IDS 2935 Can Big Data Save the Earth?

Quest 2

I. Course Information

Spring 2025
Meeting Day/Time: T7 (1.55 pm – 2.45 pm), R7+8 (1.55 pm – 3.50 pm)
Location: Matherly Hall, room 119
Primary General Education Designation: Biological Sciences
Secondary General Education Designation (if seeking): No Secondary Designation
Writing Designation (if seeking): No writing designation

A minimum grade of C is required for general education credit.

Instructor

Geraldine Klarenberg – gklarenberg@ufl.edu (but preferably use Canvas messages!)
Office location: 340 McCarty Hall C
TA: Lindsey Cromwell – lindsey.aman@ufl.edu
Student hours: Tuesday 3-4 pm, after class (or by appointment Thursday 4-5 pm)
Phone: (352) 273-0792

Course Description

There is more pressure than ever before on our environmental resources: sometimes we find solutions, but sometimes we also generate unintended consequences. At the same time, technological advances are generating ever more amounts of data - also environmental data. Remote sensing, satellite technology, sensor technology, telemetry and data storage ensure that we have biological data over various time and space scales. The challenge arises how we use this data to do good; increase our understanding, find solutions, and avoid unintended consequences. This course addresses the question: can big data save the earth? We will explore complexity in biological and socio-ecological systems, the nature of causality, models and their relation to sustainability and natural resources management. We will connect data science and its tools to biology and ecosystems through project-based enquiry, by exploring and using real-life data sets, asking big questions and answering them.

General Education designation and statement

Biological science courses provide instruction in the basic concepts, theories and terms of the scientific method in the context of the life sciences. Courses focus on major scientific developments and their impacts on society, science and the environment, and the relevant processes that govern biological systems. Students will formulate empirically-testable hypotheses derived from the study of living things,

apply logical reasoning skills through scientific criticism and argument, and apply techniques of discovery and critical thinking to evaluate outcomes of experiments.

Required & Recommended Course Materials (to purchase/rent)

All textbooks and articles used in this course are available online, for free. Select textbook chapters will be made available on Canvas.

Main textbook (select chapters used):

Severance, C. (2020). *Python for Everybody*.

- Online interactive version (recommended): https://eng.libretexts.org/Bookshelves/Computer_Science/Programming_Languages/Book%3A_Python_for_Everybody_(Severance)
- Pdf version: http://do1.dr-chuck.com/pythonlearn/EN_us/pythonlearn.pdf
- Other versions (incl in other languages, e.g. Spanish, Portuguese, Russian, Chinese, etc): https://www.py4e.com/book

Molin, S. (2021). *Hands-On Data Analysis with Pandas: Efficiently Perform data Collection, Wrangling, Analysis and Visualization Using Python.* Packt Publishing. Available for free online through the UF library system (ProQuest ebooks).

Additional textbooks (select chapters used when necessary):

Miller, B. and D. Ranum (n.d.). *How to Think Like a Computer Scientist: Interactive Edition.* Runestone Academy Project, Luther College. https://runestone.academy/ns/books/published/thinkcspy/index.html

McKinney, W. (2023). *Python for Data Analysis, 3E. Data Wrangling with pandas, NumPy & Jupyter*. O'Reilly. https://wesmckinney.com/book/

Other materials

Kim, D.H. (1999). Introduction to systems thinking.

Video: Emergence – how stupid things become smart together

Video: What is a complex system?

Cilliers, P. (2005). Knowledge, limits and boundaries. *Futures*, *37*(7), 605-613.

Carpenter, S. R., C. Folke, M. Scheffer, and F. R. Westley. 2009. Resilience: accounting for the noncomputable. *Ecology and Society* **14**(1): 13. [online]
URL: http://www.ecologyandsociety.org/vol14/iss1/art13/

Fleming, L, Tempini, N, Gordon-Brown, H, Nichols, G, Sarran, C, Vineis, P, Leonardi, G, Golding, B, Haines, A, Kessel, A, Murray, V, Depledge, M, & Leonelli, S (2017, July 27). Big Data in Environment and Human Health. *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Environmental Science*. https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780199389414.013.541

Video "Big Data for Climate Change and Disaster Resilience: Two Experts on their Work", DfID (https://datapopalliance.org/big-data-for-climate-change-and-disaster-resilience-two-experts-on-their-work/)

Video "Monitoring Forests in Near Real Time" (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lTG-0brb98I)

*Rossi, F., Breidenbach, J., Puliti, S.; Astrup, R., Talbot, B. (2019). Assessing Harvested Sites in a Forested Boreal Mountain Catchment through Global Forest Watch. *Remote Sens.* 2019, 11*,* 543.

