

COURSE SYLLABUS
WILD/ECOL 3580
VERTEBRATE NATURAL HISTORY

Spring 2022

Instructor

Dr. Steven Castleberry
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Teaching Assistants

Avery Korn (Wednesday lab)	E-mail: akorns@uga.edu
Tabby Hortenstine (Thursday lab)	E-mail: orcaluvr@uga.edu

Lecture and Lab Times (lecture meets in Warnell 1-304; lab meets in Warnell 1-101)

Lecture	9:10 – 10:00	M,W,F
Lab	1:40 – 4:40	T,Th
Lab	1:50 – 4:50	W

Course Description

This course introduces the ecology and natural history of vertebrates. Emphasis in the lecture portion of the course is on systematics, natural history, behavior, and ecology of the major vertebrate taxa. Emphasis in the lab is on the identification and natural history of southeastern vertebrate species.

Objectives

Upon completion of this course, students should be able to:

1. Classify the major taxa of vertebrates and describe the morphological, behavioral, and ecological features that characterize each
2. Discuss the evolutionary history of vertebrates and explain the relationships among taxa
3. Identify common vertebrates of the southeastern United States and describe key aspects of their natural history
4. Summarize the natural history of any vertebrate species from the scientific literature
5. Apply knowledge of vertebrate natural history to research and management

eLearning Commons

Information and resources for lecture and lab are available on the eLearning Commons (eLC) course site. Course announcements will be posted on the home page, so you should check it frequently. All quizzes and exams in lecture and lab will be administered through eLC.

Syllabus Disclaimer

The course syllabus is a general plan for the course; deviations announced to the class by the instructor may be necessary.

Lecture Requirements

Lecture Exams—Three lecture exams will be given covering lecture material and reading assignments. The final exam will only cover material since the previous exam (i.e., it is not cumulative). Make-up exams will only be given with a legitimate documented excuse.

Lecture Quizzes—Quizzes will be given during lecture throughout the semester. The primary purpose of the quizzes is to increase your engagement in the course, but they are also used to encourage attendance. You may not make up a missed quiz due to absence or tardiness without a documented excuse.

Term Paper—You will select a vertebrate species from a prescribed list and summarize relevant natural history information from the scientific literature into a scientific species account. Detailed instructions and an example paper are available on eLC. The final copy is due on May 2, but there are other deadlines related to the paper given in the instructions. Missed deadlines will result in grade reductions.

Assigned Readings—A list of readings relating to material covered in the course is available on the course web site. The reading list consists of an article for each week of the semester that is related to the material covered in lecture that week. Questions on lecture exams will be taken from the readings.

Lab Requirements

Lab Exams—Four lab practical exams will be given during the semester. Material to be covered on each lab exam will be described in the preceding lab sessions. Exams will cover identification, taxonomy, and natural history of the species discussed in lab. *All lab exams will be given on Monday evenings from 6-8 PM.* See the lab schedule on the back page for specific exam dates and plan accordingly. Due to the time required to set up lab practical exams, make-up exams are virtually impossible and will be considered only for students with a documented excuse.

Lab Quizzes—Quizzes will be given in lab each week, except the week of lab exams. Quizzes will be based on the material covered in lab and the documents posted on eLC for the taxonomic group(s) to be covered. Videos highlighting the important information for each species are available on eLC. Quizzes are cumulative up to the next lab exam.

Natural History Questions—For each lab exam, you be required to submit one question about the natural history of an assigned species. Your question should cover an important aspect of the natural history of your species related to habitat, reproduction, feeding, activity patterns, or behavior. Natural history questions on lab exams will be based on the questions submitted.

Attendance

You are expected to attend every lecture and lab in-person. If you are absent or late, you will only be able to make up work (e.g., exams, quizzes, in-class exercises, etc.) if you have a documented excuse.

