CETACEAN BEHAVIOR
COA 444
Gulf Coast Research Laboratory
Ocean Springs, Mississippi

Instructor:
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General Information
Students will learn tools and techniques used in the systematic observation and
documentation of delphinid behavior in the wild. Course includes both classroom
lecture and field studies focused primarily on dolphins of the Mississippi Sound.

Textbook
Cetacean Societies, Field Studies of Dolphins and Whales
Edited by Janet Mann, Richard C. Connor, Peter L. Tyack, and Hal Whitehead.
University of Chicago Press, 2000

Curriculum Topics
- Lecture topics: students will learn and discuss the scientific method,
  measurement, experimental designs, operational definitions, variables, and
  statistical methods.
- Lecture topics: instructor will demonstrate the development of ethograms,
  assessing inter-rater reliability, and collating data obtained from ethograms.
- Field studies: instructor will teach rational of transect randomization, species
  identification, gender identification, and photo-identification techniques.
- Field studies, students will learn navigation and boating techniques used near
  marine mammals and Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA) considerations
  for appropriate field observer techniques including how to avoid harassment as
  defined by MMPA.
- Field studies, students will conduct acoustic measurements and observe
  perception systems of delphinids.
- Field studies, students will observe and document social behavior of delphinids.
- Students will participate in analysis of ethograms created from behavioral
  observations and practice report writing skills.

ADA Syllabus Statement
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 email Suzy Hebert at Suzanne.Hebert@usm.edu.