



The University of Manitoba
Faculty of Agricultural and Food Sciences

Course Details**Course Title:** Plant Science Seminar**Department:** Plant Science**Course Number:** PLNT 7250**Academic Session:** Fall 2020 & Winter 2021**Credit Hours:** 3**Class Hours:** 1:00 - 2:30 pm (Tuesdays)**Location:** Online via Cisco Webex (Fall 2020)**Department Office Location:** 222 Agriculture Building 7522**Course Web Page:** UM Learn @ <https://universityofmanitoba.desire2learn.com/d2l/login>**Instructor Information****Instructor:** Dr. Belay Ayele (I prefer to be addressed as “Belay”)**Office Location:** Room 111 Agriculture Building**Office Phone Number:** 204-474-8227**Email Address:** belay.ayele@umanitoba.ca**Office Hours:** 11:00 am - 12:00 pm (Thursdays); otherwise, available by appointment only. I can be reached preferably by email, and I will reply to your emails within 24 hours.**General Course Information**

Why this course is useful? Communication skills are one of the most valuable assets you can develop during your graduate program. Every type of employer is looking for graduates with strong communication skills. Scientific communication skills are essential for both disseminating the results of your research and for successfully competing for employment after graduation. Communication skills can only be learned by a combination of practice and observation. This course gives you the opportunity to do both and develop your scientific communication skills for a variety of academic settings and formats.

Who should take this course? This is a required course for all M.Sc. students in the Plant Science graduate program.

Course Description/Goals

Graduate calendar description: Principles of oral and poster presentations, and visual aid design and organization are discussed and then applied by students in presenting their current research, and agricultural issues. This course is evaluated on a pass/fail basis.

Instructional methods:

The Fall classes of this course are delivered remotely. It will use a combined synchronous-asynchronous course design. Lectures/student presentations will be synchronous. Your computer/device and internet connection must meet the UM minimum requirements found here <https://centre.cc.umanitoba.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Student-Connectivity-Recommendations.pdf>. This course requires additional specialized software: WebEx. Students can access events scheduled by the instructor accessing Cisco WebEx in UM Learn.

Lectures: introductory lectures will cover aspects of preparing and presenting seminars and posters.

Presentations: Students will prepare and present oral and poster presentations using a variety of formats. Some presentations will be recorded to provide students with constructive feedback.

Assignments: assignments that support the development of scientific communication skills will be assigned.

Seminar Attendance: attending the Advanced Plant Science Seminar series of the Department is compulsory.

Course goals: The goal of this course is to make students familiar with the principles of communicating scientific information in a number of different formats, and to provide them with the opportunity to develop and practice communication skills.

Intended Learning outcomes

1. Prepare and confidently deliver academic presentations.
2. Understand standard formats of academic oral and poster presentations in the field of plant science.
3. Identify your target audience and adapt your presentation style and content for the audience.
4. Practice active audience participation by asking questions of presenters.
5. Develop presentation time management skills.
6. Practice providing and receiving constructive criticism.

Using Copyrighted Material

Please respect copyright. We will use copyrighted content in this course. Copyrighted works, including those created by me are made available for private study and research, and must not be distributed in any format without permission. Do not upload copyrighted works to a learning management system (such as UM Learn), or any website, unless an exception to the *Copyright Act* applies or written permission has been confirmed. For more information, see the University's Copyright Office website at <http://umanitoba.ca/copyright/> or contact um_copyright@umanitoba.ca.

Recording Class Lectures

No audio or video recording of lectures or student presentations and class discussions is allowed in any format, openly or surreptitiously, in whole or in part without permission from Dr. Ayele. Course materials (both paper and digital) are for the participant's private study and research, and must not be shared. Violation of these and other Academic Integrity principles, will lead to serious disciplinary action.

Texts, Readings, Materials

There is no textbook for this course. Required readings for this course will be posted on the course website or provided in class. A list of library books and websites that may be useful to you during this course as supplementary readings will be posted on the course website.

