

Florida Ecology LAB (PCB 4353L)

Fall 2023

Tentative course calendar available at [end of syllabus](#)

Class Meeting Times: Wednesdays 8:00a -12:50p in BSFS 102 (Classroom and parking are around BACK of building)
(BSFS = Biological Sciences Field Station (aka Biological Field Research Center (BFRC) or Building 92).
Directions to BSFS (BFRC): <https://www.ucf.edu/location/biology-field-research-center/>

Instructor: Dr. Gregg Klowden (pronounced "Cloud - in")

Office Hours: When – Mondays 1:00p-4:00p, Fridays 10:00a-1:00p

How: By appointment only:

- To schedule an appointment, go to: https://calendly.com/dr_klowden/office_hours
- Appointments must be scheduled at least 24 hours in advance.

Where: on Zoom on Webcourses (If in-person meeting is preferred, contact Dr. Klowden to schedule)

- Go to the Office Hours page on Webcourses for the Zoom link (Must make an appointment first)

E-mail: You may contact me via (A) the email inside Webcourses or (B) your Knights email at gklowden@ucf.edu

I receive a large volume of emails from several courses. To help me help you, you must include:

- + A subject with (A) the course name (FL Ecology Lab) and (B) a brief description of your question (e.g. FL Ecology Lab – Question about presentations)
- + Your first and last names in the message body
- * If your message does not conform to the above guidelines, it may go unanswered or be delayed
- * Due to confidentiality, I will only reply to questions emailed within Webcourses or from your UCF email.
- * I will try to respond to emails within 48 hours however, response time may be greater.
- * Please plan accordingly by not waiting to the last minute to contact me with questions or concerns.
- * Questions about grades must be discussed during office hours or using the Webcourses messaging not email.

Intended Audience: Advanced Biological Science majors & minors.

Course Prerequisite: Previous completion or concurrent registration in FL Ecology, Natural History, and Conservation (PCB 4353)

Credit Hours: 1

Course Description:

The purpose of PCB 4353 lab is to provide you with hands-on examples of concepts, organisms, and ecosystems you learn about in lecture. We explore in greater depth Florida's general ecology, habitats, vegetation types, wildlife, and conservation issues. You will also learn more about what ecologists do and how they do it by writing a research proposal. Florida has a tremendous diversity of natural habitats and communities (e.g. pine flatwoods, hardwood forests, scrub, freshwater and salt marsh, wet and dry prairie, cypress, mangrove, and hardwood swamps, rivers, springs, lakes, intertidal zones, estuaries, and coral reefs) and associated wildlife (emphasizing amphibians, reptiles, mammals and birds), ranging from north Florida flatwoods to south Florida Everglades. We will further explore the diverse ecology that characterizes Florida and differentiates this region from any other area of the continental United States.

Required Resources:

- Text: There is not a text for this course.
- + Hardware: Desktop or laptop computer, stable internet connection, web camera, microphone
- + Software:
 - Webcourses@UCF supported web browser;
 - Microsoft 365* and Adobe Acrobat* (*free download available for all students at <https://ucfapps.cloud.com/>);
- + Webcourses: Announcements, assignments, grades, etc. will be made available at this site.
- + Zoom: Office hours will be held on Zoom. Zoom can be accessed via the link within the course Webcourses page.

Student Responsibilities:

Etiquette – Students should show proper classroom etiquette. Students should show up to class on time. *Please do not be late or leave early, this disrupts the class.* All cell phones, pagers, etc. should be silenced when entering the classroom.

Email and Webcourses - You will be expected to have daily access to Webcourses since I will be consistently posting assignment updates, additions, changes, clarifications, etc. All students at UCF are required to obtain a UCF Email account and check it regularly for official university communications. If you do not own a computer, there are computers accessible to you in all UCF's computer labs, and most computer labs have computers connected to the internet. For further information on computer labs, please see the following website: <https://it.ucf.edu/techcommons/computer-labs/>

Attendance is required - You must arrive on time and remain until excused. **For EACH of the 1st two unexcused absences your course grade will be reduced by 10%. If you miss 3 labs, unexcused or excused, you will receive an F for the course.** If you arrive late to a field lab and miss the van, you will receive an unexcused absence. If you arrive late or leave early on a classroom day, your grade on assignments for that day will be reduced.

