Instructor: Dr. Zack Darnell
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Class meetings:
6/5/17–6/30/17, Monday through Friday: 3–4 hours of lecture and discussion per day, 4–5 hours of lab and field activities per day.

Required text: TBA

Course description:
This specialized course will provide an in-depth exploration of animal behavior in marine organisms, including both the physiological and ecological aspects of behavior. The course will introduce students to techniques for observing animal behavior in the field and laboratory, designing and conducting behavioral experiments, and collecting and analyzing behavioral data. The course will consist of lectures, field trips, and laboratory projects designed to provide students with hands-on experience in marine animal behavior.

Prerequisites: Two semesters of biology or permission of instructor. COA 490/590: Special Topics – Marine Animal Behavior. Five credit hours.

Group research projects: A large portion of this course consists of group research projects, conducted by groups of 2–3 students. Research projects should be hypothesis-driven, can include a mix of experimental and observational approaches in the field and in the lab, and should investigate an aspect of animal behavior.

Class grading:

Exams 1 (25%): The first exam will be on Friday of the 2nd week (June 16) and will include material covered in lecture, during discussions, and during lab and field activities. Format will be multiple choice, fill in the blanks, and short answer.

Exam 2 (25%): The second exam will be on Wednesday of the 4th week (June 28), and will have a similar format to exam 1.

Research plan (15%): Prior to beginning group research projects, students will submit a 1-page research plan including a title, hypothesis, methods, and list of materials needed.

Group project presentation (25%): At the conclusion of the term, each group will give a 15-min presentation on their research projects.

Lab/field notebook (10%): Each student is required to have a lab/field notebook to record data (e.g., date and time, water quality, sampling site descriptions, weather conditions) and species collected from each field trip and species identified in the lab. Field notebooks will be graded at the end of each week.

Grading scale (all grades rounded to nearest integer, no exceptions):
A 90–100  D 60–69
B 80–89  F <60
C 70–79
Tentative list of lecture/lab topics:
Proximate vs. ultimate causes of behavior, innate and learned behaviors, foraging behavior, antipredator behavior, migration and dispersal, social behavior, mate choice and sexual behavior, parental care.

Late Assignments
Assignments turned in late will incur a 10% penalty per day (including weekends). For example, an assignment due on Thursday and turned in on Friday would be eligible for a maximum grade of 90%. Assignments turned in on the due date but after the specified time will be considered 1 day late.