Course Overview

Spiders are one of the most diverse and successful groups of animals on Earth. They exhibit many interesting behaviors, play important roles in nearly all terrestrial ecosystems, and are intricately interwoven with human society. This course will provide students with practical, hands-on experience working with these fascinating creatures, building upon concepts introduced in ENY 3830 (Spider Biology Lecture). We will emphasize field techniques to observe and collect spiders, as well as lab techniques to curate and identify spider specimens. To this end, students will create their own spider collections that emphasize local spider diversity. By the end of this course, students will be able to identify over 30 spider families by sight, as well as additional families using a dichotomous key. Students will also gain hands-on experience in spider anatomy, behavior, and husbandry. This course is designed to complement ENY 3830 / ZOO 4926 (Spider Biology lecture).

Course Catalog description: Provides practical experience working with spiders, including field collection techniques, identification & curation of spider specimens, & observing spider behavior. Spider collection is required.

Student Learning Outcomes

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

- **Collect** spiders in the field using a variety of techniques and create a collection of properly curated spider specimens that showcases family-level diversity.
- **Identify** spider specimens to the family level, both by sight (for select families) and by using a dichotomous key.
- **Describe** the morphological characters that are important for family-level spider identification.
- **Explain** the natural history of approximately 30 common and noteworthy spider families.
- **Record observations** of spider behavior both in field and in the lab and propose hypotheses to explain those behaviors.

In working towards these goals, students will hopefully also foster a sense of curiosity and appreciation for spiders— including their diversity and their many fascinating behaviors.
Teaching Assistants

We are fortunate to have an excellent teaching assistant joining us this semester; do not hesitate to contact your TA if you have any questions about the course:

**Madison Heisey**
Email: mheisey@ufl.edu
Office Hours: By email appointment

Readings & Course Materials

**Textbooks & Readings:** The following book is required for this course. We will use it extensively for spider identification in lab, starting in Week 2. Make sure to purchase your copy by then!


The books below are all optional but recommended— they are great resources that can be helpful for spider identification. They are worth adding to your library if you’re a spider enthusiast!


Additional readings and resources may be posted on Canvas throughout the semester.

**Collecting Equipment:** At the start of the semester, each student will be issued a set of basic spider collecting & curation equipment, including vials for their specimens and vial storage boxes. Other collecting tools (such as nets and beat sheets) will be available for use during class time. Students are required to provide their own field notebooks (to record notes and observations during collecting trips) and may wish to purchase additional (optional) collecting equipment, such as a headlamp for nocturnal collecting. The instructors will provide an overview of equipment commonly used for spider collecting & curation at the start of the course.

**Computer Requirement:** All students must have regular access to a computer with a reliable internet connection to access assignments and materials on Canvas.
Communication & Conduct

Meeting Policy: If you need help with any aspect of the course, we encourage you to come to office hours (see the details on Page 1 of this syllabus). Alternatively, you can schedule a 1-on-1 meeting with any of the instructors. You can request a meeting with Dr. Auletta by clicking here: http://calendly.com/anthonyauletta and with Dr. Taylor or your TA via email. Outside of office hours, email is our preferred method of contact. We will do our best to respond to messages within 48 hours (not including weekends or holidays). As a courtesy, please check the syllabus and Canvas before reaching out; answers to many of your questions can be found there!

Canvas: Important announcements and updates will be regularly posted to the course Canvas website, so be sure to check Canvas frequently! To ensure that you do not miss anything, please ensure that your Canvas profile is set to receive notifications.

Email Accounts: It is UF policy that you use your GatorLink account or Canvas when emailing your instructors; we will not answer emails sent from other accounts (e.g., personal Gmail, Hotmail, etc).

Professional Conduct: All members of the class are expected to conduct themselves in a professional and respectful manner at all times. Please use appropriate etiquette when interacting with your peers and instructors, including during class, on Canvas, and via email. Students who behave disrespectfully or disruptively will be reported to the Dean of Students Office.

