BIOL 4319-BIOLOGY OF MARINE MAMMALS

LECTURE SECTION
BIOL-4319
Tues, Thurs 8:00-9:15 AM
Science & Technology TBA

INSTRUCTOR: Dr. Andreas Fahlman (Ph.D.)
Office: Harte Research Institute (HRI)-121
Office Phone: (361) 825-3489
E-mail: andreas.fahlman@tamucc.edu
Office Hours: Wednesday: 8:00-11:00, Tuesday and Thursday 10:00-11:00 AM;

Students may make appointments to see me or at times other than those listed above. If I am unavailable or need to relocate during office hours, I will post a note on the door. I will only correspond by e-mail with students who use their official “islander” e-mail addresses.

COURSE DESCRIPTION: This course introduces students to the life history, evolution, physiology and ecology of marine mammals. Students will study the evolution of the various taxa of marine mammals, the differences in foraging behavior (benthic vs. pelagic, plankton vs. fish), ecology and physiology (diving, thermoregulation, water balance, locomotion, vision and acoustics) between and among species and taxa. The student will also study the history of whaling and marine mammal conservation.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES: The objective of this course is to provide students with a basic understanding of the life history of marine mammals. Students should attend and participate in lectures, read the assigned material, and mentally organize information from their instructors, and their readings. For all components that are examined within each topic in the schedule, the student will be expected to…

• Understand and correctly use the taxonomy of marine mammals
• Describe the life history of the major taxa
• Analyze selected physiological processes and explain their importance for marine mammals.
• Describe various strategies for marine mammal conservation and mitigation efforts

PREREQUISITES: Biology 1407 is required.


REQUIRED E-MAIL: All students must have a Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi e-mail account (“islander” account; the address usually follows the format: flast@islander.tamucc.edu). Make sure that you can access and use it because, for students in my classes, it is the only e-mail address to which I will reply. If you have not
BIOL 4319-BIOLOGY OF MARINE MAMMALS

done so, please go to http://www.tamucc.edu/ise.html to obtain a new islander account.

TENTATIVE LECTURE SCHEDULE:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section (dates)</th>
<th>Content</th>
<th>Pages</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Sept. 5, 10</td>
<td>Introduction and Systematics of Cetaceans, Pinnipeds and other Marine Mammals</td>
<td>1-47; 51-107</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Sept. 12, 17</td>
<td>Evolution of Cetaceans and Pinnipeds, Oceanography and ecology...51-82, 111-119</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Sept. 19, 24</td>
<td>Foraging Behavior and Ecology...</td>
<td>312-355</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Sept. 26, Oct. 1, 3</td>
<td>Diving Physiology and Behavior...</td>
<td>237-262</td>
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<td>Oct. 8</td>
<td>Midterm 1</td>
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<td>5. Oct. 10, 15</td>
<td>Thermoregulation, Keeping Warm in Cold Water ...</td>
<td>213-223</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. Oct. 31, Nov. 5</td>
<td>Marine Mammal Acoustics...</td>
<td>270-275;</td>
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<td>Nov. 14:</td>
<td>Midterm 2</td>
<td></td>
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<td>10. Nov. 21, 26</td>
<td>Life History Patterns, Foraging and Reproduction...</td>
<td>363-407</td>
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<tr>
<td>3 page term paper on specific aspect of marine mammal biology due today (Nov 26)!</td>
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<td>11. Dec 3:</td>
<td>Marine Mammal Conservation: Historical Whaling...</td>
<td>456-466</td>
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Dec 12 ......................................................................................................................... Final Exam

Apart from the due dates above, the schedule is tentative and will likely change throughout the semester. Changes to the schedule will be given in class.

FINAL GRADING: Your final letter grade will be based on the points you earn in the lecture. The final grading scale will also be determined at the end of the semester, but the cut-off for each grade will be no higher than the following:

\[
A \geq 90\% > B \geq 80\% > C \geq 70\% > D \geq 60\% > F
\]

Final course grades will be determined by the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lecture Examination</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Term paper</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final examination</td>
<td>40%</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
EXAMINATIONS: The exam schedule is as follows: **Midterm**, 10/8, and 11/14, **Final** 12/12. **There is no make up exam.** Any student who knows in advance that they will miss an exam due to official University business may notify Dr. Fahlman at least fourteen (14) days in advance to make arrangements to take the exam early. The date and time for the final exam are **non-negotiable** for any reason, unless a student have conflicting examinations on the same day that cannot be re-scheduled. The final exam will be comprehensive. The format for all exams may vary and may include multiple choice, short answer, essay, matching and definitions. Extra credits—the instructor may choose a variety of formats for the extra credits (an additional 5% of the total grade). These may include quizzes and home-work assignments.

