

## PLP 6921 Colloquium Spring 2026

### Instructor

Dr. Jeffrey B. Jones, Fifield 2553 [jbjones@ufl.edu](mailto:jbjones@ufl.edu)

### Meeting Time and Place

Every Thursday 4:05 pm-4:55 pm In person and online ZOOM

**Course Description:** This course will expose students to opportunities in plant pathology. Students will interview speakers who have completed their graduate studies in Plant Pathology and have professional positions in private industry, government or universities.

**Course Learning Objectives:** The course objectives are to familiarize students with professional opportunities following graduation. Some specific procedures of the course are:

- Host students will contact speakers at least several days before class to introduce themselves and ask for any information relating to their bios that can be used when introducing them to the class.
- On the day of class, each host student will work in a team of two to introduce one speaker. This will include giving a brief introduction, including undergraduate and graduate studies (including the title of the thesis and/or dissertation, postdoctoral work, and permanent positions. Each of the host students will need to come up with at least two questions to ask each speaker, so for each speaker the students will need to have four questions.
- The two host students for each speaker will coordinate questions, including questions from other members of the class.

### Curriculum vitae and cover letters

- Industry
- Academia
- Government
- Research foundations –Danforth, Boyce Thompson, Noble

### Searching for jobs

- M.S. versus Ph.D.

### Preparation as grad student for positions in:

- Industry – Research based, chemical, diagnostic and seed companies
- Large versus small companies
- Academia
  - o Land grant versus small college
  - o University positions
    - Research
    - Teaching
    - Extension
- Government – USDA-APHIS and USDA-ARS, EPA, state government
- Industry - Charles River Laboratories International, Inc., Ball Horticultural Company, FMC Corp, Bayer, Corteva
- International jobs - International centers like CIMMYT, AVRDC, CIP

What criteria are used for selecting individuals for a particular position:

- What do you look for in a CV?
- What kind of experience do you look for?
- What do you look for in cover letters?
- Other criteria?

### Grading

This is a one credit course with letter grades assigned. Students will be graded based on the following assignments:

Participation	<b>30 pts (%)</b>
Introduction of speakers	<b><u>70 pts</u></b>
	<b>100 pts</b>

#### *Grading Scale:*

90-100% **A**; 87-89.9% **A-**; 84-86.9% **B+**; 80-83.9% **B**; 77-79.9% **B-**; 74-76.9% **C+**; 70-73.9% **C**; 67-69.9% **C-**; 64-66.9% **D+**; 60-63.9% **D**; 57-59.9% **D-**; Below 56.9% **E**.

### Professionalism Statement

Scientists are professionals guided by specific values and behaviors. These values and behaviors include respect, cooperation, active participation, intellectual inquiry, integrity, timeliness, and attendance. In addition to your performance on the graded materials, you will be evaluated on your growth as a professional. Professional characteristics include punctuality, attendance,

participation, collegial attitude, and willingness to help others learn. Your attendance at all classes is a firm expectation, but if you are ill or an emergency occurs, contact your instructor PRIOR TO the scheduled class time.

### Academic Honesty

As a student at the University of Florida, you have committed yourself to uphold the Honor Code, which includes the following pledge: *"We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honesty and integrity."* You are expected to exhibit behavior consistent with this commitment to the UF academic community, and on all work submitted for credit at the University of Florida, 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 assumed that you will complete all work independently in each course unless the instructor provides explicit permission for you to collaborate on course tasks (e.g. assignments, papers, quizzes, exams). Furthermore, as part of your obligation to uphold the Honor Code, you should report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. It is your individual responsibility to know and comply with all university policies and procedures regarding academic integrity and the Student Honor Code.

Violations of the Honor Code at the University of Florida will not be tolerated. Violations will be reported to the Dean of Students Office for consideration of disciplinary action. For more information regarding the Student Honor Code, please see: <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/SCCR/honorcodes/honorcode.php>

### 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 crises or personal problems that interfere with their general well-being are encouraged to utilize the university's counseling resources. The Counseling & Wellness Center provides confidential counseling services at no cost for currently enrolled students.

Resources are available on campus for students having personal problems or lacking clear career or academic goals, which interfere with their academic

performance.

- *University Counseling & Wellness Center, 3190 Radio Road, 352-392-1575, [www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc](http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc)*
  - Counseling Services
  - Groups and Workshops
  - Outreach and Consultation
  - Self-Help Library
  - Training Programs
  - Community Provider Database
- *Career Resource Center, First Floor JWRU, 392-1601, [www.crc.ufl.edu](http://www.crc.ufl.edu)*

## Services for Students with Disabilities

The Disability Resource Center coordinates the needed accommodations of students with disabilities. This includes registering disabilities, recommending academic accommodations within the classroom, accessing special adaptive computer equipment, providing interpretation services and mediating faculty-student disability related issues. Students requesting classroom accommodation must first register with the Dean of Students Office. The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to the Instructor when requesting accommodation

## Academic Policies and Campus Resources

Please follow this link (<https://go.ufl.edu/syllabuspolicies>) for up-to-date UF academic policies and resources regarding :

- Accommodations for Students with Disabilities
- Academic Honesty
- UF Counseling Services (University Counseling Center; Student Mental Health, Sexual Assault Recovery Services; Career Resource Center)
- Software Use • UF Policy on E-Mail
- Online Course Evaluation Process • Academic Honesty:
- Services for Students with Disabilities
- E-learning technical support • Other Policies and Resources