Course Technology

It is the general University of Manitoba policy that all technology resources are to be used in a responsible, efficient, ethical and legal manner. The student can use all technology in classroom setting only for educational purposes approved by instructor and/or the University of Manitoba Disability Services. Student should not participate in personal direct electronic messaging / posting activities (e-mail, texting, video or voice chat, wikis, blogs, social networking (e.g. Facebook) online and offline "gaming" during scheduled class time. If student is on call (emergency) the student should switch his/her cell phone on vibrate mode and leave the classroom before using it. (©S Kondrashov. Used with permission)

Class Communication

The University requires all students to activate an official University email account. Please note that all communication between myself and you as a student must comply with the electronic communication with student policy (http://umanitoba.ca/admin/governance/governing_documents/community/electronic_communication_wit)

[h_students_policy.html](#)). You are required to obtain and use your U of M email account for all communication between yourself and the university.

Expectations: I expect you to

Attend class: Class attendance is mandatory. Students must provide acceptable justification if a class is missed. Students who are unable to meet a course requirement due to medical circumstances are currently not required to submit medical notes. However, they are required to contact their instructor or academic advisor by email to inform of the missed work and to make arrangements for extensions, deferrals, or make-up assignments. Students should refrain from any disruptive behaviors during class time.

Participate: Active participation is required to achieve the greatest benefits from attending this course, including developing your communication skills.

Prepare and practice: Most weeks, this course should not dominate your schedule, but it does require timely attention before class each week to get the most out of in-class activities. Some weeks require more preparation than other weeks. Some activities (for example research seminar and poster assignment) require significant advance preparation. Time management and planning strategies for presentations will be discussed in class and the method that works best for you should be put into practice on a regular basis.

Respect: Presenters need an audience. Regular attendance and active participation create a positive atmosphere for our learning community. As a student of the course, you will receive and be asked to provide constructive criticisms. Learning how to do both effectively with respect are important skills to develop as active professionals in academic communities.

Academic Integrity

Plagiarism or any other form of cheating in examinations, term tests or academic work is subject to serious academic penalty (e.g. suspension or expulsion from the faculty or university). Students should acquaint themselves with the University's policy on plagiarism and cheating.

Student Accessibility Services

If you are a student with a disability, please contact SAS for academic accommodation supports and services such as note-taking, interpreting, assistive technology and exam accommodations. Students who have, or think they may have, a disability (e.g. mental illness, learning, medical, hearing, injury-related, visual) are invited to contact SAS to arrange a confidential consultation.

Student Accessibility Services <http://umanitoba.ca/student/saa/accessibility/>

520 University Centre

204 474 7423

Student_accessibility@umanitoba.ca

Description of Examinations

There are no written exams for this course.

Presentations and Assignments: see important dates for presentation and assignment due dates.

1. Presentations

- i. Extemporaneous Presentation
- ii. Instructional Presentation
- iii. Extension Presentation
- iv. Research Seminars

v. Research Posters

2. Assignments

- i. Written summary of your research (to the general public)
- ii. Presentation Outlines
- iii. Presentation Reflections
- iv. Practicing SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Results-focused & Time-bound) goal setting
- v. Seminar networking (this assignment is planned tentatively for the winter-term contingent upon resumption of in-person departmental seminars)
- vi. Asking good questions
- vii. Chairing a seminar session

Description of Presentations**1. Extemporaneous Presentation**

- “Tell me about your research ...” - the purpose of this presentation is to prepare students to answer this frequently asked question during, for example, conference networking or job interviews.
- Students will present a ~three minute overview of their research topic or area.
- Students should speak conversationally without visual aids during this presentation.
- Students will be asked to answer follow up questions from their peers

2. Instructional Presentations

- Choose a plant science topic that you know well and prepare a ~10 minute presentation for an undergraduate student or graduate student audience. Examples of topics could include: crop rotation practices in Manitoba, nitrogen assimilation in plants, management practices to control clubroot disease in canola.
- A combination of audiovisual aids including PowerPoint slides and whiteboard can be used for this presentation.
- Topics and proposed visual aids should be submitted to the instructor by **Sep 29**.

3. Extension Presentation

- Choose your target audience: general public, farmers, industry, and commodity group.
- Choose a subject that would be of interest to that audience.
- Prepare a 10 min presentation with a targeted extension message.
- This presentation must incorporate the use of at least one table and one figure.
- Use any combination of audiovisual aids, props, or power point slides.
- A description of the audience, title and audiovisual needs should be submitted to the instructor by **Oct 13**.

