Term Project Guidelines

MSCI-262C (World of Plants) → Fall 2025

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The Term Project in this course is designed to empower you to conduct research into specific aspects of plant biology and apply what you have learned to a social challenge. Your final work is a plant-based solution designed to address the needs of particular impacted communities.

In order to meet the requirements for an MSCI CORE course, the writing for this project must produce at least 750 words in total.

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Term Project Goals

The Term Project will be driven by the following goals:

1. Use observations of plants in their environments to develop areas of botanical interest.

2. Perform research to better understand the plants you have observed, with an emphasis on human relationships with these plant species.

3. Perform research to better understand a social challenge that could be addressed through our relationship with plants, focusing on relevant impacted communities and their needs.

4. Choose a group of plants to focus on, performing additional research as necessary.

5. Design a creative intervention that uses plants and our relationship to them to address the social challenge and needs of the impacted communities that you researched.

Term Project Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of their *Term Project* each student will demonstrate the ability to:

A. Take inspiration from the observation of plants in their environment, using that inspiration to determine an area of focal research.

B. Find reliable sources of information to support the exploration of their focal topic.

C. Identify a social challenge that can be approached by considering how humans interact with plants.

D. Use serial iteration – the process of production, feedback, and revision – to develop the components of the project.

E. Provide feedback to other students based on the transdisciplinary goals of the project.

F. Produce a plant-based solution ("creative intervention") to your social challenge that is responsive to the needs of your impacted communities.

G. Present your creative intervention to your classmates, explaining how you wove together your scientific research, your values, and your creative work to produce this intervention.

Project Development Process

During Weeks 01-13 of this course, we will be incrementally developing your *Term Project* through activities taking place in and outside of class. Below is a summary of the activities that will happen during each week:

Week	In-class work	To be prepared for the following week
01	❖ Brief introduction to the goals of the *Term Project*	☐ Conduct research on potential project directions
02	❖ Learning how to make a plant collection ❖ Learning how to use the iNaturalist app and platform	☐ Work on Term Project research & ideation
03	❖ **Term Project Workshop 1 :** Student values & interests assessment ❖ On-campus BioBlitz used to seed each student's Plant Collection	☐ Work on Term Project research & ideation
04	*None*	☐ Complete Term Project Visioning Board
05	❖ **Term Project Workshop 2 :** Research & Ideation	☐ Complete Initial Term Project Proposal
06	❖ **Term Project Workshop 3 :** Initial Term Project Proposal feedback	☐ Revise Initial Term Project Proposal
07	*None*	☐ Complete Final Term Project Proposal
08	*None*	☐ Work on Project Sketch
09	*None*	☐ Work on Draft Project Summary ☐ Complete Project Sketch
10	❖ **Term Project Workshop 4 :** Term Project Sketch feedback	☐ Work on Project Sketch revisions ☐ Complete Draft Project Summary ☐ Work on Term Project completion
11	❖ **Term Project Workshop 5 :** Draft Project Summary feedback	☐ Revise Project Summary ☐ Work on Term Project completion

Week	In-class work	To be prepared for the following week
12	*None*	☐ Work on Term Project completion
13	❖ **Term Project Work Week** (no regular class meeting; opportunity for individual ZOOM meetings with your instructor)	☐ Complete & Submit Term Project & Summary ☐ Reading of classmates' *Term Project Summaries*
14	❖ **Term Project presentations**	☐ Reading of classmates' *Term Project Summaries*
15	❖ **Term Project presentations**	*None*

Please make sure that you take full advantage of the preparation process by coming to class with the next stage of your *Term Project* each week.

Intermediate stages

This course is designed to support your development of the *Term Project* through a series of intermediate stages. These stages are outlined below.

Plant Collections

We'll start out our exploration of the plant world by developing a plant collection. By using the *iNaturalist* technology/community, we will learn to identify the plants that we encounter in our everyday life. These discoveries will serve as a jumping-off point for considering what directions of inquiry most interest each student. While students are not required to focus on plant species in their collection for their *Term Project*, it is wonderful if the plants that will be the focus of your research are also plants in your collection.

Students will present their initial discoveries from their *Plant Collections* during Week 04 of class.

Visioning Board

As a first step towards developing their *Term Project*, students will produce a *Visioning Board* where they imagine at least three directions that the project could take. Each of these "directions" should envision what kind of social challenge they would like to address, how particular kinds of plants could be involved, and who might benefit from addressing this social challenge. These ideas are meant to be initial and need not be deeply researched, although it certainly helps to have done some basic research into each direction.

Students will share their *Visioning Board* as part of a *Term Project* research & ideation workshop during Week 05 of class.

Annotated Bibliography

Once you have identified a focal area for your research, you will keep an *Annotated Bibliography* of all relevant sources you have discovered. For each source, provide:

1. A complete citation using the standard format of your choice (but stick with one format!);

2. A short paragraph or bulleted list that describes the factual and conceptual information that you plan to use from this source.

Your instructor will provide you with a Google doc where all of the written components of your project will be developed, including the *Annotated Bibliography*.

Proposal

During Week 05-08 you will develop a proposal for your project that identifies:

A. The nature of the social challenge that you want to address using a plant-based approach;
B. Who the impacted communities are for this particular social challenge;
C. What plant science concepts you will employ in your project;
D. What species of plants you plan to bring to bear on this social challenge; and
E. What sort of creative interventions you envision producing for this project.

All of these elements of the proposal should be supported by research, using the *Annotated Bibliography* to cite all sources and list the information they provided.

