

# AFS6905/LAS6938 Gender in Biodiversity Conservation

## Spring 2024

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- Schedule: Wednesdays 8:30-11:30 (periods 2-4)
- Location: Little Hall 0125

### Instructor's Information

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#### Leandra Merz, PhD

- [Leandra6@ufl.edu](mailto:Leandra6@ufl.edu) (Best way to reach me)
- Office Hours: Thursdays 9-12
- Physical Office Location: Grinter 490
- 352-392-2175 (voicemail is not monitored)

I'm an interdisciplinary conservation scientist. I study coupled human and wildlife systems, primarily in Southern Africa. I am particularly interested in studying how people share landscapes with wildlife and how we can promote human-wildlife coexistence. Gender seems to be an important component of this and I hope to incorporate it more into my own research. I am committed to facilitating an accessible and inclusive learning experience and value any feedback on how I can improve. You can call me by my first name- Leandra- or Ms. Merz/Dr. Merz are also acceptable.

### What is this course about?

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This course examines the gender differences in how people relate to, value, use, manage, protect, and conserve biodiversity. The course will also explore ways to incorporate gender equity in conservation research and practice. There will be a strong geographic focus on sub-Saharan Africa and Latin America.

### What background knowledge do I need before taking this course?

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You are not expected to have any specific background knowledge for this course, only an interest in the topic and a willingness to learn.

### What will I learn in this course?

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By the end of this course students will be able to:

1. Appreciate the importance of incorporating a gender lens for successful biodiversity conservation;
2. Develop a comprehensive understanding of the interactions between gender dynamics and biodiversity conservation;
3. Identify, critically analyze and create gender sensitive conservation research and practice projects;
4. Develop a foundational understanding of natural science and gender-related theories and frameworks;
5. Compare gendered dimensions of biodiversity conservation across geographical regions (especially between Africa and Latin America); and
6. Respectfully collaborate with colleagues from diverse backgrounds.

### **What will I do in this course?**

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Students will engage in a variety of participatory activities to apply concepts from class to real-world conservation scenarios. Individual activities outside of class include designing infographics, participating in online discussions, contributing to hyper-documents, and recording video/audio reflections. Group activities in class will include role-playing, jigsaw discussions, general discussions, and case-studies. Students will also contribute to a final research project (individual or group).

### **How can I prepare for the class sessions to be successful?**

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You should prepare for class by completing the required readings and videos for that week's module in advance. After completing the required readings and videos, you will have one assignment to complete prior to class. Please come to class on time and prepared to actively participate in discussions and activities. You are encouraged to bring electronic devices (phones, laptops, tablets) for use in class activities, but it is not required.

### **What required texts, materials, and technologies will I need?**

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All required materials will be posted directly on Canvas or made available through UF Ares course reserves. Please familiarize yourself with the Canvas platform, Google tools (using your UF google account), and Ares course reserves to ensure you can fully engage with the course (see additional resources).

### **How will my grade be determined?**

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- Attendance- 3%
- Weekly module preparation assignments (14)- 21%

- Weekly in-class activities- (14) 21%
- Collaboration reflections- (2) 5%
- Final Project-50%
  - Proposal- 5%
  - First draft- 0%
  - Final Draft- 40%
  - Presentation 5%

Letter grades are assigned as follows and consistent with UF grading policies<sup>1</sup>: A = 93-100; A- = 90-92; B+ = 87-89; B = 83-86; B- = 80-82; C+ = 77-79; C = 73-36; C- = 70-72; D+ = 67-69; D = 63-66; D- = 60-62; E = <60

## Assignment Descriptions:

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**Attendance:** Students are expected to attend each class on-time and remain until the class is dismissed to receive full credit for attendance each week. See policy on excused absences below.

**Weekly module preparation assignments:** Each week, students will have one assignment to complete prior to class. These may include posting in online discussion boards, submitting videos, making an infographic, completing a quiz, contributing to group hyperdocs, or other similar assignments. There will be 15 assignments throughout the semester, but only 14 are required.

