

## **Introduction to Collections and Research in Natural History Museums**

ZOO6927 Section 1713 (class: 21736)

ANG6930 Section 6F01 (class: 27958)

Instructors: Dr. David C. Blackburn, Dr. Michelle J. LeFebvre

### **General Class Information:**

#### ***Course Summary***

This course will introduce graduate students to research and collections in natural history museums, with a focus on the Florida Museum of Natural History (FLMNH). Each week we will engage with faculty and staff in the Florida Museum of Natural History, including virtual tours of collections, and engage in panel discussions with invited speakers from UF and other institutions on topics related to the operations, management, and use of scientific collections. This course will be conducted entirely on-line.

2 Credit hours

#### ***Course Meetings***

Tuesday, Period 7 (1:55 – 2:45 PM)

Thursday, Period 7 (1:55 – 2:45 PM)

The course will meet twice each week using video conferencing (via Zoom). Readings will be distributed each week by Canvas.

#### ***Instructors***

Dr. David C. Blackburn

Associate Curator of Herpetology  
Florida Museum of Natural History

Email: [dblackburn@flmnh.ufl.edu](mailto:dblackburn@flmnh.ufl.edu)

Office hours: Via Zoom: Tuesday 11:00 AM – 12:00 PM

Dr. Michelle LeFebvre

Assistant Curator of Archaeology  
Florida Museum of Natural History

Email: [mlefebvre@floridamuseum.ufl.edu](mailto:mlefebvre@floridamuseum.ufl.edu)

Office hours: Via Zoom: Thursday 9:30 – 10:30 AM

#### ***Grading and Exams:***

Grades will be based on attendance and active participation in all class meetings, including discussions. Students will be expected to do readings of weekly assigned course materials before each week's class on Tuesday. Before each panel discussion, students will submit two questions based on the readings and/or class discussion with FLMNH faculty and staff earlier in the week. Via an on-line platform, students will then vote on questions to be asked during the

panel discussion. As part of learning about communicating museum-based science to the public, students will complete one writing assignment (between 3 and 5 pages in length) about a topic related to the course, pending approval from the course instructors.

***Attendance Policy:***

Students are expected to attend all classes. Absences will be excused with a doctor's note provided within 1 week or if previously arranged with the instructor. If you are unable to connect to the video conference due to technology issues, options will be available to call in and participate by phone.

## **Course Details**

### ***Schedule***

#### Week 1:

September 1: Introduction to course; guest: Doug Jones, FLMNH Director

September 3: Panel discussion with current FLMNH graduate students and postdocs

#### Week 2:

September 8: Public Programs and Exhibits

Guest speaker: Darcie MacMahon (Director, Education & Public Programs)

September 10: Panel Discussion on Public Programs

Guest speakers: Myriam Springuel (Director, Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service); and one other guest (TBD).

#### Week 3:

September 15: Vertebrate Paleontology

Guest speaker: Jon Bloch (Curator, Vertebrate Paleontology)

September 17: Panel Discussion on Paleontology

Guest speakers: Talia Karim (Collection Manager of Invertebrate Paleontology; University of Colorado, Boulder); Sterling Nesbitt (Associate Professor; Virginia Tech University)

#### Week 4:

September 22: Mammalogy

Guest speaker: Verity Mathis (Collection Manager, Mammalogy)

September 24: Panel Discussion on Mammalogy

Guest speakers: Joe Cook (Professor and Curator; Museum of Southwestern Biology, University of New Mexico); Sharlene Santana (Associate Professor and Curator; Burke Museum, University of Washington)

Week 5:

September 29: Biodiversity Informatics

Guest speaker: Rob Guralnick (Associate Curator, Informatics)

October 1: Panel Discussion on Biodiversity Informatics

Guest speakers: Ramona Walls (CyVerse, University of Arizona);  
John Wieczorek (University of California, Berkeley)

Week 6:

October 6: Lepidoptera & McGuire Center

Guest speaker: Andrei Sourakov (Collection Manager, Lepidoptera)

October 8: Panel Discussion on Entomology

Guest speakers: Corrie Moreau (Professor, Curator and Director;  
Cornell University Insect Collection); Jessica Ware (Assistant  
Curator, Entomology; American Museum of Natural History)

Week 7:

October 13: Ethics & Permitting

Guest speakers: Elise Lecompte (Registrar) and Tom Webber  
(Collection Manager, Ornithology)

October 15: Panel Discussion with Charlie Cobb (Curator, Archaeology),  
and Brad Lieb (Director of Chickasaw Archaeology).

