Syllabus for Marine Communities

Course description: This course is dedicated to teaching students about the organisms and processes that shape diverse marine ecosystems. In this course, "Community structure and biological interactions including predation, competition, and symbiosis will be investigated in specific communities" (CSUSM Catalog). Understanding the marine realm is vital. Not only does the ocean cover the vast majority of the Earth's surface, it also impacts our everyday lives, is in close proximity to the CSUSM community, and is rapidly changing. This course will cover fundamental features of marine communities and ways in which they are being modified.

Required materials: Relevant reading will be posted on the Cougar Courses page for this class. You are required to read and, if specified, bring a copy of the material to class. Please be sure to check Cougar Courses regularly! You must also have and check your ***csusm.edu email*** for course announcements and further information. The book Marine Communities, Eds. Bertness, Gaines, and Hay was used to develop this course. While you are not required to purchase this textbook, you are of course welcome to do so. It is also available on reserve in the library.

Learning outcomes

In alignment with the Biology Department's Mission state and description and intent of this course, the learning outcomes are:

1. Use the scientific method to ask testable questions and to design and conduct laboratory, field, or theoretical investigations to address these questions.
2. Locate, determine the reliability of, critically evaluate and summarize scientific literature and other sources of biological information
3. Communicate biological information in an appropriate written and/or oral format to both scientific and general audiences.
4. Articulate and recognize the defining characteristics and important processes shaping of diverse marine ecosystems
5. Describe and be able to research reliably environmental threats facing marine ecosystems

Basis for grading

Activity	**Quantity**	**Points (each)**	**Points**	**Associated learning outcomes**
Exams	3	100	300	1, 3, 4, 5
Quizzes	5	20	100	3, 4, 5
The current ocean write up	1	50	50	2, 3, 4, 5
Marine ecosystem write up	1	100	100	2, 3, 4, 5
Field trip/ assignment	2	25	50	2, 3, 4, 5
Participation and in-class exercises	1	75	75	3

Exams: These are meant to test your understanding of the course material and your ability to think critically about it. All information from any aspect of the course may be included on the exam. Exam questions may be multiple choice, true/false, matching, short answer, essay, fill in

the blank, and/or quantitative. There are no make ups allowed. Because the schedule is subject to change, the instructor has the right to change the exam date, with the exception of the final.

Quizzes: These will be posted on Cougar Courses. They are meant to keep you up to speed on any of the material included in this course and help highlight where you might need to check your understanding of material. Quizzes will be open for approximately 5 days, and you can take the quiz any time the quiz is open. You can use your notes and readings, but you must complete your own quiz. You will only have one attempt. There are no make up quizzes and no dropped quizzes, so not ask about the possibility.

The Current Ocean write up: This activity is meant to highlight current issues going on in the ocean today. It also helps fulfill the writing requirement for this course and provides a mechanism for writing feedback. Find some recent coverage of **a marine community, marine organism, and/or marine biology research project** in the media. This item **cannot** be a repeat of another student's item (see Cougar Courses site for list of what students have submitted). Write a minimum of three paragraphs summarizing that item. Submit the summary via TurnItIn on Cougar Courses. Be sure to include a complete reference to the source as you would in a research paper (so I can post it on the Cougar Courses site).

Marine ecosystem write up: This activity is meant to provide you with an in-depth look at a particular *marine ecosystem* (not just one organism). It helps fulfill the writing requirement for this course and also provides practice for scientific writing, a critical component in a scientific career and education. In this write up, you must pick one marine community (preferably covered in class), find a *minimum* of three (3) peer-reviewed articles that discuss that ecosystem, what is being studied about it, and what the implications of those studies are. This document will be ~5-7 pages, not including references. This write up will be submitted via TurnItIn on Cougar Courses. Additional information will be provided in a separate handout.

Field trips/assignments: There will be two OPTIONAL field trips for this course. For the first field trip, we will be visiting the Coastal and Marine Institute Laboratory, part of SDSU. You will be required to ask at least 1 science-based question while there. If you do not attend the first field trip, the alternate assignment will be to find one **peer-reviewed** article from a researcher at the Coastal and Marine Institute Laboratory at SDSU and write up a summary of that paper. Turn in that summary on TurnItIn and be sure to include the reference to the peer-reviewed paper. If you do not, you will not receive credit.

For the second field trip, we will be visiting the coast to observe nearshore organisms, species distributions, and interactions. If you do not come on that field trip, you will be required to write up a summary of a **peer-reviewed** scientific article on a local marine ecosystem. Turn in that summary on TurnItIn.

