

Fall 2017

Instr: D. Duffus
DTB B113a

Course Outline
Geography 303
Ecology and Conservation of Whales

Course Objective

In this course we will examine a broad range of information about cetaceans. Basic taxonomy and biology will provide the basis for an investigation into the somewhat controversial ecology of the whales dolphins and porpoises. We will also discuss their distinguishing features, and trace their evolution from terrestrial origins.

Whales' history and current status cannot be understood with reference to the millennia long relationship with humanity that has run the gamut from wholesale slaughter to reverence. We will discuss the intricacies of their survival, looking at how interactions with humans have changed over time, and what threats anthropogenic activities now pose.

Course material will cover everything from historic whaling records through to exploring cutting-edge ecological research. The objective of this course is to create a foundation of knowledge, so the student may integrate material from other sources and build a critically enhanced body of knowledge about cetaceans.

Teaching/Learning Method

Lecture periods will usually begin with a short discussion of newsworthy topics from the world of the cetaceans. Lectures will use slides, skeletal materials, photographs, video and other visual aids to describe evolution, ecology and life history. Examples will be taken from current research from sites and species around the world.

Students should be prepared to take notes during lectures. There is no single text that covers this material, as the course is a general introduction to the topic, yet it is at a third year level. Suggestions will be made throughout the class as to where other useful reading material may be found. All examinable material will be given during the lectures, please make every effort to attend, and if unavoidable absent arrange with a colleague in the course to borrow missed notes. **The use of cell phones, tablets and laptops is not permitted during lectures.**

Assessment

A short in-class midterm will be given, followed later by final examination to conclude the class. These will test comprehension, and ability to assimilate and understand the course material.

Each student grade will be a sum of the following proportions:

Mid Term Exam	40%
Final Exam	60%