Projects, Assignments, & Exams

Spider Collection: Throughout the semester, each student will create a collection of 24 properly curated and labeled spider specimens, all of which must be identified to the family level. Detailed guidelines for the spider collection will be provided to you at the start of the semester. There will be two preliminary collection checks during the semester (to make sure that you’re making good progress), and the final collection will be due on the last day of class.

Final Practical Exam: On the last day of class, there will be a hands-on final practical exam that is designed to evaluate how much practical spider knowledge you have acquired during this course. This exam will ask you to identify unknown specimens, identify anatomical structures, and answer other questions that relate to the content we’ve covered throughout the semester.

Lab Worksheets: During some of our class sessions, you will be asked to complete brief worksheets based on the day’s activities. These worksheets are designed to help you practice spider identification and other important skills/concepts. The worksheets must be completed during class time and handed in before you leave the lab.

Extra Credit: Extra credit assignments may be posted at the instructors’ discretion only. Any other extra work submitted in order to raise a grade will not be accepted and requests for additional extra credit will not be considered.
**Submitting assignments:** Most assignments for this course will be submitted on paper (or as physical specimens) during class. It is your responsibility to ensure that you submit these assignments during the class period in which they’re due; work that is submitted after the class period is over will be subject to late penalties as described in this syllabus. Alternative means of submission (e.g., emailing assignments to an instructor) will not be accepted.

If an instructor indicates that an assignment should be submitted electronically via Canvas, then you are responsible for ensuring that all your work is uploaded correctly and completely by the deadline. Corrupted files will be treated as missing work (= 0 grade) until they are reuploaded correctly and late penalties will apply if your resubmission is past the deadline. So, please always double check your files right after you upload them! If you experience technical problems when submitting your work in Canvas, contact the UF Computing Help Desk for assistance: [https://helpdesk.ufl.edu](https://helpdesk.ufl.edu).

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**Grading Policies**

This course uses a points system for grading. The anticipated maximum that can be earned in the course is **735 points**, distributed as follows:

- **Lab Worksheets:** 200 pts (20 pts ea.)
- **Preliminary Collection Checks:** 75 pts
- **Final Spider Collection:** 240 pts
- **Lab Practical Exam:** 150 pts
- **Class Participation:** 70 pts

At the end of the semester, your total course grade will be converted to a letter grade using the scale below:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage Range</th>
<th>Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>93 - 100%</td>
<td>A</td>
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<tr>
<td>90 - 92.9%</td>
<td>A-</td>
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<tr>
<td>87 - 89.9%</td>
<td>B+</td>
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<tr>
<td>83 - 86.9%</td>
<td>B</td>
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<tr>
<td>80 - 82.9%</td>
<td>B-</td>
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<td>77 - 79.9%</td>
<td>C+</td>
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<td>73 - 76.9%</td>
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<td>70 - 72.9%</td>
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<td>67 - 69.9%</td>
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<td>63 - 66.9%</td>
<td>D</td>
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<td>60 - 62.9%</td>
<td>D-</td>
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Please note that the instructors **do not round up grades**—requests to do so will not be considered.

For current UF policies on assigning grade points, consult the following policy website: [https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx](https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx)

**Disputing a grade:** If you wish to dispute a grade for any exam/assignment, you must contact the instructors in writing within two days (48 hours) after the assignment has been returned. In your message, you must include a specific explanation for why you think the grade is incorrect and how you think it should be changed. An instructor will then arrange
a meeting with you to discuss the issue and determine whether or not the grade should be changed. The grade assigned following this meeting will be final.

**Attendance & Participation**

Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments and other work are consistent with university policies that can be found at: [https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/attendance-policies/](https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/attendance-policies/).

Due to the hands-on nature of this course, attendance in class is critically important. If you are absent, you won’t be able to participate in field trips, work on your collection in class, or complete other lab activities. Thus, all students are expected to **attend every class session on time and stay for the entire session**. Students who miss more than 30% of class sessions will automatically earn an E (= failing grade) in the course. Students are also expected to be **fully prepared for and engaged** in each session—this includes completing all required readings/videos, submitting all assignments on time, paying attention during class, and actively participating in all class activities. Participation in our class sessions is worth **70 points (~10% of your final course grade)**.

