

Science Matters
Summer 2026 Course Descriptions



Below are the course descriptions for each classroom for each week. Topics vary from week to week and from classroom to classroom. If you have any questions, please reach out to Kristen Jackson at jacksk6@auburn.edu.

June 1 - 5

SCORE Camp - VEXGO Mars Mission (3rd - 4th graders) - Emily Bass, Colby Malloy

"Dive into the exciting world of engineering, robotics, and coding through hands-on discovery and creative problem-solving. This Robotics Camp introduces 3rd and 4th graders to hands-on engineering and coding using VEX GO classroom kits. Students will work in teams to build a competition-style base robot and learn how to program it to complete fun and engaging tasks. Along the way, campers will develop problem-solving, collaboration, and critical-thinking skills. The camp wraps up with an exciting mock competition where students put their robots and coding skills to the test."

SCORE Camp - Beginning 3D Printing (5th - 6th graders) - Kristy Ramey

This camp is designed for students with no experience in 3D printing, where we will start with the basics. SCORE 3D printing camp will show you how to go from concept to product using Tinkercad and state-of-the-art 3D printers. Campers will work to solve an everyday problem using the engineering design process, CAD modeling, and 3D printers in an exciting hands-on experience with cutting-edge technology. What can you create?

Curious Curators (5th - 7th graders) - AU Museum of Natural History (AUMNH)*

Why do we have natural history museums? Why are they important? How do they grow? From field to museum, you will explore our local biodiversity, make collections, and learn how to curate them. You will explore swamps, streams, forests, and grasslands for all plants and animals and even some fossils. Each student will keep a field journal where they will write stories of their field experience. They will have a new appreciation for the diversity of the region and the scientists that study it!

*This camp takes place in conjunction with the AU Museum of Natural History and is different from a traditional Science Matters camp. **This camp is recommended for students that enjoy being in nature and are independent learners.** Students will primarily be outside doing fieldwork side-by-side with museum staff and class time will take place within the museum. **5th grade students are only permitted to attend one week of Curious Curators.**

June 8 - 12

Weather Wizards (1st – 2nd graders) - Ashley Hunter, Heather Cowell

Sun, wind, rain, or snow – get ready to cast your magic on the skies! Explore clouds, storms, and sunny days as you experiment with rainbows, wind, and even tornadoes in a bottle. Compare hot and cold fronts, track the clouds, and forecast fun everywhere you go. Forecast for this class: high chances of giggles and a sprinkle of wonder!

SCORE Robotics: Let's Go with VEX Go! (3rd - 4th graders) - Macey Snyder

Simple machines are all around us! Students will learn about and build simple machines using the Vex Go kit. Then students will use their new knowledge to build a super car and learn about force and velocity. The week will “zoom” by as the students learn and explore.

Sky Explorers: The Science of Weather (3rd - 4th graders) – Amy Wall

Explore the exciting world of weather! Students will learn how the sun, clouds, wind, and water work together to create different kinds of weather we see every day. We will observe the sky, measure temperature, and discover why it rains, storms happen and seasons change. Through hands-on experiments, games, outdoor activities, and field trips, we will think like scientists as they predict weather and learn how it affects people, plants, and animals.

Curious Curators (4th - 5th graders) - AU Museum of Natural History (AUMNH)*

Why do we have natural history museums? Why are they important? How do they grow? From field to museum, you will explore our local biodiversity, make collections, and learn how to curate them. You will explore swamps, streams, forests, and grasslands for all plants and animals and even some fossils. Each student will keep a field journal where they will write stories of their field experience. They will have a new appreciation for the diversity of the region and the scientists that study it!

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Weather Wonders (5th - 6th graders) - Hunter Herrick

Get ready to chase clouds, crack thunder mysteries, and become a junior weather expert! At our Weather Wonders, campers will explore the exciting world of weather through hands-on experiments, games, and discoveries. From creating mini tornadoes and tracking clouds to learning how meteorologists predict storms, campers will dive into the science behind sunny days, wild winds, and everything in between. This curiosity-packed camp is perfect for young scientists who love asking “why?” and “what if?” and don’t mind getting a little messy along the way. By the end of the week, campers will be forecasting like pros and seeing the sky in a whole new way! No rain boots required—just big imaginations and a love for discovery!

June 15-19Camp will take place on the Juneteenth holiday**

Wild About STEM: Animals Science Camp (1st - 2nd graders) - Sara Barker

Calling all animal lovers! Wild About STEM introduces students to animal science through interactive experiments, engineering challenges, and exploration-based learning. Campers will compare animals, observe patterns, design shelters, and explore how animals move, eat, and protect themselves. Through teamwork and hands-on discovery, students develop critical thinking and scientific skills while building a strong foundation in life science and STEM learning.

Amazing Animal Explorers (3rd - 4th graders) - Shelby Wall, Amy Wall

We will explore the exciting world of animals and how they live, grow, and survive. Students will learn that animals have different structures and behaviors that help them meet their needs, such as finding food, staying safe, and raising their young. Through hands-on activities, observations, reading, field trips, and discussions, students investigate animal habitats, life cycles, and food chains. They compare animals from different environments and discover how animals depend on each other and their surroundings. We will also learn how humans can help protect animals and their habitats.

Into the Wild (5th - 6th graders) - Hunter Herrick

Get ready to go wild with science! At our Animal Explorers Science Summer Camp, campers will dive into the amazing world of animals through hands-on activities, investigations, and games. From learning how animals adapt to their environments to exploring habitats, food chains, and survival skills, students will discover what makes animals so incredible. Campers will observe, classify, and think like real scientists as they uncover fun facts about mammals, reptiles, birds, and more. This playful, curiosity-filled camp is perfect for students who love animals, asking questions, and exploring the natural world. Come explore, discover, and unleash your inner animal scientist!

