

Entomology 416/816 (1 credit)
Forensic Insect Succession Syllabus
Spring 2020

INSTRUCTOR:

Erin Bauer, Entomology Lecturer

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Office Hours: The best way to reach me is by email. Expect a response within 24 hours on weekdays or 48 hours on weekends (but often much sooner). If you call, leave a message and I will get back with you as soon as possible.

If you are on campus, come by my office in 305C Entomology Hall.

ABOUT THE COURSE

This course will introduce students to forensic insect succession and specific forensically important insects including their life cycle, biology, and association with decomposition. Case studies about how forensic entomology has been used in solving crimes will also be covered.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

1. Understand forensic insect succession and its relationship to decomposition stages.
2. Identify and describe common insects of forensic importance.
3. Critique scholarly research about forensically important insects.
4. Examine case studies in forensic entomology.

INSTRUCTIONAL METHOD

Canvas will be used for delivery of all materials pertinent to this course (lectures, asynchronous discussions, videos, readings, and assignments). Power Point presentations will be used to deliver lectures, which will include text and images and will be strengthened by narration to emphasize key points. In addition, readings and videos will be assigned. Each student is expected to complete all reading assignments and view all supplementary videos for each module.

Because this is an asynchronous class, my role as instructor will be to answer any questions you have about the course or the assignments, and begin discussions. Within the discussion board, I may add comments, but primarily would like you and your classmates to guide the discussion with your own thoughts and ideas. I check email frequently and usually get back to students within 24 hours on weekdays or 48 hours if over a weekend.

TEXTBOOKS AND RESOURCES (available on Amazon.com and other online retailers):

Required:

Castner, J.L. & Byrd, J.H. (2000). *Forensic Insect Identification Cards*. Feline Press, Gainesville, FL.

Also, please purchase the *Catching Killers: Insect Evidence* TV episode. It is available for \$2 (or free if

you have Amazon Prime) from [Amazon](#), [Vudu](#), or [Google Play](#).

Recommended:

Byrd, J.H. & Castner, J.L. (2009). *Forensic Entomology: The Utility of Arthropods in Legal Investigations*. 2nd ed. CRC Press.

STUDENT ASSIGNMENTS

Journal Article Critiques: Students will choose topically related scholarly research paper/articles (two for undergrads and three for grads) and write a 3-4 page summary and critique for that article. Please see separate handout for more details about this assignment.

Video Essays: Students will watch a short video and complete class essays (one for undergrads, two for grads; see separate handout for details) about specific cases where insects were used to help solve a crime. Additional references and thought are necessary to be successful on these assignments.

For assistance in obtaining reference materials from the library here at the University of Nebraska, contact the Entomology Librarian, who is Leslie Delserone, C.Y. Thompson Library, East Campus, UNL, Lincoln, NE 68583- 0717 (402) 472-6297 Email: ldelserone2@unl.edu

Exams: There will be two exams in this course, a midterm and a final. Both will be closed book, with questions being multiple choice, true/false, or short answer. The midterm will cover the first half of the course, and the final will be comprehensive.

POINT BREAKDOWN

Undergraduates

Assessment	Quantity	Points Per	Total Points
Journal Article Critiques	2	30	60
Video essay	1	50	50
Exams	2	75	150
Total			260 points

Graduates

Assessment	Quantity	Points Per	Total Points
Journal Article Critiques	3	30	90
Video essay	2	50	100
Exams	2	75	150
Total			340 points

Letter grades will be assigned based on straight percentages of 100 - 90% A range, 89 - 80% B range, etc.

SCALE

100 – 98 A+	89 - 87 B+	79 - 77 C+	69 – 67 D+	59 – 0 F
97 – 94 A	86 - 83 B	76 – 73 C	66 – 63 D	
93 – 90 A-	82 - 80 B-	72 – 70 C-	62 – 60 D-	