Grading

<u>Lecture</u>		<u>Lab</u>	
Exam 1	20%	Exam 1	15%
Exam 2	25%	Exam 2	20%
Exam 3	25%	Exam 3	20%
Term paper	20%	Exam 4	20%
Quizzes	10%	Quizzes and Natural History Questions	25%

Grades will be assigned according to the following scale: A = 92-100, A- = 89-91, B+ = 87-88, B = 83-86, B- = 79-82, C+ = 77-78, C = 73-76, C- = 69-72, D = 60-68, F = <60

Covid-19 Prevention

Per USG guidelines, face coverings are recommended for all individuals while inside campus facilities, whether vaccinated or not. Everyone is strongly encouraged to get vaccinated. You can schedule a vaccination appointment through the University Health Center [Patient Portal](#). Asymptomatic Covid-19 testing appointments can be scheduled through the [COVID-19 Surveillance Testing Portal](#). If you have been exposed to someone with Covid-19, you should follow quarantine guidance from the [Georgia Department of Public Health](#). If you are showing symptoms of Covid-19, self-isolate and get tested. If you test positive, whether you are showing symptoms or not, UGA policy requires that you report it through the [DawgCheck](#) system and follow the guidance provided. I will make accommodations for you to participate remotely if you are quarantined due to a positive test, but only if I receive notification through the DawgCheck system.

Diversity and Inclusion

The phrase ‘diversity and inclusion’ encompasses welcoming and respect for differences of culture, background, and experience among individuals and groups. UGA is committed to creating a dynamic, diverse, and welcoming learning environment for all students and has a non-discrimination policy that reflects this philosophy. Our class will respect all students regardless of race, color, sex (including sexual harassment and pregnancy), sexual orientation, gender identity, ethnicity or national origin, religion, age, genetic information, disability, or veteran status.

University Honor Code and Academic Honesty

As a University of Georgia student, you have agreed to abide by the UGA academic honesty policy. UGA Student Honor code: *“I will be academically honest in all of my academic work and will not tolerate academic dishonesty of others.”* A Culture of Honesty, the University's policy and procedures for handling cases of suspected dishonesty, can be found at <https://honesty.uga.edu/>.

You are responsible for informing yourself about the University's standards before performing any academic work. Lack of knowledge of the academic honesty policy is not a reasonable explanation for a violation. Please ask if you have questions related to course assignments and the academic honesty policy. Any form of possible academic dishonesty will be reported to the UGA Office of the Vice President for Instruction.

Accommodations for Disabilities

If you require a disability-required accommodation, it is essential that you register with the Disability Resource Center (Clark Howell Hall; <https://drc.uga.edu>; 706-542-8719 [voice]; 706-542-8778 [TTY]) and notify me of your eligibility for reasonable accommodations. We can then plan how best to coordinate your accommodations. Accommodations cannot be provided retroactively.

Mental Health and Wellness Resources

If you or someone you know needs assistance, you are encouraged to contact Student Care and Outreach in the Division of Student Affairs at 706-542-7774 or visit <https://sco.uga.edu>. They will help you navigate any difficult circumstances you may be facing by connecting you with the appropriate resources or services.

UGA has several resources for a student seeking mental health services (<https://www.uhs.uga.edu/bewelluga/bewelluga>) or crisis support (<https://www.uhs.uga.edu/info/emergencies>).

If you need help managing stress anxiety, relationships, etc., please visit BeWellUGA (<https://www.uhs.uga.edu/bewelluga/bewelluga>) for a list of FREE workshops, classes, mentoring, and health coaching led by licensed clinicians and health educators in the University Health Center.

Additional resources can be accessed through the UGA App.

FERPA Notice

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) grants student's certain information privacy rights. To comply with FERPA, all communication that refers to individual students must be through a secure medium (UGAMail or eLC) or in person. Instructors are not allowed to respond to messages that refer to individual students or student progress in the course through non-UGA accounts, phone calls, or other types of electronic media. For details, please visit

<https://apps.reg.uga.edu/FERPA>.

Laptop Requirement

You are required to have a laptop (or other suitable device) for use in lecture and lab. You will take all quizzes and exams on your laptop. Quizzes and exams will require that you use Respondus Lock-down Browser. Before each quiz/exam, be sure that you have installed the latest updates and that it is working correctly.

Cell Phone and Laptop Courtesy

As a courtesy to your classmates and instructor, turn off and put away cell phones before class. Laptops and tablets may be used during class for legitimate class purposes, such as taking notes, following along with presentation slides, as well as in-class activities, quizzes, and exams that require personal device use. Anyone using a laptop or tablet for non-legitimate purposes (e.g., email, social media, web surfing, playing games, etc.) will be asked to stop. Repeated offenses will result in revocation of the right to use devices during class except for required activities. Research has demonstrated that students who use electronic devices for non-class purposes, *and students around them*, score lower on exams.

Laboratory Rules and Specimen Care

Food and drink are not permitted in the lab at any time. It is University policy that smoking or use of any tobacco product is forbidden anywhere on campus.

