

Course Syllabus for Biology of Sea Turtles

Karen A. Bjorndal
Spring 2019



Biology of Sea Turtles -- ZOO4405

Spring 2019

Contact information

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Class schedule Tuesday, Periods 4-5 (10:40 – 12:35)

Thursday, Period 4 (10:40 – 11:30)

Class location 222 Carr Hall

Office hours Thursdays 11:45-12:35 in 320 Carr Hall or by appointment

If you are experiencing any problems with the class, please see me as soon as possible – before or after class, during office hours, or by appointment.

Objectives

This 3-credit course will focus on the current major issues in sea turtle biology, conservation, and management. Each Tuesday, there will be lectures by the instructor or guest speakers or the class will work on pre-designated group research projects. Each Thursday we will discuss readings, explore recent research, and identify research needs. Readings for class discussions will be both classic papers and recent literature.

Basis of Grade

If you have any questions about your grade, please see me as soon as possible.

The course grade is based on the following breakdown:

Class participation (35%)
Written discussion questions (25%)
Group Research Project (25%)
Group Presentation for discussion session (15%)

Thus, 60% of the grade is based on individual work and 40% on group work. No exams are given.

Class participation: Grade is based on quality of participation in class. There is a total of 35 class periods during which students have the opportunity to participate in a substantive manner in class. Participation in each of these 35 class periods is worth 1% of their grade. Each student is ranked either high or low for their contributions in each class period. High participation requires at least two substantive contributions during the class session. Grade for participation is assigned by the following:

Participation high for 30-35 meetings = 100%
Participation high for 25-29 meetings = 90%
Participation high for 20-24 meetings = 80%
Participation high for 15-19 meetings = 70%
Participation high for 10-14 meetings = 60%
Participation high for fewer than 10 meetings = 50%

Written discussion questions: Each student not leading the discussion session writes two substantive questions based on the readings and submits them before each of the nine discussion sessions. Each student will write questions for eight discussion sessions for a total of 16 questions. Grade is based on both content and written communication. For each pair of questions, grades are assigned as:

Excellent = 2.0 points
Good = 1.5 points
Average = 1.0 point
Poor = 0.5 point

Examples of Not Substantive and Substantive Questions

Not substantive question

How can we decrease the amount of plastic debris entering the oceans?

Substantive question

Nelms et al. noted “turtles in early life history stages, that are small in size may be at higher risk of mortality from plastic ingestion due to their smaller less robust digestive tracts” and Schuyer et al. noted “oceanic life stage were significantly more like to ingest debris than turtles of an unknown stage”. However based on their literature reviews we do not have as much data on this life stage so how can we get more data and do you think these findings would change if we had more data or be substantiated?

Group Research Project: Instructor assigns four students to each of five research groups, and students select one of five research projects created by the instructor. Grade is based on quality of research results, oral presentation of results, and written presentation of results in a poster. In addition to my assessment, each student gives me anonymously a ranking of Excellent, Good, Average, Poor, Very poor with an explanation of why the rank is assigned for the other students in his/her Research Group.

The final poster is worth 30 points and is graded by each student, the instructor, and a guest faculty member as follows:

Informative title: 2 points

Objectives: 4 points

Introduction: 5 points

Materials and Methods: 5 points

Results: 5 points

Discussion: 5 points

Overall clarity: 4 points

Only the scores from the instructor and guest faculty member are used in assigning the grade to the poster. Students grade each poster and describe the strengths and weaknesses of each poster as an educational experience.

Presentation for discussion session: Instructor assigns two to three students to each of eight presentation groups. Each group selects a topic with two to three readings designated by the instructor. Each group creates a 5-10 minute Powerpoint introduction to the assigned topic and then leads the class discussion for a class period. Grade is based on quality of the Powerpoint presentation, the oral presentation, and the ability to maintain high level of discussion. In addition to my assessment, each student gives me anonymously a ranking of Excellent, Good, Average, Poor, Very poor with an explanation of why the rank was assigned for the other students in his/her Discussion group.

Course Policies

Class discussions

This class cannot be a success if you do not attend. You should contribute to class discussions and be courteous to others in the classroom and respect each other's viewpoints. You are encouraged to ask either factual or interpretative questions and discuss the assigned reading material. You are expected to have completed reading assignments before class and be prepared to discuss the material.

Class attendance

You are expected to attend all classes and arrive promptly. Please refrain from side discussions and distracting behavior (turn off cell phones). If you miss class due to an illness, family emergency, or approved University activity, you will need to provide documentation.

Academic Honesty

Quoted from the UF Website:

"Preamble: In adopting this [Honor Code \(Links to an external site.\)](#)[Links to an external site.](#), the students of the University of Florida recognize that academic honesty and integrity are fundamental values of the University community. Students who enroll at the University commit to holding themselves and their peers to the high standard of honor required by the Honor Code. Any individual who becomes aware of a violation of the Honor Code is bound by honor to take corrective action. Student and faculty support are crucial to the success of the Honor Code. The quality of a University of Florida education is dependent upon the community acceptance and enforcement of the Honor Code.

"The Honor Pledge: *We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honesty and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code.*

"On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: *"On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment."*

University Support Services

Resources are available on campus to help students meet academic goals and solve personal problems. Resources include:

1. [UF Counseling and Wellness Center \(Links to an external site.\)](#)[Links to an external site.](#), personal counseling (including mental health issues) and career counseling.
2. [Career Resource Center \(Links to an external site.\)](#)[Links to an external site.](#), career development assistance and counseling.
3. [CLAS Academic Advising Center \(Links to an external site.\)](#)[Links to an external site.](#) and [CALS Academic Advising Center \(Links to an external site.\)](#)[Links to an external site.](#)

[external site.](#) provide advice on course selection and course planning to meet graduation requirements.

Your well-being is important to the University of Florida. The **U Matter, We Care** initiative (www.umatter.ufl.edu/ ([Links to an external site.](#))[Links to an external site.](#)) is committed to creating a culture of care on our campus by encouraging members of our community to look out for one another and to reach out for help if a member of our community is in need. If you or a friend is in distress, please contact umatter@ufl.edu so that the U Matter, We Care Team can reach out to the student in distress. A nighttime and weekend crisis counselor is available by phone at 352-392-1575. The U Matter, We Care Team can help connect students to the many other helping resources available including, but not limited to, Victim Advocates, Housing staff, and the Counseling and Wellness Center. Please remember that asking for help is a sign of strength. In case of emergency, call 9-1-1.

Disability Notice

Students with disabilities enrolled in this course who may need disability-related classroom accommodations are encouraged to make an appointment to see me before the end of the second week of the term. All discussions will remain confidential, although the [Student Accessibility Services](#) ([Links to an external site.](#))[Links to an external site.](#) office may be consulted to discuss appropriate implementation of any accommodation requested.