TERM PAPER: Each student is required to write a review term paper. This should be a 3 page long paper summarizing a certain topic in marine mammal biology. A one paragraph summary, or abstract, is due on or before class on September 6. The summary should concisely describe the topic of the term paper. This abstract counts for 5% of the total 30% of the term paper. Students are encouraged to discuss their paper with the instructor. The paper should consist of an abstract, background and conclusion. The abstract should summarize the background and conclusion, the background should summarize what is known about the specific topic, and the conclusion summarize the review and possible future prospects for studies.

ATTENDANCE: My attendance policy is the same as that stated in the University Catalog. Attendance is the student’s responsibility, and students are expected to attend, be on time for and remain the entire period in every class. Late arrival will not be accepted and I have a closed door policy during class. Attendance is not used to determine grades. In lecture, even when I take roll, I do not give—per se—a bonus for attendance, nor a penalty for absence (except for missing an examination, or an assignment). I may choose to give information not covered in the book or quizzes which may count toward the grade. Thus, coming to lecture on a regular basis should result in a higher grade, and if you come to class often, it will help you do well in this course.

ABSENCES: You are responsible for the material covered and assignments made in every lecture regardless of whether you attend it or not. “I came in late and didn’t hear about the assignment, or specific material,” is never an acceptable excuse. It is always your responsibility to determine what happened in class during your absence. If you are absent, tardy, or leave early, you will have to copy a classmates notes and handouts. I will not, “track down” absentees to make sure that they know about material not covered in the textbook. As note-taking is an important skill to develop, I do not “share” my notes or PowerPoints (including posting them on the web).

Miscellaneous Policies Regarding Attendance: There are no make-ups for missed work except for an excused absence. An excused absence allows us to make alternative arrangements for completing work and taking exams. The documentation required for an absence to be excused must be…

- from an appropriate source (e.g., doctor, dentist, funeral director) who states the nature of the event that caused (or will cause) your absence.
- in writing, on official stationery, and signed. (I do not return excuses to you.)
BIOL 4319—BIOLOGY OF MARINE MAMMALS

Telephone calls, FAXes, and e-mails are not acceptable.

- presented prior to the absence for a scheduled event (e.g., university-sponsored activity, recognized religious holiday, military service).
- presented no more than one week after the date of an unexpected absence

When an excused absence is planned ahead, the student should consult with the Professor to be given a pre-test (see below). When the absence is an emergency (medical or otherwise), the Professor and TAs should be notified as soon as possible and the appropriate documentation submitted. In those cases, a make-up test will be given after the original test. This may vary in format and content at the discretion of the Professor, and scheduled in consultation with the student.

Unacceptable Excuses: Only unavoidable absences are excused, so you should schedule routine personal events (e.g., vacations, weddings, reunions, non-emergency medical or dental visits, parent-teacher conferences, household or auto repairs) to avoid conflicts with your classes. Oversleeping is never an acceptable excuse. Employment conflicts are not acceptable excuses for absences, tardiness, or leaving class early. (Once enrolled in a class, it is the student’s responsibility to arrange his or her work schedule so that no regularly scheduled class or examination time is missed.) Texas waives jury duty for students, so jury duty is not an acceptable excuse.

“Pre-Tests”: For some scheduled events (official University business, athletics, military duty, etc.), or an acceptable excuse, you may arrange to take a lecture examination before (but not after) its scheduled date. (You should take a test as close to its originally scheduled time as possible, but you may not take a test more than one week before its originally scheduled time. You must obtain your instructor’s approval at least two weeks before you wish to take the pre-test.). If you arrange to take any test at an alternate time and do not show for that appointment, then you forfeit the opportunity to take the test except at its originally scheduled time. Students who do not arrange to take examinations in advance will not be eligible for this special consideration. A written excuse from the university department involved or from the Office of Student Affairs is required.

The instructor—in consultation with Dr. Eliot Chenaux, Vice President for Student Affairs—will determine if circumstances warrant giving an individual a make-up test after the original test. A make-up test given after the original test may vary in format and content at the discretion of the Professor. The exam day will be scheduled in consultation with the student.

Late Assignments: You may always turn in assignments early. Except for excused absences, late assignments will not be accepted. If you know in advance that you will have an excused absence when an assignment is due, you must turn in that assignment before its due date. You should turn in assignments that were missed because of an unexpected, excused absence as soon as possible.

Any situations for which you cannot provide an acceptable excuse as outlined above (e.g., “I have an excuse, but it is too personal to discuss with you”) will be discussed with Dr. Eliot Chenaux, Vice President for Student Affairs.
RELIGIOUS HOLIDAYS: Any student who will miss class and/or test days because of recognized religious holidays should notify me as soon as possible so we can make alternative arrangements. Prior notification is required for such absences to be excused.