SCORE Robotics - Design Has No Limits: 2026-2027 VEX IQ Competition Camp (7/8/9th graders) - Dr. Bruce Zutter

This exciting camp will focus on the VEX IQ 2026-2027 Competition. Campers will begin the week learning about the new VEX IQ game challenge, using an engineering notebook with the engineering design process, robot mechanisms. Campers will work in teams to design, build, and program an original robot and develop game strategy to compete in the new game and challenge fellow campers in an end of the week competition. Students on schools teams will get a jump start on the robotics season and take their knowledge back to school in August.

June 22 - 26

Biology Buddies: Exploring Living Things STEM Camp (1st - 2nd graders) - Sara Barker

Get ready to explore the living world all around us! In Biology Buddies, students will investigate plants, animals, and other living things through hands-on STEM activities and simple experiments. Campers will explore life cycles, habitats, adaptations, and basic needs of living organisms while building models, making observations, and solving fun science challenges. This camp nurtures curiosity, respect for nature, and scientific thinking as young learners discover how living things grow, change, and survive.

SCORE Robotics: Wild about Coding (1st - 2nd graders) - Macey Synder

Are you curious about animals in swamps, grasslands, forests and oceans? This camp will take students on a wild adventure of learning about animals, their habitats, and the basics of robotics coding. Students will start with virtual puzzles and hands on animal discovery then wind their way to coding Dash. Campers will use Vex 123 and Dash robotics platforms to learn driving and coding. In the final frontier, campers will construct an animal, its habitat and code their creature to navigate the wild unknown.

Bugs & Blossoms: Junior Entomologists & Botanists (3rd - 4th graders) - Emily Antoniak, Amy Wall

Students will study living organisms and how their structures and behaviors help them survive. Hands-on activities with plants and animals will allow students to explore life cycles, habitats, food chains, and adaptations. Through investigations, models, stories, research and discussions, students will be able to compare different organisms and examine how living things depend on one another and on their environment. Students will also learn how changes in environments can affect living organisms. This camp is perfect for young learners who enjoy asking questions, getting their hands a little dirty, and discovering how nature works — up close and under the lens!

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July 6 - 10**Storybook STEM (1st - 2nd graders) -Sarah Barker, Kelly Pugh**

Step into a world where stories come to life through science, technology, engineering, and math! In Storybook STEM, students will explore beloved children's books and use them as inspiration for hands-on STEM challenges. Campers will design, build, test, and problem-solve as they engineer solutions for storybook characters, conduct simple experiments, and explore real-world science connections. Each day blends literacy and STEM learning through creative thinking, teamwork, and playful discovery—helping young learners build confidence, curiosity, and a love of learning.

Storybook STEM (3rd - 4th graders) - Shelby Wall, Kaila Sutterfield

Join us as we jump into some of our favorite stories and turn them into fun, hands-on science adventures. Campers will build, experiment, and invent as they help story characters solve problems using cool STEM ideas. Along the way, they'll work together, try new things, and discover that science is all about creativity and curiosity.

July 13-17

Anatomy Adventures: Inside the Human Body STEM Camp (1st - 2nd graders) - Sarah Barker

Get ready to explore what's inside the amazing human body! In **Anatomy Adventures**, students will investigate major body systems—such as the skeletal, muscular, digestive, respiratory, and circulatory systems—through hands-on STEM activities and age-appropriate experiments. Campers will build models, test how bodies move and grow, and solve fun challenges that show how our bodies work together. This camp encourages curiosity, healthy habits, teamwork, and scientific thinking while helping young learners understand and appreciate their incredible bodies.

Body Builders: Junior Human Biologists (3rd - 4th grade) - Kaila Sutterfield, Emily Antoniac

is an energetic, hands-on science camp where students explore how the human body works through games, building challenges, and movement-based activities. Throughout the week, campers become junior medical scientists, solving problems by testing models, racing through system challenges, and working together to keep the body “running.” Students investigate major body systems — like muscles, bones, heart, lungs, and brain — and discover how these systems depend on one another. Every lesson combines physical activity with critical thinking, making learning engaging and memorable for active learners. By the end of the week, campers build confidence, teamwork skills, and a deeper understanding of how their own bodies function every day.

Medical Microbiology (5th - 6th) - Dr. Rebecca Riggs*

Welcome to Medical Microbiology, where science comes alive at the thrilling intersection of human anatomy, disease, and discovery! In this course, you'll dive into the microscopic world of bacteria, viruses, fungi, and parasites—the unseen organisms that shape human health, drive disease, and inspire life-saving medical breakthroughs.

Get ready for an immersive, hands-on experience as you explore the SynDaver in the Anatomy and Physiology lab and step into the microbiology lab to culture and investigate real microorganisms. Through engaging lab activities, you'll build scientific curiosity and sharpen critical thinking skills while uncovering how microbes interact with the human body. You'll learn how to prepare culture media, grow and analyze your own microorganisms, and work directly with bacterial specimens. Along the way, you'll master essential laboratory techniques, including safely handling specimens, staining bacterial cells, viewing them under the microscope, and testing antimicrobial susceptibility. By the end of the week, you'll have a deeper understanding of the powerful role microorganisms play in human health—and the skills used by scientists and medical professionals every day.

*** This is an elevated camp taught by a university lecturer.**