The ONLY exceptions to this policy are for legitimate, documentable circumstances. Authorized absence must include written documentation from a competent authority (physician, coach, counselor, etc.). Excuses from relatives (including relatives who are doctors, dentists, attorneys, etc.) will NOT be accepted. Acceptable absences are major illness, serious family emergencies, special curricular or professional requirements (e.g. attending a scientific meeting), court-imposed legal obligations, military obligations, certain religious holidays, and participation in official university-sponsored activities (e.g. intercollegiate athletes, presentation at Student Scholar Symposium). Work- or travel-related absences will NOT be considered valid excuses (e.g. "I had to cover someone else's shift", "my parents booked airplane tickets", etc.).

For anticipated absences such as religious holidays, military obligations, and participation in official University sponsored activities, you must inform Dr. Klowden of this anticipated absence within the 1st 10 days of the semester or you will not be eligible for an authorized absence. For unanticipated absences (e.g. illness), it is your responsibility to contact Dr. Klowden if possible prior to the absence or if not possible then within 24 hours after missing the exam and provide *documentation signed by a doctor, police officer, judge, coach, etc. within one week*. An authorized absence does not excuse you from any missed work. You are individually and entirely responsible for all information, announcements, assignments, and/or handouts that you miss during an absence.

Work missed due to unauthorized absence cannot be made up and a grade of zero will be recorded. Work missed due to an authorized absence must be made up or will be assigned a grade of zero. Late assignments will not be accepted.

Lab Participation:

I expect you to have a good attitude and to be active participants in the learning process. This not only means that you are present in all labs but that you are prepared and actively work to improve your understanding of the subject. Ask questions and seek answers both alone and in conjunction with your classmates. In the field you will quickly discover that working outdoors trying to collect ecological data is a challenging endeavor that is generally enjoyable but can at times be uncomfortable, exhausting and monotonous. Please try to keep a good attitude and help your classmates whenever possible. In addition to the learning benefits that active participation will bestow upon you, it will also be reflected in your grade. Dr. Klowden will observe and evaluate your preparedness, general attitude, and enthusiasm in all labs. Your grade may be reduced substantially if it is deemed that you participation is particularly poor on one or more days.

Field Labs

Throughout the semester we will take field trips to investigate several of Florida's ecosystems. We will observe and discuss various abiotic (e.g. soil, water) and biotic (plant community composition and physiognomy, animal communities) characteristics of each system and compare/ contrast these to other systems.

For all field labs please wear long pants, long sleeves, socks and close toed shoes that can get wet and dirty since you are likely to encounter waist high vegetation, poison ivy, biting insects, rain, mud, etc. and may get wet and muddy. If you have something to do after this lab you may want to bring a change of clothes. Labs will occur rain or shine unless the weather is severe. So, please bring a raincoat on rainy days. Be on time for lab as we will leave promptly. Don't be late or you will miss your ride (and receive an unexcused absence)! Absolutely, positively no personal vehicles are allowed on field trips.

List of required and recommended equipment to bring to each outdoor lab:

Required:

1. **Water** - bring plenty (i.e. not just 1 small bottle) as we will be outdoors in the sun for hours.
2. Long pants, long sleeves, socks and close toed shoes that can get wet and dirty
3. Personal medications – allergy, headache, bee sting kit if allergic to bee stings, etc.
4. Field notebook and pencils

Recommended:

- | | | | | |
|-------------|---------------------|----------------------|-----------------|--------------------------------|
| 5. Hat | 7. Insect repellent | 9. Field guides | 11. Watch | 13. Wet wipes & hand sanitizer |
| 6. Sunblock | 8. First aid kit | 10. Lunch and snacks | 12. Hand towels | 14. Backpack |

Assignments:

Academic Activity Verification

To meet the registrar's requirement for documentation of your participation in this course, all faculty members are required to document students' academic activity at the beginning of each course. To document that you began this course, please complete the academic activity verification assignment in Webcourses by the deadline in the course schedule. Failure to do so may result in a delay in the disbursement of your financial aid.

