Syllabus BIOL 5193-003 (82252)
Graduate Seminar (Crayfish Species)
Fall 2025
Meeting Times: 10:00 – 11:00 am
Location: BEP 260
First Day of Class: Monday, August 26th
Last Day of Class: Friday, December 5th
Date to Withdraw Without Penalty (Census Date): Monday, September 8th

Instructor:

Dr. Josh Banta
Hudnall-Pirtle-Roosth Building (HPR) room 129 (Please knock loudly!)
Phone: (903) 565-5655
Email: jbanta@uttyler.edu
Office Hours: Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays 3:00 – 4:00 pm or by appointment

Course Description

This 1-credit graduate seminar provides hands-on experience in identifying crayfish, with emphasis on Texas species. Students will learn to recognize diagnostic characteristics of crayfish genera, with special focus on external reproductive structures used in species-level identification. Students will rotate leading discussions on crayfish biology, ecology, anatomy, and species richness, and will actively participate in all identification activities.

Student Learning Outcomes

- Identify major genera of Texas crayfish using external morphological traits.
- Distinguish crayfish species based on external reproductive structures.
- Demonstrate knowledge of crayfish species richness, ecology, and evolutionary relationships.
- Effectively present scientific information on crayfish biology to peers.

Grading:

Class participation, 50% of final grade
Leading discussions, 50% of final grade
Total: 100%

90 – 100% = A	80 – 89.999% = B	70 – 79.999% = C
60 – 69.999% = D	59.999% or lower = F	

Participation: Students are expected to attend every class, participate in crayfish identification labs, and engage in discussions.

Presentations: Each student will lead the discussion on at least two occasions, presenting a relevant topic on crayfish biology, ecology, anatomy, or species richness.

Professionalism: As a graduate-level course, students are expected to prepare thoroughly for class, contribute constructively, and demonstrate collegial behavior.

Attendance: Attendance is mandatory. Absences will be excused only for documented illness, religious observances, university-sponsored events, or other serious circumstances in accordance with university policy. Unexcused absences will negatively affect the participation grade.

Academic integrity: Cheating or any other type of academic misconduct will be reported to the university administration, and at minimum will result in failure of the course.

Privacy: Students do **not** have the right to be "anonymous" whether classes are in person or online, or for all-online classes. All discussion will take place within Canvas, and your names will be displayed.

Artificial Intelligence (AI): UT Tyler is committed to exploring and using artificial intelligence (AI) tools as appropriate for the discipline and task undertaken. We encourage discussing AI tools' ethical, societal, philosophical, and disciplinary implications. All uses of AI should be acknowledged as this aligns with our commitment to honor and integrity, as noted in UT Tyler's Honor Code. Faculty and students must not use protected information, data, or copyrighted materials when using any AI tool. Additionally, users should be aware that AI tools rely on predictive models to generate content that may appear correct but is sometimes shown to be incomplete, inaccurate, taken without attribution from other sources, and/or biased. Consequently, an AI tool should not be considered a substitute for traditional approaches to research. You are ultimately responsible for the quality and content of the information you submit. Misusing AI tools that violate the guidelines specified for this course (see below) is considered a breach of academic integrity. The student will be subject to disciplinary actions as outlined in UT Tyler's Academic Integrity Policy.

AI is not permitted in this course at all. For this course, I expressly forbid using ChatGPT or any other artificial intelligence (AI) tools for any stages of the work process, including brainstorming. Deviations from these guidelines will be considered a violation of UT Tyler's Honor Code and academic honesty values.

Tentative Schedule of Topics

Week 1: Introduction; overview of crayfish species richness in Texas
Week 2: Anatomy of crayfish: external features
Week 3: External reproductive structures and species identification
Week 4–10: Student-led presentations and crayfish identification labs
Week 11–14: Genera of Texas crayfish and regional identification practice
Week 15: Wrap-up discussion and synthesis

Student Resources and University Policies: These can be found on the Canvas course page under "Modules" ➔ "Course Information."