

## INSECT ECOLOGY

ENY 6203

3 credit hours

Fall 2018

Online sections

**Instructor:** Dr. Heather McAuslane  
Room 2109, Entomology-Nematology Bldg.  
Bldg. 970, Natural Area Drive  
P.O. Box 110620  
TEL 352-273-3923  
FAX 352-392-5660  
hjmca@ufl.edu

**Office Hours:** Available by phone from 8:30 a.m. till 4:30 p.m. (Eastern Standard Time) or email during the workweek. I will respond to your call or email within 24 hours. Please arrange Zoom calls (after regular work hours if necessary) for more detailed questions.

**Course Website:** <http://elearning.ufl.edu/> Log in to E-Learning and you should find this course listed (and the accompanying lab class) on the first day of the semester.

**Course Communications:** Please communicate with the instructor about private issues through the course management email system (Inbox). Questions about course content that may benefit from peer input can be posted on the general Course Questions discussion board. The discussion board is moderated by the class instructor. Please follow the guidelines for communication in the Netiquette documented linked on p. 4 of this syllabus.

**Recommended Text:** Speight, M. R., M. D. Hunter and A. D. Watt. 2008. Ecology of Insects: Concepts and Applications. 2nd ed. Wiley-Blackwell.

**Course Description:** This course is an introduction to the concepts in ecology with emphasis on insects. The relationships of insects with their biotic and physical environments, along with the roles of insects in nature, will be emphasized. The basics of ecological research will also be covered. This is one of the required courses in the entomology graduate curriculum.

**Prerequisite Knowledge and Skills:** ENY 3005/5006, or any introductory entomology course

**Course Goals and/or Objectives:** By the end of this course, students will be able to:

- 1) Explain influences of an insect's biotic and abiotic environment on evolution of life histories;

- 2) Describe causes and effects of patterns of insect species abundance and distribution within ecosystems;
- 3) Describe fundamental ecological principles underlying the development and application of insect pest management and insect conservation;
- 4) Evaluate and critique ecological primary literature for content and scientific quality;
- 5) Translate scientific ecological literature into lay public-accessible presentations.

**Instructional Methods:** Class material to be understood and applied consists of readings from the assigned textbook and scientific journal articles, and narrated PowerPoint presentations, supplemented with videos or podcasts when available. Assignments to reinforce class material include short quizzes, online discussions, short writing assignments, and development of an oral PowerPoint presentation. Two midterm exams assess mastery of course material.

### **Course Policies**

**Attendance Policy:** As this is an asynchronous online course, there are no requirements for synchronous participation. However, participation in asynchronous online discussions is mandatory and graded.

**Quiz/Exam Policy:**

Quizzes are conducted online. Midterm exams are conducted by arrangement with a proctor. Exams are emailed to the proctor who administers and returns the completed exam within 24 hours. Suitable proctors include those people in a position of authority (work supervisors, faculty mentors) or assigned substitutes, and may be conducted at a place of work or at a suitable testing site (such as at the facilities of members of the National College Testing Association, <http://www.ncta-testing.org/cctc/find.php>).

**Make-up Policy:** Arrangements for a different date for the exam must be made at least one week prior to the exam date. If a student misses an exam due to a medical or family emergency (accompanied by a note from a medical professional), the exam will be rescheduled as soon as possible.

**Assignment Policy:** Late assignments will lose 25% of their score per day, including weekend days. Thus, if an assignment is more than four days late, the grade for the assignment will be zero. Assignments and exams must be submitted by 11:59 p.m. (Eastern Standard Time) on the day that they are due to get full credit.

**Course Technology:** The course is administered in E-learning through Canvas. Students will need a Gatorlink account to access the course web site (<http://www.gatorlink.ufl.edu/>). All students should have unlimited access to a computer with either Windows 7 or higher or Mac OS X operating systems. Students should make sure to have access to a back-up computer in case of equipment failure. A high-speed Internet connection is highly recommended. Students will need speakers, microphone, and headphones to hear and record presentations. Microsoft Office PowerPoint is recommended for the presentation assignment but OpenOffice (freeware)

may suffice <http://www.openoffice.org/>. Canvas supports the last two versions of most major browsers (<https://community.canvaslms.com/docs/DOC-10720>).