Participation and in-class exercises: This class involves several active learning components and involves all of us working together to add to a supportive learning environment. We will do several in-class exercises including but not limited to think-pair-share, small group work, whole-class discussions, and case studies. Your active involvement, positive attitude, and willingness to participate are essential to this learning environment. This portion of your grade will thus reflect your involvement in class. To receive it, you must come to class and be an active and willing participant in the academic material of this course.

Late/missed work policy: If you turn in either write up late, it will be docked 10% for each 24-hour period after the time and date it is due. Quizzes cannot be made up, nor can participation nor in-class exercises. Missed exams will receive zero (0) points unless you have made prior arrangements with me or can provide documentation of a serious and unforeseen circumstance. Please see me if you have serious, verifiable, and unforeseen circumstances that prevent you from turning in your work.

Letter grade assignments

A = 100.0 – 92.0	A- = 91.9 – 90.0	B+ = 89.9 – 88.0	B = 87.9 – 82.0
B- = 81.9 - 80.0	C+ = 79.9 - 78.0	C = 77.9 – 72.0	C- = 71.9 – 70.0
D+ = 69.9 – 68.0	D = 67.9 – 62.0	D- = 61.9 – 60.0	F $\leq$ 59.9

Tentative schedule: A detailed class schedule will be provided on the Cougar Courses page for this class. The schedule will be updated as we progress through the course and is thus subject to change

Digital recordings: Due to concerns of copyright, privacy, and effective learning techniques, you must ask the instructor for permission before digitally recording (e.g., filming, taking pictures of experiments or Powerpoint slides, etc.) anything during class time.

Credit Hour Policy: You are expected to spend a *minimum* of eight (8) hours a week outside of class engaged in student learning for this course. This expectation is explicitly made to help you manage your time during the semester.

Student Outreach and Referral (SOAR) and Cougar Care Network (CNN): Please know that there are free programs provided by the campus to provide resources, support, and information to help you with issues that may impact your academic success (e.g., loss, anxiety, food security, relationships, time management, academic performance). SOAR and CNN are these early support programs. SOAR is located in USU 3500 and can be reached at 760-750-7627 or soar@csusm.edu. Faculty and staff may refer to you CNN, who will then reach out to you.

ADA Statement: Students who require accommodations for disabilities must be approved by the Office of Disable Student Services (DSS). DSS is in Craven Hall 4300. They can be contacted via phone (760-750-4905), TTY (760-750-4909), and email (dss@csusm.edu). Should you be approved, please meet with me during office hours to make sure we can discuss the necessary accommodations. **Please try to notify me within the first two weeks of the semester should you require specific accommodations so that I can make the necessary arrangements to help you succeed in this course.**

Academic honesty, plagiarism, and cheating: According to the university's academic honesty policy, "cheating and plagiarism in connection with an academic program at a campus is listed in Section 41301, *Title 5, California Code of Regulations*, as an offense for which a student may be expelled, suspended, put on probation, or given a less severe disciplinary action" (CSUSM Catalog). Therefore, you are required to do your own work. **Plagiarism and/or cheating and not tolerated.** You will not receive a warning if I suspect plagiarism and/or cheating has transpired. *At a minimum*, you will receive a zero (0) for any and all assignments in which plagiarism and/or cheating is suspected. Further disciplinary action may also be warranted.

Class behavior expectations: You are expected to be engaged, civil, and respectful contributors to a supportive learning environment. Such behavior helps cultivate a safe, intellectually stimulating space and community in which to learn and thrive. Class disruptions are not tolerated. These disruptions include, but are not limited to, speaking while the instructor is lecturing, using computers for anything other than note-taking and completing class assignments, and not being in class for its full duration. Furthermore, you are *strongly* encouraged not to take notes with a computer if possible as retention of information improves when it is hand written.

Tips for student success:

- Come to class and be engaged in the learning process
- Be civil and encouraging to your fellow classmates and instructor
- Read class material
- Review course material, including lectures and any readings often
- Come to office hours. If you can't make the set time, schedule and appointment

References:

California State University San Marcos 2016-2018 Catalog. 2016. Retrieved from https://www.csusm.edu/catalog/documents/2016-2018/csusm-2016-2018-catalog.pdf.

California State University San Marcos Biology Department Mission Statement and Learning Objectives. 2018. Retrieved from https://www.csusm.edu/biology/missionstatement.html