

SECRETS IN THE MUD

Pollen and Other Microfossils in Quaternary Research

Geography 530: TuTh 12:40–1:55 in Fall 2015



You may have seen TV shows in which pollen grains in the mud on the bottom of a suspect's shoes are used to connect the suspect with a crime scene. This is possible because the vegetation of different places on earth is often distinct, such that particular combinations of plants produce unique assemblages of preserved pollen in soils and sediments. In this course, we will focus on the scientific detective work of using pollen grains and other evidence in layered deposits of mud in lakes and wetlands to study past vegetation and fires, and other conditions of the environment. We will meet Tuesday and Thursday in 401 Burchfiel for lectures, laboratory work, and discussion, and at other times for optional field experiences. Upper-level undergraduate students are welcome along with graduate students in geography, anthropology, earth and planetary sciences, ecology, and related fields. Coursework in one or more of the fields listed provides the needed background. Undergraduates should email the instructor (shorn@utk.edu) for help enrolling, or with any questions. ***Come learn the secrets hiding in mud!***