* Pittman, J.R., Hatzell, H.H., and Oaksford E.T. (1997). Spring contributions to water quantity and nitrate loads in the Suwannee River during base flow in July 1995. *USGS Water-Resources Investigations Report 97-4152*.

* Bergquist, D.C., Heuberger, D., Sturmer, L.N., Baker, S.M. (2008). Continuous water quality monitoring for the hard clam industry in Florida, USA. *Environ Monit Assess* 148: 409–419. DOI 10.1007/s10661-008-0171-3.

* Kucera, Thomas E, and Reginald H Barrett. 2011. "A History of Camera Trapping." In *Camera Traps in Animal Ecology: Methods and Analyses*, edited by Allan F O'Connell, James D Nichols, and K Ullas Karanth, 9–26. Camera Traps in Animal Ecology: Methods and Analyses. Tokyo: Springer Japan.

* Nichols, James D, Allan F O'Connell and K Ullas Karanth. 2011. "Camera Traps in Animal Ecology and Conservation: What's Next?." In *Camera Traps in Animal Ecology: Methods and Analyses*, edited by Allan F O'Connell, James D Nichols, and K Ullas Karanth, 9–26. Camera Traps in Animal Ecology: Methods and Analyses. Tokyo: Springer Japan.

*Wanik, D.W., J.R. Parent, E.N. Anagnostou and B.M. Hartman (2017). Using vegetation management and LiDAR-derived tree height data to improve outage predictions for electric utilities. *Electric Power Systems Research*. 146: 236-245.

Episode of Vox: Coding, Explained (on Netflix)

Broman, KW & Woo, KH (2018). Data Organization in Spreadsheets. *The American Statistician*, 72:1, 2-10, DOI: 10.1080/00031305.2017.1375989

Wilson, G, Aruliah ,DA, Brown, CT, Chue Hong, NP, Davis, M, Guy, RT, et al. (2014) Best Practices for Scientific Computing. PLoS Biol 12(1): e1001745. https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pbio.1001745

Wilson, G, Bryan, J, Cranston, K, Kitzes, J, Nederbragt, L, Teal, TK (2017) Good enough practices in scientific computing. PLoS Comput Biol 13(6): e1005510. https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pcbi.1005510

Video: "What is a Climate Model?" https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bkcrH9tYv8g

Online article "Satellite data record shows climate change's impact on fires", NASA (https://climate.nasa.gov/news/2912/satellite-data-record-shows-climate-changes-impact-on-fires/)

Zook M, Barocas S, Boyd D, Crawford K, Keller E, Gangadharan SP, et al. (2017) Ten simple rules for responsible big data research. PLoS Comput Biol 13(3): e1005399. https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pcbi.1005399

Online article: "Big data case study: big data and conservation biology" (https://www.onlineethics.org/40548.aspx)

Materials and Supplies Fees: n/a

* Provisional readings. Final selection of readings dependent on demos in week 3.

II. Coursework & Schedule

1. List of Graded Work[1]

Assignment	Description	Requirements	Points[2]
Reflection essay 1	Reflection on the nature of complexity, consequences for natural resources management and socio-ecological systems.	500-750 words	10
Reflection essay 2	Reflection on the usefulness of models.	500-750 words	10
Reflection essay 3	Reflection on current and future data production, dangers and opportunities.	500-750 words	10
Coding tutorials	Coding tutorials on the basics of data management, organization and analysis (5; week 4 through 8)	Annotated, working code	10 each
Project	Conceptual framework of the question and pathway to answering it	Visual representation + 200 words max	10
Project	Project materials: organized data and code	Scripts, spreadsheets	20
Project	One-pager with project description (what, why, how, results)	~500 words	20
Project	Presentation	Powerpoint / Prezi	20
TOTAL			**150**

[1] Additional short quizzes or tasks can be assigned at the discretion of the instructor. These will be announced at least 2 weeks in advance.

[2] Grading rubrics with assessment criteria and point allocation are available for students on Canvas.