5. Research Seminar

- It should include **1)** the significance and objectives of your research, **2)** Results (it can be preliminary) and discussion (integrate your research [or intended research] with existing related research in the literature **3)** Conclusions.
- Students will use a PowerPoint slides and a computer projector.
- All members of the Plant Science Department are invited to attend these seminars.
- The seminar presentation length should be a 30 (± 2) minute. Seminars that are not close to time will be repeated.
- Tables and figures must be included in the presentation.
- Presentation titles and outlines must be submitted to the instructor by **Dec 1** to allow a listing of all second term seminars to be posted.

- A final title must be submitted no later than one week before the presentation to ensure the correct information is in the seminar announcement poster. Your final title will be due by _____.

4. Research Poster

- Preparation of a research poster that could be delivered at a research conference.
- Prepare a ~5 minute poster presentation that would be delivered to conference participants when coming to view your poster at a conference poster session.
- Posters are to be developed electronically using presentation software, such as PowerPoint, and will be presented as virtual posters using a projector.

Presentation Schedule

Presentation dates for individual students are listed in the course schedule (see below). Students may arrange to change their presentation dates by finding another student willing to exchange dates and then seek final approval from the course instructor for this change. These changes should be arranged a minimum of one week in advance for presentations given during the fall term. Changes to the research seminar schedule for the winter term must be finalized by **Dec 8**, unless exceptional emergency circumstances occur. Students are encouraged to bring computers for use when delivering presentations.

Description of Assignments

1. Written summary of your research (to the general public)

Write a summary of your research in a simple language to the general public (in a maximum of 2500 characters). In your summary, you should include the following:

- Why your research is important
- The nature of your research
- Potential outcomes
- Benefits of the research results

Assignment #1 should be submitted to the instructor by **Oct 6** and will be returned with my feedback within 10 working days.

Note: Assignments #2, 3, 4 and 6 are to be composed as a journal (record of events) in Microsoft Word. Journals are to be submitted to the instructor on **Dec 1** and will be returned after the break. Assignment #5 is planned tentatively for the winter-term contingent upon resumption of in-person departmental seminars, and its due date will be determined in the future.

2. Presentation outlines

Planning is essential for an effective presentation. In your journal, prepare an outline for each of the three presentations given during the first term (Extemporaneous, Instructional and Extension). The outline should include:

- Point form descriptions of the presentation sections
- Identify the audience for the presentation and describe the assumptions about the audience
- Identify your take home message(s)

3. Presentation reflections

How did your presentation go? This is your chance to write 1-2 paragraphs to evaluate how things went. Write a reflection entry after each of your three presentations (extemporaneous, instructional, extension). Here are some questions you should address:

- How did you feel before, during, or after your presentation? Did you feel nervous, confident, tired? What strategies did you use to mitigate any nervous feelings that you may have had?

- How well prepared did you feel? Did this end up being a last minute project? What did you spend too little/too much time on? What would you change for the next time?
- How did the audience respond to your presentation? Did they ask you tough questions? Did they misunderstand your take home message?
- Did you get distracted by something/someone? Were you able to get back into your presentation?
- Were there any technical glitches? Would another type of presentation format have been more effective? What would you change for your next presentation?

4. Practicing SMART goal setting

Time management skills are needed to prepare for presentations when you have multiple demands on your time (research, classes, teaching, family, community involvement). Create a work schedule for completing the Instructional and Extension presentations. Setting SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Results-focused & Time-bound) goals is one method you could use to complete your presentation preparations within your work schedule. Write down 3-5 SMART goals for at least one work session for these two presentations. Indicate how much time you *plan* to spend on each SMART goal and the time you *actually* spend on each goal.

