

Liking Lichens: An overlooked "organism," their biology and depiction in the arts IDH2952 Honors College Class

I. Course Information

Meeting Day/Time: Thursday Period 4 10:40-11:35 am

Location: Marston 308

Office Hours: Thursday 12-1 pm or by appointment

Instructor

Laurel Kaminsky, Assistant University Librarian

Office Location: Marston Science Library 201A

Telephone: 352-273-2764

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Course Description

Lichens are a symbiotic relationship between a fungus and a photosynthesizing partner. Their symbiosis is unique in that the lichen resembles neither the fungus or photosynthesizing partner. Lichens are easily overlooked due to their small size, but under a hand lens have an intricate morphology. The symbiosis and beauty of lichens has attracted the attention of multiple artists, including John Cage. The class explores the biology of lichens and how lichens are depicted in art and politics. Class periods will contain a mix of field trips, and discussion on the eco-poetics of lichens and their biology.

Learning Objectives and Goals

- Describe key concepts of lichen biology and morphology from artistic and scientific perspectives
- Interpret and analyze artistic representations of biological concepts
- Critically evaluate how science and politics are intertwined
- Create original artistic work inspired by lichens

Texts and Materials

Required text:

- [Lichens: Toward a Minimal Resistance](#). Vincent Zonca. 2023. Polity Press.

This book will be placed as a Course Reserve for in library use at Marston Science Library. We will read about half the book for this class.

Suggested:

- A hand lens (10x magnification) or magnification device for a phone is recommended but not required. A phone with a strong camera should be sufficient.

Additional texts:

- Lives of Lichens. Robert Lücking and Toby Spribille. 2024. Princeton University Press.
Link on Canvas. (no readings, provides background info on lichens).
- Drawing and Painting Fungi : An Artists Guide to Finding and Illustrating Mushrooms and Lichens. Claire Kathleen Ward. 2024. The Crowood Press. (available online).
- Graphis scripta / Writing Lichens. Claire Goulet. 2024. Gaspereau Press. (selections will be posted on Canvas, and book will be placed on course reserve)
- Supplementary literary works on lichens will be provided through Canvas or Course Reserves.

II. List of Graded Work

Assignment	Description	Requirements	Due Date	Points
Class participation	See rubric in Section IV		Throughout semester	70
Discussion leader	On the selected day, provide a brief overview of the readings, and start the conversation	See Canvas for the assigned week	See Canvas	20
Reflection posts	A two-paragraph response to a prompt on Canvas	At least two paragraphs long and submitted on Canvas	See weekly schedule and Canvas	30
Lichen identification lab	Collect 3 large lichens and bring to class, and post spreadsheet with collection data on Canvas	See Canvas for details and rubric	February 12 & 13	10
Project proposal	A two-paragraph proposal describing final creative project	At least two paragraphs outlining your creative project and artistic/scientific inspirations	April 2nd	10
Final creative project	A six-minute PowerPoint presentation on lichens and creativity using only images	See Canvas for rubric	April 9 th by 11:59 pm upload on Canvas, April 10 presentation	60

III. Course Schedule

January 16th Week 1: Course intro and brief overview on lichens	
Reading:	n/a
Activities:	Microscopy and folding a lichen packet; M.C. Escher "Waterfall"
Assignment Work:	
January 23rd Week 2: What is a lichen?	
Readings:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scientific definition pgs. 12-19 and 47-48 • Politics pgs. 173-184 • Customs and beliefs pgs. 22-30 • Artistic inspiration pgs. 52-55 and 69-71 • Fragility and resistance pgs. 132-134
Activities:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PowerPoint presentation on scientific definitions of a lichen • Discussion on readings
Assignment Work:	
January 30th Week 3: Field trip- Lichen hikin': Nature and culture of lichens	
Readings:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ruderals pgs. 91-92 • Rousseauist walks pgs. 92-107 • Microhabitats pgs. 166-169 • Natural Images pgs. 51-52 (to end of Nearing quote) • Luiz Zerbini pgs. 209-210; https://www.sikkemajenkinsco.com/luiz-zerbini
Activities:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Walk and discussion on readings. Meet at front entrance of Marston Science Library
Assignment Work:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflection on the hike and readings (Due February 5th 11:59 pm on Canvas)
February 6th Week 4: Artistic representations of lichens	
Reading:	Please read excerpts from the book about these artists and look at their websites. Does a specific artist or piece resonate with you?