2. Weekly Course Schedule

Week/ Date	Activity	Topic/Assignment (Question/Subject)		Assigned Work Due
NOTE: this course meets 2 times a week. Generally, the first class (Tuesday) will consist of a lecture and discussions. The class later in the week (Thursday) will focus on hands-on work. Later in the semester though, it can occur that all meeting times are used for coding and group work. During the group work, progress has to be submitted. *Course schedule, topics, readings, and assignment/project due dates are subject to change. If changes are necessary, these will be announced at least one week in advance, on Canvas.*				
Week 1, Jan 13-19	Topic	**Complexity in nature and society**		
	Summary	- What is complexity – chaos and emergence - Unintended consequences / unpredictability - Issues of scale - Determinism vs stochastic - Linked to environmental problems, specifically socio-environmental problems		
	Readings/Works	Kim, D.H. (1999). Introduction to systems thinking. Video: Emergence – how stupid things become smart together Video: What is a complex system? Cilliers, P. (2005). Knowledge, limits and boundaries. *Futures*, *37*(7), 605-613. Carpenter, S. R., C. Folke, M. Scheffer, and F. R. Westley. 2009. Resilience: accounting for the noncomputable. *Ecology and Society* **14**(1): 13. [online] URL: http://www.ecologyandsociety.org/vol14/iss1/art13/	19 pages 7m 30 s 10m 23s 9 pages 6 pages	
	Assignment	Collaborative annotations of Cilliers (2005) Reflection essay 1 on complexity and causality, determinism and stochasticity – specifically in relation to socio-ecological systems		Fri wk 2
Week 2, Jan 20-26	Topic	**What is big data in ecosystem sciences and how are they used?**		
	Summary	- Satellite data / remote sensing / LiDAR - Automatic instrumentation: weather, water flow/quality, flux towers - Camera traps, acoustic detection systems (bats, birds)		

		- Eddy flux towers and other forestry-related data - Associated with all this; telemetry		
	Readings/Works	Article: Fleming, L., Tempini, N., Gordon-Brown, H., Nichols, G., Sarran, C., Vineis, P., Leonardi, G., Golding, B., Haines, A., Kessel, A., Murray, V., Depledge, M., & Leonelli, S. (2017, July 27). Big Data in Environment and Human Health. *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Environmental Science*. Video "Big Data for Climate Change and Disaster Resilience: Two Experts on their Work", DfID (https://datapopalliance.org/big-data-for-climate-change-and-disaster-resilience-two-experts-on-their-work/) Video "Monitoring Forests in Near Real Time" (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lTG-0brb98I)	25 pages 5 mins 2:30 mins	
	Assignment	Collaborative annotations of Fleming et al. (2017) Explore some of the presented data sources, such as USGS, NOAA websites (and other ecological projects), find a project or research article that shows practical applications of big data. Present it and its importance through a video or Powerpoint submission		Thurs wk 3
Week 3, Jan 27 – Feb 2	Topic	**Organize, manage, analyze: tools to deal with data**		
	Summary	- Programming / coding: advantages of scripts and reproducible research		
	Readings/Works	Episode of Vox: "Explained: Coding", on Netflix (alternative: clips from code.org) Article: Karl W. Broman & Kara H. Woo (2018) Data Organization in Spreadsheets, The American Statistician, 72:1, 2-10, DOI: 10.1080/00031305.2017.1375989	25 mins 10 pages	
	Assignment	Collaborative annotations (week 2 & 3) Prompts on coding documentary Survey to assess backgrounds/experience		Thurs wk 5
Week 4, Feb 3-9	Topic	**Big data in real life**		
	Summary	Demos from practitioners, showing measuring equipment and software - Tower/forestry data from NEON (Batelle staff) - Camera traps (UF faculty/students) / acoustic detection systems (Normandeau)		