The specimens that you will use in this course are fragile, and many are old and difficult or impossible to replace. Some are on loan from the research collection of the Georgia Museum of Natural History. Specimens are available for your benefit and mishandling will not be tolerated.

You will be shown the proper way to handle each group of specimens. Proper handling techniques should be used every time the specimens are examined. Cavalier handling of the specimens may result in the lowering of your course average. Repeated offenses may result in dismissal from the course.

Most specimens will be left in the lab for you to study at your convenience. You may not remove specimens from the lab under any circumstances. If inappropriate handling or damage to the specimens becomes frequent, this privilege will be revoked and you will only be allowed limited opportunities to view the specimens under supervision.

Tentative Lecture Schedule and Topics

Date	Day	Topic	Date	Day	Topic
JAN 10	M	Class Introduction	MAR 28	M	EXAM 2
JAN 12	W	Introduction to Vertebrates	MAR 30	W	Birds
JAN 14	F	Taxonomy	APR 2	F	Birds
JAN 17	M	MLK Holiday	APR 4	M	Birds
JAN 19	W	Systematics	APR 6	W	Birds
JAN 21	F	Species and Subspecies	APR 8	F	Birds
JAN 24	M	Speciation	APR 11	M	Birds
JAN 26	W	Fish	APR 13	W	Birds
JAN 28	F	Fish	APR 15	F	Mammals
JAN 31	M	Fish	APR 18	M	Mammals
FEB 2	W	Fish	APR 20	W	Mammals
FEB 4	F	Fish	APR 22	F	Mammals
FEB 7	M	Fish	APR 25	M	Mammals
FEB 9	W	Fish	APR 27	W	Mammals
FEB 11	F	EXAM 1	APR 29	F	Mammals
FEB 14	M	Amphibians	MAY 2	M	Mammals
FEB 16	W	Amphibians			
FEB 18	F	Amphibians			
FEB 21	M	Amphibians			
FEB 23	W	Amphibians	MAY 11	W	EXAM 3
FEB 25	F	Amphibians	(8:00-11:00 AM)		
FEB 28	M	Amphibians			
MAR 2	W	Reptiles			
MAR 4	F	Reptiles			
MAR 7	M	Spring Break			
MAR 9	W	Spring Break			
MAR 11	F	Spring Break			
MAR 14	M	Reptiles			
MAR 16	W	Reptiles			
MAR 18	F	Reptiles			
MAR 21	M	Reptiles			
MAR 23	W	Reptiles			
MAR 25	F	Reptiles			

Lab Schedule and Topics

Lab #	Date		General Topic	Specific Topic
1	Jan	11/12/13	Intro & Fish	Lab Requirements, Fish Characteristics; Bony Fishes I
2	Jan	18/19/20	Fish	Bony Fishes II
3	Feb	25/26/27	Fish	Cartilaginous Fishes; Jawless Fishes
Exam	Jan	31	Lab Exam 1	Monday, 6-8 PM (Fish)
4	Feb	1/2/3	Amphibians	Amphibian Characteristics; Frogs & Toads
5	Feb	8/9/10	Amphibians	Salamanders
6	Feb	15/16/17	Reptiles	Reptile Characteristics; Turtles, Crocodilians, Lizards, Snakes I
7	Feb	22/23/24	Reptiles	Snakes II
Exam	Feb	28	Lab Exam 2	Monday, 6-8 PM (Amphibians & Reptiles)
8	Mar	1/2/3	Birds	Characteristics of Birds; Loons, Grebes, Pelicans, Herons, Ducks & Geese
9	Mar	15/16/17	Birds	Hawks, Gallinaceous Birds, Rails, Shorebirds, Gulls
10	Mar	22/23/24	Birds	Owls, Nighthawks, Kingfishers, Woodpeckers, Perching Birds I
11	Mar	29/30/31	Birds	Perching Birds II
Exam	Apr	4	Lab Exam 3	Monday, 6-8 PM (Birds)
12	Apr	5/6/7	Mammals	Mammal Characteristics; Armadillos, Opossums, Insectivores, Bats
13	Apr	12/13/14	Mammals	Rodents & Lagomorphs
14	Apr	19/20/21	Mammals	Carnivores, Ungulates, Aquatic Mammals
Exam	Apr	25	Lab Exam 4	Monday, 6-8 PM (Mammals)