Abstract:
Social insects, including ants, bees, wasps, and termites, are ‘among the greatest achievements of evolution’. They dominate terrestrial environments and make up a substantial part of the animal biomass. The tremendous success of social insects stems from their ability to effectively manage ecological problems through their complex social systems. In fact, the formation of the remarkable societies displayed by social insects represents one of the major transition points in evolutionary history. In this talk, I will provide an overview of the biology of social insects. I will focus on discussing the development and importance of social insect societies. I will then discuss the natural history of important social insects found locally, including fire ants and yellowjackets.