

# Syllabus

# Marine Ichthyology

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Course: COA 421, 421L (3/3)  
Dates: June 5 - 30  
Location: FSB 102  
TA: Jeremy Johnson  
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**COURSE DESCRIPTION:** The goal of this course is to provide students with an overview of the taxonomy, systematics, biodiversity, anatomy, biogeography, and ecology of marine fishes, with an emphasis on the bony fishes (Class Actinopterygii) of the northern Gulf of Mexico. Course content will be provided through a combination of formal classroom lectures, field collection trips, laboratory exercises, and supplemental readings. This is an intensive six credit hour class, consisting of separate, graded lecture (3 h) and lab (3 h) sections that must be taken concurrently. Fieldwork will make up a large portion of the course, and participation in field excursions is mandatory.

## LECTURE (COA 421/521)

- **Textbook:** No textbook is assigned for the lecture portion of the course. A list of readings and journal articles related to specific topics maybe provided during the course, or put on reserve in the library.
- **Exams:** Exams are cumulative and will be based primarily on lecture presentations, assigned readings, and discussions from class, lab exercises, and field trips.
- **Grades:** Lecture grades will be based on three exams, including a cumulative final:  
*Exam 1: 30%      Exam 2: 30%      Exam 3: 40%*
- **Graduate Credit:** Students taking the course for graduate credit are required to write a review/research paper and give a presentation. The review or research topic must be approved by the instructor prior to Friday, June 9. The paper must meet the following criteria: 4-5 pages in length (not including References); 1.5 line space; 12 point Times New Roman font; 1" margins; References in PLOS ONE format (<http://journals.plos.org/plosone/s/submission-guidelines>). A 12-minute PowerPoint presentation summarizing the contents of the research or review will be presented to the class during the final week.  
*Exam 1: 25%   Exam 2: 25%   Exam 3: 25%   Paper: 15%   Presentation: 10%*

## LAB (COA 421L/521L)

- **Textbook:** The following are required for the lab portion of the course:
  - Hoese, H.D. and R.H. Moore. 1998. *Fishes of the Gulf of Mexico: Texas, Louisiana, and Adjacent Waters*, 2nd edition. Texas A&M University Press. ISBN-10: 0890967679; ISBN-13: 978-0890967676.

- Kells, V. and K. Carpenter. 2011. *A Field Guide to Coastal Fishes: From Maine to Texas*, 1st edition. John Hopkins University Press. ISBN-10: 0801898382; ISBN-13: 978-0801898389.
- **Lab/Field Notebook:** Each student should keep and have a Rite-in-the-Rain notebook (which will be provided for you) at all times to record information discussed in the field and lab (which may be included in exams). Information recorded will also be helpful when compiling the Group Reports (see below).
- **Fieldwork:** Field trips that require GCRL vessels will depart from the dock promptly at 8:00 am, unless otherwise noted. Students are required to be at the dock for these trips by 7:45 am (or 15 minutes prior to departure, as noted). Departure times for vehicle-based field trips will vary.
- **Safety and Appropriate Attire:** All students should dress appropriately for field work; please refer to the student handbook for guidance. This includes close-toed shoes while out in the field (i.e., no flip flops, aquashoes, or heel-less sandals). "Keen" footwear is permissible providing they are close-toed and have a heel strap; however, these often come off in areas of deep mud (e.g., marshes) or do not cover the entire foot, which may be hazardous in other field settings (e.g. oyster reefs). Old sneakers are often the best for coastal environments, particularly high tops. Students not wearing appropriate foot wear will not be allowed to participate in field trips; no exceptions. Additional recommendations include sunscreen, sunglasses, hat, and cool, breathable clothing. While on research vessels, students are to listen to the instructions of the captain at all times. Students prone to sea sickness are encouraged to use Dramamine, bonine or nausea-related remedies.
- **Class Participation:** Students will be expected to assist with field and lab preparation and clean up, including equipment and lab maintenance/cleaning, loading/unloading for field trips, data recording, etc.
- **Fish Collections:** Students will be divided into groups; each group will be responsible for assembling a properly labeled and identified fish collection. Details on additional fish collection requirements will be provided on the first day of class. Each collection will be accompanied by a Group Report that provides a listing of species, environmental and habitat characterizations, gear type, etc. Details on additional Group Report requirements will be provided on the first day of class.
- **Grades:** Lab grades will be based on the following:  
*Quizzes: 25%      Practical: 35%      Collection/Report: 35%      Participation: 5%*

**GRADING SCALE:** Lecture and lab grades will be assigned according to a 10-point scale:

100-90 = A      89-80 = B      79-70 = C      69-60 = D      <60 = F

**ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:** All students at the University of Southern Mississippi are expected to demonstrate the highest levels of academic integrity in all that they do. Forms of academic dishonesty include (but are not limited to):

1. Cheating (including copying from others' work)
2. Plagiarism (representing another person's words or ideas as your own; failure to properly cite the source of your information, argument, or concepts)
3. Falsification of documents
4. Disclosure of test or other assignment content to another student
5. Submission of the same paper or other assignment to more than one class without the explicit approval of all faculty members' involved
6. Unauthorized academic collaboration with others
7. Conspiracy to engage in academic misconduct

Engaging in any of these behaviors or supporting others who do so will result in academic penalties and/or other sanctions. If a faculty member determines that a student has violated our Academic Integrity Policy, sanctions ranging from resubmission of work to course failure may occur, including the possibility of receiving a grade of "XF" for the course, which will be on the student's transcript with the notation "Failure due to academic misconduct." For more details, please see the University's [Academic Integrity Policy](#). Note that repeated acts of academic misconduct will lead to expulsion from the University.

**PLAGIARISM:** As stated in the undergraduate bulletin: Plagiarism is scholarly theft, and it is defined as the unacknowledged use of secondary sources. More specifically, any written or oral presentation which the writer or speaker does not distinguish clearly between original and borrowed material constitutes plagiarism. Because students, as scholars, must make frequent use of the concepts and facts developed by other scholars, plagiarism is not the mere use of another's facts and ideas. However, it is plagiarism when students present the work of other scholars as if it were their own work. Plagiarism is a serious offense. An act of plagiarism may lead to a failing grade on the paper and in the course, as well as sanctions that may be imposed by the student judicial system.

**DISABILITY ACCOMMODATIONS:** If a student has a disability that qualifies under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and requires accommodations, he/she should contact the Office for Disability Accommodations (ODA) for information on appropriate policies and procedures. Disabilities covered by ADA may include learning, psychiatric, physical disabilities, or chronic health disorders. Students can contact ODA if they are not certain whether a medical condition/disability qualifies.

**Address:**

The University of Southern Mississippi  
Office for Disability Accommodations  
118 College Drive # 8586  
Hattiesburg, MS 39406-0001

**Voice Telephone:** 601.266.5024 or 228.214.3232

**Fax:** 601.266.6035

Individuals with hearing impairments can contact ODA using the **Mississippi Relay Service** at 1.800.582.2233 (TTY) or emailing ODA at [oda@usm.edu](mailto:oda@usm.edu).

**COURSE CALENDAR:** Below is the tentative schedule for the course; lectures, labs and field trips *may be rescheduled as needed* (e.g., if a field trip needs to be rescheduled due to inclement weather).