

ZOO4926  
ZOO6927

# Animal Behavior and Parasitism

Spring 2025

## Class Description

### Catalog Description

An introduction to the ways in which animal behavior influences infectious diseases of wildlife, domesticated animals, and humans. We investigate how host behavior influences disease, how parasites manipulate host behavior, and how host-parasite interactions are studied across levels of biological organization (individuals, social groups, populations, communities). We use an integrative perspective on how human diseases are connected to wildlife and the environment.

**Credits:** 3 credit hours

**Pre-requisites and Co-requisites:** BSC2010 & BSC2011, or instructor discretion.

### Course Meeting Times

Tuesday: period 3 (9:35AM - 10:25AM) & Period 4 (10:40AM - 11:30AM)

Thursday: period 3 (9:35AM - 10:25AM)

**Course Meeting Location:** Carr Hall 611

**Textbooks or Other Readings:** No required textbooks. Readings will be available on Canvas.

## Instructor: Nick Keiser, PhD.

Dr. Keiser is a behavioral ecologist by training and is interested in a diversity of phenomena including infectious disease ecology, parasitology, and animal sociality. His research focuses on individual and social determinants of disease, infection avoidance behaviors, and parasite manipulation of host behavior. The Keiser Lab works on many test systems like spiders, fruit flies, snails, ants, mites/ticks, and more.

### Contact information:

**Email:** [ckeiser@ufl.edu](mailto:ckeiser@ufl.edu)

**Phone:** 352-273-4981

**Office Hours:** Mondays 1PM-3PM. Carr Hall 622A.

## Course Objectives

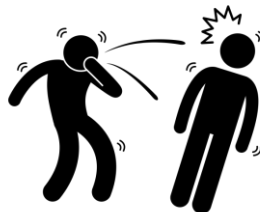
1. Summarize common relationships between host behavior, disease risk, and transmission
2. Predict the types of diseases likely to affect hosts based on their behavioral traits
3. Assess parasite-mediated changes to behavior in the context of evolutionary adaptations in hosts and parasites
4. Interpret and critique the primary literature on behavioral disease ecology



<b>GRADING</b>		
<b>Assignment</b>	<b>Undergraduate</b>	<b>Graduate</b>
Jigsaw discussions	100 points	100 points
Diseases in pop culture	40 points	40 points
Social network activity	20 points	20 points
Final project	75 points	75 points
Research presentation	n/a	50 points
Midterm exam	50 points	45 points
Final exam	50 points	45 points
Class Participation	50 points	50 points
<b>Total:</b>	<b>385 points</b>	<b>435 points</b>



<b>Grading scale</b>	
A	90% - 100%
B	80% - 89.9%
C	70% - 79.9%
D	60% - 69.9%
E	< 60%



**Late work and re-grading policy:** Late work will be graded with a maximum of 50% credit and can be turned in at any time before the final exam. Re-grading requests must be made within one week of the grades being released to students. For additional information on UF grading policies please see: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>.

### Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

Students who will require a classroom accommodation for a disability must contact the Dean of Students Office of Disability Resources, in Peabody 202 (phone: 352-392-1261). Please see the University of Florida Disability Resources website for more information at <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/>. Note that the student should provide documentation of a requirement for accommodation by the second week of classes. No accommodations are available to students who lack this documentation, and accommodations are not retroactive. It is the policy of the University of Florida that the student, not the instructor, is responsible for arranging accommodations when needed. Once notification is complete, the Dean of Students Office of Disability Resources will work with the instructor to accommodate the student.

### Drop/Add/Withdrawal

A student can drop/add during the drop/add period with no penalty. After drop/add, a student who drops will receive a W until the date listed in the academic calendar. After that date, the student may be assigned an "E" (fail). Note: it is the responsibility of the STUDENT to withdraw from a course, not the instructor. Failure to participate/complete the class does NOT constitute a drop.

## Academic Honesty

All students registered at the University of Florida have agreed to comply with the following statement:

*“I understand that the University of Florida expects its students to be honest in all their academic work. I agree to adhere to this commitment to academic honesty and understand that my failure to comply with this commitment may result in disciplinary action up to and including expulsion from the University.”*

In addition, on all work submitted for credit the following pledge is either required or implied:

*“On my honor I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.”*

Cheating, including plagiarism will result in consequences which may range from a 0 on the assignment to a failing grade for the entire course. Sanctions for cheating may be applied in a retroactive manner. The use of **generative AI** (e.g., ChatGPT), text summarizers, or similar software to produce content that a student turns in as their own is considered cheating.