Week 8:

October 20: Science Communication

Guest speaker: Natalie van Hoose (Science Writer)

October 22: Panel Discussion on Science Communication

Guest speakers: Erin Chapman (Manager of New Media Content,  
American Museum of Natural History); one other guest (TBD).

Week 9:

October 27: Ichthyology

Guest speaker: Rob Robins (Collection Manager, Ichthyology)

October 29: Panel Discussion on Ichthyology

Guest speakers: Katheryn Maslenikov (Collection Manager, Ichthyology, Burke Museum, University of Washington); Luiz Rocha (Associate Curator, California Academy of Sciences)

Week 10:

November 3: Genetic Resources

Guest speaker: Pam Soltis (Curator, Molecular Systematics)

November 5: Panel Discussion on Genetic Resources

Guest speakers: Logan Kistler (Curator, Archeobotany & Archeogenomics, National Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian); one other guest (TBD).

Week 11:

November 10: Imaging

Guest speakers: Ed Stanley (Associate Scientist) and Zach Randall (Imaging Specialist)

November 12: Panel Discussion on Imaging

Guest speakers: Heather Richards-Rissetto (Associate Professor, University of Nebraska, Lincoln); Diane Zorich (Director of Smithsonian Digitization Program Office)

Week 12:

November 17: Environmental Archeology

Guest speaker: Nicole Cannarozzi (Collection Manager, Environmental Archeology)

November 19: Panel Discussion on Archeology

Guest speakers: Madonna Moss (Curator, Museum of Natural and Cultural History, Oregon); Torben Rick (Curator, North American Archeology, National Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian)

Week 13:

**\*\*NO CLASS: THANKSGIVING BREAK\*\***

Week 14:

December 1: Herbarium

Guest speaker: Lucas Majure (Assistant Curator, Herbarium)

December 3: Panel Discussion on Herbaria

Guest speakers: Charles Davis (Professor and Curator, Harvard University Herbaria); Jenn Yost (Associate Professor and Director, Robert Hoover Herbarium, Cal Poly San Luis Obispo)

Week 15:

December 8: Course wrap-up

## University of Florida Policy Statements

### **Grades and Grade Points**

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

### **Absences and Make-Up Work**

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/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>

### **Online Course Evaluation Process**

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. These evaluations are conducted online at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu>. Evaluations are typically open for students to complete during the last two or three weeks of the semester; students will be notified of the specific times when they are open. Summary results of these assessments are available to students at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu/results>.

### **Academic Honesty**

In adopting this honor code, the students of the University of Florida recognize that academic honesty and integrity are fundamental values of the university community. Students who enroll at the university commit to holding themselves and their peers to the high standard of honor required by the honor code. Any individual who becomes aware of a violation of the honor code is bound by honor to take corrective action. The quality of a University of Florida education is dependent upon community acceptance and enforcement of the honor code.

The Honor 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. On all work submitted for credit by students at the university, 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/process/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.

### **Campus Helping Resources**

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, 3190 Radio Road, 352-392-1575, [www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc/](http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc/)
  - Counseling Services
  - Groups and Workshops
  - Outreach and Consultation
  - Self-Help Library
  - Training Programs
- U Matter We Care, [www.umatter.ufl.edu/](http://www.umatter.ufl.edu/)
- Career Resource Center, First Floor JWRU, 392-1601, [www.crc.ufl.edu/](http://www.crc.ufl.edu/)

### **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. 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, 392-8565, [www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/](http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/)

### **Student 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://www.distance.ufl.edu/student-complaint-process> for more details.

### **Sexual Harassment**

It is the policy of The University of Florida to provide an educational and working environment for its students, faculty, and staff that is free from sex discrimination and sexual harassment. In accordance with federal and state law, the University prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex, including sexual harassment. Sex discrimination and sexual harassment will not be tolerated, and individuals who

engage in such conduct will be subject to disciplinary action. The University encourages students, faculty, staff, and visitors to promptly report sex discrimination and sexual harassment. If you believe you have been subjected to sex discrimination or sexual harassment please report the incident to me or any University official, administrator, or supervisor. The Office of Human Resource Services investigates all complaints. Incidents should be reported as soon as possible after the time of their occurrence ([larry-ellis@ufl.edu](mailto:larry-ellis@ufl.edu)).