

Course Outline

Geography 303
Ecology and Conservation of Whales

D.A. Duffus
Office Hours: Tues/Weds 5:00-6:00
Office: DTB 113B
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Course Description

This is a stand alone third year science course in lecture format to introduce students to the biological and socio-political nature of cetaceans (the whales, dolphins and porpoises). As it is only a single course with no specific senior classes on the topic we will move along quickly giving a wide variety of information, topically, from evolutionary history and the palaeontological record to the potential influence of ocean regime change. The last half century have seen tumultuous changes in our relationship to, and knowledge of the cetaceans.

The course is a microcosm of the art of creating a foundation for furthering your education in the study of cetaceans. Studying a group of living organisms as co-inhabitants of earth requires you follow the adage of the famous philosopher Dylan when he stated “learn your song well before you start singing.” Many people profess to love cetaceans, many people are engaged in management and conservation, but remarkably few of them have or recall the fundamental nature of the organisms they are dealing with. This course will demonstrate the types of knowledge needed to combat the level of ignoble discourse, and open the shutters to a fascinating group of animals.

The course will allow students the opportunity to leverage their hard won knowledge from courses such as, evolution, behaviour, ecology, biogeography, spatial analysis, remote sensing, oceanography, among others, all focussed on the whales, dolphins, and porpoises.

Text

There is no single text that covers the breadth of material sufficiently. There are several good basic texts in the library, they will be presented and discussed in class. The principal course information is your notes, taken during lectures.

Recommendation

Attending lectures is crucial, please do so. There is no latitude for altering final exam dates, as per the calendar please try not to book travel during the exam period. Make all due effort to attend the midterm.

Evaluation

The course evaluation is based on:

Midterm Exam (date will be set in first lecture) 40%

Final Exam (date set by the Registrar) 60%

University Grading System

Grade	Grade point value	Grade scale	Description
A+ A A-	9 8 7	90-100% 85-89% 80-84%	Exceptional, outstanding and excellent performance. Normally achieved by a minority of students. These grades indicate a student who is self-initiating, exceeds expectation and has an insightful grasp of the subject matter.
B+ B B-	6 5 4	77-79% 73-76% 70-72%	Very good, good and solid performance. Normally achieved by the largest number of students. These grades indicate a good grasp of the subject matter or excellent grasp in one area balanced with satisfactory grasp in the other area.
C+ C	3 2	65-69% 60-64%	Satisfactory, or minimally satisfactory. These grades indicate a satisfactory performance and knowledge of the subject matter.
D	1	50-59%	Marginal Performance. A student receiving this grade demonstrated a superficial grasp of the subject matter.
F	0	0-49%	Unsatisfactory performance. Wrote final examination and completed course requirements; no supplemental.
N	0	0-49%	Did not write examination or complete course requirements by the end of term or session; no supplemental.

Geography Department virtual contact information

- Geography Department website: uvic.ca/socialsciences/geography/
- Geography Department Chair: geogchair@uvic.ca
- Geography Undergraduate Advising: geogadvising@uvic.ca