

Florida Environments – WIS 4934
3 Credits, Spring Semester 2026, University of Florida

Course Syllabus

- Class times/location:** Lectures: MWF 1:55 – 2:45 p.m. ET (Period 7)
Location: MCCB 1108 ([MAP](#))
Lectures will be delivered in class.
Three optional field trips will be offered.
- Prerequisites:** There are no prerequisites for this course.
- Instructor:** Dr. Martin Main, Professor
Office: Rm 312, Newins-Zeigler Hall ([MAP](#)).
Email: mmain@ufl.edu
Phone: Office: 352.294.2728
About me: <https://wec.ifas.ufl.edu/people/wec-faculty/martin-main/>
- Office hours:** MWF 9:00-10:00 a.m.
Please use Canvas when contacting me by email.
- Course textbook:** None. Course materials, announcements, and grades will be posted on the Canvas site: “Florida Environments”. You will need your Gatorlink username and password to log into Canvas at elearning.ufl.edu – access via the orange *Log in to E-learning* box.

Course description: Introduction to Florida’s coastal, freshwater, and upland environments, the different natural communities (habitat types) that occur within these environments, the diversity of plants and animals that live in those environments, and some of the principal conservation issues facing Florida’s natural environments and the species they support.

Course objectives and goals: By the end of this course, students will be able to:

- 1) Describe important natural communities that occur in Florida’s coastal, freshwater, and upland environments, how they vary across the state, and why.
- 2) Identify and describe plants and animals that live in Florida’s coastal, freshwater, and upland environments including how selective pressures and species adaptations influence where different species occur.
- 3) Discuss causes and challenges associated with major conservation issues facing Florida’s natural environments and the species they support.

Class demeanor: It is important that we treat each other with respect and patience. Questions may be posted on Canvas and I ask everyone to respect every question as a good question and refrain from posting a message that could be taken as criticism. Every person is valued and language that demeans or dehumanizes any person or group of people is not acceptable.

Assignments and exams will be administered online in Canvas. This course includes six assignments, three semester exams, and a final, comprehensive exam that collectively total 600 points. Questions for assignments and exams are drawn from a large question data bank based on information from class lectures and materials. Exams are timed and will be open in Canvas for 45 minutes. For students with DRC accommodations, the time will be extended to meet your accommodation.

Assignments (30 pts. each): Assignments are open book and will be administered online in Canvas. You may use your notes and as much time as you need to answer assignment questions, which serve both as an important part of your grade and a means for you to prepare for exams. Once you begin an assignment, you must complete it entirely, so give yourself plenty of time.

Semester Exams (90 pts. each): Exams are timed and will be open in Canvas for 45 minutes, excepting students with accommodations from DRC. The exam clock starts ticking when you begin an exam in Canvas and the exam will close when the allotted time has expired, even if you have not completed the exam. You will score poorly if you do not study for exams, so please prepare.

Final exam (150 pts.): The final exam is cumulative, incorporating questions from all three semester assignments and exams. As with the semester exams, the final exam is timed (60 min) and will be administered via Canvas on the date and location specified by UF (TBA).

Extra credit may be available at discretion of the instructor.

Assignment and Exam Schedule:

- **Module 1 – Coastal Systems**
 - Assignment 1 (25 pts): Due Tues. 1/27/26 (10 pm)
 - Assignment 2 (25 pts): Due Tues. 2/10/26 (10 pm)
 - **EXAM 1** (100 pts): Open in Canvas: 8:00 a.m.-10:00 p.m. Weds. 2/11/26
- **Module 2 – Freshwater Systems**
 - Assignment 3 (25 pts): Due Tues. 3/3/26 (10 pm)
 - Assignment 4 (25 pts): Due Tues. 3/24/26 (10 pm)
 - **EXAM 2** (100 pts): Open in Canvas: 8:00 a.m.-10:00 p.m. Fri. 3/25/26
- **Module 3 – Upland Systems**
 - Assignment 5 (25 pts): Due Tues. 4/7/26 (10 pm)
 - Assignment 6 (25 pts): Due Tues. 4/21/26 (10 pm)
 - **EXAM 3** (100 pts): Open in Canvas: 8:00 a.m.-10:00 p.m. Weds. 4/22/26
- **FINAL EXAM** (150 pts): Open in Canvas: Date and Time TBD

Assignment and Exam Points and Final Grade Calculation:

Assignments (6 @ 25 pts each)	=	150 points available
Semester Exams (3 @ 100 pts each)	=	300 points available
Final Exam (1 @ 150 pts)	=	150 points available
Total from required assignments and exams	=	600 points

Grades: **A** (90%; ≥540 pts), **B** (80%; 480-539 pts), **C** (70%; 420- 479 pts), **D** (360-419 pts), **E** (<360 pts). Scores on exams are not curved. No plus or minus grades are given in this course.

Student accommodations: [Accommodations - DISABILITY RESOURCE CENTER](#)

Missed exams: Students wishing to take a missed exam must provide a legitimate, documented excuse as to why the exam was missed. Please discuss with me ahead of time or immediately following a missed exam. Requirements for make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university academic policies.