**Library and Electronic Journal Resources:** You have access to library resources and librarian help, just the same as our on-campus students do.

<http://guides.uflib.ufl.edu/c.php?g=147495&p=967232>

In order to access for free all of the journals and books that you are entitled to as a UF student, you should follow the directions here and use either the UF proxy server or the Virtual Private Network (VPN, recommended) <http://cms.uflib.ufl.edu/offcampus>.

**Plagiarism:** Please understand that my purpose in bringing to your attention the matter of plagiarism is to help train you to be ethical scientists, not to impugn your character.

Plagiarism is a serious problem in academia today, especially with the ease of obtaining information from the World Wide Web. Plagiarism is defined as representing the words or ideas of another person as one's own, without attribution to the source. All words and ideas must be attributed to a source unless they are considered common knowledge (i.e., widely known by many people and found in many different sources). There are many kinds of plagiarism (<https://www.bowdoin.edu/studentaffairs/academic-honesty/common-types.shtml>). One of the most common forms is insufficient paraphrasing. Even with attribution, you may be guilty of insufficient paraphrasing because your sentence too closely follows the content and structure of the cited author's sentence. Please look at this reference to learn about ways to avoid plagiarism (<https://www.bowdoin.edu/studentaffairs/academic-honesty/avoiding-plagiarism.shtml>).

Plagiarism is unethical, unacceptable in science, and prohibited by the UF Student Honor Code (<https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/policies/student-honor-code-student-conduct-code/>). The consequences for plagiarism while at the University of Florida range from receiving a grade of zero for the plagiarized assignment or a failing grade for the course, to, for repeated offenses, expulsion from the university. Plagiarism after graduate training calls into question one's scientific integrity and can lead to banning of publication in journals and the loss of jobs/careers.

In some countries, it is an acceptable practice to write in a manner that faculty members at the University of Florida consider being plagiarism. Students studying in our university and with plans to publish their research in the English language need to know what plagiarism is and how to avoid it.

Students who plagiarize will be caught and consequences will be applied. I check all written assignments using anti-plagiarism software called Turnitin®. Students who plagiarize will receive a grade of zero on the assignment. The second instance of plagiarism in the course will result in an automatic failing grade in the course.

## **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: <https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/policies/student-honor-code-student-conduct-code/>.

## **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.

## **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

0001 Reid Hall, 352-392-8565, [www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/](http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/)

## **Netiquette: Communication Courtesy**

All members of the class are expected to follow rules of common courtesy in all email messages, threaded discussions and chats. <http://teach.ufl.edu/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/NetiquetteGuideforOnlineCourses.pdf>

## **Course Evaluation**

Student assessment of instruction is an important part of efforts to improve teaching and learning. At the end of the semester, students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing online evaluations at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu>. Evaluations are typically open during the last two or three weeks of the semester, but students will be given specific times when they are open. Summary results of these assessments are available to students at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu/results/>.

## Getting Help

### Academic Resources

*E-learning technical support*, please contact the UF Help Desk at: [helpdesk@ufl.edu](mailto:helpdesk@ufl.edu), or (352) 392-4357 - select option 2, or <http://helpdesk.ufl.edu/>

Any requests for make-ups due to technical issues MUST be accompanied by the ticket number received from LSS when the problem was reported to them. The ticket number will document the time and date of the problem. You MUST e-mail your instructor within 24 hours of the technical difficulty if you wish to request a make-up.

*Career Resource Center*, 352-392-1601, career assistance and counseling, <http://www.crc.ufl.edu>

*Library support*, <http://cms.uflib.ufl.edu/ask>. Various ways to receive assistance with respect to using the library or finding resources.