5. Seminar networking (this assignment is planned tentatively for the winter-term contingent upon resumption of in-person departmental seminars)

Networking is not an essential skill to deliver a research seminar or poster. However – it is a skill that is often used immediately before or after attending or presenting research seminars and posters. Networking is a form of academic communication and takes practice to do with comfort and confidence. Networking typically involves two parts: 1) learning about others and 2) introducing yourself through conversation or correspondence. Sometimes you are lucky and get an introduction via colleagues and other times it involves taking the initiative to introduce yourself, regardless it takes self-confidence and practice to do well. During the pre-seminar coffee session for Advanced Plant Science Seminar (or other seminars and workshops you attend) during the fall term, introduce yourself to a minimum of three people on separate occasions. They should be students or staff from the department that you do not know well. They could also be visitors from outside of the department. Find out who they are, what they study/research, and where they are from. Be prepared to tell them about yourself – practice your extemporaneous presentation. Write three one-paragraph journal entries to describe:

- Whom you met during your networking session and what you learned about them?
- How effectively were you able to tell them about yourself and your research?
- How well were you able to carry the conversation?
- What might do you try differently next time?

6. Asking good questions

Asking good questions can add a lot to the dialogue between speakers and the audience following a seminar. For most of us, it takes concentration and practice to ask questions confidently during seminars and poster presentations. During or following three Advanced Plant Science Seminars that you attend during the fall term, come up with a list of two or more questions that you would pose to the presenter. If possible, I encourage you to ask these questions during the question period following the seminar. In three separate journal entries list:

- The title of the seminar, and date and location
- Presenter's name and affiliation
- A 2-5 sentence summary of the presentation, or its take home message
- Your questions for the presenter

7. Chairing Winter Term Research Seminars

The last speaker in the second term will act as chairperson for the first seminar session and all subsequent sessions will be chaired by the previous week's speaker. The chair is responsible for:

- Ensuring that the seminar room is set up appropriately and that the necessary equipment is present and working properly
- Introducing the speaker,
- Accepting questions from the audience (to help the class develop questioning skills and ensure class participation the chair should accept the first 2-3 questions from class members)
- Thanking the speaker on behalf of the audience

Course Evaluation Methods

Quality of class presentations	15%
Assignments	15%
Participation in class discussion	10%
Research poster	20%
Research seminar	40%
Final Grade	Pass/Fail Fail (< 60%)

Important Dates

Fall

First Day of Class	September 15
Topics and description of target audience for instructional presentation due	September 29
Written summary your research to the general public due	October 6
Topics description of target audience for extension presentation due	October 13
Assignment journal due	December 1
Research seminar and poster presentation titles due	December 1
Request for changes to research seminar schedule	December 8

Winter

Voluntary withdrawal from Fall/Winter term courses	January 29
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Students who did not drop the course by the deadline would be assigned a final grade. The withdrawal courses will be recorded on official transcript. Refer to the [Registrar's Office](#) web page for more information.

Assignment Submission Policy

Late assignments: Assignments will lose 20% of the total value for each day late (including weekends).

Missed assignments/presentations: Students will receive "incomplete" grade if assignments/presentations are not completed.

Class Schedule

This schedule is subject to change at the discretion of the instructor and/or based on the learning needs of the students but such changes are subject to Section 2.8 of the – [ROASS](#)- Procedure).

Class#	Fall Term	Date
1	Introductions and syllabus review	Sep 15
2	Guest Lecture - Research Information Retrieval and Management (Mr. Ryan Schultz)	Sep 22
3	Lecture #1 - Effective communication and constructive criticism Extemporaneous Presentations (All students)	Sep 29
4	Lecture #2 - Planning presentations and setting SMART goals Written summary of your research to the general public due	Oct 6
5	Lecture #3 - Slide Preparation & Questions	Oct 13
6	Instructional Presentations (Will, Arshani, Samantha, Gurkamal, James)	Oct 20
7	Instructional Presentations (Madison, Sampa, Jesse, Chathuri) Lecture #4 - Networking & Chairing	Oct 27
8	Extension Presentation (Will, Arshani, Samantha, Gurkamal, James)	Nov 3
	Fall Term Break – No Class	Nov 9-13
9	Extension Presentation (Madison, Sampa, Jesse, Chathuri)	Nov 17
10	Lecture #5 - M.Sc. Thesis Guidelines	Nov 24
	Winter Term	
11	Research Seminar – Will	Jan 19
12	Research Seminar – Arshani	Jan 26
13	Research Seminar – Samantha	Feb 2
14	Research Seminar – Gurkamal Lecture #6 – Poster Presentation	Feb 9
	Mid-Term Break – No class	Feb 16-19
15	Research Seminar – James	Feb 23
16	Research Seminar – Madison	March 2
17	Research Seminar – Sampa	March 9
18	Research Seminar – Chathuri	March 16
19	Research Seminar – Jesse	March 23
20	Research Poster Presentation (Will, Arshani, Samantha, Gurkamal, James)	March 30
21	Research Poster Presentation (Madison, Sampa, Jesse, Chathuri)	April 6