UF academic policies and support services: <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/>

WIS4934 Florida Environments - Lecture Schedule Spring 2026

Module 1: Florida's Coastal Systems

Week 01

- M Jan. 12: Welcome and Introduction to Florida's Coastal Systems
- W Jan. 14: Florida's Marine and Estuarine Environments
- F Jan. 16: Virtual tour (video) of Florida's Nearshore Environments; discussion

Week 02

- M Jan. 19: ***UF Holiday—Martin Luther King Day***
- W Jan. 21: Virtual tour (video) of Florida's Estuarine environments; discussion
- F Jan. 23: Florida's Coastal Upland Environments
- ***Assignment 1: Florida's Coastal Environments (due Tues. 1/27 - 10 pm)***

Week 03

- M Jan. 26: Virtual tour (video) of Florida's Coastal Upland Environments; discussion
- ***Due: Assignment 1 (Tues. 1/27 - 10 pm)***
- W Jan. 28: Coastal Invertebrates
- F Jan. 30: Coastal Fish

Week 04

- M Feb. 2: Coastal Amphibians and Reptiles
- W Jan. 4: Coastal Birds
- F Feb. 6: Coastal Mammals
- ***Assignment 2: Florida's Coastal Species (due Tues. 2/10 - 10 pm)***
- ***COASTAL FIELD TRIP (OPTIONAL) – SAT FEB 7***

Week 05

- M Feb. 9: *Review Day (in classroom)*
- ***Due: Assignment 2 (Tues. 2/11 - 10 pm)***
- W Feb. 11: EXAM 1 - Florida's Coastal Systems (Online in Canvas 8am-10pm; no class)**

Module 2: Florida's Freshwater Systems

F Feb. 13: Introduction to Florida's Freshwater Systems

Week 06

M Feb. 16: Florida's Herbaceous Wetlands (marshes)

W Feb. 18: Virtual tour (video) of Florida's Herbaceous Wetlands; discussion

F Feb. 20: Florida's Forested Wetlands

Week 07

M Feb. 23: Virtual tour (video) of Florida's Forested Wetlands; discussion

W Feb. 25: Florida's Permanent Wetlands

F Feb. 27: Virtual tour (video) of Florida's Permanent Wetlands; discussion

- ***Assignment 3: Florida's Freshwater Environments (due Tues. 3/3 - 10 pm)***
- ***FRESHWATER FIELD TRIP (OPTIONAL) – SAT FEB 28***

Week 08

M Mar. 2: Freshwater Invertebrates

- ***Due: Assignment 3 (Tues. 3/3 - 10 pm)***

W Feb. 4: Freshwater Fish

F Mar. 6: Freshwater Amphibians

Week 09

M Mar. 9: Freshwater Reptiles

W Mar. 11: Freshwater Birds

F Mar. 13: Freshwater Mammals

- ***Assignment 4: Florida's Freshwater Species (due Tues. 3/24 - 10 pm)***

Week 10 – SPRING BREAK (Mar. 16-20) – No Class

Week 11

M Mar. 23: Review Day (in classroom)

- ***Due: Assignment 4 (Tues. 3/24 - 10 pm)***

W Mar. 25: EXAM 2 - Florida's Freshwater Systems (Online in Canvas 8am-10pm; no class)

Module 3: Florida's Upland Systems

F Mar. 27: Introduction to Florida's Upland Systems

Week 12

M Mar. 30: Florida's Pineland Habitats
View video of Florida's Pineland Habitats on your own (link in Canvas)

W Apr. 1: Florida's Hardwood Habitats
View video of Florida's Hardwood Forests on your own (link in Canvas)

F Apr. 3: Florida's Scrub/Rangeland Habitats
View video of Florida's Scrub/Rangelands on your own (link in Canvas)

- **Assignment 5: Florida's Upland Environments (due Tues. 4/7 - 10 pm)**
- **UPLANDS FIELD TRIP (OPTIONAL) – SAT APR 4**

Week 13

M Apr. 6: Review/discussion of Florida Upland Habitats/Videos

- **Due: Assignment 5 (Tues. 4/7 - 10 pm)**

W Apr. 8: Upland Invertebrates

F Apr. 10: Upland Amphibians

Week 14

M Apr. 13: Upland Reptiles

W Apr. 15: Upland Birds

F Apr. 17: Upland Mammals

- **Assignment 6: Florida's Upland Species (due Tues. 4/21 - 10 pm)**

Week 15

M Apr. 20: Review Day (in classroom)

- **Due: Assignment 6 (Tues. 4/21 - 10 pm)**

W Apr. 22: EXAM 3 - Florida's Upland Systems (Online in Canvas 8am-10pm; no class)

READING DAYS: April 23-24, 2025

Week 16

FINAL EXAM: TBD (Online in Canvas)

**Lecture schedule may change to meet the needs of the instructor, guest speakers, or students.*