**Weekly in-class activities:** Each week students will work in groups to complete an activity that involves applying concepts from the required materials to specific case studies. Students are expected to participate fully and respectfully to critically assess the challenge and propose solutions in the given time-frame. There will be 15 activities throughout the semester, but only 14 are required.

**Collaboration Reflections:** Students are expected to learn and apply good collaboration skills such as assigning roles, providing feedback, and engaging in self-assessment. Students will submit a mid-term and final assessment on their collaborations.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/grades-grading-policies/>

**Final Project:** Students will work on a final project of their choosing that demonstrates mastery of course goals 2 and 3 and possibly 1, 4, and/or 5. These projects can be completed in groups or individually. Examples topics will be provided in class, but creativity is welcome. The projects will be self-graded with the instructor reserving the right to alter grades if necessary. This is designed to follow principles of “ungrading” which allows students greater freedom in choosing their assessment, setting learning goals, and self-assessing progress. Students will submit a short proposal describing the planned project and a rubric for assessing mastery of course goals. Proposals will be reviewed to ensure they are adequately aligned with course goals. Students will submit a draft for feedback prior to the final submission and will present their findings to the class at the end of the semester.

## **What are the course policies?**

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### **Communications**

The best way to communicate with me is through Canvas messages or UF email. I generally respond within 1-2 workdays and if you do not receive a response within this time period please send me a reminder. Similarly, I expect students to regularly check UF email, and course announcements/notifications to stay up to date on important information. All communications should be respectful and professional- this includes instructors, guests, and classmates.

### **Absences and Make-up Work**

Students are expected to attend regularly, and to actively participate in class discussions and activities. Students should let the instructors know if they are unable to attend a class and provide documentation for excused absences. Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university policies.<sup>2</sup> Late work that falls outside of that described in the University policy will be allowed only at the discretion of the instructor.

### **Academic Accommodations**

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<sup>2</sup> <https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/attendance-policies/>

If you need an accommodation for this class, please contact the [Disability Resource Center](#)<sup>3</sup> as soon as possible. The DRC coordinates accommodations for students with disabilities. They can be reached at 352-392-8565 or [DRC@ufsa.ufl.edu](mailto:DRC@ufsa.ufl.edu).

Also, please contact me privately as soon as possible so we can discuss your accommodations. Please note that you will not be required to disclose your disability, only your accommodations. The sooner you let me know your needs, the sooner I can assist you in achieving your learning goals in this course.

## Academic Integrity

Academic honesty is expected of all students at the University of Florida in accordance with the [honor code](#)<sup>4</sup>. Students should submit original work of their own creation for all assignments. Any use of materials or support should be properly attributed to avoid plagiarism and comply with the honor code. **You are welcome to use AI technologies to complement your learning goals, but the details of AI use should be documented on any assignments submitted.** For example: I used Bing image creator to make this image; or I used ChatGPT to generate ideas for my proposal. Any violations of the honor code will be reported to the Dean Of Students Office and will result in a 0 on the assignment.

## Course Evaluations

Students are expected and strongly encouraged to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course. In-class evaluation surveys will be conducted by the instructor at the mid-point and end of the semester. [Official UF evaluations](#)<sup>5</sup> are conducted online at during the last few weeks of the semester. The instructor also will conduct a collective verbal evaluation during the last week of class.

## What university resources can help me during this course?

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### Physical and Mental Health Support

Students sometimes experience stress from academic expectations and/or personal and interpersonal issues that may interfere with their academic performance. If you find yourself facing issues that have the potential to or are already negatively affecting your coursework, you

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<sup>3</sup> <https://disability.ufl.edu/>

<sup>4</sup> <https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/2020/12/Orange-Book-Web-Version-2020.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> <https://evaluations.ufl.edu>

are encouraged to talk with an instructor and/or seek help through University resources available to you. We have helped many students through stressful situations impacting their academic performance. You are not alone so do not be afraid to ask for assistance!

