic Honesty:** The University of Florida requires all members of its community to be honest in all endeavors. Cheating, plagiarism, and other acts diminish the process of learning. When students enroll at UF they commit themselves to honesty and integrity. Your instructor fully expects you to adhere to the academic honesty guidelines you signed when you were admitted to UF. As a result of completing the registration form at the University of Florida, every student has signed the following statement: *“I understand the University of Florida expects its students to be honest in all their academic work. I agree to adhere to this commitment to academic honesty and understand that my failure to comply with this commitment may result in disciplinary action up to and including expulsion from the University.”*

Furthermore, on work submitted for credit by UF students, 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 to be assumed all work will be completed independently unless the assignment is defined as a group project, in writing by the professor. This policy will be vigorously upheld at all times in this course.

- **Attendance is required.** Please notify the instructor if you will not be attending class. Students will be excused as necessary, depending on their religious calendars or emergencies. Please let us know if these apply to you. Participation is an important component of your grade which means you must come to class.
- **Turn off your cell phone** while in class. If you must make or receive a call, please do so outside the classroom.
- **Use of computers** in the classroom is not allowed unless such use is part of the day’s activities. On those days where you are working in teams in class, you should be sure to bring at least one laptop per team.
- **All written assignments** must be typed and submitted electronically and on time.

**Disclaimer:** There will be changes in this syllabus depending on the availability of guest speakers, class interest in certain topics, and other unforeseen events.

### **Aspects to develop and stress:**

1. **Student supervisory committee involvement:** Students will be generating the first draft of their final reports of their field practicums in this course. Therefore, it will be important to engage your supervisory committee members in the process throughout the semester. This involvement will be tracked by the course instructor.

2. **Combination of approaches:** The course will stress the strengthening of conceptual aspects, the realization of methodological/analytical exercises and student leadership, facilitation and presentations. It will be necessary to determine particular strengths among the students for providing leadership to specific sessions. Students will also be required to carry out a peer review with appropriate depth of the draft final report of a fellow classmate.
3. **Faculty involvement:** When necessary, a faculty member will be invited to ensure we make full use of the information gathered during the analysis and interpretation of results utilizing specific methodological tools.

### **Assignments and grading**

1. Each student will be required to present sections of his/her field practicum final report as indicated in the course schedule. These presentations will account for **10%** of the student's final grade. Presentations will have to be concise and within the time allotted.
2. Each student will be required to provide leadership to one session of class, preferably relating to the analysis of information derived from a methodology utilized by him/her during their field practicum. This task will account for **10%** of the student's final grade.
3. Each student will be required to contribute in class by participating during class discussions and providing constructive feedback. Class participation will contribute **10%** to the final grade.
4. Each student will be required to carry out a peer review of a fellow student's draft final report. This peer review will contribute **20%** of the student's final grade. The course instructor will review both the draft final reports and the student peer reviews to assess the degree to which student observations were taken into account during the preparation of the draft final reports.
5. Each student will be required to prepare a poster summarizing the results of their field practicums in a concise way. A poster session will be organized to which students and faculty across campus will be invited. The preparation and presentation of the poster will account for **20%** of the student's final grade.
6. Finally, each student will be required to complete a high quality draft of the final report of their field practicum following the indications provided. The final report is the major deliverable of the course and will account for **30%** of the final grade.

### **Schedule of Class Topics**

August 23: **Introduction to course (presentation of the syllabus)**

August 30: **Short presentations of the field practicum experiences.** The instructor will provide a guide to help students prepare these presentations. A number of questions will have to be addressed by each student, such as: How well did the FP go to plan? What modifications did you have to make in your original plan? How well were you able to sustain communication with

your committee and with your host organization(s)? What were the most important cultural challenges you had to face? What were the major difficulties encountered? What did you particularly like about the experience?

A short discussion will be carried out on the derivation and strengthening of the contextual/conceptual framework of the FP. This will be the assignment for week 3.

**September 6: Contextual/conceptual frameworks of the FP**

During this class, students will present diagrammatic representations of the contextual/conceptual frameworks of their FP. In some cases, these frameworks may require further modification later in the semester. Students will be required to indicate the primary sources of information utilized to develop their framework.

**September 13: Methodologies utilized in the FPs**

Students will be required to give a thorough presentation of the methodologies they utilized during the realization of their field practicums. What did they learn about the application of these methodologies? What worked well and what did not work? Why? Describe how data and information was organized and recorded. What would you have done differently if you had known then what you know now? Students will be asked to indicate the type of support needed to process the information compiled. Although there may be some overlap with week 2, the focus in this session will be specifically on methodologies.