Worksheets

Each week you will have a worksheet to complete which should help you to think about, better understand, and compare the ecosystems we visit and stay caught up. Worksheets will be due prior to each lab. Late worksheets will not be accepted.

Presentations:

Three times in the semester (see due dates in syllabus) you need to submit a slideshow movie presentation about the ecosystems we visit including photos and video of the flora and fauna that you were able to photograph and identify on each field trip. Slideshow movies can be constructed using any appropriate movie software or presentation software such as PowerPoint. Complete details for this assignment are available on Webcourses.

All photographs and movies of species shown in your presentations must be taken by you during the lab period. Photos taken by you before or after the lab or those taken by others besides yourself are not eligible for submission. Each person will be supplied with a waterproof camera that will allow you to photograph or video a variety of terrestrial and aquatic subjects. All species used in your presentations must have been photographed using the supplied camera. You may also use pictures or movies taken on your own phone, but only if it is a species you have also photographed on the supplied camera.

To aid in identification of the plants and animals you observe, an assortment of field guides with pictures, descriptions, and distribution maps will be available to you on reserve in the John C. Hitt Library at the 2nd floor Circulation desk. You may check these out for 2 hours. Please share these resources kindly with your classmates. Additionally, you may want to use internet resources and download apps of interest to your phone.

Performance Evaluation:

Worksheets (10 x 2.2%)
Presentations (3 x 26%)

Proportion of grade

22%
78%
100%

Grading Scale:

A	93.0 – 100%	B+	87.0 - 89.9%	C+	77.0 - 79.9%	D+	67.0 - 69.9%	F	0 - 59.9%
A-	90.0 - 92.9%	B	83.0 - 86.9%	C	70.0 - 76.9%	D	63.0 - 66.9%		
		B-	80.0 - 82.9%			D-	60.0 - 62.9%		

Grade Rounding Policy:

No matter where I set the limit, there will ALWAYS be someone who is close to the next grade. If I said I would round up grades that are 0.5% or closer to the next grade then the person that is 0.6% away would be sad. If I said I would round up grades that were 1% or closer, then the person that is 1.1% would be sad. Because of this, your overall semester grade will NOT be rounded. In other words, either you have the grade or you don't. In other words, a 79.99 is still a 'C+'. As there are many students in this class I strive for consistency and fairness. For this reason, there will be no exceptions to this policy and no other adjustments will be made (i.e. No additional curving or extra credit will be offered).

Prevention of Disease Transmission

Help reduce and prevent the spread of diseases to others. While certain diseases may be mild for one person, they may cause others substantial health risks, inconvenience, long-term debilitation, miscarriage, or death.

If we all take precautions, we can greatly reduce disease spread and illness. There are many ways your actions can help protect you, your household, and your community from severe illness. In addition to basic health and hygiene practices, like handwashing, to protect yourself and those around you, it is recommended that you:

- Stay home if you have symptoms of flu, “colds”, COVID, or other similarly transmissible illnesses!
 - If you believe you might be getting or could possibly be ill, wear a mask when near others (N95 or surgical grade).
 - Always cough or sneeze into a tissue or your elbow (not your hands!).
 - Test for COVID if you have symptoms or think you may have been exposed and stay home if you have any doubt.
 - Stay up to date with all vaccines (Flu, COVID, etc.).
- * Vaccines are the safest and most effective way to avoid severe illness. Sometimes vaccinated people can still get the flu or COVID, etc. however, vaccines significantly lower the risk of getting very sick, being hospitalized, or dying. Vaccines cannot cause the disease for which you are being vaccinated. They simply trick the immune system to think you are infected, so your body produces antibodies in case you really do get infected. Sometimes your body responds with a brief fever, but this does not mean you have the disease. It simply means your immune system is working and it is preparing you in case you really do get the disease. For more information on vaccines and how they work, read: <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/hcp/conversations/understanding-vacc-work.html> or watch videos on YouTube such as: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_mHo9vGulx8

Academic Integrity:

Why should I care?

