

Art + Technology Seminar | The Vegetal | ART6933 | Fall 2025

Instructor: Katerie Gladdys

Email: kgladdys@ufl.edu

Class Meeting Time and Location: T 11:45-2:45 (FAC 306)

Office Hours: Tuesday - 3:00-4:00 and by appt.

Office Location: FAC301 or online <https://ufl.zoom.us/j/9597018114>

*** Class announcements, homework assignments, critique dates, and special events are communicated verbally in class, through email, and on our class website in the announcement section. Supplementary resources and extra credit opportunities are also noted on the website. Assignments will be submitted online and accessible from Canvas.*

Course Description

The relationships between plants and humans offer profound potential for new modes of creative engagement. How might concepts—such as time, space, materiality, movement, sound, growth, decay, movement, and symbiosis—when seen through the lens of plant studies transform our approach to studio practice?

The Vegetal is an interdisciplinary seminar that challenges students to explore how an art practice rooted in plant consciousness, ecological awareness, and interspecies collaboration can generate new ways of thinking and making. Students will learn about the emergent field of plant studies and engage with writers, artists, thinkers, and scientists who investigate plant communication, intelligence, and interspecies relationships. Students will learn how plant agency, ecological care, and interspecies relationships can serve as the foundation for cultivating strategies in art-making. The course explores how plants function as active protagonists and collaborators in art, philosophy, activism, and media, and how these relationships can inform and transform their own artistic practices.

This course seeks to expand your conceptual framework by introducing ecological fieldwork as a strategy for making. The resources and research at land grant university such as University of Florida serve as a potential laboratory for locating connections between landscape, geography, ecological systems, site-specific engagement and creative experimentation.

Course Format

This course will be structured around group discussions, creative experiments, field trips, collaborations, critiques, and both studio visits and individual meetings. In this class, you will be required to read, write, make work and engage physically with the environment. Our class meets once a week, with an additional 2–3 small group critique sessions scheduled outside of regular class time at mutually agreed upon times. There is also the possibility of a two-day overnight field trip. Weekly sessions will be held on Tuesdays and will include guest speakers, discussions of assigned readings, and share the outcomes from hands-on “experiments” and interventions related to interactions with plants. We will take advantage of opportunities to explore the use of AI and the Hipergator as tools for artistic creation.

Throughout the semester, we will explore course themes and engage with different forms of plant life through on- and off-campus site visits during class hours. You will be expected to develop a piece or intervention inspired by an overnight weekend field trip to South Florida, where we will visit various gardens and farms. (Details will be discussed during the first two weeks of the semester.) The final piece should reflect both your personal studio practice and the knowledge, experiences, methodologies, and readings encountered throughout this seminar.

Objectives

You will:

- Explore how research on plant consciousness, more-than-human engagements, and ecological thought can inform artistic practice.
 - Create personal and collaborative work that considers and explores critical plant studies from technological, conceptual, material, and socially engaged perspective.
 - Experiment with a variety of techniques, ideas, and research methods as ways of understanding what is meant by care connecting your personal values to your art practice
 - Deepen your understanding of how interspecies engagement can be practiced and enacted upon both physical and virtual environments, through critical engagement with readings, art works, and research methodologies.
 - Make work shaped by political, social, biological, economic, and scientific systems (or add your own category), to better understand how evolving notions of vegetal life and plant-human relations can shape your art and research.
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Course Structure

The materials associated with each class are placed in Canvas modules. Each module contains the topics for the week, the homework discussions/assignments where you post or upload your response to readings, screenings, activities etc. We will also create a calendar schedule of small group critique and reminders of who, when, and where those critiques will take place. Assignments can also be found in the Assignment and the Modules sections of our course's Canvas site. If an assignment is a discussion, the assignment can be found in the Module, Assignments and Discussion sections in Canvas. There is built in redundancy which can be confusing. Please do not start your own discussion on Canvas. Post your reading reflection/response to discussion started by me for the week.