	<p>Claudia Losi https://www.claudialosi.com/portfolio/tavole-vegetali/ Oscar Furbacken https://www.oscarfurbacken.se/ Leo Battistelli https://www.instagram.com/leobattistelli_/p/CXHN8rPp_H/ Yves Chaudouët can google Yves Chaudouët lichen to see color prints of images Nathalie Ravier pgs 36 and 178 https://nathalieravier.wixsite.com/book/les-lichens Pascale Gadon-Gonzalez https://www.pascalegadon.com/ Drawing and Painting Fungi : An Artists Guide to Finding and Illustrating Mushrooms and Lichens (e-book, link on Canvas, skim to see how to draw/paint fungi/lichens)</p>
Activities:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion on representation of lichens in artwork
Assignment Work:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bring three lichens to the next class to identify and upload collection data onto Canvas by February 11th 11:59 pm
February 13th Week 5: Eroticism and scientific representation of lichens	
Reading:	Lichen erotics pgs 34-43
Activities:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify 1-3 lichens to genus and or species • Describe a species scientifically and creatively
Assignment work:	
February 20th Week 6: Field trip: Lichen collection at the Florida Museum of Natural History	
Readings:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sentinel Species pgs. 108-112 • “Sbarbarian” Glowworm pgs. 116-120 (with emphasis on herbarium references) • Ecological Forewarnings pgs 124-132 • <i>Cora timucua</i> (Hygrophoraceae), a new and potentially extinct, previously misidentified basidiolichen of Florida inland scrub documented from historical collections. Lücking et al. 2020. The Bryologist. (Note: Skim abstract, Figures 4 and 5, and Conservation Assessment section)
Activities:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet at the front desk of Dickinson Hall; Tour of the herbarium and lichen collection
Assignment Work:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflection on visit to the FLMNH and readings (Due February 26th 11:59 pm on Canvas)
February 27th Week 7: Field trip- Harn Museum of Art	
Reading:	<p>Read pgs. 67-71 and 77-89 to provide context for some of the art pieces.</p> <p>List of potential artworks we’ll discuss at the Harn. Richard Misrach. Swamp and Pipeline, Cancer Alley, Louisiana Mark Klett. Pine Cut and Marked, Apalachicola National Forest Eliot Furness Porter. Shade Tree in Bloom, Gt. Smoky Mtns.</p> <p>Thomas Struth. Paradise 14, Yakushima, Japan 1999 Shen Quan. Deer Amid Pine Trees 松下雙鹿圖</p> <p>Read pgs. 77-89.</p> <p>Miguel Arzabe. La Ofrenda. Currently undatabased in Harn collection. Watch: https://youtu.be/671UffuMT4o?si=9Mt_n_2cKaOkQ8Pw&t=376 Similarity to Bernard Saby, read pgs. 67-71</p> <p>Elizabeth Blackwell. 334 Jew’s Ear. John Gould. Sparkling-tail Tryphaena Duponti</p>
Activities:	Field trip to the Harn Museum of Art to look at artwork that incorporates and/or is inspired by lichens and fungi. Meeting place will be determined. Either Marston or Harn Museum of Art.
Assignment Work:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflection on visit to the Harn Museum of Art and readings (Due March 5th 11:59 pm on Canvas) • Prepare questions to ask visiting lichen artists/scientists
March 6th Week 8: Zoom discussion with artists and artistic lichenologists	
Reading:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lichen artists and artistic lichenologists: Becoming what we attend to. Nastassja Noell, 2023. Evansia.
Activities:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion with artists and lichenologists • Guest artists/lichenologists to be determined
Assignment Work:	

