
OUR OCEANS

Human Impacts & Impacts on Humans



Our oceans. They are stunningly beautiful, profoundly impacted by humans, and vitally important to human existence. In this Quest 2 course, we will explore the biodiversity and ecology of our oceans, human impacts on ocean ecosystems, how ocean ecosystems impact humans, and solutions for ecological problems. We will read and discuss articles, papers, and films; learn from local projects and scientists in the field; educate our local community; critically examine approaches to lessen or alleviate our impacts, both published and original; and discuss how human impacts on the ocean inform our own lives, practices, and careers. We will make a *positive* impact

Galapagos Sea Lion pup with tourist boat in the background. Photo by Melissa Meadows. 2018.

Course Information

Course number: ZOO 4926 Special Topics

Instructor: Dr. Melissa Meadows

Credit hours: 3

Office: Carr 510

Class meetings: T 10:40 - 11:30 FLI 0121, Th 10:40 - 12:35 FLI 0117

Office Hours: T 11:30 - 12:30, W 3-4, Th 1-2

Email: melissa.meadows@ufl.edu

What will I need?

E-learning/ Canvas: All reading materials, announcements, assignments, and other materials will be available on the e-Learning site for this course. Please make sure that you are enrolled on the site, and set notifications to come to you in whatever way is convenient (text, email, etc.) so that you receive them in a timely manner.

Text: There is no textbook for this course; instead all required material will be provided through lectures, assigned reading which will be provided on the e-Learning site, films, etc.

Mindset: Come to class each day ready to think critically. Read all assigned material, complete any pre-class assignments, and prepare to participate every day in this course. The quality of the course and how much you learn and grow will depend upon YOU and your valuable input and ideas.

What will I learn?

As a Quest 2 course, this course has objectives that are for Quest 2, General Education Biology, and specific to this course. I will combine these here. More information about the Quest Program and specific course objectives and learning goals for Quest 2 courses can be found at: <http://undergrad.aa.ufl.edu/uf-quest/>. See page 1 for a general description of this course and our goals.

What are Quest 2 courses? Quest 2 courses provide an opportunity for students to engage in thought-provoking General Education coursework that builds on and expands upon their Quest 1 experience in the Arts and Humanities. If Quest 1 courses ask what it means, Quest 2 courses ask what we can do. Rather than offer an introduction to or survey of a specific field, Quest 2 courses invite students to encounter important real-world issues that cut across disciplines. They introduce scientific methods and discourse for students to become familiar with the ways that data, methods, and tools from diverse fields can be brought to bear on pressing questions facing human societies and/or the planet today. What are the unintended consequences of technological progress, climate change, structural racism? How do the various social and/or biophysical sciences substantively contribute to life on our planet? How do these disciplines converge towards improving the human condition?

What will I learn? (continued)

Course Objectives

- Address the history, key themes, principles, terminologies, hypotheses, and methodologies of studying the ocean, how we are impacting it, and how it in turn impacts us.
- Consider how our study of and impacts on ocean ecosystems impact the state of the planet and the human condition.
- Enable students to analyze and evaluate (in writing, and other forms of communication) data relevant to the pressing question of how we impact the ocean and the results of these impacts.
- Analyze critically the role human impacts on the ocean play in the lives of individuals, societies, and students' degrees and careers.
- Explore marine science resources outside the classroom (such as museums, field stations, UF scientists, and opportunities to engage the public) and explain how engagement with those resources complements classroom work.
- Students will assist in the further development of this special topics course as a Quest 2 course for Spring 2020.

Student Learning Outcomes

- Identify, describe, and explain the cross-disciplinary dimensions of the pressing issue of human impacts on oceans and ocean impacts on humans. (Content)
- Critically analyze data for informing an approach or policy that addresses some dimension of human impacts on oceans. (Critical Thinking)
- Develop and present, in terms accessible to an educated public, clear and effective responses to proposed approaches, policies, or practices that address human impacts on oceans. (Communication)
- Connect what you learn and critically reflect upon in this course to your intellectual, personal, and professional development at UF and beyond. (Connection)

How will my learning be assessed?

Grading Scale: Please note that grades will not be rounded. For example 89.99% is a B+ rather than an A-. Grades will be based upon a variety of activities as described on the following page.