Beyond moral considerations, academic dishonesty diminishes the quality and value of a UCF education. If prospective employers, graduate schools, etc. have a poor perception of UCF, it undermines the value of your education and decreases your likelihood of advancement. If you are aware of academic dishonesty it is important to report it as quickly as possible. Otherwise you risk devaluation of your degree and hard work. Non-reporting is also considered academic dishonesty.

What should you do if you are aware of another student cheating?

You should contact Dr. Klowden <gklowden@ucf.edu> in private as soon as possible after the incident has occurred. Your reporting will remain confidential.

What is considered academic dishonesty?

Students should familiarize themselves with UCF's Rules of Conduct at <http://osc.sdes.ucf.edu/process/roc>.

According to Section 1, “Academic Misconduct,” students are prohibited from engaging in:

- Unauthorized assistance: Using or attempting to use unauthorized materials, information or study aids in any academic exercise unless specifically authorized by the instructor of record. The unauthorized possession of examination or course-related material also constitutes cheating.
- Communication to another through written, visual, electronic, or oral means: The presentation of material which has not been studied or learned, but rather was obtained through someone else's efforts and used as part of an examination, course assignment, or project.
- Commercial Use of Academic Material: Selling of course material to another person, student, and/or uploading course material to a third-party vendor without authorization or without the express written permission of the university and the instructor. Course materials include but are not limited to class notes, Instructor's PowerPoints, course syllabi, tests, quizzes, labs, instruction sheets, homework, study guides, handouts, etc.
- Falsifying or misrepresenting the student's own academic work.

- Plagiarism: Using or appropriating another's work without any indication of the source, thereby attempting to convey the impression that such work is the student's own. Examples include, but are not limited to:
 - Turning in someone else's work as your own.
 - Copying words or ideas from someone else without giving credit.
 - Failing to put a quotation in quotation marks.
 - Giving incorrect information about the source of the information.
 - Changing words but copying the sentence structure of a source.
 - Copying so many phrases from a source that it makes up a substantial part of your work, even if you give credit.
- Multiple Submissions: Submitting the same academic work more than once without written permission of the instructor.
- Helping another violate academic behavior standards.

For more information about Academic Integrity, consult the International Center for Academic Integrity <http://academicintegrity.org>

For more information about plagiarism and misuse of sources, see "Defining and Avoiding Plagiarism: The WPA Statement on Best Practices" <http://wpacouncil.org/node/9>

Unauthorized Use of Websites and Internet Resources

There are many websites claiming to offer study aids to students, but in using such websites, students could find themselves in violation of academic conduct guidelines. These websites include (but are not limited to) Chat GPT, Quizlet, Course Hero, Chegg Study, and Clutch Prep. UCF does not endorse the use of these products in an unethical manner, which could lead to a violation of our University's Rules of Conduct. They encourage students to upload course materials, such as test questions, individual assignments, and examples of graded material. Such materials are the intellectual property of instructors, the university, or publishers and may not be distributed without prior authorization. Students who engage in such activity are in violation of academic conduct standards and could face course and/or University penalties. Please let me know if you are uncertain about the use of a website so I can determine its legitimacy.

If you need assistance, I recommend you visit me during my office hours and make use of the Student Academic Resource Center (SARC), the University Writing Center (UWC), the Math Lab, etc.

If you are aware of others engaging in such activity or find materials from my classes posted on these sites, I would appreciate your bringing this to my attention. We all play a part in creating a course climate of integrity.

Unauthorized Use of Technology for Graded Work

If you were in a classroom setting taking a quiz, would you ask the student sitting next to you for an answer to a quiz or test question? The answer should be no. This also applies to graded homework, quizzes, tests, etc. Students are not allowed to use GroupMe, WhatsApp, or any other form of technology to exchange course material associated with a graded assignment, quiz, test, etc. when opened on Webcourses. The completion of graded work in an online course should be considered a formal process: Just because you are not in a formal classroom setting being proctored while taking a quiz or test does not mean that the completion of graded work in an online course should not be treated with integrity.

