

**INSECTS AND PLANTS LAB
(HONORS)
Spring 2026**

Credits: 0-2

Course number: IDH 4912, section 4912, class number 22674

Schedule: Thursday, period 7-8 (1:55 pm - 3.50 pm)

Location: Entomology and Nematology Department (ENY)/McGuire Center for Lepidoptera and Biodiversity (Powell Hall), room to be determined on weekly basis.

Prerequisites: Student has taken Insects and Plants (UnCommon Reads)

Instructors

Dr. Andrei Sourakov

Dr. Keith Willmott

McGuire Center for Lepidoptera

Florida Museum of Natural History

Powell Hall, 3215 Hull Road, office 220

TEL: (352) 273-2013

Email: asourakov@flmnh.ufl.edu; kwillmott@flmnh.ufl.edu

Office hours

By appointment

Course description

The course introduces hands-on components relevant to the Insects and Plants (UnCommon Reads) class, where students gain appreciation for the evolutionary arms-race between interacting insects and plants. Students will have a chance to spend time in the field collecting and photographing insects, will learn how to make a basic insect collection, how to identify insects and plants using publications and electronic resources, and how to contribute their observations online for broader use by the scientific community. Course participants will also be introduced to basic taxonomic techniques, such as dissecting and drawing insect specimens, extracting DNA for DNA-barcoding, and “blasting” DNA barcodes against DNA sequence databases for identification purposes.

Objectives and basis for grading

Students registered for 0-1 credits will be graded on attendance, participation and the final paper, which will be formatted for submitting to the Featured Creatures website (<https://entnemdept.ufl.edu/creatures/>). The paper will represent as complete profile as possible of one of the insect species that occurs in Florida. Students registering for 2 credits will identify an additional research component at the start of the semester through discussion with the instructors, which they will present during the last class.

CLASS TOPICS (SUBJECT TO CHANGE)

WEEK 1: Jan 15

Introduction; Tour of McGuire Center/Florida State Collection of Arthropods (FSCA) insect

collections

WEEK 2: Jan 22

Insect identification: keys, field guides, online resources, iNaturalist

WEEK 3: Jan 29

McGuire Center lab dissections, scientific illustration

WEEK 4: Feb 5

McGuire Center lab dissections, scientific illustration

WEEK 5: Feb 12

Butterfly Rainforest/Natural Area Teaching Laboratory (NATL) insect photography

WEEK 6: Feb 19

NATL field survey methods (sampling methods, vegetation structure)

WEEK 7: Feb 26

NATL insect collection in the field

WEEK 8: Mar 5

Insect preparation lab (tissue sampling, specimen preparation)

WEEK 9: Mar 12

Molecular lab - DNA extraction

WEEK 10: Mar 19 – SPRING BREAK NO CLASS

WEEK 11: Mar 26

Molecular lab - DNA barcoding/PCR

WEEK 12: Apr 2

Herbarium: preparation of plant specimens

WEEK 13: Apr 9

Molecular lab - gel electrophoresis, sequence analysis

WEEK 14: Apr 16

Student presentations

Grading

% by activity

Activity	% of final grade
Attendance	50
Participation	30
Final paper	20

A = 93 – 100%
A- = 90 – 92.99%
B+ = 87 – 89.99%
B = 83 – 86.99%
B- = 80 – 82.99%
C+ = 77 – 79.99%
C = 73 – 76.99%
C- = 70 – 72.99%
D+ = 67 – 69.99%
D = 63 – 66.99%
D- = 60 – 62.99%
E = below 60%

A minimum grade of B is required to earn Academic points towards Honors Completion Requirements. 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 Requirements module to earn Honors Milestone / Completion credit. For current UF grading policies see: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/grades-grading-policies/>

Academic policies and resources

Academic Policy and Resource information is provided here: <https://go.ufl.edu/syllabuspolices>

Class attendance, work and exam policies

Students are expected to attend all classes unless there are valid reasons for absence, and part of the grade will reflect class attendance. Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university policies that can be found at: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/attendance-policies/>

Use of AI

Students may use AI in this course to help synthesize or understand information, but should be aware that the information they receive is only as reliable as information that is already available online. Online resources may provide conflicting, inaccurate, or outdated information, and we thus encourage students to always seek original sources online, as well as textbooks and field guides accessible in UF libraries, to verify information quality.

Accommodations for students with disabilities

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: <https://disability.ufl.edu/get-started/>. 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.

Textbook

There is no required textbook for this class.

Current UF grading policies

See: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/grades-grading-policies/>

Student feedback on course

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/>. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/>.

Academic support

- E-learning technical support: Contact the UF Computing Help Desk (<http://helpdesk.ufl.edu/>) at 352-392-4357 or via e-mail at helpdesk@ufl.edu.
- Career Connections Center (<https://career.ufl.edu/>): Reitz Union Suite 1300, 352-392-1601. Career assistance and counseling services.
- Library Support (<https://cms.uflib.ufl.edu/ask>): Various ways to receive assistance with respect to using the libraries or finding resources. Call 866-281-6309 or email ask@ufl.libanswers.com for more information.
- Teaching Center (<https://umatter.ufl.edu/office/teaching-center/>): 1317 Turlington Hall, 352-392-2010 or to make an appointment 352- 392-6420. General study skills and tutoring.
- Writing Studio (<https://writing.ufl.edu/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.
- Academic Complaints: Office of the Ombuds; Visit the Complaint Portal webpage (<http://www.ombuds.ufl.edu/complaint-portal/>) for more information.
- Enrollment Management Complaints (Registrar, Financial Aid, Admissions): View the Student Complaint Procedure webpage (<https://em.ufl.edu/complaint>) for more information.
- 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>
- Honors Program Event Calendar: <https://www.honors.ufl.edu/news--events/calendar-of-events/>