Course Calendar

WEEK 1 – The Vegetal: Introduction to Critical Plant Studies & Studio Practice

WEEK 2 – The Social Life of Plants

WEEK 3 – Plant Temporalities: Slowness and Growth

WEEK 4 – Material Entanglements: Authorship and Intra-Actions

WEEK 5 – With, Not About: Interspecies Collaboration

WEEK 6 – Listening to the Plant World: Sound, Vibration, and Sensing

WEEK 7 – Ethnobotany and Ancestral Knowledge

WEEK 8 – AI x Plant Futures

WEEK 9 – Field Ecology and Site-Specific Practice

WEEK 10 – Fieldtrip ????

WEEK 11 – Seeds: Food Sovereignty and Agroecology **OR** Aquatic Plants and Ocean Thinking

WEEK 12 – Fungi, Compost and The Aesthetics of Decay

WEEK 13 – Rewilding: Weeds and Ruderal Ecology

WEEK 14 – Studio and Research Week (movable)

WEEK 15 – Studio and Research Week (movable)

WEEK 16 – Final Project Critique

Course Materials

Please purchase or access *The Light Eaters* by Zoe Schlanger.

<https://www.zoeschlanger.com/the-light-eaters> There are five copies at the Alachua County Public library in various formats. UF has an electronic copy which I will also put a copy on reserve. For the rest of the course materials, I will provide pdfs and link to the readings and screenings. Readings and screenings will be decided by myself, those enrolled in the seminar and guest speakers. In the first week of the fall semester, there is an assignment where you will be asked to propose potential topics and readings.

You may also be required to watch films and videos and performances as part of this course. Many of these videos can be accessed for free or as a rental on services such as Amazon, Netflix, or iTunes. I will try and choose options that keep the cost down to a minimum. Another option besides looking for a so-so quality video on YouTube is to check out the UF Library's Streaming Video Databases.

To access UF Library videos, navigate to <https://uflib.ufl.edu/find/videos/> Click on the link to the streaming service and then log on to the service with your net ID and then navigate to the film/video you would like to watch. If you are watching from off-campus, you will have to set a VPN account in order to stream large amounts of video data. To set up a VPN account, go to UF Libraries: About the UF VPN - <https://cms.uflib.ufl.edu/offcampus>

As part of this course, you have access to technical resources in the form of equipment which can be checked out from the FAC306 lab and cage. Be aware though that if another class is given an assignment that requires them to use that equipment, that class is given priority. This semester, I would like to do one project/activity that involves AI and Hipergator, each student will receive an allocation as part of the class.

Analog and digital means to make art.

Access to Equipment and Facilities

As a graduate student you have 24/7 access to the FAC306 Lab. To use the FAC306 computer lab, Michael Christopher, AT Teaching Lab Specialist will need to put your Gatorlink ID into the system, and then you will be given access. For more information on FAC306 Computing's Policies, Procedures and Guidelines, Michael Christopher will be giving us a link to a new site.

Bibliography

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Distribution of Grades

Class attendance and participation = 20%

Reading/screening/activity and writing in preparation for weekly class activity or discussion = 30%

Small group crit attendance, preparedness, and participation = 20%

Participation in Fieldtrip and remote Location project = 30%

Class attendance and participation (10% (showing up) + 10% (actively participating in in-class discussion) = 20% total weighted.) Attendance counts. This is an experiential learning course. If

you are not present, you will not benefit. Participation is critical in order to engage with the topics and the materials. There are 15 class sessions including the field trip.

Writing and Doing - Readings/Screenings/Writing/Activities/Discussions (30%) In order to be engaged, we need to be informed. We become informed by through reading, listening, tasting, smelling and touching, watching/observing. As artists, we engage and process information through making and writing and discussing. Every week you will have readings, screening, podcast and/or experience in preparation for the next class. You will submit a written piece (3-5 paragraphs) to the Canvas Discussion that thoughtfully responds to the assigned readings/screenings/podcasts/experience prior to class. As part of your writing, please include at least two questions based upon the assigned materials that could generate discussion or address topics in the materials that need clarification. Weekly writing is graded on its completeness and expression of thought, as well as a demonstration of critical consideration regarding the readings/media under discussion. This is a graduate seminar and I believe that you are already familiar with what constitutes a well-written assignment. I am including a writing rubric so that you have an idea of my expectations for a writing assignment.

