

Ecology and Evolutionary Biology

Interdepartmental Graduate Major

The ecology and evolutionary biology (EEB) interdepartmental major is offered through a faculty in eleven different departments. Faculty from the departments of Agronomy, Anthropology; Ecology, Evolution & Organismal Biology; Entomology; Genetics, Development & Cell Biology; Geological & Atmospheric Sciences; Horticulture; Mathematics; Natural Resource Ecology & Management; Plant Pathology; and Statistics cooperate to offer courses and direct research leading to the MS and PhD degrees in ecology and evolutionary biology.

Applicants should have completed an undergraduate or master of science or arts degree in one of the biological, physical, or mathematical sciences. Applicants also should have taken undergraduate courses in both basic ecology and evolution.

The EEB major is designed for students interested in the study of mechanisms controlling the composition, structure, and functional processes of ecological systems and the mechanisms that regulate the pattern and rate of evolutionary change within and among species.

The EEB curriculum includes a core course, seminar courses, and an extended field trip. In addition, offerings are available in the ethics and practice of research in the biological sciences. Cooperating departments provide courses and research opportunities in population, community, and ecosystems ecology; landscape ecology, modeling, and spatial dynamics; systematics, biodiversity, and biogeography; physiological and behavioral ecology; conservation and restoration ecology; agroecology; natural resources ecology and management; evolutionary ecology; population, quantitative, and evolutionary genetics; and environmental statistics, stochastic modeling, and quantitative ecology and evolution.

Students majoring in EEB are trained for careers focused on basic or applied ecology and evolutionary biology in a variety of settings, including academia, government, industry, and private organizations. Graduates have a broad understanding of ecology and evolutionary biology, experience designing and conducting research, writing grant proposals, and communicating effectively with scientific colleagues at meetings and through publications.

Information on application procedures, research interests of the faculty, and specific requirements of the major may be obtained from the EEB web site www.grad-college.iastate.edu/EEB/, or by contacting eeboffice@iastate.edu.

Courses primarily for graduate students, open to qualified undergraduates:

EEB 511. Conceptual Foundations in Ecology and Evolutionary Biology.

(3-2) Cr. 4. F. Prereq: Graduate classification

Introduction to key figures and ideas that have shaped the development of ecology and evolutionary biology. Covers major developments in ecology and evolutionary biology at five levels of biological organization: Genome, Organism, Population, Community, and Ecosystem. Impacts of these developments on current approaches to investigation and argument formulation. Effects of technological advances on the direction of scientific investigations. Introduction to analytical skills important for critical thinking in ecology and evolutionary biology and the impact of accepted lines of scientific reasoning on the objectives and conduct of research, such as explanation and prediction, design of studies as experimentation, and structured or unstructured observation.

EEB 585. Extended Field Trip.

(0-6) Cr. 2. Repeatable. S. Prereq: Graduate classification

Annual field trip to a region of North America to study the major terrestrial and aquatic ecosystem types. Report required.

EEB 590. Special Topics.

Cr. 1-3. Repeatable. F.S.SS. Prereq: Graduate classification and permission of instructor

For students wishing to conduct in-depth study of a particular topic in ecology and evolutionary biology.

Courses for graduate students:

EEB 698. Seminar.

(1-0) Cr. 1. Repeatable. F.S.

Reports and discussion of recent research and literature.

EEB 699. Research.

Cr. arr. Repeatable. F.S.SS.

Thesis and dissertation research.