The following are some examples of what is considered academic misconduct. This is certainly not an all-inclusive list and there are many other possible ways to be in violation.

- Taking a screen shot of an online assignment, posting it to GroupMe or WhatsApp, and asking for assistance.
- Answering, giving advice, assistance, or suggestions on how to complete an online assignment or assessment that is posted to GroupMe or WhatsApp.
- The use of outside assistance from another student or by searching the internet, Googling for answers, use of websites such as Chat GPT, Quizlet, Course Hero, Chegg Study, etc.
- Gathering to take an online quiz or test with others and sharing answers in the process.

Responses to Academic Dishonesty, Plagiarism, or Cheating

Students should also familiarize themselves with the procedures for academic misconduct in UCF's student handbook, The Golden Rule <<http://goldenrule.sdes.ucf.edu/docs/goldenrule.pdf>>. UCF faculty members have a responsibility for students' education and the value of a UCF degree, and so seek to prevent unethical behavior and when necessary respond to academic misconduct. Penalties can include a failing grade in an assignment or in the course, suspension or expulsion from the university, and/or a "Z Designation" on a student's official transcript indicating academic dishonesty, where the final grade for this course will be preceded by the letter Z. For more information about the Z Designation, see <http://goldenrule.sdes.ucf.edu/zgrade>.

Course Accessibility Statement:

The University of Central Florida is committed to providing access and inclusion for all persons with disabilities. Students with disabilities who need disability-related access in this course should contact the professor as soon as possible. Students should also connect with Student Accessibility Services (SAS) <http://sas.sdes.ucf.edu/> (Ferrell Commons 185, sas@ucf.edu, phone 407-823-2371). Through Student Accessibility Services, a Course Accessibility Letter may be created and sent to professors, which informs faculty of potential access and accommodations that might be reasonable. Determining reasonable access and accommodations requires consideration of the course design, course learning objectives and the individual academic and course barriers experienced by the student.

Campus Safety Statement

Emergencies on campus are rare, but if one should arise during class, everyone needs to work together. Students should be aware of their surroundings and familiar with some basic safety and security concepts.

- In case of an emergency, dial 911 for assistance.
- Every UCF classroom contains an emergency procedure guide posted on a wall near the door. Students should make a note of the guide's physical location and review the online version at http://emergency.ucf.edu/emergency_guide.html.
- Students should know the evacuation routes from their classrooms and have a plan for finding safety in case of an emergency.
- If there is a medical emergency during class, students may need to access a first-aid kit or AED (Automated External Defibrillator). To learn where those are located, see <https://ehs.ucf.edu/automated-external-defibrillator-aed-locations>.
- To stay informed about emergency situations, students can sign up to receive UCF text alerts by going to <https://my.ucf.edu> and logging in. Click on "Student Self Service" located on the left side of the screen in the toolbar, scroll down to the blue "Personal Information" heading on the Student Center screen, click on "UCF Alert", fill out the information, including e-mail address, cell phone number, and cell phone provider, click "Apply" to save the changes, and then click "OK."
- Students with special needs related to emergency situations should speak with their instructors outside of class.
- To learn about how to manage an active-shooter situation on campus or elsewhere, consider viewing this video <https://youtu.be/NIKYajEx4pk>.

Notifications in Case of Changes to Course Modality

Depending on the course of the pandemic during the semester, the university may make changes to the way classes are offered. If that happens, please look for announcements or messages in Webcourses@UCF or Knights email about changes specific to this course.

In Case of Faculty Illness

If the instructor falls ill during the semester, there may be changes to this course, including having a backup instructor take over the course. Please look for announcements or mail in Webcourses@UCF or Knights email for any alterations to this course.

Deployed Active-Duty Military Students:

Students who are deployed active-duty military and/or National Guard personnel and require accommodation should contact their instructors as soon as possible after the semester begins and/or after they receive notification of deployment to make related arrangements.

Title IX

Title IX prohibits sex discrimination, including sexual misconduct, sexual violence, sexual harassment, and retaliation. If you or someone you know has been harassed or assaulted, you can find resources available to support the victim, including confidential resources and information concerning reporting options at <https://letsbeclear.ucf.edu> and <http://cares.sdes.ucf.edu/>.