## Dates

**Jan 15**      **General meeting and expectations.** Select hosts for each speaker and discuss logistics

## Invited Speakers

- Jan 22** Dr. Kiersten Fullem, Postdoctoral Associate, University of Florida, Department of Plant Pathology ([kbushong@ufl.edu](mailto:kbushong@ufl.edu))
- Dr. Mousami Poudel, Postdoctoral Associate, University of Florida, Department of Plant Pathology ([poudel.mousami@ufl.edu](mailto:poudel.mousami@ufl.edu))
- Dr. Aastha Subedi, Postdoctoral Associate, Cornell University, Geneva, NY ([as4358@cornell.edu](mailto:as4358@cornell.edu))
- Jan 29** Dr. Arthur Grupe, Assistant Professor, University of Wisconsin-La Crosse, La Crosse, WI ([agrupeii@uwlax.edu](mailto:agrupeii@uwlax.edu))
- Dr. Elena Karlsen-Ayala, USDA Forest Service ([elena.karlsen-ayala@usda.gov](mailto:elena.karlsen-ayala@usda.gov)) Research Plant Pathologist, U.S. Forest Service Northern Research Station Unit NRS-03, Ecology & Management of Invasive Species and Forest Ecosystems in Hamden, CT
- Feb 5** Dr. Naweena Thapa ([naweena.thapa@fmc.com](mailto:naweena.thapa@fmc.com)), Discovery Biology Principal Investigator, FMC Corporation, Newark, DE
- Dr. Sujan Timilsina ([sujan.timilsina@gmail.com](mailto:sujan.timilsina@gmail.com)), Bioinformatics Scientist, Charles River Laboratories International, Inc , Newark, DE
- Feb 12** Dr. Andy Shirley - [andy.shirley@corteva.com](mailto:andy.shirley@corteva.com) - Field Scientist, Cairo, GA at Corteva Agriscience ([andy.shirley@corteva.com](mailto:andy.shirley@corteva.com))
- Feb 19** Dr. Ricardo Alcalá Briseño, Plant Pathology Department, Pennsylvania State University ([ria5282@psu.edu](mailto:ria5282@psu.edu))  
Dr. Fernanda Iruegas Bocardo, Assistant Research Professor, Plant Pathology Department, Pennsylvania State University ([fbi5042@psu.edu](mailto:fbi5042@psu.edu))
- Feb 26** Dr. Sladana Bec ([SBec@ballhort.com](mailto:SBec@ballhort.com)), Plant Disease Diagnostician, Ball Horticultural Company, West Chicago, Illinois 60185-2698 USA

Dr. Shankar Shakya ([sshakya@ballhort.com](mailto:sshakya@ballhort.com)), Bioinformatics Associate Scientist, Ball Horticultural Company, West Chicago, Illinois 60185-2698 USA

**March 5** Dr. Matt Cullen, ([mattcullen15@sbcglobal.net](mailto:mattcullen15@sbcglobal.net)) Plant Pathology Lab Supervisor, Plant Industries Division, Missouri Department of Agriculture, Jefferson City MO

Dr. Stephanie Suarez ([stephaniensuarez@gmail.com](mailto:stephaniensuarez@gmail.com)), Fungicide Branch, Registration Division, Office of Pesticide Programs U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

**March 12** Dr. Tatiana Sanchez-Jones ([tatiana.sanchez@ufl.edu](mailto:tatiana.sanchez@ufl.edu)) Commercial Horticulture Agent, Alachua County

Dr. Sanju Kunwar, Assistant Professor, University of Florida NFREC and Plant Pathology Department, Quincy, FL ([sanju.kunwar@ufl.edu](mailto:sanju.kunwar@ufl.edu))

**March 26** Dr. Eric Newberry, Research Scientist, ([eric.newberry@usda.gov](mailto:eric.newberry@usda.gov)) Molecular Biologist, Plant Pathogen Confirmatory Diagnostics Laboratory, USDA, Animal Plant Health Inspection Service, Plant Protection and Quarantine, Science and Technology, Laurel, MD

Dr. Peter Abrahamian, ([peter.abrahamian@usda.gov](mailto:peter.abrahamian@usda.gov)), Research Plant Pathologist, USDA-ARS, National Germplasm Resources Laboratory, BLDG 004 BARC-WEST, BELTSVILLE, MD 20705

**April 2** Dr. Amanda Strayer-Scherer, Associate Professor & Extension Specialist, Department of Entomology and Plant Pathology, Auburn University

Dr. Neha Potnis, Professor, Department of Entomology and Plant Pathology, Auburn University

**April 9** Dr. Renato De Carvalho, Scientist, Molecular and Cell Sciences, Plant Biotechnology – Bayer Crop Sciences ([renato.decarvalho@bayer.com](mailto:renato.decarvalho@bayer.com))

Dr. Juliana Pereira-Martin ([julianapereiramartin@gmail.com](mailto:julianapereiramartin@gmail.com))

Scientist at Bayer, Product Design, Biotechnology, Trait Introgression,  
Plant Breeding

**April 16**

Dr. Brett Lane, Kansas State University, Agronomy Department.

Dr. Anuj Sharma, Assistant Professor, Horticulture Department,  
GCREC, University of Florida ([anujsharma@ufl.edu](mailto:anujsharma@ufl.edu))