Since this is a **face-to-face course**, students will not have the option to join remotely via Zoom. Our class sessions will also not be recorded.

If you need to miss a class due to an **excusable absence**, you must let the instructors know as far in advance as possible to discuss arrangements for making up missed work. Excusable absences include serious illness or injury, family emergencies, approved professional activities, severe weather, religious holidays, & court-imposed legal obligations. In order to make up missed work, you will be required to submit appropriate documentation of your absence to the instructors.

If you are absent for any other reason or fail to notify the instructors of your absence in a timely manner, you will earn a 0 for any in-class work that you missed (make-up work will not be accepted). Please note that personal travel/vacations are not considered excusable absences, and thus students will earn a 0 for any work missed due to personal travel/vacations during the course.

If you do miss a class meeting, please contact a classmate for notes from that session; the instructors will not provide notes. If the content is still unclear after you review your classmate’s notes (and the required readings/other materials on Canvas), please don’t hesitate to come to office hours or schedule a meeting with an instructor. We ask that you please come to that meeting prepared to discuss the specific questions you have.

*In addition to working on your spider collection during class, students should also plan to allocate time **outside of class** to collect and identify their specimens!*
Late Work & Make-Up Assignments

All assignments must be submitted by the due date and time indicated on Canvas. If you miss a class, you are still responsible for turning in the work due on that date at the required time. If an assignment is submitted late, 20% of its total point value will be deducted for every day that it is late. Credit cannot be earned for assignments that are turned in 5+ days past the due date, or for those that are submitted after the instructor has graded and returned the assignment to the class. Late work will not be accepted after the deadline for the final assignment in the course.

Extensions will be considered on a case-by-case basis (at the instructors’ discretion) only in the event of unforeseen emergencies. In such a case, you must contact the instructors as soon as possible to discuss the situation; note that the instructors may request documentation. No extensions will be granted for students who miss the due date for any other reason.

Due to the time & effort involved in setting up the lab activities, make-up labs will not be provided for students who miss a class session. If you miss a class session due to an excused absence, you will be allowed to complete an alternative assignment to earn the points for that session. To request a make-up assignment, you must contact the instructors as soon as possible and provide appropriate documentation of your absence (i.e., doctor’s note or court order). Make-up assignments will not be provided for students who miss class for unexcused absences.

A make-up practical exam (or incomplete course grade) will only be offered to students who miss the exam due to an unforeseen emergency and who present the proper documentation for that absence in a timely manner. If you miss the practical any other reason, you will not be permitted to make it up and will earn a grade of 0 on the exam. Remember, personal travel/vacations are not excusable absences, so students will not be allowed take a make-up exam to accommodate end-of-semester travel plans.

A note about deadlines: Remember, the due date doesn’t have to be the “do” date! In other words, we encourage you to work on your assignments in advance—don’t wait until right before the deadline to submit your work! Last-minute computer problems or other non-emergency situations that arise right before the deadline are not valid reasons for requesting an extension; such requests will not be considered and late penalties will be applied to your work if it is not submitted before the deadline.

Course Schedule

Below is a tentative* schedule of topics & assignments for the semester. Readings and videos for each session will be posted on Canvas and must be completed before the start of class. All assignments must be submitted by the end of the class period on the due date listed below, unless otherwise noted on Canvas.
### List of Important Dates

Key dates to remember are below—be sure to add them to your calendar now! Due dates for other assignments are listed in the Course Schedule above and/or on Canvas.

