

WILDLIFE TRACKS & SIGN

WIS6934

3 CREDIT HOURS

INSTRUCTOR: Lee Burton

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COURSE WEBSITE: <https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/443077>

COURSE COMMUNICATIONS: Students can ask general questions about course policies and content in the Course Questions discussion, which is pinned to the top of the Discussions page in the course website. Specific questions about grades can be emailed to the instructor and will usually receive an answer within 48 hours. Discussion boards will be graded within one week barring unusual circumstances, in which case the instructor will attempt to message students.

REQUIRED TEXT:

Elbroch, Mark (2019). *Mammal Tracks and Sign: A Guide to North American Species, 2nd Edition*. Stackpole Books, ISBN-10: 0811737748

Young, Jon (2007). *Animal Tracking Basics*. Stackpole Books, ISBN-10: 0811733262

Liebenberg, Louw, & Elbroch (2010). *Practical Tracking: A Guide to Following Footprints and Finding Animals*. Stackpole Books, ISBN-10: 081173627X

RECOMMENDED COURSE TECHNOLOGY: *Note: Purchase of smartphone app iTrack Wildlife Pro is highly recommended. Great way to analyze tracks in the field by looking up species accounts on the app. Includes photos, descriptions, and other useful information. Available on iOS and Android app stores.*

<http://www.naturetracking.com/itrack-wildlife/>

COURSE DESCRIPTION: This course is intended for ecologists, naturalists, and other parties who wish to have a deeper understanding of the behavior of terrestrial animals in terms of the habitats they frequent, what and where they

feed, den and bedding locations, and other activities. In particular, it is designed for wildlife professionals who work in the field conducting animal surveys, observations, and capturing/handling wildlife or who are otherwise involved in teaching field skills.

PURPOSE OF COURSE: By completing this course curriculum, students will have a whole new world opened to them, revealing the evidence left behind by mammals, ground dwelling birds, and other animal species as they pass through an area. In addition to broadening your knowledge of wildlife behaviors, it will yield other unexpected benefits including deepening your enjoyment of the outdoors. Upon course completion, students will be expected to recognize a variety of North American animal tracks and signs, as well as perform rudimentary identification and interpretation of common animal gaits.

COURSE GOALS AND/OR OBJECTIVES:

BY THE END OF THIS COURSE, STUDENTS WILL BE ABLE TO:	USING:
Recognize track morphologies for select mammal, reptile, amphibian, and avian species	Instructional materials, Q&A, Module Quizzes
Recognize the effects of varying substrates on track appearances	Instructional materials, Q&A, Module Quizzes
Recognize animal gaits	Instructional materials, Module discussions, Portfolio
Identify tracks in the field for a variety of canine, feline, ungulate, procyonidae, rodent, and other mammal, reptile, amphibian, and avian species	Instructional materials, Module discussions, Portfolio

Identify scat for mammals, reptiles, amphibians, and birds (including pellets)	Instructional materials, Module discussions, Portfolio
Recognize other animal sign (digs, burrows, beds, animal runs, debarking/markings, scrapes, broken limbs, grazing/browsing or other feeding sign, predation events, and skeletal remains)	Instructional materials, Module discussions, Portfolio
Differentiate between tracks and sign of varying ages	Instructional materials, Module discussions, Portfolio
Recognize and be able to follow animal trails	Instructional materials, Module discussions, Portfolio

COURSE STRUCTURE: The course is composed of 15 modules, which corresponds to completing a module each week. Each module will consist of a variety of tasks that will generally occur in the following order:

1. Course Learning Materials - readings, videos, audios, etc.
2. Q&A – answer word questions related to module topic based on lectures and reading materials
3. Group Discussion – a forum discussion relating to analysis of animal track and sign photos (for each module the initial post is due at the end of Day 3, and all subsequent replies must be in by the end of Day 5).
4. Quiz – answer picture identification questions based on the module topic and learnings from the materials & assignments
5. Final Portfolio Submission – a cumulative assignment that analyzes tracks each student found in the field

COURSE POLICIES:

MODULE REQUIREMENTS: To successfully complete a module for full credit, all tasks and activities must be fully completed within the allocated time period (1 week per module except for Thanksgiving week which is extended). Full credit for a module means viewing all module materials and completing all tasks (readings/videos, assignments, quizzes, etc.) in addition to participating in any group discussions, all of which will factor into the student's final grade (see grading section).

For every hour of credit (3 for this course), students should plan to put in 3-5 hours of effort. That equates to roughly 9-15 hours of time invested to sufficiently complete all module activities each week. Some weeks will be slightly longer/harder than other weeks, and some will be shorter/easier.