		- Water quality monitoring (SRWMD, SJRWMD) - Drones, LiDAR (Geomatics, SFRC)		
	Readings/Works	TBD in detail (depending on demos): reading related to case studies, e.g. *Tracking deforestation*: Rossi, F., Breidenbach, J., Puliti, S.; Astrup, R., Talbot, B. (2019). Assessing Harvested Sites in a Forested Boreal Mountain Catchment through Global Forest Watch. *Remote Sens.* 2019, 11*,* 543. *Water quality monitoring*: Pittman, J.R., Hatzell, H.H., and Oaksford E.T. (1997). Spring contributions to water quantity and nitrate loads in the Suwannee River during base flow in July 1995. *USGS Water-Resources Investigations Report 97-4152*. Bergquist, D.C., Heuberger, D., Sturmer, L.N., Baker, S.M. (2008). Continuous water quality monitoring for the hard clam industry in Florida, USA. *Environ Monit Assess* 148: 409–419. DOI 10.1007/s10661-008-0171-3. *Camera traps*: Kucera, Thomas E, and Reginald H Barrett. 2011. "A History of Camera Trapping." In *Camera Traps in Animal Ecology: Methods and Analyses*, edited by Allan F O'Connell, James D Nichols, and K Ullas Karanth, 9–26. Camera Traps in Animal Ecology: Methods and Analyses. Tokyo: Springer Japan. Nichols, James D, Allan F O'Connell and K Ullas Karanth. 2011. "Camera Traps in Animal Ecology and Conservation: What's Next?." In *Camera Traps in Animal Ecology: Methods and Analyses*, edited by Allan F O'Connell, James D Nichols, and K Ullas Karanth, 9–26. Camera Traps in Animal Ecology: Methods and Analyses. Tokyo: Springer Japan. *Weather/LiDAR*: Wanik, D.W., J.R. Parent, E.N. Anagnostou and B.M. Hartman (2017). Using vegetation management and LiDAR-derived tree height data to improve outage predictions for electric utilities. *Electric Power Systems Research*. 146: 236-245. Prep for next week: From "Hands-On Data Analysis with Pandas" (Molin, 2019) - Chapter 1 Introduction to Data Analysis, pages 8-37	Approx. 35-40 pages max 29 pages	
	Assignment	N/A		

Week 5, Feb 10-16	Topic	**Organize, manage, analyze: tools to deal with data (ctd)**		
	Summary	- Programming fundamentals - Introduction to Python - Focus on reproducibility - Overview of statistics / math requirements (brief)		
	Readings/Works	Articles: Wilson G, Aruliah DA, Brown CT, Chue Hong NP, Davis M, Guy RT, et al. (2014) Best Practices for Scientific Computing. PLoS Biol 12(1): e1001745. https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pbio.1001745 Wilson G, Bryan J, Cranston K, Kitzes J, Nederbragt L, Teal TK (2017) Good enough practices in scientific computing. PLoS Comput Biol 13(6): e1005510. https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pcbi.1005510 From "Python for Everybody" (Severance, 2020): - Chapter 1 Introduction - Chapter 2 Variables, Expressions and Statements - Chapter 4 Functions - Chapter 8 Lists	7 pages 20 pages 15 pages* 9 pages* 9 pages* 11 pages*	
	Assignment	Tutorials on programming and introduction to Python		Thurs wk 6
Week 6, Feb 17-23	Topic	**Organize, manage, analyze: tools to deal with data (ctd)** Sub-topic: what are supercomputers and how to use them?		
	Summary	Continuation with: - Programming fundamentals - Introduction to Python; packages for data science - Focus on reproducibility and big data		
	Readings/Works	From "Hands-On Data Analysis with Pandas" (Molin, 2019) - Chapter 2 Working with Pandas DataFrames	59 pages	
	Assignment	Tutorials on programming and introduction to Python		Thurs wk 7
Week 7, Feb 24 – Mar 2	Topic	**Big questions and big data in ecosystem science**		

	Summary	What are the kinds of questions people are asking? How can more data help? Exploration of NEON data themes, with examples of questions related to them and connected to resource management: - Atmosphere - Organisms, populations and communities - Biogeochemistry - Ecohydrology - Land cover and processes		
	Readings/Works	Get started with NEON Data and Resources: https://www.neonscience.org/resources/getting-started-neon-data-resources - Introduction to NEON - Download and explore NEON data - Use Python to access NEON data: https://www.neonscience.org/resources/learning-hub/tutorials/neon-utilities-python From "Python for Everybody" (Severance, 2020): - Chapter 3 Conditional execution	9 pages	
	Assignment	Make groups, decide on a NEON site and an area of interest. Tutorials on programming and introduction to Python (ifelse and for-loops)		Thurs wk 8
Week 8, Mar 3-9	Topic	**Exploration of real-life data: NEON data** Project work: conceptual framework for analysis		
	Summary	- Engage more with the NEON data, look at the sites, what data is available, what kind of question would you want to answer. - Continue exploring NEON data using Python, use NEON packages for downloading and organizing data		
	Readings/Works	Get started with NEON Data: https://www.neonscience.org/get-started-neon-series - Work with NEON's plant phenology data - Work with NEON's single-aspirated air temperature data - Plot continuous and discrete data together From "Hands-On Data Analysis with Pandas" (Molin, 2019)		