DISABILITY AND VETERANS’ SERVICES: Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi is committed to providing persons with disabilities an equal opportunity to access campus facilities, resources and programs. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. Support and accommodations are also available for returning veterans who experience cognitive and/or physical access issues in the classroom or on campus. Our Office of Disability Services arranges such support and academic accommodations. To make a request, or for more information, call (361) 825-5816 or visit Driftwood 101. It is important to contact the Office of Disability Services in a timely fashion as it will take time for them to review requests and prepare accommodations and accommodation letters.

CLASSROOM ETIQUETTE: You are adult University students. I will treat you as such, and I will expect you to act as such. You will act with courtesy and common sense. I will not tolerate disruptive, disrespectful, or abusive behavior/language directed toward anyone in this class (i.e., student or instructor). Violations range from talking during class to outright insubordination, and will result in penalties that range from the student being asked to stop to the student being “escorted” from the class - permanently. Cellular phones (including text messaging), pagers, and other “beepers” must be turned off in the classroom. (I will make exceptions for certain “emergency” personnel, but you must see me to obtain this.) Children are not allowed in the rooms during lecture, or when the child’s guardian is working or studying “after hours.”

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY/PLAGIARISM: University students are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with the highest standards of academic honesty. Academic misconduct for which a student is subject to penalty includes all forms of cheating, such as illicit possession of examinations or examination materials, falsification, forgery, complicity or plagiarism. (Plagiarism is the presentation of the work of another as one’s own work.) In this class, academic misconduct or complicity in an act of academic misconduct on an assignment or test will result in prosecuted to the full extent of University regulations (see the Student Handbook and the Catalog 2010-11: Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi). The following procedures will be enforced:

- You must be prepared to present a photo ID at all examinations.
- Different test forms may be prepared for a single examination. To ensure that the appropriate key will be used to grade your answer sheet, always follow instructions on the test or answer sheet, or given orally by the instructor.
BIOL 4319-BIOLOGY OF MARINE MAMMALS

- If you leave an examination room—for any reason—you must hand in your answer sheet and you will not be allowed to resume the examination. Attend to personal matters (e.g., rest room visits) before the examination.
- Be on time! **Anyone arriving after someone has completed an examination and left the room will not be allowed to take that examination.**
- Plagiarism is the presentation of the work of another as one’s own work and will not be tolerated.

**ACADEMIC ADVISING:** The College of Science & Technology requires that students meet with an Academic Advisor as soon as they are ready to declare a major. The Academic Advisor will set up a degree plan, which must be signed by the student, a faculty mentor, and the department chair. The College’s Academic Advising Center is located in Center for Instruction, Suite 360, and can be reached at 825-6094.

**GRADE APPEALS:** As stated in the Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi University Rules and Procedures (Section B [Academic Program], Part 13 [Students]: 13.02.99.C2 [Student Grade Appeals] and 13.02.99C2.01 [Student Grade Appeal Procedures]), a student who believes that he or she has not been held to appropriate academic standards as outlined in the class syllabus, equitable evaluation procedures, or appropriate grading, may appeal the final grade given in the course. The burden of proof is on the student to demonstrate the appropriateness of the appeal. A student with a complaint about a grade is encouraged to first discuss the matter with the instructor. For complete details, including the responsibilities of the parties involved in the process and the number of days allowed for completing the steps in the process, consult the University Rules and Procedures specified above (accessible through the University Rules and Procedures website at http://www.tamucc.edu/provost/university_rules/index.html). For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Office of Student Affairs.

**DROPPING THE COURSE (OR NOT):** I hope that you never find it necessary to drop this or any other class. However, events can sometimes occur that make dropping a course necessary or wise. Please consult with me before you decide to drop to be sure it is the best thing to do. Should dropping the course be the best course of action, you must **initiate the process to drop the course by going to the Student Services Center and filling out a course drop form.** Just stopping attendance and participation WILL NOT automatically result in your being dropped from the class. If you drop the class before the “drop date” (see the online Spring 2011 schedule for more information), you will be assigned a grade of “W.” There are consequences for dropping a class, so read the drop policy in the University Catalog (better still, see your academic advisor and someone in the financial aid office) before you drop any class. In the middle of the semester, you are likely to receive midterm grade reports (either on S.A.I.L. or through some other means). If you have a lower mid-term grade than you wish, it should concern you, but not frighten you. (Remember that there are more opportunities to earn points and boost your grades in the last half of most courses than in the first half.) Talk to your instructors (not to other students) to explore your options. Also note that the mid-term grades posted on S.A.I.L. are not official, not a guarantee and are never updated; once they are posted they cannot be changed even if your grade in the class **does** change.