

## I. Course Information

Course Number: ZOO 6927  
Course Name: Biodiversity Ecology  
Credit hours: 3  
Course website: Canvas (elearning.ufl.edu)  
Time and place: 10:40-1:40 Wednesday in Carr 221  
Office hours: Tues right after lecture. Or contact instructor for an appointment.  
***Details of the Syllabus are subject to change. Any changes will be announced in class and on the course website.***

## II. Required Materials

Textbook: *Not required but highly recommended: Eichhorn, M.P. 2016. Natural Systems: The Organization of Life. Wiley and Sons.*  
Other readings: Additional readings will be posted on the course website.

## III. Catalog Description

Ecological causes and consequences of biodiversity at various spatial and temporal scales. Emphasizing basic principles, emerging approaches and analytical methods.

## IV. Pre-requisites and Co-requisites

A basic course in general ecology or similar (consult with instructor if needed)

## V. Instructors

*Dr. Mathew Leibold, 627 Bartram Hall, mleibold@ufl.edu*

## VI. Course Website

Course materials and information are available on the course website on Canvas (see Course Information). Students are responsible for all announcements made in class and/or posted on the course website.

## VII. Email Communication

**Please use Canvas Mail for all email correspondence for this course.**

## VIII. Course Design and Objectives

This is a course designed for graduate students interested in the ecology of biodiversity. This includes the ecological factors that affect patterns of biodiversity as well as the consequences of biodiversity variation on other ecological features. The first part of the class will be primarily lecture oriented and meant to cover the basic principles and ideas related to biodiversity ecology. The second third will focus on emerging approaches and draw on recent literature. The final third will consist of presentations by students on selected topics or problems. This course should be appropriate for students interested in both applied questions in biodiversity ecology such as management and conservation as well as students interested in basic research on related topics.

## IX. Assessments and Grading

***Exams:*** There will be one exam after the first section of the course on basic principles. This will be a short-answer, short essay exam and worth 25% of the final grade.

***Reading Assignments:*** The second part of the class will be based on readings to be determined. These readings will address emerging approaches. You are expected to read the assigned readings and prepare a synopsis with points of discussion for each of the readings. These will be collected on the day of discussion and form the basis for 25% of the final grade.

*Individual presentation:* The final part of the course will consist of individual literature or data research on a topic of choice (subject to approval by the instructor). There will be two components. First is a presentation to the class on the topic also including leading the discussion. The second will be a term paper on the topic. Each is worth 20 points.

*Participation:* A class like this depends crucially on active participation by students in discussions and other class activities. Active participation includes being prepared for the activities by having read any assignments and preparation of topics and questions for discussion. I expect students to be able to show their preparedness by asking questions and participating in discussions. This will be evaluated subjectively and worth 10 points.

## X. Attendance and Excused Absence

You are expected to attend all lectures, and you are responsible for all material covered. An absence is **excused** if there is an **acceptable reason** according to UF policy (<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>). Examples of acceptable reasons are medical illness, religious holidays, military obligation, and university-sponsored activities up to 12 days per semester. For religious holidays, please notify your instructor prior to the absence, but documentation of the religious holiday is not required. In all other cases, it is your responsibility to provide documentation of an acceptable reason; otherwise, the absence will be considered *unexcused* and will result in a zero grade for any missed activities.

## XI. Conduct in Class

Although this class encourages discussion and debate, this should be done in a courteous and respectful manner.

## XII. Academic Honesty and the Honor Code

Each student is responsible for reviewing and adhering to the UF Student Honor Code: <https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/students/student-conduct-code/>. If you witness any instances of academic dishonesty, please notify your instructor, or the Dean of Students Office (352-392-1261).

## XIII. Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

Students who require accommodations for a disability must contact the UF Disability Resource Center (<https://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc>) to request an Accommodation Letter. No accommodations are available to students until the letter is provided to the instructor. Once your instructor receives your letter, your instructor and TA will be happy to work with you to arrange the necessary accommodations.

#### XIV. UF Counseling, Self-Help, and Career Services

Your well-being is important to the University of Florida. The U Matter, We Care initiative is committed to creating a culture of care on our campus by encouraging members of our community to look out for one another and to reach out for help if a member of our community is in need. If you or a friend is in distress, please contact [umatter@ufl.edu](mailto:umatter@ufl.edu) so that the U Matter, We Care Team can reach out to the student in distress. A nighttime and weekend crisis counselor is available by phone at 352-392-1575. The U Matter, We Care Team can help connect students to the many other helping resources available including, but not limited to, Victim Advocates, Housing staff, and the Counseling and Wellness Center. Please remember that asking for help is a sign of strength. In case of emergency, call 9-1-1.

Resources are available on-campus for students with personal problems or lacking clear career and academic goals. The resources include:

- The UF Counseling & Wellness Center (<http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc/>, 352-392-1575) offers counseling services for depression, anxiety, and other mental health concerns. For Emergency Assistance, please see <https://counseling.ufl.edu/services/crisis/>.
- Many students experience stress and anxiety related to academic performance and college life. In addition to counseling services, the UF Counseling & Wellness Center provides self-help resources that you may find helpful: <https://counseling.ufl.edu/resources/online/>.
- The UF Career Resource Center (<http://www.crc.ufl.edu/>, Reitz Union, 392-1601) offers career and job search services.

#### XV. Software Use

All faculty, staff and student of the University are required and expected to obey 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.