		- Chapter 3 Data Wrangling with Pandas - Chapter 4 Aggregating Pandas DataFrames	68 pages 60 pages	
	Assignment	Project work: developing questions. Make a conceptual diagram / visual representation of the question to answer, which data is needed, types of analyses? Tutorials on programming and introduction to Python (pandas)		Thurs wk 10
Week 9, Mar 10-16	Topic	**How to communication and visualize results and analyses effectively** Project work: data wrangling		
	Summary	Effective visualization - Basics of effective visualization - Grammar of graphics - Tools in Python for data visualization		
	Readings/Works	From "Hands-On Data Analysis with Pandas" (Molin, 2019) - Chapter 5 Visualizing Data with Pandas and Matplotlib	47 pages	
	Assignment	Continue with project; wrangle data – submit progress		Thurs wk 11
Week 10, Mar 17-23		**SPRING BREAK**		
Week 11, Mar 24-30	Topic	**What are models? Usefulness and application of models** Project work: data and organization		
	Summary	- What is a model - Purpose - Usefulness; how to interpret models - Connecting data analysis/models with resource management - Machine learning and AI		
	Readings/Works	Video: "What is a Climate Model?" https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bkcrH9tYv8g Online article "Satellite data record shows climate change's impact on fires", NASA (https://climate.nasa.gov/news/2912/satellite-data-record-shows-climate-changes-impact-on-fires/) From "Hands-On Data Analysis with Pandas" (Molin, 2019) - Chapter 9 Getting Started with Machine Learning in Python (selection)	9 mins 3-4 pages 72 pages (selection	

	Assignment	Essay 2: contemplate the usefulness of computer models, the development of models over time, how they are used nowadays, and the dangers/risks of using and interpreting models. Continue with project: download data and organize – submit progress/draft		Thurs wk 12
Week 12, Mar 31 – Apr 6	Topic	**Project work: data wrangling and analysis**		
	Summary	Continue hands-on work on group project		
	Readings/Works	Depending on focus of groups and questions being asked		
	Assignment	Continue with project; wrangle data and analyze – submit progress		Thurs wk 13
Week 13, Apr 7-13	Topic	**Where will the data revolution take us?** Project work: analysis		
	Summary	Specifically related to natural resources management; - What is the future of data collection and analysis? - Ethics associated with (big) data and analyses		
	Readings/Works	Article: Zook M, Barocas S, boyd d, Crawford K, Keller E, Gangadharan SP, et al. (2017) Ten simple rules for responsible big data research. PLoS Comput Biol 13(3): e1005399. https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pcbi.1005399 Online article: "Big data case study: big data and conservation biology (https://www.onlineethics.org/40548.aspx)	10 pages 7 pages	
	Assignment	Essay 3: reflection on current and future data production, dangers and opportunities; consider ethics of data collection, use, analysis and publication/dissemination. Continue with project; analyze – submit progress		Thurs wk 14
Week 14, Apr 14-20	Topic	**Project work: analysis and visualization**		
	Summary	Continue hands-on work on group project		
	Readings/Works	Depending on focus of groups and questions being asked		
	Assignment	Continue with project; analyze and visualize – submit progress		Thurs wk 15
Week 15-16, Apr 21 – May 2	Topic	**Presentations of project work**		

	Summary	Work on presentation and one page summary (in plain English, as if for a resource management agency) One page summary contains: what, why, how, result of the project (in plain English, as if for a resource management agency)	
	Readings/Works	N/A	
	Assignment	Group presentations, peer review others' presentation	Before reading days
	Final project	Data, code, one page summary, presentation	Penultimate week

* Since these are online books, number of pages is estimated based on word count, and taking 500 words/page (hence excluding figures).

III. Grading

3. Statement on Attendance and Participation

Attendance and Participation:

Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university policies that can be found at: https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/attendance-policies/

Attendance: will be taken daily and recorded in the Canvas gradebook. You are allowed four "personal days" for the semester, after which each absence that does not meet university criteria for "excused" will result in a two-point deduction from your final grade.

Participation: Consistent informed, thoughtful, and considerate class participation is expected. Occasionally, points will be awarded for participation (e.g. discussions, online discussion board, collaborative reading etc.)

NOTE: If you have personal issues that prohibit you from joining freely in class discussion, e.g., shyness, language barriers, etc., see the instructor as soon as possible to discuss alternative modes of participation.

