

Introduction to Collections and Research in Natural History Museums

ANG 6930, ZOO 6927 (2 credits)

Instructors: Dr. Michelle J. LeFebvre¹ and Dr. David C. Blackburn²

¹mlefebvre@floridamuseum.ufl.edu, ²dblackburn@ufl.edu

When: Tuesday Periods 3,4,5

Natural history museum collections are central to research understanding many of the pressing challenges facing humanity today, including climate change, biodiversity loss, health of both humans and other organisms, and the rapid loss of language and culture. These collections are also increasingly used as foundations for facilitating civic engagement and confronting historical legacies of colonialism in sciences and society writ large.

This class will introduce students to research and collections in natural history museums, with a focus on the Florida Museum of Natural History (FM) at the University of Florida. Each week we will engage with faculty and staff in the FM, including speakers from UF and other institutions to discuss of-the-moment topics related to the operations, management, use, and ethics of scientific museum collections and related research. Throughout the course, students will learn how natural history museum collections and research are relevant to careers, disciplines, and discoveries both within and beyond museums themselves—including the research and career aspirations represented among the enrolled students.

This course is ideal for any graduate student interested in natural history museum research, collections, and resources (e.g., digitization), affiliated natural history disciplines (e.g., anthropology, biology, geology, education), as well as museum studies more broadly. Early-career graduate students are especially encouraged to participate to learn more about FM resources that may support their dissertation research.

The course will be conducted in-person and include behind-the-scenes tours of the FM research and collections facilities.

For more information, please email instructors.



(Florida Ethnographic Collection)



(Mammals Collection)