*Complaints*: Each online distance learning program has a process for, and will make every attempt to resolve, student complaints within its academic and administrative departments at the program level. See <http://distance.ufl.edu/student-complaints> for more details.

*Writing Studio*, 352-846-1138. Help brainstorming, formatting, and writing papers. <http://writing.ufl.edu/writing-studio/>

### Health and Wellness

*U Matter, We Care*. If you or a friend is in distress, please contact [umatter@ufl.edu](mailto:umatter@ufl.edu) or 352-392-1575 so that a team member can reach out to the student.

Other resources are available at <http://www.distance.ufl.edu/getting-help> for:

- Counseling and Wellness Center
- Disability Resource Center
- Dean of Students Office
- Online Library Help Desk

## Grading Policies

Assignment	Points	Percentage
Midterm exams (2)	150 x 2	30
A narrated 10-minute PowerPoint presentation on an ecological topic	200	20
A 300-word written scientific abstract of the presentation, with references	50	5
Peer review of ecological presentation (1)	50	5
Participation in informal weekly discussion topics (6) plus introduction	10 x 7	7
Critical paper analysis (1)	100	10
Online quizzes (4)	20 x 4	8
Insect ecology in the news	150	15

Online quizzes. These consist of short answer questions and are set to encourage you to keep up with the course material. Quiz 1 covers “Introduction to insect ecology” to “Introduction to herbivory”; Quiz 2 covers “Plant defenses and insect counter defenses” to “Natural enemy behavioral ecology”; Quiz 3 covers “Predator-prey and host-parasite interactions” to “Life history strategies”; Quiz 4 covers “Insects in ecosystems” to “Factors affecting community structure”. Quizzes are timed, online, open book but DO NOT COPY answers directly from online or class resources. I will have the quizzes open for 3 days but once started, they must be finished in 1 hour.

Informal weekly discussion topics. There are 6 weekly discussion topics after that, usually based on watching a video, reading a blog or listening to a podcast. Questions are posed in the Discussions section of Canvas and are due on the dates shown in Canvas. Answer the question and respond to at least one other student’s response to receive full points. An additional “discussion” worth 10 points is your introduction of yourself to the class to be completed by the beginning of the second week of class.

Midterms. These consist of sentence definitions, short paragraph and longer essays. Each exam will cover only the material specified and will not be cumulative. Midterm 1 covers “Introduction to insect ecology” to “Predator-prey and host-parasite interactions”; Midterm 2 covers “Insect defenses against enemies” to “Factors affecting community structure”. Exams are proctored, 2 hours in length, and closed book. Line up your proctors at the beginning of the semester and send me their names and contact information. For most students at RECs, this will be your major professor or a staff member.

Insect ecology in the news. This consists of an essay comparing and contrasting the presentation of a current insect ecology topic in the news with the original scientific publication from which the scientific content was drawn. A specific content rubric will be supplied.

Suggested sources for insect ecology in the news are:

- Entomology Today <https://entomologytoday.org/>

- Science Daily [http://www.sciencedaily.com/news/plants\\_animals/insects\\_and\\_butterflies/](http://www.sciencedaily.com/news/plants_animals/insects_and_butterflies/) (you can also try the Agriculture & Food and Ecology links on the Science daily web page)
- Science Magazine <http://news.sciencemag.org/category/plants-animals>
- The New York Times <http://topics.nytimes.com/topics/news/science/topics/insects/index.html>.

**Critical paper analysis.** One recent paper from the primary scientific literature will be assigned over the course of the semester. The paper will be read critically following the Guide to Critical Reading of Scientific Literature on page 10. Analysis in a 2-page written document, focusing on the questions below, is due on the due date indicated in Canvas.

In five short paragraphs, address the following discussion questions:

1. State the main hypothesis and the over-arching larger scientific area examined in this paper.
2. Describe the main results and conclusions.
3. How convincing were their results and do they support the conclusions? (i.e., did they set up the experiments and analyze the data correctly?)
4. What you would have done differently, if anything?
5. What is the next direction this research group should take based on these results?