March 13th Week 9: Music and Imagination of John Cage and Iannis Xenakis	
Reading:	Music = Mushroom pgs. 72-77 Lichens by Iannis Xenakis John Cage: " Mushroom Haiku " and " At the Middle "
Activities:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion on readings and music • Artificial intelligence exercise on lichen representation
Assignment Work:	
March 20th Week 10: Spring Break	
Reading:	
Activities:	
Assignment Work:	
March 27th Week 11: Redefining the lichen symbiosis	
Reading:	Evolutionary biology of lichen symbioses Introduction 1566-1567, and VI. Whose genes, whose phenotypes Chimeras , Vampires and other common monsters; "A third place" and Cohabitation pgs 192- 213 A symbiotic view of life: We have never been individuals. Gilbert et al. 2012 [paper references "We are all lichens" quoted in book; put here as reference, no required reading] Selection of poems by Forrest Gander, Drew Milne and/or Clare Goulet
Activities:	
Assignment Work:	Final project proposal, due April 2 nd at 11:59 pm
April 3rd Week 12: No class, Laurel at conference	
Reading:	
Activities:	
Assignment Work:	Work on final project, upload PowerPoint onto Canvas April 9th by 11:59 pm
April 10th Week 13: Project Presentations	
Reading:	
Activities:	
Assignment Work:	
April 17th Week 14: Project presentations and/or Class wrap up	
Reading:	
Activities:	
Assignment Work:	

IV. Grading

A minimum grade of B is required to earn Academic points towards your Honors Completion Requirements. (Exception: Honors Quest I and II sections require a C). Once you have earned your final grade in this course, please upload the course information and final grade from your Unofficial Transcript into your Honors Canvas Cohort: Honors Completion module to earn Honors Milestone / Completion credit.

Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in the course are consistent with university policies. [See UF Academic Regulations and Policies for more information regarding the University Attendance Policies.](#) Students can miss one class as a personal day. Make up assignments will be provided for additional missed classes.

Grading Scale

Grading scale is consistent with University policy. [For more information see a link to the University grades and grading policy.](#)

A	200-188 points	C	148-153
A-	180-187	C-	140-147
B+	174-179	D+	134-139
B	168-173	D	128-133
B-	160-172	D-	120-127
C+	154-159	E	Under 119

Class Participation Rubric

The class is centered around discussion and engaging with “uncommonly” encountered materials and perspectives. Participation consists of attendance, and contributing to in-class discussions. Please be mindful and considerate that classmates may have different lived experiences and opinions. Maintaining a space free of judgement is crucial for learning.

Class participation will be graded upon

Attendance: Attends class regularly (1 missed class allowed)

Consideration of classmates: Please be mindful and considerate that classmates may have different lived experiences and opinions

Engagement with materials: Shows evidence in discussion of having read the assigned work, and given thought to major themes

Total Points 70 pts

High Quality: 70

Average: 62

Needs Improvement: 35

V. Required Policies

Students Requiring Accommodations

Students with disabilities who experience learning barriers and would like to request academic accommodations should connect with the Disability Resource Center. [See the “Get Started With the DRC” webpage on the Disability Resource Center site.](#) It is important for students to share their accommodation letter with their instructor and discuss their access needs, as early as possible in the semester.

UF Evaluations Process

Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/>. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens, and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or [via https://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/](https://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/). Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/>.

Campus Resources

- Honors Program, 201 Walker Hall, 352-392-1519 Quick questions for an Honors advisor? Email advisor@honors.ufl.edu Need an Honors advising appointment? Schedule via Microsoft Bookings: <https://bit.ly/ufhonorsadvising>

- U Matter, We Care: If you or someone you know is in distress, please contact umatter@ufl.edu, 352-392-1575, or visit U Matter, We Care website to refer or report a concern and a team member will reach out to the student in distress.
- Counseling and Wellness Center: Visit the Counseling and Wellness Center website or call 352-392-1575 for information on crisis services as well as non-crisis services.

Academic Resources

- E-learning technical support: Contact the UF Computing Help Desk at 352-392-4357 or via e-mail at helpdesk@ufl.edu.
- Teaching Center: 1317 Turlington Hall, 352-392-2010 or to make an appointment 352- 392-6420. General study skills and tutoring.
- Writing Studio: Daytime (9:30am-3:30pm): 2215 Turlington Hall, 352-846-1138 | Evening (5:00pm-7:00pm): 1545 W University Avenue (Library West, Rm. 339). Help brainstorming, formatting, and writing papers.