Proposals will be developed through a series of iterations, including feedback from your peers and your instructor that should lead you to make critical revisions.

Project Sketch

Before creating your actual final project, you will get a chance to get feedback on a "sketch" of your plan. As the name suggests, the sketch should be an initial depiction of your proposed plant-based solution ("creative intervention"). The sketch should draw connections between the nature of your social challenge, the needs of your impacted communities, and the solution you are considering. The solution need not be fully realized, but the general nature of what you will create for the project itself should be clear in the sketch. An ideal sketch has the full outline (visual and/or text) of what you plan to do *before* you actually flesh out the final project. The goal of completing the sketch is to get feedback from your peers and instructor on your planned solution before you take the time needed to implement it.

Project Summary

All students will submit a *Term Project Summary* that includes a final *Bibliography* (you should not include annotations at this stage). The *Term Project Summary* should:

- provide general scientific background required to understand the creative intervention that you have made;

- describe and explain the factual and conceptual scientific information that informed the project, using citations to indicate which sources provided particular content;

- explain the social challenge that you are addressing, describing all relevant impacted communities; and

- explain the plant-based creative intervention that you are proposing and how you depict the solution to your chosen social challenge in the project itself.

Each *Term Project Summary* will be accompanied by an *Annotated Bibliography* that provides for each source not only a complete citation but also a list summarizing what conceptual and factual scientific information this source contributed to your project (see <u>above</u>). Please make sure that each of your sources is cited inline within the text of your *Term Project Summary* at least once.

In order to meet the requirements for an MSCI course, the writing for this project must produce <u>at least 750 words in total</u>.

The Project

Your actual term project should be a plant-based solution to a social challenge that addresses the needs of particular impacted communities. This will be a "creative intervention" in the sense that you will create something to intervene in the social challenge that you have identified. Depending on the scale of the creative intervention that you propose, your project can either be a plan for implementation or an implemented plan.

These guidelines are intentionally vague about the actual form of this final project, because ideally it takes a form that best fits within your interests, talents, and educational path. Final term projects can be physical or digital. They can be text-based or visual or audio or a combination of these forms. They can be a documented intervention or a design for a potential intervention. The idea is that you get to determine the final form of the *Term Project* that best meets your educational needs and most appropriately addresses the social challenge that you have identified. Please see above for all the opportunities to incrementally develop your concept for the final *Term Project*… but when in doubt, talk to your instructor!

What's crucial for all *Term Projects* is that they be fully documented. What is appropriate documentation will vary from project to project. Again, when in doubt please contact your instructor.

All *Term Projects* must be submitted via *Canvas* as follows:

- If your project is purely digital, it can be directly uploaded to *Canvas*. Some movie projects may exceed the *Canvas* upload limit, and should be uploaded to a film-streaming site such as YouTube or Vimeo (please provide the URL on *Canvas*).

- If your project is analog, you should upload a set of at least six (6) portfolio-quality images of your work to the LMS as a single PDF file.

Feedback as you develop your project

Throughout this project you will be receiving feedback from both your peers and your instructor on the intermediate stages of your project. A big part of the learning experience for this project is engaging with that feedback: making sure you understand what others are reflecting to you, contemplating how that feedback relates to your creative goals, and deciding on how (and if/when) to revise your work in response to this feedback.

You will also be asked to give quality, constructive feedback to your classmates throughout this process (and can earn points towards the *Collaboration and Feedback* component of your grade based on the quality of your feedback). Remember that quality feedback is actionable. If you are telling a classmate that you like something they did, they need to hear why you like that element of their work so they can make sure to retain the best elements of their project. If you are telling a classmate that something needs to improve, you need to explain both why an element of their project is not working for you and what direction you think they should move in to make improvements.

Delivery of Materials

The written components of the *Term Project* (*Project Summary + Annotated Bibliography*) will be developed in a Google doc generated by your instructor. Developing the written components of the project via a Google doc will allow you to receive feedback from your instructor directly on your work, streamlining the revision process. Please see the *Term Project* section of *Canvas* (in the "General Course Resources" module) to access the Google doc where you will develop the written components of your *Term Project*.

The components of your project that relate to the development of your creative work can be provided in a variety of formats (as appropriate), but for 2D work a PDF (rather than a series of image files) is required. Please see the *Canvas* for details on how to submit the intermediate and final components of your *Term Project*.

Scheduling

All completed student projects are due at the end of instructional Week 13. See the course Canvas site for specific due dates.

You will be scheduled to present during either Week 14 or Week 15. Again, please see the course Canvas site to sign up for a presentation slot..

Term Project Presentation

During Weeks 14-15 of the course, students will present their *Term Projects* and get the chance to provide each other with feedback.

On academic honesty

Plagiarism of any kind will not be tolerated. All cases of suspected plagiarism will be turned over to the Registrar's office for potential referral to the academic judiciary. Please be careful to indicate the source of all ideas other than your own; this includes both direct quotes ("evolution is the science of…") and paraphrasing of books, scientific papers, and websites. Careful citation makes you seem more authoritative in whatever you write. For more information on the course plagiarism policy see the syllabus and this site: [For Students | Christopher X J. Jensen](#).

Help!

You are not meant to be left alone to develop your *Term Project*. Please take advantage of the built-in peer and instructor feedback that will occur during Weeks 02-13. Also, please reach out to your instructor at any time if you need help. The best *Term Projects* will emerge from a lot of conversations that you have with your classmates, instructors, and perhaps other trusted colleagues.