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|-------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| A | A- | B+ | B | B- | C+ | C | C- | D+ | D | D- | E |
| ≥ 93% | ≥90% | ≥87% | ≥83% | ≥80% | ≥77% | ≥73% | ≥70% | ≥67% | ≥63% | ≥60% | <60% |

How will my learning be assessed? (continued)

Grade Weighting: Grades will be weighted as follows:

- 30% **Exams** based on the content of readings and lectures
- 20% **Assignments and Participation** in class and outside of class.
- 15% **Scientist Interview Project** in which you will interview a UF researcher (professor, research scientist or graduate student) about their research related to human impacts on the marine environment and present it as a class presentation, video, or podcast.
- 15% **Public Education Project** in which you will present a topic of your choice related to the course to the public in a format of your choice (YouTube video, Blog, presentation, etc.)
- 20% **Final Paper** on an issue of your choice related to the course in which you critically evaluate the issue using approved sources of information, examine its impact on your life and those around you, and present both published and original ideas for solutions or mitigation.

What policies should I follow?

Attendance: This is a small class, and if you aren't here, I'll worry! Attendance is *required*. Missed in-class assignments and participation points cannot be made up. If you have a planned conflict for a UF activity, discuss it with me as far in advance as possible. If there is an unforeseen circumstance, please let me know as soon as possible and ensure that it is for a university-approved reason. Please see the UF policy for excused absences here: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/attendance-policies/>

No make-up exams without prior permission or documentation of illness. Students missing an exam due to a university-approved excused absence (sports, etc.) should let the instructor know in advance. In case of illness or personal emergency on exam day, students must submit documentation to the Dean of Students office (P202 Peabody Hall, dsocares@dso.ufl.edu) and request an instructor notification to be sent. These notes must be received within five business days after the exam.

Conduct in class: PARTICIPATE. Ask questions. Connect. Bring your computer, but don't use it for non-class activities. Be respectful. Silence your phone. Don't do anything that distracts your neighbors' learning or your instructor's teaching.

Diversity: We need diversity of opinion, social class, culture, religion, sexual orientation, gender, race, ethnicity, and ability in science. Enjoy the diverse scientists you learn about. Ask why diversity is lacking. Maintain an environment of respect and inclusion at all times. Listen and learn from all.

Time commitment: The university policy is that students should expect to spend 3-4 hours per week per credit hour studying, reading, and completing assignments, and participating in class. This is a 3 credit course, so budget 9-12 hours per week to succeed. Do not procrastinate.

Academic Honesty

All students must review and abide by the University Honor Code. If you witness any instances of academic dishonesty in this class, please notify the instructor or contact the Student Honor Court (392-1631) or Cheating Hotline (392-6999). For additional information on Academic Honesty, please refer to the University of Florida Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code at: <https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/process/student-conduct-code/>

Plagiarism will not be tolerated. Please do not copy anything from other sources. Remember - if you hit copy on an article or internet site, and then hit paste into your paper - even if you plan to reword it - is a bad idea and will result in plagiarism. Be careful and review what is or isn't plagiarism with many excellent online sources and with your instructor if needed. When in doubt, leave it out.

Accommodations

Contact the Dean of Students Office of Disability Resources, Peabody 202, 352-392-1261. I will work with them to accommodate your needs. More info: <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/> (Links to an external site.).

What if I need help?

Questions and Concerns: If you don't understand something or are concerned about a grade, talk to me ASAP. Please do not wait until a failed exam or project. Ask in class, during office hours, or via email. I am fully committed to your learning and success! I want everyone to make an A (but you will work for it)!!! Seriously, come visit! I will always be available for you in my office (CRR 510) T 11:30-12:30, W 3-4, and Th 1-4. If those times don't fit your schedule, email me to make an appointment. I will respond to emails within 24 hrs M-F. After 5 on F, I will not respond until M.

UMatter, WeCare! ASKING FOR HELP IS A SIGN OF STRENGTH. College can be stressful. If you or a friend is in distress, contact umatter@ufl.edu or call the 24/7 crisis counselor at (352) 392-1575. Also available is UF Counseling and Wellness Center www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc/ 392-1575.

Course Schedule

The topics and schedule for this course will be determined collaboratively and will evolve over the course of the semester. Examples of topics we will cover include: an overview of marine ecology and its study, marine ecosystem and habitat types and habitat destruction, marine plastics, climate change, sea level rise, coral bleaching, chemical pollution, and more! What do YOU want to explore? What do you want to change? How do you want to be part of the solution?