If you witness any instances of academic dishonesty in this class, please notify me or contact the Student Honor Court (392-1631) or Cheating Hotline (392-6999). You are expected to review and abide by the University of Florida Academic Honesty Guidelines at:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/advising/info/student-honor-code.aspx#honesty>.

## Additional information / resources

**Attendance policy:** Attendance is not required. However, in-class/synchronous engagement is a large part of the class participation grade. If you expect to miss a class, please contact the instructor in advance. Makeup exams must be scheduled with the instructor before the original exam date. For additional information on UF attendance policies please see:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/attendance-policies/>.

**Course Evaluations:** Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. 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 your instructors prior course evaluation results are available to students at: <https://gatorevals.ua.ufl.edu/public-results/>.

## Counseling Center and University Support Services

Resources are available at [Distance Learning's Getting Help](#) for:

- Counseling and Wellness resources
- Disability resources
- Resources for handling student concerns and complaints
- Library Help Desk support

Should you have any complaints about your experience in this course, please visit [Distance Learning's Student Complaint Process](#) to submit a complaint.

College can be an incredibly stressful time in a person's life. Resources are available on campus to help students meet academic goals and solve personal problems, which may interfere with their academic performance. If you find that you are having difficulty emotionally or academically, there is support available. See "A Self Help Guide for Students" or contact one of the following services:

- **UF Counseling and Wellness Center**, Radio Rd Facility, 392-1575
- **Dean of Students Office**, 202 Peabody Hall, 392-1261
- **Career Resource Center**, Reitz Union, 392-1601
- **CLAS Academic Advising Center**, Farrior Hall, 100 Fletcher Drive, 392-1521
- **UF Field and Fork Pantry**, 564 Newell Dr., 294-3601
- **Career Connections Center**: 352-392-1601. [www.career.ufl.edu/](http://www.career.ufl.edu/).
- **Library Support**: Various ways to receive assistance with respect to using the libraries or finding resources: [cms.uflib.ufl.edu/ask](http://cms.uflib.ufl.edu/ask)
- **Teaching Center**: 352-392-2010 General study skills and tutoring: [teachingcenter.ufl.edu/](http://teachingcenter.ufl.edu/)
- **Writing Studio**: 352-846-1138. Help brainstorming, formatting, and writing papers: [writing.ufl.edu/writing-studio/](http://writing.ufl.edu/writing-studio/)

Any student who has difficulty affording groceries or accessing sufficient food to eat every day, or who lacks a safe and stable place to live and believes this may affect their performance in the course, is urged to contact the Dean of Students (202 Peabody Hall, 392-1261) for support. Furthermore, please notify your instructor if you are comfortable doing so. This will enable me to provide any further resources that we may possess.

### Health and Wellness

- **U Matter, We Care**: If you or someone you know is in distress, please contact <mailto:umatter@ufl.edu>, 352-392-1575, or visit [umatter.ufl.edu](http://umatter.ufl.edu) to refer or report a concern and a team member will reach out to the student in distress.
- **Counseling and Wellness Center**: Visit [counseling.ufl.edu](http://counseling.ufl.edu) or call 352-392-1575 for information on crisis services as well as non-crisis services.
- **Student Health Care Center**: Call 352-392-1161 for 24/7 information to help you find the care you need or visit [shcc.ufl.edu](http://shcc.ufl.edu).

**Basic Needs**: Any student who faces challenges securing their food or housing and believes this may affect their performance in the course is urged to contact the Dean of Students for support – see <http://www.umatter.ufl.edu>. Please notify the professor if you are comfortable in doing so, and visit The **Field and Fork Pantry** <https://pantry.fieldandfork.ufl.edu> for additional resources. The **Molm Family Gator Career Closet** ([link](#)) alleviates the financial strain of purchasing professional clothing for career fairs, interviews, and the workplace. This service is available to all University of Florida students with a valid UF ID and UF alumni up to one year after graduation.

**Procedure for Conflict Resolution:** Any classroom issues, disagreements or grade disputes should be discussed first between the instructor and the student. If the problem cannot be resolved, please contact the (Under)Graduate Coordinator or the Department Chair. Be prepared to provide documentation of the problem, as well as all graded materials for the semester. Issues that cannot be resolved departmentally will be referred to the University Ombuds Office (<http://www.ombuds.ufl.edu>; 392-1308) or the Dean of Students Office (<http://www.dso.ufl.edu>; 392-1261). For further information refer [here](#) (for residential classes) or [here](#) (for online classes).

**DISCLAIMER:** This syllabus represents the instructor's 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.