ROASS Schedule “A”

Section (a) sample re: A list of academic supports available to Students, such as the Academic Learning Centre, Libraries, and other supports as may be appropriate:

Writing and Learning Support

The Academic Learning Centre (ALC) offers writing and learning supports to help you throughout your academic program. These supports are offered online during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Make an appointment with an ALC writing tutor who can give you feedback at any stage of the writing process, whether you are just beginning to work on a written assignment or already have a draft. The ALC also has an English as an Additional Language (EAL) specialist available to work with students on improving their English-language academic writing skills.

Consult an ALC learning specialist or attend an academic skills workshop to improve your time management, learning strategies and test-taking strategies. Get support in select courses by making an appointment with an ALC content tutor. The ALC also offers peer-facilitated study groups called Supplemental Instruction (SI) for certain courses that students have typically found difficult. In SI study groups, students ask questions, compare notes, discuss content, solve practice problems, and develop new study strategies in a group-learning format.

In addition to one-to-one and group sessions, you can also find writing and study tip sheets and videos on the ALC website.

Academic Learning Centre services are free for U of M students. For more information, please visit the Academic Learning Centre website at: <http://umanitoba.ca/student/academiclearning/>

Contact the Academic Learning Centre by calling 204-480-1481 or emailing academic_learning@umanitoba.ca. Bannatyne students can contact the Bannatyne Student Services office at 204-272-3190.

University of Manitoba Libraries (UML)

Research begins at [UM Libraries](#). [Learn at the Libraries](#) is a great place to start, with information for students on academic writing, how to search the library, evaluating resources, and writing citations. As the primary contact for all research needs, your [liaison librarian](#) can play a vital role when completing academic papers and assignments. Liaisons can answer questions about locating appropriate resources or managing citations, and will address any other concerns you may have regarding the research process. Liaisons can be contacted by email or phone, and are also available to meet with you online. When working remotely, students can also receive help online through [Ask Us!](#) chat. For further detail about the libraries' services and collections, [visit the Libraries' web site](#). Regularly check our [COVID-19 Update](#) page for available library services and access to resources for Fall 2020

Section (b) sample: re: A statement regarding mental health that includes referral information:

For 24/7 mental health support, contact the Mobile Crisis Service at 204-940-1781.

Student Counselling Centre

Contact SCC if you are concerned about any aspect of your mental health, including anxiety, stress, or depression, or for help with relationships or other life concerns. SCC offers crisis services as well as individual, couple, and group counselling. *Student Counselling Centre:*
<http://umanitoba.ca/student/counselling/index.html>

474 UMSU University Centre or S211 Medical Services Building
(204) 474-8592

Student Support Case Management

Contact the Student Support Case Management team if you are concerned about yourself or another student and don't know where to turn. SSCM helps connect students with on and off campus resources, provides safety planning, and offers other supports, including consultation, educational workshops, and referral to the STATIS threat assessment team.

<http://umanitoba.ca/student/case-manager/index.html>

520 UMSU University Centre
(204) 474-7423 (Student Support Intake Assistant)

University Health Service

Contact UHS for any medical concerns, including mental health problems. UHS offers a full range of medical services to students, including psychiatric consultation. Note that due to fire displacement, UHS is unable to provide in-person medical care on the Fort Garry Campus until October, 2020.

University Health Service <http://umanitoba.ca/student/health/>
(204) 474-8411 (Business hours or after hours/urgent calls)

Health and Wellness

Contact our Health and Wellness Educator if you are seeking information on health topics, including physical and mental health concerns, alcohol and substance use harms, or sexual violence. You can also access peer support from a *Healthy U* peer health educator.

