

ANTHROPOLOGY 2267A-650

Anthropology of Zoos

Department of Anthropology

BRIEF COURSE OUTLINE

Fall 2021

Version date: July 20, 2021

Instructor: Dr. Ian Colquhoun

Office: SSC 3428

Office hours: TBD

Email: colquhou@uwo.ca (contact me about anything concerning the course!)

Credit value: 0.5 credit

Mode of Delivery: This course will be conducted online.

Requisites:

Antirequisites: None.

Prerequisites: None.

Course Description:

Just about everyone has visited a zoo at one time or another (or maybe even visited multiple zoos multiple times). But, what does the average zoo-goer actually know about zoos? Zoos are, at the same time, one way that people, particularly children, may experience aspects of the natural world (especially exotic wildlife), but are also perhaps relatively unknown to the general public in how they function. Zoos, in fact, present a microcosm of how humans interact with the natural world. In this course, we will undertake a literature-based examination of the multiple dimensions of interaction that exist between zoos, society (both zoo-goers and the broader general public), and the conservation research community, and consider what the future of zoos may hold.

A full course schedule including a week-by-week breakdown of topics and assigned readings will be available on the course's OWL site on the first day of the Fall 2021 term.

Learning Outcomes:

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- identify and critically reflect upon the key perspectives concerning the role(s) that zoos currently play in the conservation of endangered species (and, more broadly, how zoo-based conservation efforts might contribute to global efforts to conserve endangered species);

- show an appreciation of how an interdisciplinary approach grounded in anthropology can be used to examine the value, and future, of zoos in the 21st century;
- critically analyze and evaluate online content presented by zoos relating to public engagement and conservation education. This critical analysis and evaluation will include assessment of ongoing public and academic debates on a range of issues as they relate to course themes and the societal position zoos will hold in the future.
- hone transferable critical thinking skills that will have long-term applicability in your professional and life tool-kits.

Course Materials:

There is **not** a required textbook for this course.

Rather, in our examination of the multi-faceted nature of zoos, we will be making use of peer-reviewed articles drawn from academic journals such as *Zoo Biology*, *International Zoo Yearbook*, and *Conservation Biology* (among others). **All** the course readings are either from Open Access sources, or are drawn from academic journals which are available electronically through the [Western Libraries web portal](#).

Registered students will be able to access information about these journal article course readings through the course's on-line OWL site before the first day of the Fall 2021 academic term.

Evaluation:

The following is the tentative breakdown of this course's evaluated work:

- Zoo Websites Comparative Evaluation (15%)
- Mid-term Test (35%)
- Reflection: The Future of Zoos (15%)
- Final Exam (35% -- only covers material following the mid-term test)

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