Raffa, K.F., E. N. Powell, and P.A. Townsend. 2013. Temperature-driven range expansion of an irruptive insect heightened by weakly coevolved plant defenses. PNAS 110: 2193-2198.

**Presentation, scientific abstract and list of references.** The oral presentation consists of an audio-recorded narrated 10-minute PowerPoint presentation on an ecological topic that is not covered in detail in class. If preparing a standard research presentation is not useful to you, we can discuss doing a teaching, training or extension kind of presentation, but still focusing on an ecological subject. The abstract describes the main details of your talk using standard format in scientific journals. You will need to consult 5 journal articles, or more, to develop the content of the presentation. More details are found on page 9 of the syllabus.

**To add audio to a PowerPoint presentation.....** You can access many free software tutorials at Lynda.com as a University of Florida student. Be sure to use this portal - <http://elearning.ufl.edu/> and look under Log In to Services, then click on Lynda.com.

Search for “adding audio to PowerPoint” to help add narration to your PowerPoint presentation. Before submitting it to me, check your presentation on a computer different than the one you created it on to make sure that the audio files have been “packaged” within the PowerPoint file. If you find another way to add narration to a PowerPoint, other than using the tool within PowerPoint, please feel free to use that.

**Peer review of class presentation.** You will upload your completed and narrated presentation to the Presentation Uploads and Review Discussion, in addition to submitting it to me as an

Assignment. Please view the presentations of your classmates. Choose one presentation and provide a constructive peer review using the evaluation form found on the Discussion page.

Grading Scale: Grades will be based on the following scale:

A, 93-100; A-, 90-92; B+, 87-89; B, 83-86; B-, 80-82; C+, 77-79; C, 73-76; C-, 70-72; D, 60-69; E, <60.

For information on current UF policies for assigning grade points, see <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>

### Course Schedule

Week	Start module	Topic of PowerPoint module	Reading	Assignment	Due date
1	Aug. 22	Introduction to insect ecology	Speight, Chap. 1	Introduction discussion Week 1 discussion	Aug. 27 Aug. 27
2	Aug. 27	Insects and climate	Speight, Chap. 2, Chap. 7 (7.4-7.7)	Week 2 discussion	Sept. 3
3	Sept. 3	Introduction to herbivory	Speight, Chap. 3 <i>Paper 1</i>	Critical paper analysis	Sept. 10
4	Sept. 10	Plant defenses and insect counter defenses		Quiz 1 Week 4 discussion	Sept. 13-16 Sept. 17
5	Sept. 17	Resource niche and competition	Speight, Chap. 4		
6	Sept. 24	Natural enemy behavioral ecology	Speight, Chap. 5	Insect ecology in the news	Oct. 1
7	Oct. 1	Predator-prey and host-parasite interactions		Quiz 2	Oct. 4-6
8	Oct. 8	Insect defenses against enemies		Topic for presentation due <b>Midterm 1 (proctored)</b>	Oct. 8 <b>Oct. 10</b>
9	Oct. 15	Mutualisms	Speight, Chap. 6, Chap. 7 (7.1-7.3, 7.8-7.10)	Week 9 discussion	Oct. 22

10	Oct. 22	Pollination		Week 10 discussion	Oct. 29
11	Oct. 29	Life history strategies			
12	Nov. 5	Insects in ecosystems	Speight, Chap. 8	Quiz 3	Nov. 8-10
13	Nov. 12	Sampling insect populations		First draft scientific abstract, and references Week 13 discussion	Nov. 19  Nov. 19
14	Nov. 19	Measuring community structure	Speight, Chap. 9		
15	Nov. 26	Factors affecting community structure		Quiz 4	Nov. 29- Dec. 1
16	Dec. 3	None		Final draft presentation, abstract, and references <b>Midterm 2</b> Peer review of presentation	Dec. 3  <b>Dec. 5</b> Dec. 6

Disclaimer: This syllabus represents my current plans and objectives. As we go through the semester, those plans may need to change to enhance the class learning opportunity. Such changes, communicated clearly, are not unusual and should be expected.

