

Department of Anthropology
ANTHRO 2267B-650: Anthropology of Zoos
BRIEF COURSE OUTLINE
WINTER 2025

Date: July 23, 2024

Instructor and course information:

Instructor: Dr. Karyn Olsen (she/her)
Method of delivery: Asynchronous online.
Credit value: 0.5
Antirequisites: None.
Prerequisites: None.

Course Description:

Most people have visited a zoo at some point, often multiple times. That said, the average zoo-goer may have limited knowledge about zoos and how they operate. Zoos can offer a unique way for people, especially children, to experience the natural world and exotic wildlife. Zoos represent a microcosm of human interaction with the natural world. Modern zoos also present themselves as key players in conserving endangered species. However, the general public may not fully understand the inner workings of these institutions. This course uses anthropological and interdisciplinary approaches to evaluate zoo-based conservation efforts and examine how effectively zoos engage the public in 21st-century conservation issues.

We will explore academic literature on zoos, focusing on the various interactions between zoos, the species they maintain, society (including zoo-goers and the broader public), and the conservation research community. We will also consider the history and future of zoos from a global perspective.

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

Course Materials:

There is no required textbook for this course. All required readings will be available through the Course Readings tool on the OWL Brightspace site.

Evaluation:

Grades will be based on the following:

Weekly Quizzes	9%
3 Assignments (3x 22%)	66%
Take Home Final Exam (short essay)	25%

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