FINAL PORTFOLIO ASSIGNMENT: This is a cumulative assignment, which you will do throughout the semester at your own pace. During this course, choose ten animal tracks or signs that you find out in the field and analyze them using the Shikari journal template supplied in the course materials. At the end of the semester, you will reflect on the process of journaling your experience with animal tracking in an essay or video. Compile everything into an ePortfolio in Canvas and submit the link to your ePortfolio by **Dec 4th**. Links to the assignment can be found in Module 1 and Module 15.

MAKE-UP POLICY: Each module has a beginning date and a due date listed on the Course Schedule section, meaning you will not be able to do them after the latter date (i.e. no late assignments accepted nor make ups are allowed).

UF POLICIES:

UNIVERSITY POLICY ON ACCOMMODATING STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES: Students requesting accommodation for disabilities must first register with the Dean of Students Office (<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/>). The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to the instructor when requesting accommodation. You must submit this documentation prior to submitting assignments or taking the quizzes or exams. Accommodations are not retroactive, therefore, students should contact the office as soon as possible in the term for which they are seeking accommodations.

UNIVERSITY POLICY ON ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT: Academic honesty and integrity are fundamental values of the University community. Students should be sure that they understand the UF Student Honor Code at <https://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/>

NETIQUETTE: COMMUNICATION COURTESY: For any forum discussions, group calls, etc. students are expected to behave in a manner that is respectful to the instructor and to fellow students. In the interests of time and out of courtesy to others, students should adhere to the session topics as well as being mindful of their contributions to the discussion. All students should fully participate in group discussions, but should not dominate or drown out the voices of others. Opinions held by other students should be respected in discussion, and conversations that do not contribute to the discussion should be held at minimum.

COMMUNICATION: Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of content in this course by completing online evaluations at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu>. Evaluations are typically open during the last two or three weeks of the semester, but students will be given specific times when they are open. Summary results of these assessments are available to students at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu/results/>.

GETTING HELP:

For issues with technical difficulties for E-learning in Canvas, please contact the UF Computing Help Desk at:

- helpdesk@ufl.edu
- (352) 392-HELP - select option 2
- <https://request.it.ufl.edu>

Any requests for make-ups due to technical issues MUST be accompanied by the ticket number received from LSS when the problem was reported to them. The ticket number will document the time and date of the problem. You MUST e-mail your instructor within 24 hours of the technical difficulty if you wish to request a make-up.

Other resources are available at <http://www.distance.ufl.edu/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 with your experience in this course please visit <http://www.distance.ufl.edu/student-complaints> to submit a complaint.

GRADING POLICIES:

The course has a total of 15 modules, with each module containing a value of up to 62 points. Your lowest score in each of the regular assignments (Q&A, Quiz, Discussion) will be dropped, so effectively you will only be graded on an aggregate total of 14 modules. Hence, you could miss one week/module due to personal reasons and still receive the highest score for the course.

ASSIGNMENT	POINTS PER ASSIGNMENT	TOTAL POINTS (BEST 14 MODULE SCORES)	% OF GRADE
Syllabus Quiz	10	10	1%
Discussion	11	154	15%
Q&A	24	336	34%
Quiz	24	336	34%
Final Portfolio Submission	154 not attached to any one module)	154	15%
Exit Survey	10	10	1%
Total	NA	1000	100%

GRADING SCALE:

Score	Percent	Grade	Grade Points
934-1000	93.4-100	A	4
900-933	90-93.3	A-	3.67
867-899	86.7-89.9	B+	3.33
834-866	83.4-86.6	B	3
800-833	80-83.3	B-	2.67
767-799	76.7-79.9	C+	2.33
734-766	73.4-76.6	C	2
700-733	70-73.3	C-	1.67
667-699	66.7-69.9	D+	1.33
634-666	63.4-66.6	D	1
600-633	60-63.3	D-	0.67
0-599	0-59.9	E	0

More information on grades and grading policies is here:

<http://gradcatalog.ufl.edu/content.php?catoid=11&navoid=2486#grades>

COURSE SCHEDULE:

Module	Dates	Topic
1	8/23 – 8/29	Introduction to Animal Sign
2	8/30 – 9/05	Tracking Morphology and Ecology
3	9/06 – 9/12	Animal Gaits
4	9/13 – 9/19	Canine Tracks
5	9/20 – 9/26	Feline Tracks
6	9/27 – 10/03	Ungulate Tracks
7	10/04 – 10/10	Bears, Raccoons, Skunks & Procyonidae Tracks
8	10/11 – 10-17	Medium Sized Mammals
9	10/18 – 10/24	Rodent Tracks
10	10/25 – 10/31	Bird Tracks
11	11/01 – 11/07	Reptile and Amphibian Tracks
12	11/08 – 11/14	Scat and Pellets
13	11/15 – 11/21	Other Animal Sign
14	11/22 – 12/01	Aging Tracks and Sign
15	12/02 – 12/08	Trailing Animals
NA	8/23 – 12/08	Final Portfolio Submission

Disclaimer: This syllabus represents my 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.