

Marine Studies Consortium

Biology of Whales

Spring 2014 Syllabus and Course Policies

This course provides a comprehensive review of the biology, ecology, and management of cetaceans. A thorough grounding in cetacean mammalogy and population biology will prepare students to understand conservation problems presented as case histories. Students will also complete an independent research paper on a topic related to cetacean biology. Hands-on activities may include the dissection of a small cetacean and a shore-based whale watch in Cape Cod Bay.

Prerequisites: 1 year general biology and two upper level biology courses.

Lecture: Wednesday evenings, 6:00-8:30
Wellesley College, Science Center, Room 274

Instructor: Dr. Nadine Lysiak, Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution
Phone: 530-312-9854
Email: nlysiak@whoi.edu

Office Hours: Wednesdays, by appointment

Course Website: A course folder has been created on DropBox. Lecture outlines, course documents, and reading assignments will be posted there. You will receive a link to join this folder after the first week of class.

Reading Materials: There is no required textbook for this course. The instructor will provide weekly reading assignments via the course website. Please read the assigned text BEFORE you come to class, and be prepared with questions for class if you do not understand concepts covered in the text.

ATTENDANCE

Attendance is required at lectures, exams, and course activities. If you must miss a class, please inform the instructor ahead of time. Make-up assignments (for missed participation points) will only be arranged for students with approved absences.

ASSIGNMENTS

All class assignments are due by 6:00 PM on the date noted in the course schedule. Assignments turned in late will receive a lower overall score. I accept assignments via email, so long as they are received by the start of class on the due date. Please name your assignment files as follows: **LastName_AssignmentName.extension**
Example: Lysiak_ResearchPaper.doc or Lysiak_VideoResponse.pdf

RESEARCH PAPER

Students will choose a topic to investigate further for a research paper. This might be an overarching theme, conservation issue, particular species or environment specific to marine mammals.

IN-CLASS ARTICLE DISCUSSIONS

Each week, an article pertaining to lecture content will be assigned for an in-class discussion. Every student is expected to participate in these discussions. Come to class with comments and questions about the article assigned for that week.

GRADING

During the semester, a maximum of 550 points may be earned.

2 Lecture Exams, 150 points each	300 points
Article Discussions & General Participation	100 points
Video Response Assignment	25 points
Research Paper	125 points

Grades will be given according to a standard percentage scale, based on total points possible: (A = 93-100%, A- = 90-92 %, B+ = 88-89, B = 83-87%, etc.)

HONOR CODE

Academic dishonesty – such as cheating and plagiarism – will not be tolerated.

From the MSC website: “Students are expected to maintain the highest standards of academic honesty. A student will not receive credit for work that is not the product of the student's own effort. Infringement of academic honesty by a student subjects that student to penalties or disciplinary procedures of the student's home institution (that may include failure of the course). A student's name on any written exercise constitutes a statement that the work is the result of the student's own thought and study, stated in the student's own words, and produced without the assistance of others (except in quotes, footnotes or references with appropriate acknowledgement of the source). A student who is in doubt about standards of academic honesty (such as plagiarism, multiple submissions of written work, unacknowledged or unauthorized collaborative effort, false citation or false data) should consult either the course instructor, school liaison, or staff of MSC.”

CLASSROOM CONDUCT

- Treat yourself, your peers, and the instructor with respect.
- **NO CELL PHONES** are allowed during lecture. It is disrespectful to the instructor (see above.)
- Laptop computers are permitted only for class-related business