4. Grading Scale

For information on how UF assigns grade points, visit: https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/grades-grading-policies/

A	94 – 100% of possible points		C	74 – 76%
A-	90 – 93%		C-	70 – 73%
B+	87 – 89%		D+	67 – 69%
B	84 – 86%		D	64 – 66%
B-	80 – 83%		D-	60 – 63%
C+	77 – 79%		E	<60

Late submissions:
< 24 hrs: -10% of points earned
< 48 hrs: -25% of points earned
> 48 hrs: -50% of points earned

IV. Quest Learning Experiences

5. Details of Experiential Learning Component

Students will work with real-life datasets from the National Ecological Observatory Network (NEON), a nationwide monitoring network. One of the NEON sites is Ordway-Swisher Biological Station, just outside Gainesville. NEON staff will show and demonstrate some of the equipment used to capture atmospheric, mammal and vegetation data to give students in-depth understanding of the data that has been collected.

Using tutorials, class exercises and a learner-centered approach, the majority of classes will be hands-on project work. The focus will be on developing an ecosystem question driven by data availability and student interest, and use programming tools (Python) to wrangle and analyze data to provide answers. This inquiry-based project work is done in teams to provide students a realistic data science project experience, and practice effective communication.

6. Details of Self-Reflection Component

The course requires students to reflect on the concept of complexity and causality, as well as determinism and stochasticity (focusing on biological and socio-economic systems) at the beginning of the semester. Students are asked to contemplate whether determinism is true or not, and what it means for human agency in either case. These philosophical questions have strong connections with mathematics and physical sciences, especially in the realm of modeling processes – but also with our own personal views on free will and agency, and the effects of actions on each other and the environment.

Then, after being introduced to data, tools and computer models, students contemplate the usefulness of computer models related to biological and environmental systems. They are expected to reflect on the development of models over time, how they are used nowadays, and the dangers of models. This exercise aims to have students engage critically with the concept of predictive and explanatory science and data analysis.

Towards the end of the semester, students are asked to question the use and abuse of data in our current and future society. They should articulate their thoughts about current and future developments around data production and the effect on our world. This should focus specifically on biological and environmental data. Aside from practical considerations, this exercise addresses issues of ethics in data science.

V. General Education and Quest Objectives & SLOs

Biological Sciences in GenEd courses: Biological science courses provide instruction in the basic concepts, theories and terms of the scientific method in the context of the life sciences. Courses focus on major scientific developments and their impacts on society, science and the environment, and the relevant processes that govern biological systems. Students will formulate empirically-testable hypotheses derived from the study of living things, apply logical reasoning skills through scientific criticism and argument, and apply techniques of discovery and critical thinking to evaluate outcomes of experiments.

7. Biological Sciences + Quest 2 + Course Objectives

Biological Sciences Objectives ➔	**Quest 2 Objectives ➔**	**This Course's Objectives ➔** (This course will….)	**Objectives will be Accomplished By:** (This course will accomplish the objective in the box at left by…)
Biological science courses provide instruction in the basic concepts, theories and terms of the scientific method in the context of the life sciences.	Address in relevant ways the history, key themes, principles, terminologies, theories, or methodologies of the various social or biophysical science disciplines that enable us to address pressing questions and challenges about human society and/or the state of our planet.	… explore the use of data over time, the emergence of systems thinking, complexity and data science. They will contemplate and address philosophical questions around these issues, such as (causal) determinism, stochasticity of systems and agency (in biological and environmental sciences).	… examining complexity and systems literature, explore various existing data sets and computer models. Students will work with data hands-on, and will write a reflection on complexity and determinism in relation to data science and models (essay 1).
Courses focus on major scientific developments and their impacts on society, science and the environment, and the relevant processes	Present different social and/or biophysical science methods and theories and consider how their biases and influences shape pressing questions about the	… present the different ways in which data and models are used for predictive and explanatory purposes, reflect on their underlying assumptions and thus usefulness.	… explore a variety of models, discuss their uses and have students reflect on the use of models