Small group critique (20%) In addition to our meeting time on Tuesday, we will meet in smaller groups (3-5) at people's studio or communal critique spaces for small group crit. These critiques are scheduled at mutually agreed upon times outside of our Tuesday session. Each critique generally lasts from 30-40 minutes per person. Each person should plan on attending two of these sessions in addition to their own. If you are being critiqued, you need to have work that is ready to be discussed. Those attending need to be prepared to offer constructive criticism and thoughtful feedback. I evaluate this part of your grade based on preparedness to show work and actually having work for us to critique and discuss if you are showing work. If you are just attending, I base your grade on actually showing up and meaningfully participating verbally. There are extra credit opportunities for people who want to show up for more than their required small group crits.

Remote Location/Fieldtrip Inspired Project (30%) We will be doing fieldwork at a remote location TBA. Prior and during our visit, you will do some research as part of the seminar and then over the course of the semester make a piece that responds to the site-specificity of the place that we will visit. Consider the critical plant studies as a potential methodology for understanding a site and how the vegetal resonates with your art practice. We may exhibit the work publicly. Projects are graded on their ability to communicate conceptually and aesthetically your intent as well as demonstration of mastery of the technical apparatus you chose to employ.

Grading and Evaluation

The purpose of grading is to clearly and accurately pinpoint the strengths and weaknesses of your progress. Education is an ongoing process of self-reflective synthesis of course content, individual research and art practice. You should take every opportunity to take advantage of this and extend this class in a direction that is most valuable to your singular needs as your

make work at part of your MFA and beyond. For more information on UF policies on grade points, see <http://www.registrar.ufl.edu/catalog/policies/regulationgrades.html>

Grading Scale

A	100–94: superior work, all criteria have been surpassed in a distinguished manner
A-	93–90: superior work, all criteria have been surpassed
B+	87-89: very good work, all criteria have been surpassed
B	83-86: above average work
B-	80-82: slightly above average work
C+	77-79: adequate, average work
C	73-76, adequate work
C-	70-72, less than adequate work
D+	67-69: barely meeting criteria
D	63-66 barely meeting criteria
D-	60-62 barely meeting criteria
E	59–0: failure to meet criteria

Weekly written assignments are due at the beginning of class on the day they are due. This is a small class. Each day that they are late, you lose 10% from the maximum possible grade. Work turned in after class on the due date is counted as one day late (-10%). A grade of C- or below will not count toward major requirements.

PARTICIPATION + ATTENDANCE

What constitutes participation?

- complete readings for the associated assignment prior to class
- contribute to class discussions
- ask relevant questions
- respond thoughtfully
- show consideration for classmates
- attend every class period
- positive attitude and open mind

Expectations for Class Participation

Participation by all members is critical to the success of this class. Participation includes contributing to ongoing discussions and critiques, suggestions of alternative ways of approaching projects, along with a thoughtful process and strong work ethic. Participation is evaluated with respect to both quality and quantity. Registered students who do not attend at least one of the first two class meetings for the course, and who have not contacted the department to indicate their intent, may be dropped from the course.

Lateness and Leaving Early

I will take attendance at the beginning of each class. If you are not present at that time, you will be marked as absent unless you see me at the end of class letting me know that you came so I can correct my attendance sheet. You are expected to stay for the entire class period. I generally check to see who is around after the break. If you leave, your attendance will be recorded as late. Four late marks count as an unexcused absence. If you know that you will be late or absent, please let me know in advance by contacting me at kgladdys@ufl.edu.

Late Assignments

10% will be deducted for each day the assignment is late. In-class assignments that are 10 points or less may not be made up unless you have contacted me in advance. If you arrive late and miss the better part of an in-class assignment, you are welcome to do the assignment on your own time, but I will not give credit for it. It is not fair to the students who were on time.

