Courses at Mountain Lake

UVA offers a variety of courses at MLBS, all of which incorporate substantial field experience. Nationally recruited instructors bring a wealth of knowledge and expertise to the classroom, and small class sizes (maximum of 11) ensure a highly personalized experience.

Courses earn 3 undergraduate or graduate credits and lab credits toward the UVA Biology major. Enrollment is open to both UVA and non-UVA students. Visit our website for more information on enrollment, tuition, and fees.

Financial aid is available. Applications reviewed starting March 15.

About the Station

MLBS is a University of Virginia field station that sits atop Salt Pond Mountain in Giles County, Virginia, approximately 3 hours southwest of the UVA campus. Surrounded by thousands of acres of deciduous hardwood forest in the southern Appalachians, the Station offers a wide array of natural environments for field research, as well as modern lab facilities. A friendly academic community fosters collaboration at all levels. Seminars occur twice weekly. Recreational opportunities include swimming, sand volleyball, hiking, running, and biking, as well as special events such as live music, dances, a volleyball tournament, a July 4th celebration, and other festivities.

Contact Us

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mlbs.org
2016 Summer Courses at Mountain Lake Biological Station

“We're I to do college all over again, I would spend every summer here.”

Summer Session I (May 23 - June 10)

Plant Diversity & Conservation: Bioinformatics and Systematics
Zack Murrell, Appalachian State University
The extraordinary diversity of the southern Appalachians will be used to explore the world of plants. We will visit unique mountain habitats to study the different species assemblages in these ecologically wide-ranging sites. Based upon our observations and analyses, we will critique contemporary views of the most effective conservation units (individual, population, species, family, habitat) and the methods used to achieve conservation goals.

Field Herpetology
Christian Cox, Georgia Southern University
We will focus on the ecology and evolution of reptiles and amphibians, leveraging their diversity in the southeastern U.S. In both the field and laboratory, we will study 1) evolutionary relationships among reptiles and amphibians, 2) key evolutionary innovations that characterize each major lineage, 3) reptile and amphibian systems in ecological and evolutionary research, and 4) location and identification of reptiles and amphibians.

Science Writing: Creative Approaches to Biology & Ecology (a short ArtLab course May 23 - June 3)
Hannah Rogers, University of Virginia
Writing is fundamental to the practice of science. We write about individual organisms, ecosystems, and patterns, to record our findings and to reach broader audiences. This course will explore a variety of writing styles to make the students better communicators both inside scientific communities and to the public. Students will be inspired by their experience of observing at MLBS and by prominent nature and science writers (e.g., Wordsworth, Oliver, Cole, Thoreau, McPhee, Berry) to create poems, environmental essays, and longer written works.

“I have many fond memories of tromping around in the woods surrounding the station.”

“[I took] Dr. Byers’ entomology class in 1975. I fell in love with insects then and made it my life’s work.”

Summer Session II (June 13 - July 8)

Field Biology of Fishes
David Neely, Tennessee Aquarium
MLBS sits on the Eastern Continental Divide providing an incredible diversity of freshwater habitats. Proficiency in ichthyology will be developed through field trips and lab work. Themes include: fish identification; patterns and drivers of diversity; interactions on individual, population, community, and ecosystem levels; evolution; and influences of human activities. Students will design and conduct a research project and present at a class symposium.

Summer Session III (July 11 - 29)

Biology of Fungi
Rytas Vilgalys, Duke University
The southern Appalachians provide an ideal setting to explore the biology of fungi. This class provides an introduction with emphasis on field identification and current experimental methods used to study fungal genetics, ecology, and evolution. Lab exercises will use filamentous fungi to demonstrate methods for identification, culture techniques, breeding systems, genetic analysis, and interaction biology. Field trips will survey the taxonomic diversity.