Biological Sciences Objectives ➔	**Quest 2 Objectives ➔**	**This Course's Objectives ➔** (This course will….)	**Objectives will be Accomplished By:** (This course will accomplish the objective in the box at left by…)
that govern biological systems.	human condition and/or the state of our planet.		
Students will formulate empirically-testable hypotheses derived from the study of living things, apply logical reasoning skills through scientific criticism and argument, and apply techniques of discovery and critical thinking to evaluate outcomes of experiments.	Enable students to analyze and evaluate (in writing and other forms of communication appropriate to the social and/or biophysical sciences) qualitative or quantitative data relevant to pressing questions concerning human society and/or the state of our planet.	… apply coding and other software tools to analyze biological and environmental data relevant to the questions students pose (based on data availability and students' interests), associated with ecosystems.	… having students work in teams to develop questions and pathways to answering these. They will learn about tools they can employ and develop workflows and apply tools. They will submit a conceptual framework before starting analyses.
Biological science courses provide instruction in the basic concepts, theories and terms of the scientific method in the context of the life sciences.	Analyze critically the role social and/or the biophysical sciences play in the lives of individuals and societies and the role they might play in students' undergraduate degree programs.	… explore the role of big data and data science in providing explanations or solutions for pressing issues affecting ecosystems and society	… having students work with data and tools, and having students develop questions related to ecosystems and natural systems that they consider relevant
	Explore or directly reference social and/or biophysical science resources outside the classroom and explain how engagement with those resources complements classroom work.	… put students in touch with people working on biological and environmental data collection and analyses, and it will give students hands-on experience in coding and analyzing real-life datasets.	… demonstrations and guest lectures, and an inquiry-based project that requires the using of online databases and coding tools.

8. Biological Sciences + Quest 2 + Course SLOs

	Biological Sciences SLOs ➔ **Students will be able to…**	**Quest 2 SLOs ➔** **Students will be able to…**	**This Course's SLOs ➔** **Students will be able to…**	**Assessment** **Student competencies will be assessed through…**
Content	**Identify, describe, and explain** the basic concepts, theories and terminology of natural science and the scientific method; the major scientific discoveries and the impacts on society and the environment; and the relevant processes that govern biological and physical systems.	**Identify, describe, and explain** the cross-disciplinary dimensions of a pressing societal issue or challenge as represented by the social sciences and/or biophysical sciences incorporated into the course.	**Identify, describe, and explain** the role of big data, data science, analyses and models in understanding and predicting biological and ecosystem issues such as biodiversity loss and deforestation.	Class participation, reflection essays 1 and 3.
Critical Thinking	**Formulate empirically-testable hypotheses** derived from the study of physical processes or living things; apply logical reasoning skills effectively through scientific criticism and argument; and apply techniques of discovery and critical thinking effectively to solve scientific problems and to evaluate outcomes.	**Critically analyze** quantitative or qualitative data appropriate for informing an approach, policy, or praxis that addresses some dimension of an important societal issue or challenge.	**Analyze** and **Evaluate** available real-life large-scale biological (NEON) data in relation to the question asked by students / student groups.	Class participation, reflection essay 2, project results (conceptual framework, one page summary, presentation).

	Biological Sciences SLOs ➔ Students will be able to…	Quest 2 SLOs ➔ Students will be able to…	This Course's SLOs ➔ Students will be able to…	Assessment Student competencies will be assessed through…
Communication	Communicate scientific knowledge, thoughts, and reasoning clearly and effectively.	**Develop and present**, in terms accessible to an educated public, clear and effective responses to proposed approaches, policies, or practices that address important societal issues or challenges.	**Develop** a one page (plain English) summary of a data analysis project; the question, approach and results. **Present** a visual overview (presentation) of the project, as a group.	Project results (one page summary, presentation)
Connection	N/A	**Connect course content** with critical reflection on their intellectual, personal, and professional development at UF and beyond.	**Reflect** on the knowledge gained from the course on the role of data in society and in environmental sciences, and **connect** it to their thoughts about the future of our planet and its environment, and the role of data and humans in it.	Essay 3

VI. Required Policies

10. Students Requiring Accommodation

Students with disabilities who experience learning barriers and would like to request academic accommodations should connect with the Disability Resource Center by visiting https://disability.ufl.edu/students/get-started/. It is important for students to share their accommodation letter with their instructor and discuss their access needs, as early as possible in the semester.

11. UF Evaluations Process

Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available at https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens, and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via https://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/.

12. In-Class Recording

Students are allowed to record video or audio of class lectures. However, the purposes for which these recordings may be used are strictly controlled. The only allowable purposes are (1) for personal education use, (2) in connection with a complaint to the university, or (3) as evidence in, or in preparation for, a criminal or civil proceeding. All other purposes are prohibited. Specifically, students may not publish recorded lectures without the written consent of the instructor.