**September 20 – October 11 (up to four weeks): Analysis of quantitative and qualitative information**

We will devote time to discussing the analysis of information from diverse methodological approaches utilized in the FPs of the group. As explained before, the idea is to expose all course participants to the analysis of information from the most widely utilized methodologies in the FPs. The following list summarizes the methodologies included in the 2012 FP proposals.

Methodology	# of students applying
Focus groups	8
Surveys (including snowball sampling, household, livelihood surveys, FOAM)	6
Interviews (including semi-structured interviews and informal conversations)	4
Participatory methodologies (participatory rural appraisal, participatory action research, participatory valuation/ranking of assets)	3
Appreciative enquiry and participatory creation of situation/goal trees	2
Stakeholder and situation analysis	2

Participant observations	2
Visioning and pathways, Scenario planning and building	2
Participatory mapping and transect walking	2
Needs assessment	2
SWOT analysis	2
Historical timeline/community history	1
Collaborative planning	1
Market mapping	1
Social networking analysis	1

We will devote each class to one or more of these different methodological approaches. The session on each methodology will include a presentation on analyses of the information they generate, drawing on student knowledge and experiences and the literature and expertise at UF. If good examples can be found on the web, these may be used as well. Common difficulties in the analysis of information from these approaches will be highlighted, as well as pitfalls and common mistakes. As stated before, each student will take responsibility to introduce a session devoted to a particular methodology.

**October 18: Useful approaches for presenting results of FP results**

This week (perhaps two weeks) will be devoted to utilizing didactic tools to present FP results. Students will be required to present two to three of their most important results using tables, graphs, frequency of response diagrams, maps, and social network diagrams, among others to discuss the effectiveness of the “figures” and steps that might be taken to improve them (make them easier for the reader to interpret). Each student will also be required to bring in a particularly good figure or graph and explain why it is effective.

**October 25 – November 01: Utilization and discussion of results**

During these two weeks, students will make thorough presentations related to the utilization and discussion of the results of their FP. This section will bring together all the results generated from the FP in an integrated fashion. The nature of the presentations will depend on the final product envisioned prior to carrying out the FP: proposal including a logframe, needs assessment, value chain analysis, monitoring and evaluation system, Dashboard, program evaluation, community maps, etc. Each student will integrate the figures, diagrams and other didactic tools developed in the previous weeks to present results. Students will also be required to draw on the literature and other sources of information to strengthen the case made in their discussions.

### November 08: **Cross-scale and cross-discipline considerations**

Students will be required to devote a section of their final report to visualizing how the work conducted fits into the bigger picture. It will be necessary to make references to relationships between the findings of the field practicum and development processes occurring at varying scales with the involvement of different stakeholders. It will also be necessary to indicate how the work cuts across and/or integrates different disciplines and sectors. Important considerations for policy makers should also be indicated when possible. This important section will push each student to view their efforts from a broader, more holistic perspective. It will be important that students begin visualizing these linkages and building their case early in the semester.

### November 15: **Presentation of the primary conclusions and recommendations**

This session will be devoted to presenting a synthesis of the most important conclusions of the FP. In addition, students will be required to point out aspects that they would have done differently, had they known during the planning stage of their FP what they know upon completing their work. Finally, students should make recommendations for future efforts devoted to similar topics and processes, or for work that will be carried out in the same region and with the same stakeholders.

Finally, each student will be asked to address the question, what could have been done better to prepare you for your field practicum? The answers to this question will provide inputs to improve the spring semester Sustainable Development Practice course, designed to prepare students for their FP.

During the week following this class, students will have two assignments. The first assignment will involve finalizing the first complete draft of the final report of the FP for peer review by a fellow MDP student. Students should have all the necessary information to assemble the final report in its entirety well before this week. This first draft will be given to a fellow student for a peer review that will have to occur within one week.

The second assignment will involve preparing an attractive poster that presents in a very concise way a clear summary of your field practicum; title, introduction, conceptual framework, objectives, participants, methods, results, conclusions and references. Support provided should also be acknowledged.

### November 22: **Thanksgiving (no classes)**

### November 29: **Review of Draft Posters**

This session will serve to review the draft posters that will be prepared by each student. Students will be expected to take into account observations and suggestions made, to improve the design and content of their posters. Students will be required to hand in the draft final report and the first draft with track changes made by the student peer of the report.

During final week (classes end on Wednesday December 05): **Poster session presentation**

During the final week a date, time and venue will be scheduled for the poster session to the UF community. The session will be promoted, especially in academic units providing support to the MDP program, among TCD students, other potentially interested students, MDP core and affiliate faculty and staff of Center for Latin American Studies and African Studies. This will be an ideal opportunity for MDP students to share their work and experiences with a wider audience in UF.

**Final comment:** It may be necessary to devote time to clarify concepts (like adaptive capacity and resilience) that are utilized frequently in the context of sustainable development work and the MDP. If so, time will be allotted during the course to explore these concepts in more depth.