- **September 30**: Collection check #1
- **October 7**: UF Homecoming (no class)
- **November 4**: Collection check #2
- **November 11**: Veteran’s Day (no class)
- **November 23-26**: Thanksgiving Break (no class)

*Although we will do our best to adhere to this schedule, it may be adjusted during the semester to accommodate opportunities, disruptions, and other circumstances. These changes will be communicated clearly via Canvas.*
- 8 -

- December 2: Lab practical exam
- December 7: Final spider collection due

COVID-19 Safety

This is a face-to-face course that involves in-class discussions and hands-on lab/field work. Thus, all students must attend class in person to fully participate (see the Attendance Policy above). To help maintain a safe learning environment, everyone is expected to comply with all COVID-19 safety guidelines that are posted on the course Canvas website, as well as the university-wide policies relating to COVID-19 (which can be found at https://coronavirus.ufl.edu). Students who do not follow these guidelines will be dismissed from class and considered absent for that day, and may also be reported to the Dean of Students Office for misconduct. Due to the unpredictable nature of the pandemic, these guidelines may change during the semester; all changes will be clearly communicated in class and via Canvas. It is your responsibility to stay informed of these updates and adhere to the latest guidance provided by the instructors. Thank you for doing your part to keep our community safe!

Field Trip Expectations

Observing and collecting spiders in the field is a major focus of this course. There will be several required field trips during the semester, which will occur during class time and be within walking distance of our classroom. Dates for the major field trips are listed in this syllabus. Inclement weather may force us to reschedule/cancel some of these excursions; those changes will be clearly communicated in class and via Canvas. Additional smaller field activities may be organized during the semester as opportunities arise; these will also be announced in class and on Canvas.

This means that we will be spending a significant amount of class time outdoors, including on days when it may be hot and humid. On days when field activities are scheduled, you should come to class prepared to spend time outside in these conditions. This includes wearing comfortable, closed-toed shoes and clothes that are suitable for the outdoors. You are also encouraged to bring a hat (to shade yourself from the sun), sunscreen, bug spray, and a water bottle.

If you have concerns about working in the field, please contact the instructors at the beginning of the semester. We are happy to discuss reasonable alternatives for students who have limited physical mobility or other conditions that may impact their ability to participate in these field trips.

In addition to these required field activities, the instructors will organize optional field trips outside of the usual class time (including at least one nocturnal collecting trip). Students are not required to attend these excursions but are encouraged to if their schedule allows— they are great opportunities to collect additional spiders for your collection! The dates and locations of these trips will be announced in class and on Canvas near the start of the semester.
Laboratory Guidelines

Everyone is required to follow all **lab safety instructions** and other **lab procedures** provided by the instructors. These procedures will be clearly communicated via Canvas and/or during class. While in the laboratory, all students must wear **closed-toed shoes**. Also note that food and beverages are not permitted in the lab. During the course, you will be required to handle arachnid specimens and use microscopes & other lab equipment; please treat these specimens and instruments with **care**! Always ask an instructor if you are unsure about how to use an instrument. Students who do not adhere to these guidelines will be dismissed from the lab and considered absent for that day, and may also be reported to the Dean of Students Office for misconduct. You may also be liable for any damages to lab equipment that result from your misuse.

University Policy on 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: [http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code](http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code).

**Instructors’ note:** Any action that subverts the learning goals of the course (or a particular course activity) will be treated as academic misconduct and reported to the Dean of Students Office. This includes- but is not limited to- cheating or assisting others in cheating, plagiarism (i.e., misrepresenting someone else’s work as your own, whether it is copied directly or paraphrased), self-plagiarism (i.e., copying/reusing work that you have submitted previously), collaborating with others when it is not permitted, fabricating data, lying to an instructor, and bad faith attempts to undermine the intent of an learning activity. **In addition to being reported to the Dean of Students Office, a student will earn a grade of 0 on any assignment that is plagiarized or that otherwise violates these academic honesty policies. This 0 grade is irreversible- it cannot be dropped and the assignment cannot be resubmitted for a different grade. After this, any subsequent incidents of plagiarism or academic honesty will result in an automatic E (= failing grade) in the course.**
Accommodations 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.

Disability Resource Center

001 Reid Hall
(352) 392-8565 | https://disability.ufl.edu/

Instructors’ note: We want you to succeed in this course! To ensure your accommodations are in place when you need them, please be sure to have your DRC accommodation letter sent to us as early as possible—ideally at the beginning of the semester.

