Background

Wetlands form the transition between terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems and provide critical resources for waterfowl, fish, and other wildlife. They also provide important natural services including natural flood control, recreation, and water purification. Although historically maligned and ignored, recent ecological awareness has revealed the importance of wetlands. The ability to recognize wetland plants is important not only for scientific reasons but also for legal ones. Delineation of wetlands is an important part of land use planning as owners, managers, and developers seek to comply with wetland protection laws.

Course activities

The goals of this course are to 1) familiarize the student with the ecology of wetlands and wetland plants and 2) develop identification skills and learn to recognize local wetland species.

Through both guided and on-your-own unguided field trips and a digital plant image gallery, the student will see a range of East Texas wetland and aquatic ecosystems and learn to identify roughly 120 local wetland species. Additionally, directed readings largely from Mitch and Gosslink (2000) will expose the student to topics relating to the hydrology, soil conditions, adaptations, and management of wetlands and wetland plants.

Grading:
The course grade will be based on a midterm (33%) and a final examination (33%) over topics from readings assigned from Mitch and Gosslink (2000) and a laboratory final (34%) testing the student's ability to identify wetland plants from the assigned species list.