

Geography 491 A01  
Advanced Topics in Geography  
Ecology and Politics of the Killer Whale

Term 202001

D.A.Duffus

DTB 113a

Course Content

This course will focus on two linked aspects of a single animal species, the killer whale (*Orcinus orca*). It is one of the most closely watched species of cetacean, but for some populations virtually unknown. Thus, it inhabits a variety of ecological spaces, and political spaces (meaning interaction with humanity). During this course we will examine both areas, and then examine how these two spheres interact. Thus the evolutionary history, taxonomy, basic biology, ecology, and behavior will be linked to the conservation, economics, management, threats, and ethics in the human dimension. Students should have background in some of these areas, although they will be discussed in the class time with opportunity for question and answers.

Learning/Teaching Method

The course is a senior seminar. Readings and core concepts will be discussed, and students are expected to maintain a reading program of both classic papers and new literature. Each student will claim a topic within broad areas discussed in class and prepare a concise, well-founded, technically superior paper. The size may vary depending on the nature of the topic, some may, for example, have a map folio, but the paper should not exceed 15 pages. This will be due at the end of the class. A seminar requires discussion, after an initial lecture I will give the general material for the following seminar and students are expected to be prepared to engage in the discussion. This is an ongoing part of the graded material for the course. Each student will prepare a digital poster for presentation with a 5-10 minute explanation, and be prepared for questions from the floor. The core material involved reading, discussion, writing and presenting, students should be prepared to cover all four areas.

## Course Materials

This course will rely on readings from the scientific and management literature. Suggestions will be made as to key papers or sources, but student will need to use their skills with source material. There will be a brief reminder on how to collect and collate sources.

## Course Grade

The final grade will be composed of 50% for the term paper, 30% for the poster and presentation, and 20% for participation in discussion.

## Consultation

Students may consult in person with the instructor between 5 and 6 PM on either Tuesday or Wednesday on topics linked to the course.

## Undergraduate Grading Standards

<i>Passing Grades</i>	<i>Description</i>
A+ 90% - 100% A 85% - 89% A- 80% - 84%	<b>Exceptional, outstanding and excellent</b> 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+ 77% - 79% B 73% - 76% B- 70% - 72%	<b>Very good, good and solid</b> 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+ 65% - 69% C 60% - 64%	<b>Satisfactory, or minimally satisfactory.</b> These grades indicate a satisfactory performance and knowledge of the subject matter.
D 50% - 59%	<b>Marginal</b> Performance. A student receiving this grade demonstrated a superficial grasp of the subject matter.
F 0% - 49%	<b>Fail</b>