Policy on Recording Class Sessions

Students are allowed to record video or audio of class lectures. However, the purposes for which these recordings may be used are strictly controlled. The only allowable purposes are: (1) for personal educational use, (2) in connection with a complaint to the university, or (3) as evidence in, or in preparation for, a criminal or civil proceeding. All other purposes are prohibited. Specifically, students may not publish recorded lectures without the written consent of the instructor.

A “class lecture” is an educational presentation intended to inform or teach enrolled students about a particular subject, including any instructor-led discussions that form part of the presentation, and delivered by any instructor hired or appointed by the University, or by a guest instructor, as part of a University of Florida course. A class lecture does not include lab sessions, student presentations, clinical presentations such as patient history, academic exercises involving solely student participation, assessments (quizzes, tests, exams), field trips, private conversations between students or between a student and the faculty or lecturer during a class session.

Publication without permission of the instructor is prohibited. To “publish” means to share, transmit, circulate, distribute, or provide access to a recording, regardless of format or medium, to another person (or persons), including but not limited to another student within the same class section. Additionally, a recording, or transcript of a recording, is considered published if it is posted on or uploaded to, in whole or in part, any media platform, including but not limited to social media, book, magazine, newspaper, leaflet, or third party note/tutoring services. A student who publishes a recording without written consent may be subject to a civil cause of action instituted by a person injured by the publication and/or discipline under UF Regulation 4.040 Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code.
Use of Electronic Devices

You may use personal electronic devices such as laptops or tablets in class, unless otherwise noted by the instructor. However, it is your responsibility to make sure that you use your devices in a professional and courteous manner. This includes:

- Limiting device use only to activities that are **directly related to your learning of course material**, such as taking notes or typing your collection labels. Using your devices for any other purpose is not allowed in the classroom; doing so is disrespectful to the instructor, distracting to your fellow students, and robs you of a quality learning experience.

- Keeping your devices **muted at all times** to prevent disrupting others around you.

- Quietly stepping out into the hall if you must take a call or contact someone. We understand that emergencies can happen and will not prevent you from attending to them, but we also ask that you try to minimize disruptions to your peers.

If your device use is disruptive or inappropriate, you will be asked to put away your device. Students who repeatedly violate this policy will no longer be allowed to use devices in class.

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.

Course Evaluations

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 using a standard set of university and college criteria. 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/](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.bluerca.com/ufl/](https://ufl.bluerca.com/ufl/). Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at: [https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/](https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/).
Students experiencing crises or personal problems that interfere with their general wellbeing are encouraged to utilize the university’s counseling resources. The Counseling & Wellness Center provides confidential counseling services at no cost for currently enrolled students. Resources are available on campus for students having personal problems or lacking clear career or academic goals, which interfere with their academic performance:

University Counseling & Wellness Center
Counseling Services, Groups and Workshops, Outreach and Consultation, Self-Help Library, Wellness Coaching
3190 Radio Road
(352) 392-1575; https://counseling.ufl.edu

Other campus resources include:

U Matter, We Care: http://umatter.ufl.edu
Career Connections Center: Reitz Student Union- First Floor; (352) 392-1601; http://career.ufl.edu
Student Success Initiative: http://studentsuccess.ufl.edu
Student Complaints: Complaints regarding on-campus courses may be filed at https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/policies/student-honor-code-studentconduct-code/. For online courses, please see https://distance.ufl.edu/getting-help/student-complaint-process/

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It is your responsibility to ensure that you fully understand the policies outlined in this syllabus as well as the policies of the university as they relate to this course. By remaining enrolled in this course, you agree that you have read and understood all of these policies and that you will be held accountable to them.

At their discretion, the instructors may change aspects of the course during the semester to accommodate new opportunities, unforeseen disruptions, or other circumstances. These changes will be communicated clearly in class and through Canvas. The current version of the syllabus will always be available on our course’s Canvas website. It is your responsibility to ensure that you are following the most recent version of the syllabus.

If you have any questions, please contact the instructors as soon as possible (preferably at the beginning of the course)!

Cover Photo: Cardinal jumping spider, Phidippus cardinalus (adult male) by Jay Sun Len (microcosmnaturephotography.com)