Keeping and Making Up

If you are having difficulties for any reason in understanding the material and completing the work for this class, you need to make an appointment to meet and talk with me. Do not wait until the last minute (right before an assignment is due) or until you are totally lost to contact me. Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work are consistent with university policies that can be found at: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>.

Expectations for Attendance

This class is very experiential and experimental in nature. We will do a lot of in-class activities for which you will get credit. Many of these activities cannot be "made up" outside of class. You will miss out on a great deal if you do not come. There is a correlation in studio classes between attendance and final grades. You have a better chance of doing well if you come to class.

In general, acceptable reasons for absence from class include illness, serious family emergencies, special curricular requirements (i.e., judging trips, field trips, professional conferences), military obligation, severe weather conditions, religious holidays, and participation in official university activities such as music performances, debate, and athletic competitions. Absences from class for court-imposed legal obligations such as jury duty or

subpoena will be excused. Other sound reasons may be offered and considered on an individual basis. Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work are consistent with university policies that can be found at:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>

Attendance is also 10% of your participation grade. If you do not show up and are not present for the entire class, you lose points. You are expected to stay for the entire class. Be professional; be on time. Arriving late or not being prepared is disruptive to others. Attendance is taken at the beginning of each class. You will be considered tardy if you arrive after roll is taken. *If you cannot attend class, please inform the instructor ahead of time.*

ENGAGING WITH ONE ANOTHER

In our structured and unstructured discussions and dialogue, we also will have many opportunities to explore some challenging issues and increase our understandings of different perspectives. Our conversations may not always be easy; we sometimes will make mistakes in our speaking and our listening; sometimes we will need patience or courage or imagination or any number of qualities in combination to engage our texts, our classmates, and our own ideas and experiences. Always we will need respect for others. Thus, an additional aim of our course necessarily will be for us to increase our facility with the sometimes, difficult conversations that arise as we deepen our understandings of multiple perspectives – whatever our backgrounds, experiences, or positions.

I want this class to be fun and meaningful with everybody feeling comfortable to contribute to the dialogue. This is how we learn. Effective learning/teaching is a creative and co-constructed experience with give and take between teacher and student and between student and student. Key to facilitating an environment for learning is respect. Disruptive and disrespectful actions make for stressful atmosphere which is not conducive to learning.

Here are some thoughts and suggestions for cultivating community.

- Treat every program interaction, both in and out of class and critique, as if you were professional colleagues who need to work together to be successful.
- Be an active listener who seeks to understand.
- Honor multiple perspectives and experiences that others bring to the program.
- Take responsibility (for your statements, actions, interactions, academic performance).
- Assume good intent on the part of others.
- Pause and reflect before reacting.
- Use every class session and every interaction with peers to think about your future as an artist and teacher.
- Conduct yourself with personal integrity and honesty. See UF Student Honor Code policies below.

- Communications outside of class with individuals as well as the class are done via email, please check your @ufl.edu email account regularly for updates and additional course information.
- When collaborating with others for group projects, you are expected to do your share of the work and communicate effectively with others in your group i.e. providing correct contact information to the rest of the group, responding to emails and phone calls regarding the group project, attending meetings to work out assignments and schedules.

It is my intent that students from all diverse backgrounds and perspectives be well-served by this course, that students' learning needs be addressed both in and out of class, and that the diversity that the students bring to this class be viewed as a resource, strength and benefit. It is my intent to present materials and activities that are respectful of diversity: gender identity, sexuality, disability, age, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, race, nationality, religion, and culture.

Electronic Device Policy and Recording Class

A note on cell phones, texting, and checking one's email during class: Research has shown us that even having our cell phones on the table in front of us diminishes our ability to learn well; further, taking notes via computer diminishes one's ability to process information. Checking texts, emails, and messages is also unprofessional and disrespectful to our class community. Please put your phones on vibrate, do not check email, Facebook etc. via computer during class; I will do so as well. I appreciate your cooperation with this important aspect of creating a class of which we all want to be a part. I will not hesitate to ask you to put away a mobile phone if in use during class.

