Course Information
Title: Introduction to Alaska’s Mammals
Course Identifier: BIOL 195
Credits: 1
Term: Summer 2015
Meeting Time: Jun 25, 26 (Th-F) 6-8:30 pm, Jun 27, 28 (Sa-Su) 12-5:00 pm

Instructor
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Course Reading/Materials

Course Description
This course will familiarize students with the diversity of mammal species that occur in Alaska, with an emphasis on terrestrial small mammal species and those occurring in interior Alaska. It includes lectures covering the unique characteristics of specific groups of mammals (rodents, carnivores, insectivores, marine mammals, etc.), the identification of mammal species, basic ecology, adaptations, overwintering strategies, and field methods of mammalogy. Students will participate in a field trip, learning how mammalogists trap small mammals and there will be a session in the UA Museum to learn about the role museums play in our understanding of mammals.

Course Goals
This course will give students a greater understanding of the diversity and distribution of mammal species living in Alaska and the knowledge to identify them when encountered in the field. At the end of this course students should be able to identify many Alaskan mammals to their species or family group. They will know how track plates, small mammal trap lines, bat detectors and mist nets, and other field methods are used to study mammals. They will have a greater understanding of how professional mammalogists do their research and the impact the University of Alaska Museum Mammals Collection has on our understanding of Alaska’s mammals.

Instructional Methods
Lecture will include the use of slides, images, sound recordings, video, and museum specimens. Students may photos of specimens to use as study aids.

Field trips will focus on methods of field research in mammalogy. Students will participate in a small mammal trapping effort but the instructor will do all the handling of mammals. A tour of the UA Museum Mammals Collection will include a demonstration of the preparation of a research specimen.
Course Calendar
Day 1: The first lecture will provide an introduction to mammals, general characteristics of mammals, classification, and evolution and an introduction to the various mammal species and distributions in Alaska. We will begin a survey of Alaska’s mammals with the orders Rodentia and Lagomorpha, including identification, distribution, habitat preferences, etc.

Day 2: Lecture will continue with the overview of Alaska mammal diversity covering Soricomorpha, Chiroptera, and Carnivora.

Day 3: Lecture will cover field methods used in research on small mammals and we will take a field trip to set up a small mammal trap line. Lecture will review the mammals common to interior Alaska and how to identify them and discuss topics of overwintering strategies and other adaptations employed by mammals in Alaska. There will be an opportunity to go out in search of bats this night to learn how to use a bat detector and mist nets to capture bats.

Day 4: We will spend 2 hours in the museum visiting the Mammals Collection to learn how research specimens are prepared (including a demonstration), stored, and used by mammalogists. A final test will be taken in which students must identify at least 20 mammals to species

Course Policies
Attendance to all lectures and field trips is mandatory (except for the late night field trip on day 3). Lecture slides will be available for students but museum specimens used during lectures will not be available outside of class time. The final exam will be comprised of museum specimens and therefore cannot be made up or taken early.

Evaluation: Pass/Fail
To receive a passing grade students must attend all lectures. Students will be required to identify a minimum of 20 species on the final exam.

Disabilities Services
The instructor will work with the Office of Disabilities Services (203 WHIT, 474-7043) to provide reasonable accommodation to students with disabilities.