Health and Wellness Educator

<https://umanitoba.ca/student/health-wellness/welcome-about.html>
britt.harvey@umanitoba.ca

469 UMSU University Centre
(204) 295-9032

Sexual Violence Resource Centre

Contact SVRC if you have experienced sexual violence or are seeking information about how to help somebody else. SVRC provides inclusive, survivor-centred, trauma-informed services, such as consultation, referrals, safety planning, and a range of on-site supports, including counselling by Klinik.

Sexual Violence Resource Centre

<https://umanitoba.ca/student-supports/sexual-violence-support-and-education>
svrc@umanitoba.ca

537 UMSU University Centre
(204) 474-6562 (Sexual Violence Intake and Triage Specialist)

Student Services at Bannatyne Campus

Contact SS@BC to access a full range of resources and supports for learners at the Rady Faculty of Health Sciences. Services are provided through a one-stop hub that includes a range of supports for personal and academic success, including counselling, mental health consultation, and spiritual care.

Student Services at Bannatyne Campus

<https://umanitoba.ca/student-supports/student-services-bannatyne-campus>

bcss@umanitoba.ca

S211 Medical Services Building

(204) 272-3190 (Intake and Triage Specialist)

Section (c) sample: re: A notice with respect to copyright:

All students are required to respect copyright as per Canada's *Copyright Act*. Staff and students play a key role in the University's copyright compliance as we balance user rights for educational purposes with the rights of content creators from around the world. The Copyright Office provides copyright resources and support for all members of the University of Manitoba community.

Visit <http://umanitoba.ca/copyright> for more information.

Section (d) sample: re: A statement directing the student to University and Unit policies, procedures, and supplemental information available on-line:

Your rights and responsibilities

As a student of the University of Manitoba you have rights and responsibilities. It is important for you to know what you can expect from the University as a student and to understand what the University expects from you. Become familiar with the policies and procedures of the University and the regulations that are specific to your faculty, college or school.

The [Academic Calendar](http://umanitoba.ca/student/records/academiccalendar.html) <http://umanitoba.ca/student/records/academiccalendar.html> is one important source of information. View the sections *University Policies and Procedures* and *General Academic Regulations*.

While all of the information contained in these two sections is important, the following information is highlighted.

- If you have questions about your grades, talk to your instructor. There is a process for term work and final **grade appeals**. Note that you have the right to access your final examination scripts. See the Registrar's Office website for more information including appeal deadline dates and the appeal form <http://umanitoba.ca/registrar/>
- You are expected to view the General Academic Regulation section within the Academic Calendar and specifically read the **Academic Integrity** regulation. Consult the course syllabus or ask your instructor for additional information about demonstrating academic integrity in your academic work. Visit the Academic Integrity Site for tools and support <http://umanitoba.ca/academicintegrity/> View the **Student Academic Misconduct** procedure for more information.
- The University is committed to a respectful work and learning environment. You have the right to be treated with respect and you are expected to conduct yourself in an appropriate respectful manner. Policies governing behavior include the:

Respectful Work and Learning Environment

http://umanitoba.ca/admin/governance/governing_documents/community/230.html

Student Discipline

http://umanitoba.ca/admin/governance/governing_documents/students/student_discipline.html and,

Violent or Threatening Behaviour

http://umanitoba.ca/admin/governance/governing_documents/community/669.html

- If you experience **Sexual Assault** or know a member of the University community who has, it is important to know there is a policy that provides information about the supports available to those who disclose and outlines a process for reporting. The **Sexual Assault** policy may be found at: http://umanitoba.ca/admin/governance/governing_documents/community/230.html More information and resources can be found by reviewing the Sexual Assault site <http://umanitoba.ca/student/sexual-assault/>

For information about rights and responsibilities regarding **Intellectual Property** view the policy: https://umanitoba.ca/admin/governance/governing_documents/community/235.html

For information on regulations that are specific to your academic program, read the section in the Academic Calendar and on the respective faculty/college/school web site <http://umanitoba.ca/faculties/>

Contact an **Academic Advisor** within our faculty/college or school for questions about your academic program and regulations <http://umanitoba.ca/academic-advisors/>

Student Advocacy

Contact Student Advocacy if you want to know more about your rights and responsibilities as a student, have questions about policies and procedures, and/or want support in dealing with academic or discipline concerns.

<http://umanitoba.ca/student/advocacy/>

520 University Centre

204 474 7423

student_advocacy@umanitoba.ca