## Class Presentation

The class presentation can cover any specific topic relating to insect ecology but should not be your own current or past research. Grades will be assigned on a formal 10-minute narrated PowerPoint presentation, a scientific abstract, and a list of the primary literature references that were consulted to research the presentation topic. **Please confirm your choice of topic on or October 8.**

**Topic** Your presentation can be a talk similar to what you may have seen/heard at a national, regional or state entomology meeting. Read 5 papers on this topic: use 2 or 3 of the papers as background information and rationale for the studies that you are going to describe. Then describe selected experiments from 1 or 2 of the papers in a research talk format including title, background information, research objectives, methods, results, and significance/conclusions/implications.

ALTERNATIVELY, you may develop an Extension/teaching talk that you might need to use to teach new information and concepts to your clientele (Extension audience) or employees/trainees/students. This kind of talk may focus less on experimental methods and more on a review of the literature.

For the scientific presentation type of talk, your topic should focus on specific examples, and not on general principles. For an extension type talk, you may speak more broadly about the subject but do include specific examples that will resonate with your audience.

**Reference List** It will be necessary to consult recent primary literature (i.e., research articles in journals) to prepare your presentation. A list of five correctly cited publications (in the style of *Environmental Entomology*<sup>1</sup>) is required.

**Abstract** A scientific abstract is required and is limited to 300 words. "The abstract should: 1) state the principal objectives and scope of the investigation, 2) describe the methodology employed, 3) summarize the results, and 4) state the principal conclusions"<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Consult the Entomological Society of America Instructions to Authors for *Environmental Entomology* at the following URL for the correct citation format (look under references): [https://academic.oup.com/ee/pages/Manuscript\\_Preparation](https://academic.oup.com/ee/pages/Manuscript_Preparation)

<sup>2</sup> Excerpted from R. A. Day. 1998. *How to Write and Publish a Scientific Paper*. Oryx Press, Phoenix, AZ. Available for internet checkout at UF Marston Science library

## Critical Reading of Scientific Articles

Whenever you read a primary journal article, think about the following questions. Just because a paper has been published in a scientific journal, does not necessarily mean it was good science or it was well-written. As you are reading the assigned journal articles, think about these questions.

1. What are the specific hypotheses (and alternative hypotheses) or questions that are being explored?
2. Do the authors relate the specific hypotheses to a larger area of science (i.e., the “big picture”)?
3. Do the hypotheses follow logically from the background material that is presented in the Introduction section?
4. Do the authors make specific predictions of outcomes after manipulative experiments or was their study purely descriptive or comparative?
5. Are the experimental design and the methods used appropriate to answer their questions?
6. Are the methods described well enough to be repeated by other research groups?
7. How were the data analyzed? Was the analysis appropriate or can you think of a better way to do it? Think also if the data could have been collected differently to facilitate the analysis.
8. Are the data portrayed effectively in figures and tables? Are they clear and necessary or could the data have been presented in the text?
9. Do the results match the predictions the authors made?
10. If results differ from predictions or from the published research of other groups, do they address the differences and suggest reasons?
11. What are the authors’ conclusions? Would you have reached the same conclusion from these results? Have they made a strong case for their conclusions? What else could you propose to bolster their conclusions? What kinds of data would have convinced you?
12. What are the implications of these findings for the subfield and entomology more generally? How can these findings be extended into the “big picture”.
13. Where should this research go next? What should the next experiments be?
14. You may also think about the quality of the presentation of the article. Does the paper tell a nicely packaged “story” with sound reasoning throughout the paper? Are there areas where the paper wanders from the argument? Are the major points of the paper accurately and consistently presented in the title, abstract, key words, introduction and conclusions? Was the writing easy to understand, interesting, and not too wordy?