

AGRO 449 Special Problems
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AGRO 449 Special Problems (1-3 credits)

Typically the students develop a plan to work on a special research problem and get involved in hands-on activities in a lab or field setting. As this is more of a one-to-one instruction, the social distancing will mostly not be an issue. There is also a possibility that this course will be shifted to the following semester in spring 2021 as it's an individualized course and should not affect overall departmental course offerings. A decision will be made as we approach closer to the semester in late summer.

A part of the instruction will be delivered through CANVAS/Emails and Zoom meetings. Students will develop a brief research proposal and plan to conduct the study. Most of the activity will be geared towards utilizing online tools i.e. conducting review of literature on chosen topics of interest. Considering if the situation allows, a part of the instruction will involve hands-on activity to give students a holistic experience. The students will participate in an ongoing research project in a in-lab and in-field setting. The lab part will be held in GT 204, while the in-field research site will be at Fabian Garcia Plant Science Center. The students will follow the strict guidelines for safety according to the protocols developed by the research teams including protective gears, and disinfecting the equipment and lab spaces regularly.

As there are only 4 students in total as of May 11, 2020 in this course, they will be divided into groups of two (so that a maximum number of students will be two in a session at a given time, the social distancing will be feasible. One group of two students will participate in the in-field activities while the other in the in-lab activities during a given period. The two groups will then rotate their activity between in-lab and in-field activity so as to minimize the social contact and maximize social distancing. The second measure is to have students work on their individually staggered times that will be determined based on their individual availability, so as to avoid any social contact with other students.

Following is my consideration for proposed changes to the physical presence activity component in the event of change in the severity of health threats. **Scenario 1: There are no longer any significant health threats.** In this scenario, there are no proposed changes to the physical presence labs. **Scenario 2: Significant health threats have emerged during the semester and face-to-face instruction is no longer tenable.** Students will plan and conduct a study in pots in their home setting. The lab/field sessions in question will be used include filling pots, planting and inspecting the crops, collecting data at student home site. These will be converted to online Zoom meetings using a combination of PowerPoint presentations and student videos.

Scenario 3: My class has more than 50 students and health guidelines state that such large gatherings are prohibited. Not Applicable.

1. Contact tracing. A student will immediately notify me and the aggie health center by email or telephone if they suspect they are ill (body temperature in excess of 100.4F, cough, or shortness of breath), or if they are notified that they may have potentially been exposed to COVID-19. Once I discover via email that a student may have a virus or has been tested as presumptively positive, I will work with the student promptly via email or telephone to i) assert that they are isolated and do not transmit further, ii) ask them who they have come in contact with for up to 14 days before they experienced symptoms, and iii) attempt to secure the name(s) and contact information for the human contact(s) in question. I will maintain email and telephone records of affected students and their

contacts. The names and contact information (telephone and email) of the affected student and their recent contact(s) will be reported to my Department Head, Dr. Rolston St. Hilaire. The affected student will be instructed to call their physician, the New Mexico Department of Health COVID Hotline, or the Aggie Health and Wellness Center to arrange for a test, if the student has not already done so. In extreme cases, they will be instructed to call 911. The affected student will return to class only if they have been tested, and only after a negative test. If the test is positive, I will notify Dr. Rolston St. Hilaire, and the student will self-quarantine for 14 days.