This course will examine various aspects of the evolutionary biology of marine mammals. Lecture topics include pinniped, cetacean and sirenian evolution, diet and foraging strategies, echolocation, energetics, diving physiology, reproductive strategies, population biology, and conservation. There will be several labs concentrating on the identification of local marine mammals. Other labs are focused on bioinformatics, GIS and functional anatomy.

Course Objectives: This course provides an introduction to marine mammal biology. Students will also learn:
- evolutionary and ecological concepts
- principles of organismal biology
- species level identification of California marine mammals

Course Format: In addition to lectures on Tuesday and Thursday (8:00-8:50 am), labs/field trips/discussion sections will follow the Thursday lecture (9:00 am-11:40 am).

There will be an assignment at San Diego Museum of Natural History in Balboa Park as part of a lab on marine mammal functional morphology that you will do on your own. Attendance is required on a field trip to Sea World and Hubbs Sea World Research Institute tentatively scheduled for November 7 at 10:00 am.

Grading: Grades will be based on a total of 440 pts: two midterms (100 points each), a final (124 points), workshop presentation and 1 pg. outline (25 points), laboratory/field trip assignments (66 points), field observation assignment (25 points). The final exam is comprehensive and will include 30 points from the first two sections of the course. The format of the exams will be matching, short answer and essay.


LAB MANUAL: Laboratory Manual for Evolution and Ecology of Marine Mammals (Biol. 512) by Annalisa Berta. Available at Aztec Shops.

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OFFICE HOURS: Tu 10:00 -11:00 am and by appt.