For more information on diversity and inclusion, Title IX, accessibility, or UCF's complaint processes contact:

- Title IX – OIE – <http://oie.ucf.edu/> & askanadvocate@ucf.edu
- Disability Accommodation – Student Accessibility Services
- Diversity and Inclusion Training and Events
- UCF Compliance and Ethics Office & complianceandethics@ucf.edu

UCF Cares:

During your UCF career, you may experience challenges including struggles with academics, finances, or your personal well-being. UCF has a multitude of resources available to all students. Please visit UCFCares.com if you are seeking resources and support, or if you are worried about a friend or classmate. Free services and information are included for a variety of student concerns, including but not limited to alcohol use, bias incidents, mental health concerns, and financial challenges. You can also e-mail

ucfcares@ucf.edu with questions or for additional assistance. You can reach a UCF Cares staff member between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. by calling 407-823-5607. If you are in immediate distress, call 407-823-2811 to speak with a counselor at Counseling and Psychological Services 24/7 or call 911.

Knights Pantry

The Knights Helping Knights Pantry is committed to serving UCF students by providing basic needs including food, clothing, and personal hygiene items to foster continued academic success and increase retention for students in need. Access to the Knights Pantry is reserved for UCF Students who present a valid Student ID upon entry. Students are limited to 5 food items per day. There is currently no limit for toiletries or clothing.

Location: Ferrell Commons, Room 7H - 101 // Phone: 407-823-3663 // Hours: Mon-Fri: 10am-6pm, Sat. 12pm-5pm

The Knights Pantry relies on the support of students, faculty, and staff. Donations of food, toiletries, or clothing (business professional or casual) can be dropped off at the Pantry in Ferrell Commons or to one of our many donation boxes around campus. Campus donation boxes can be found on the UCF Mobile app maps. In addition to tangible donations, the Knights Party accepts monetary donations to ensure food is available when demand is high. Also, the Pantry would not be able to keep its doors open without the help of student volunteers, so consider volunteering.

TENTATIVE Course Calendar (subject to change)

Week	Day/ Date	Topic	Important dates
1	Wed 8/23	No class	Academic Activity assignment (Due Fri 8/25 by 5:00p)
2	Wed 8/30	Course Intro Intro to plant identification Intro to animal identification	Worksheet 1 due in class
3	Wed 9/6	Field day – Pine flatwoods and dry prairie	Worksheet 2 due Tu 9/5 by 11:59p
4	Wed 9/13	Field day – Scrub	Worksheet 3 due Tu 9/12 by 11:59p
5	Wed 9/20	Field day – Hardwood hammock	Worksheet 4 due Tu 9/19 by 11:59p
6	Wed 9/27	Presentations 1	Presentation 1 and Summary 1 due Tu 9/26 by 11:59p
7	Wed 10/4	Field day – Freshwater marsh	Worksheet 5 due Tu 10/3 by 11:59p
8	Wed 10/11	Field day – Freshwater swamp	Worksheet 6 due Tu 10/10 by 11:59p
9	Wed 10/18	Field day – Salt marsh and mangroves	Worksheet 7 due Tu 10/17 by 11:59p
10	Wed 10/25	Presentations 2	Presentation 2 and Summary 2 due Tu 10/24 by 11:59p
11	Wed 11/1	Field day - Springs	Worksheet 8 due Tu 10/31 by 11:59p
12	Wed 11/8	Field day – River (or estuary)	Worksheet 9 due Tu 11/7 by 11:59p
13	Wed 11/15	Field day – Beach and dunes	Worksheet 10 due Tu 11/14 by 11:59p
14	Wed 11/22	NO CLASS – THANKSGIVING BREAK	
15	Wed 11/29	Presentations 3	Presentation 3 and Summary 3 due Tu 11/28 by 11:59p
Finals		No final exam	

*"I'm a great believer in luck, and I find the harder I work the more I have of it."
-Thomas Jefferson*

Dr. Klowden reserves the right to modify the syllabus as needed. Students will be informed of changes.