

## **Alexander Grass Scholars Program**

### Faculty Mentor FAQs

#### **What is the Alexander Grass Scholars Program (AGS), and how does it involve community partners?**

Each Spring term, 20 undergraduates are selected through a competitive process to participate in a project-based learning experience about research in the humanities. Students are introduced to the nuts-and-bolts of humanistic methods like careful reading, historical analysis, contextualization, conceptual analysis, and critical evaluation. They learn to develop research questions, interact with archives, locate and assess sources, choose research methods, navigate ethical considerations, and practice strategies for communicating about findings.

In UF's Summer A (6 weeks, May 12-June 20), students are enrolled in a UF course on humanities research fundamentals. As a part of this course, they are divided into four groups, each of which explores a publicly engaged topic and produces a research project. They also create research plans for an individual project in the fall.

In the Fall term, each student completes an independent research project and participates in a Grass Scholar Research Symposium to publicly present their work.

Faculty mentorship is crucial during students' independent research process. Mentors guide students in executing their research plan, navigating challenges, and ensuring quality and research integrity.

#### **What support does the Grass Scholars Program provide faculty mentors?**

The AGS provides **\$500** for supervision of a Grass Scholar. This may be taken as a lump sum if faculty is on appointment (taxes will be deducted), or as professional development funds (held in a department account, taxes not deducted).

#### **What are my responsibilities as a Grass Scholar Faculty Mentor?**

Students begin the fall with a research plan developed during the Summer A Research Fundamentals course. Faculty should assist their student in following their plan. Faculty are also expected to ensure research integrity: helping students

to select and assess sources properly; fact-checking when appropriate; helping students to navigate any ethical issues that may arise (for instance, when conducting research with marginalized communities); helping students to communicate their research results clearly and in a compelling fashion via a research poster.

### **What kinds of projects will the students be producing?**

We expect most Grass Scholars to opt for non-traditional, public facing humanities projects involving research. Examples include writing blogs, producing a podcast, creating a StoryMap, and designing a social media campaign.

More advanced students are encouraged to produce traditional research products if they wish, along the lines of a research paper. We especially encourage this when students have established faculty mentorship, and the faculty mentor is committed to overseeing an advanced project.

All students must prepare a poster to showcase their research at our Grass Scholar Research Symposium in November 2025. Posters must be accurate, compelling, and legible to a broad audience.

Grass Scholars Projects must be distinct from other funded undergraduate research projects—such as University Scholars, CLAS Scholars, and Reubin Askew Scholars.

### **About how much time should I expect to devote to supervising my student?**

We estimate that faculty will meet 1 hour every other week with their student, plus faculty must attend a Grass Scholars Research Symposium in November. This amounts to approximately 10 hours over the course of the semester.

### **Must my student sign up for independent study or thesis credits with me in order to pursue this research?**

No, but if you and your student would like to organize your collaboration around independent study or thesis credits you may certainly do so.

## **What other supports do Grass Scholars have to complete their independent research projects?**

**Funds:** each Grass Scholar is awarded \$1500 to support their research upon completion of the Summer Research Fundamentals course. (They are awarded an additional \$500 upon successful completion in the Research Symposium).

**Graduate student mentorship:** each Scholar is assigned to a graduate student mentor, who is responsible for checking on their independent research progress and being available for consultation.

**Informal peer mentorship:** each Scholar is one member of a cohort of 5 students from over the summer, with whom they worked closely to produce a public-facing research project.

**Grass Scholars Coordinator:** Alison Walsh will serve as Coordinator of the Grass Scholars Program in 2025-2026 and will be available to consult with students about their projects in the fall of 2025.

## **Who can I contact for more information?**

Alison Walsh, Grass Scholars Coordinator, [alison.walsh@ufl.edu](mailto:alison.walsh@ufl.edu)