- [The Counseling and Wellness Center](http://www.counseling.ufl.edu)<sup>6</sup> (352-392-1575) offers a variety of support services such as psychological assessment and intervention and assistance for math and test anxiety. Visit their web site for more information. Online and in person assistance is available.
- [You Matter We Care](http://www.umatter.ufl.edu/)<sup>7</sup> website. If you are feeling overwhelmed or stressed, you can reach out for help through the You Matter We Care website, which is staffed by Dean of Students and Counseling Center personnel.
- The [Student Health Care Center](https://shcc.ufl.edu/)<sup>8</sup> at Shands is a satellite clinic of the main Student Health Care Center located on Fletcher Drive on campus. Student Health at Shands offers a variety of clinical services. The clinic is located on the second floor of the Dental Tower in the Health Science Center. For more information, contact the clinic at 392-0627.
- Crisis intervention is always available 24/7 from the [Alachua County Crisis Center](http://www.alachuacounty.us/DEPTS/CSS/CRISISCENTER/Pages/CrisisCenter.aspx)<sup>9</sup> at (352) 264-6789.
- [Hitchcock Field and Fork Pantry](https://pantry.fieldandfork.ufl.edu/)<sup>10</sup> provides free food to any student, faculty, or staff member experiencing food insecurity. No questions asked. The only requirement is that guests provide their UF ID number. We're on a mission to build a more food-secure community. Come visits us!

## Academic Support

- E-learning technical support: Contact the [UF Computing Help Desk](https://helpdesk.ufl.edu/)<sup>11</sup> at 352-392-4357 or via e-mail at [helpdesk@ufl.edu](mailto:helpdesk@ufl.edu).
- How to documents for [Canvas](https://cloud.it.ufl.edu/faqs/using-your-uf-google-account/)<sup>12</sup> and [UF google accounts](https://career.ufl.edu/)<sup>13</sup>
- [Career Connections Center](https://career.ufl.edu/)<sup>14</sup> Reitz Union Suite 1300, 352-392-1601. Career assistance and counseling services.
- Library Support: Various ways to receive assistance with respect to using the libraries or finding resources including an online chat option at the [UF library website](https://uflib.ufl.edu)<sup>15</sup>.
- [Writing Studio](https://writing.ufl.edu/writing-studio/)<sup>16</sup>: 2215 Turlington Hall, 352-846-1138. Help brainstorming, formatting, and writing papers.

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<sup>6</sup> <http://www.counseling.ufl.edu>

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.umatter.ufl.edu/>

<sup>8</sup> <https://shcc.ufl.edu/>

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.alachuacounty.us/DEPTS/CSS/CRISISCENTER/Pages/CrisisCenter.aspx>

<sup>10</sup> <https://pantry.fieldandfork.ufl.edu/>

<sup>11</sup> <https://helpdesk.ufl.edu/>

<sup>12</sup> <https://elearning.ufl.edu/student-help/keep-learning/quickstart-guide-for-students/>

<sup>13</sup> <https://cloud.it.ufl.edu/faqs/using-your-uf-google-account/>

<sup>14</sup> <https://career.ufl.edu/>

<sup>15</sup> <https://uflib.ufl.edu>

<sup>16</sup> <https://writing.ufl.edu/writing-studio/>

## What is the expected course schedule?

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### Week 1: January 10<sup>th</sup>

- Class topic/unit name: Introduction
- Pre-class work for students:
  - Read/watch required materials
  - Complete online survey/reflection
- Planned in-class activities:
  - Ice-breakers
  - Group discussions
- Assignments due:
  - Weekly module preparation assignment

### Week 2: January 17<sup>th</sup>

- Class topic/unit name: Gender Theory
- Pre-class work for students:
  - Read/watch required materials
  - Complete weekly module preparation assignments
- Planned in-class activities:
  - Jigsaw discussion
  - Guest speaker
  - Group activity
- Assignments due:
  - Weekly module preparation assignment

### Week 3: January 24<sup>th</sup>

- Class topic/unit name: Human-Environment Interactions
- Pre-class work for students:
  - Read/watch required materials
  - Complete weekly module preparation assignment
- Planned in-class activities:
  - Case study
  - Discussion
- Assignments due:
  - Weekly module preparation assignment

