The focus of this seminar is on the taxonomy and identification of North American Sphagnum species (peatmosses). Sphagnum differs from other mosses in virtually all aspects of their structure and life history. Lectures will cover the morphology and diversity of peatmosses, evolution and phylogeny of Sphagnum species, and the ecology of Sphagnum-dominated habitats. Individual lectures will focus on each subgenus of Sphagnum and how to distinguish related species. Participants will have ample opportunities to develop skills needed to identify North American Sphagnum (and other wetland bryophyte species as interest and time permit) in the field and laboratory. Field trips will target local peatlands with a diversity of Sphagnum species followed by guided microscopic identification of collections, supplemented by examination of species found in other parts of North America. Participants are encouraged to bring collections they have made in other geographic areas.

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