A “class lecture” is an educational presentation intended to inform or teach enrolled students about a particular subject, including any instructor-led discussions that form part of the presentation, and deliver by an instructor hired or appointed by the University, or by a guest instructor, as part of a University of Florida course. A class lecture does not include lab sessions, student presentations, clinical presentation such as patient history, academic exercises involving solely student participation, assessments (quizzes, tests, exams), field trips, private conversations between students in the class or between a student and the faculty or guest lecturer during a class session.

Publication without permission of the instructor is prohibited. To “publish” means to share, transmit, circulate, distribute, or provide access to a recording, regardless, of format or medium, to another person (or persons), including but not limited to another student within the same class section. Additionally, a recording, or transcript of a recording, is considered published if it is posted on or uploaded to, in whole or in part, any media platform, including but not limited to social media, book, magazine, newspaper, leaflet, or third-party note/tutoring services. A student who publishes a recording without written consent may be subject to a civil cause of action instituted by a person injured by the publication and/or discipline under UF Regulation 4.040 Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code.

13. University Honesty Policy

UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states "We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: "On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment." The Conduct Code specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. See the UF Conduct Code website for more information. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor or TAs in this class.

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). 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://policy.ufl.edu/regulation/4-040/

14. 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.

15. AI Use

At the University of Florida, integrating AI throughout the curriculum strategically enhances teaching and learning while preparing students for an AI-ready workforce across disciplines. As AI continues to permeate every aspect of our lives, it becomes more critical for students to develop AI literacy so that they can effectively weigh the exciting opportunities and complex challenges presented.

The following policy on AI use is specific for this course only. Other courses will have different guidelines.

- Generative AI tools may be used to enhance some assignments in this course. Assignment instructions will differentiate between distinct human and AI tasks. Any work that is done using generative AI must be cited in your submission.
- If uncited and/or unpermitted generative AI use is suspected, the student may be asked by the TA or instructor to elaborate on their work in person before a grade is assigned.

16. Whole Gator App

The Whole Gator and website and app connects UF students with resources dedicated to supporting overall health and well-being. In addition to many of the resources below it also has strategies to practice self-care.
https://one.uf.edu/whole-gator/topics

Health and Wellness

- U Matter, We Care: If you or someone you know is in distress, please contact umatter@ufl.edu, 352-392-1575, or visit U Matter, We Care website to refer or report a concern and a team member will reach out to the student in distress.
- Counseling and Wellness Center: Visit the Counseling and Wellness Center website or call 352-392-1575 for information on crisis services as well as non-crisis services.
- Student Health Care Center: Call 352-392-1161 for 24/7 information to help you find the care you need, or visit the Student Health Care Center website.
- University Police Department: Visit UF Police Department website or call 352-392-1111 (or 9-1-1 for emergencies).
- UF Health Shands Emergency Room / Trauma Center: For immediate medical care call 352-733-0111 or go to the emergency room at 1515 SW Archer Road, Gainesville, FL 32608; Visit the UF Health Emergency Room and Trauma Center website.
- GatorWell Health Promotion Services: For prevention services focused on optimal wellbeing, including Wellness Coaching for Academic Success, visit the GatorWell website or call 352-273-4450.
- Student Success Initiative, http://studentsuccess.ufl.edu

Academic Resources

- E-learning technical support: Contact the UF Computing Help Desk at 352-392- 4357 or via e-mail at helpdesk@ufl.edu.
- Career Connections Center: Reitz Union Suite 1300, 352-392- 1601. Career assistance and counseling services.
- Library Support: Various ways to receive assistance with respect to using the libraries or finding resources. Call 866-281-6309 or email ask@ufl.libanswers.com for more information.
- Teaching Center: 1317 Turlington Hall, 352-392-2010 or to make an appointment 352- 392-6420.

General study skills and tutoring.

- Writing Studio: Daytime (9:30am-3:30pm): 2215 Turlington Hall, 352-846-1138 | Evening (5:00pm-7:00pm): 1545 W University Avenue (Library West, Rm. 339). Help brainstorming, formatting, and writing papers.
- Academic Complaints: Office of the Ombuds; Visit the Complaint Portal webpage for more information.
- Enrollment Management Complaints (Registrar, Financial Aid, Admissions): View the Student Complaint Procedure webpage for more information.

Student Complaints:

- Residential Course: https://www.ombuds.ufl.edu/complaint-portal/
- Online Course: https://pfs.tnt.aa.ufl.edu/state-authorization-status/#student-complaint