### Week 4: January 31<sup>st</sup>

- Class topic/unit name: Social Ecological Systems

- Pre-class work for students:
  - Read/watch required materials
  - Complete weekly module preparation assignment
- Planned in-class activities:
  - Design SES framework
  - Guest speaker
- Assignments due:
  - Weekly module preparation assignment
  - Final Project Proposal

#### **Week 5: February 7<sup>th</sup>**

- Class topic/unit name: Biodiversity Use
- Pre-class work for students:
  - Read/watch required materials
  - Complete weekly module preparation assignment
- Planned in-class activities:
  - Case study
  - Discussions
- Assignments due:
  - Weekly module preparation assignment

#### **Week 6: February 14<sup>th</sup>**

- Class topic/unit name: Biodiversity impacts
- Pre-class work for students:
  - Read/watch required materials
  - Complete weekly module preparation assignment
- Planned in-class activities:
  - Case study
  - Jigsaw discussions
- Assignments due:
  - Weekly module preparation assignment

#### **Week 7: February 21<sup>st</sup>**

- Class topic/unit name: Perceptions and Values
- Pre-class work for students:
  - Read/watch required materials
  - Complete weekly module preparation assignment
- Planned in-class activities:



- Case study
- Comparison activity
- Assignments due:
  - Weekly module preparation assignment

### **Week 8: February 28<sup>th</sup>**

- Class topic/unit name: Conservation Behavior
- Pre-class work for students:
  - Read/watch required materials
  - Complete weekly module preparation assignment
- Planned in-class activities:
  - Case study
  - Discussions
- Assignments due:
  - Weekly module preparation assignment

### **Week 9: March 6<sup>th</sup>**

- Class topic/unit name: Protection
- Pre-class work for students:
  - Read/watch required materials
  - Complete weekly module preparation assignment
- Planned in-class activities:
  - Guest Speaker?
  - Case study comparisons
- Assignments due:
  - Weekly module preparation assignment
  - Mid-term evaluation

### **Week 10: March 20<sup>th</sup>**

- Class topic/unit name: Conservation Careers
- Pre-class work for students:
  - Read/watch required materials
  - Complete weekly module preparation assignment
- Planned in-class activities:
  - Guest speaker
  - Program Recommendation activity
- Assignments due:
  - Weekly module preparation assignment

- First Draft of final project

### **Week 11: March 27<sup>th</sup>**

- Class topic/unit name: Methods for gender integration-research
- Pre-class work for students:
  - Read/watch required materials
  - Complete weekly module preparation assignment
- Planned in-class activities:
  - Ranking
  - Jigsaw discussions
- Assignments due:
  - Weekly module preparation assignment

### **Week 12: April 3<sup>rd</sup>**

- Class topic/unit name: Methods for gender integration-practice
- Pre-class work for students:
  - Read/watch required materials
  - Complete weekly module preparation assignment
- Planned in-class activities:
  - Conservation proposal activity
  - Discussion
- Assignments due:
  - Weekly module preparation assignment

### **Week 13: April 10<sup>th</sup>**

- Class topic/unit name: Research evaluation
- Pre-class work for students:
  - Read/watch required materials
  - Complete weekly module preparation assignment
- Planned in-class activities:
  - Case studies comparisons
  - Discussion
- Assignments due:
  - Weekly module preparation assignment

### **Week 6: April 17<sup>th</sup>**

- Class topic/unit name: Biodiversity impacts
- Pre-class work for students:

- Read/watch required materials
  - Complete weekly module preparation assignment
- Planned in-class activities:
  - Group Activity
  - Presentations
- Assignments due:
  - Weekly module preparation assignment
  - Final project presentation

**Week 15: April 24<sup>th</sup>**

- Class topic/unit name: Wrap-up
- Pre-class work for students:
  - Read/watch required materials
- Planned in-class activities:
  - Presentations
  - Group activity- pitch
- Assignments due:
  - Weekly module preparation assignment
  - Final project
  - Evaluations/Reflections

**This syllabus is subject to change and students should refer to the most recent updates in Canvas.**

This syllabus was prepared using a student-centered template from the University of Northern Illinois Center for Innovative Teaching and Learning.