Sound or visual recordings may not be made during class time except in particular circumstances as defined by the university. See below for link to university policy.

GENERATIVE AI

This class integrates generative AI into the content of the course as a tool for art making. Generally, you are required to use images and video generated by you with a camera in collaboration with AI. With respect homework and in-class assignments that involve writing, in order to ensure that all students have an equal opportunity to succeed and to preserve the integrity of the course, students are not permitted to submit text that is generated by artificial intelligence (AI) systems such as ChatGPT, Bing Chat, Claude, Google Bard, or any other automated assistance for any classwork or assessments. This includes using AI to generate answers to assignments, exams, or projects, or using AI to complete any other course-related tasks. Using AI in this way undermines your ability to develop critical thinking, writing, or

research skills that are essential for this course and your academic success. Students may use AI as part of their research and preparation for assignments, or as a text editor, but text that is submitted must be written by the student. For example, students may use AI to generate ideas, questions, or summaries that they then revise, expand, or cite properly. Students should also be aware of the potential benefits and limitations of using AI as a tool for learning and research. AI systems can provide helpful information or suggestions, but they are not always reliable or accurate. Students should critically evaluate the sources, methods, and outputs of AI systems. Violations of this policy will be treated as academic misconduct. If you have any questions about this policy or if you are unsure whether a particular use of AI is acceptable, please do not hesitate to ask for clarification. (from University of Texas, Center for Teaching and Learning Website <https://ctl.utexas.edu/chatgpt-and-generative-ai-tools-sample-syllabus-policy-statements>)

WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT FROM ME

- End class on time or within two minutes of scheduled ending time unless previously notified
 - Answer student email within 24 hours or less (usually a lot less) unless I am out of the country or in a place where there is no email. My office phone is NOT the best way to reach me as I am often in the lab teaching or in my studio working. Face to face communication in class or email are the preferred methods of communication.
 - Return assignments in a timely manner
 - Be available during my office hours. If I am not in town, I will let you know in advance if I am not able to attend office hours.
 - Listen to student concerns and questions.
 - Explain, answer and research questions regarding the topics of the class. The nature of technology and learning is ever evolving. If I do not have an immediate answer, I will research your question and get back to you in a timely fashion with a solution or a reference to a relevant resource.
 - Abide by the grading scale above and not change dates for turning in assignments unless the class as a whole has agreed upon the change.
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ONLINE COURSE EVALUATIONS

Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in the course by completing course evaluations via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner can be found at <https://gatorevals.ua.ufl.edu/students/>. You 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. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/>.

GENERAL UNIVERSITY POLICIES AND SERVICES

See UF's Academic Policies and Resources Page <https://syllabus.ufl.edu/syllabus-policy/uf-syllabus-policy-links/>

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

Each student must complete a H&S STUDENT WAIVER FORM (available next to the copier in the SAAH office) and on-line (see address above). Waivers must be turned into the SAAH Director of Operations before the end of the 2nd week of classes. Because we use some hazardous materials as part of the electronic components that become part of our projects, please pay particular attention to the guidelines pertaining to Art and Technology.

The School of Art and Art History Safety Manual will be reviewed in class. Students and instructors are responsible for following policy and procedures for making art safely at all times. The entire document is available at <https://arts.ufl.edu/site/assets/files/37319/saahhealthandsafetyhandbook.pdf>

All students are required to sign and turn in the signature page to the instructor on the first day of class. Please read and respect studio use and guidelines posted in classrooms.

COMPUTER USE AND ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY

All faculty, staff, and students of the University of Florida 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. <https://it.ufl.edu/policies/acceptable-use/>

Be advised that you can and will be dismissed from class if you engage in disruptive behavior.

CRITICAL DATES ON THE UNIVERSITY CALENDAR

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/dates-deadlines/>