CLASS SCHEDULE

Week	Topic	Assignments due
1 (Jan 13-17)	Introduction to Insect Succession	
2 (Jan 20-24)	Diptera: Blow Flies Part 1	
3 (Jan 27-31)	Diptera: Blow Flies Part 2	
4 (Feb 3-7)	Diptera: Flesh Flies	Journal critique 1 due
5 (Feb 10-14)	Diptera: House and other misc. flies	
6 (Feb 17-21)	Midterm Exam (opens Feb 18)	
7 (Feb 24-28)	Case Studies	
8 (Mar 2-6)	Coleoptera: Predatory beetles	Journal critique 2 due
9 (Mar 9-13)	Coleoptera: Carrion beetles	
10 (Mar 16-20)	Coleoptera: Dermestid beetles	Video essay 1 due
11 (Mar 23-27)	Spring break, no lecture	
12 (Mar 30-Apr 3)	Hymenoptera: Predatory insects	
13 (Apr 6-10)	Other predatory arthropods	Journal critique 3 due (grad students only)
14 (Apr 13-17)	Blattodea/Lepidoptera/Orthoptera: Opportunistic insects	
15 (Apr 20-24)	Other Opportunistic arthropods	Video essay 2 due (grad students only)
16 (Apr 27-May 1) 17 (May 4-8)	Final exam (opens Apr 28)	

Academic Dishonesty:

The University of Nebraska-Lincoln has a clear, succinct, and reasonable policy about academic dishonesty, as indicated in the student code of conduct (<https://studentconduct.unl.edu/student-code-conduct>). As a student at UNL, you enjoy rights and protections under the code and are obligated to conduct yourself in compliance with the code. One area where students occasionally have some confusion regards plagiarism (which is especially important in this course, as most assignments and exams involve writing). The key concept here (and in other misconduct) is misrepresenting the work of another as one's own. The University has a good web site that reviews UNL's policy on academic integrity and academic dishonesty, which you should review (<https://studentconduct.unl.edu/academic-integrity>).

As the Student Code of Conduct indicates, academic sanctions for misconduct (subject to appeal) are at the discretion of the instructor, and may include giving the student a failing grade for the course. In this course, the least penalty we will impose for misconduct is a one letter grade reduction in the course grade, however, in most instances (particularly for graduate students) the penalty for cheating in this class will be a failing grade in the course.

If a student wishes to appeal a claim of academic dishonesty, the following process must be followed. First, the student must submit a written appeal to the instructor of the course and state their reason(s) for appealing. If this student appeal cannot be resolved with the course instructor, then the student must immediately submit their appeal statement within seven days to the Department's Curriculum Committee for their recommendation. If a satisfactory solution to this appeal is still not reached with the Department Curriculum Committee, the student's written appeal will then be forwarded to the Department Head. If a satisfactory solution is still not achieved at the Department Head level, the student may then submit their

written appeal statement to the College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources (CASNR) Dean's Office. The appeal process for the College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources will then be followed as outlined by the College.

Additional Information:

PLEDGE OF INSTRUCTIONAL STANDARDS

Entomology instructors will provide our students a complete syllabus meeting all UNL standards, our classes will be based on current science and will follow published schedules and descriptions, and our instructors will be timely in returning grades and in responding to our students.

ADA STATEMENT

The University strives to make all learning experiences as accessible as possible. If you anticipate or experience barriers based on your disability (including mental health, chronic or temporary medical conditions), please let me know immediately so that we can discuss options privately. To establish reasonable accommodations, I may request that you register with Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD). If you are eligible for services and register with their office, make arrangements with me as soon as possible to discuss your accommodations so they can be implemented in a timely manner. SSD contact information: 232 Canfield Admin Bldg.; 402-472-3787

CHEATING

The University of Nebraska-Lincoln has a policy about academic dishonesty, as indicated in the Student Code of Conduct (see Undergraduate Bulletin). As a student at UNL, you enjoy rights and protections under the code and are obligated to conduct yourself in compliance with the code.

As the Student Code of Conduct indicates, academic sanctions for misconduct subject to appeal are at the discretion of the instructor, and may include giving the student a failing grade for the course. In this course, the least penalty that will be imposed for misconduct is a one letter grade reduction in the course grade, but in most instances the penalty for cheating will be a failing grade in the course.

"Students are expected to adhere to guidelines concerning academic dishonesty as specified in Entomology policy (insert web link) in accordance with Section 4.2 of the University Student Code of Conduct (<http://stuafs.unl.edu/ja/code/>)."