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November 10, 2020

The EES 217 field course led by Kate Ruskin, a University of Maine lecturer and undergraduate coordinator in the Ecology and Environmental Sciences Program, met Nov. 6–8. Typically, the students in the course spend a weekend tackling a real-world environmental problem in Acadia National Park. To adapt to COVID-19 restrictions, the course this fall was held on campus to assess the tick risk on UMaine's campus — addressing a research question that, “as far as we can tell, hasn't been done before,” Ruskin says.

In collaboration with UMaine professor Allison Gardner's lab, the EES 217 students examined the vegetation, wildlife and abiotic associations of ticks on campus. They also sampled ticks to kickoff for a long-term monitoring project on campus.

During the 48-hour research course, the students broke into groups on Friday evening and designed their experiments, collected data in the field Saturday and then returned to the lab to enter and analyze it. Sunday evening, they presented their results to the public in a presentation.

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