

Life Through Time (GEO 405)

Fall 2011 Lecture Syllabus

TIME & PLACE: T-Th 2:00-3:30 pm, JGB 3.116

INSTRUCTOR: Julia Clarke-Julia_Clarke@jsg.utexas.edu
Office: 3.216D

OFFICE HOURS: T & TH 10:00am-12:00pm; JGB 3.216D
(or by appointment)

LAB INSTRUCTORS: Travis Wicks twicks@mail.utexas.edu
Robert Burroughs theancientwalk@gmail.com
All labs meet in JGB 2.310
All office hours for TAs are in 3.314AA

CORE TOPICS: The nature of science. Major factors affecting past and present biodiversity. Geologic time. Fossils and fossilization. The history of life. An introduction to evolutionary theory. Patterns of change in shape and form. Extinction. Vertebrate evolution.

TEXT: Gould, S.J., (ed.) 2001. The Book of Life. W.W. Norton & Company

GRADING: The grade for the class is based on the following:

a) Exam 1	Sept. 20	20%
b) Exam 2	Oct. 20	20%
c) Exam 3 (last)	Dec. 1	20%
d) Quizzes, assignments, & participation		15%
e) Laboratory		25%

No final during finals block.

The final class grades may be curved if necessary, but any actual curve will not be known until all grades have been finalized. Curves generally amount to only 1 or 2 points (out of a 100). +/- Grades.

PREREQUISITE: GEO 401, 303, or 312K (or equivalent) with a grade of at least C. If you have not taken and passed one of the above classes, **you will be dropped from this course, no exceptions.**

READINGS: This course uses Blackboard, a Web-based course management system in which a password-protected site is created for each course. Student enrollments in each course are updated each evening. I will post all non-textbook readings to Blackboard. You will be responsible for checking the Blackboard course site regularly for class work and announcements. Blackboard is available at <http://courses.utexas.edu>. Support is provided by the ITS Help Desk at 475-9400 Monday through Friday 8 am to 6 pm, so plan accordingly.

You are responsible for all the material designated as readings on the lecture schedule, and other readings that may be posted to Blackboard as the course progresses. You will be tested on this material. Readings are not redundant with lecture content. Readings provide additional material not necessarily covered in class and are an important supplement to the lectures.

Readings taken from sources other than the text are posted to Blackboard as Acrobat pdf files. In the spirit of preserving the environment I will not be putting paper copies in open reserve. If you do not have a computer you can access these files from public computers in any UT library, or the Geology Undergraduate Computer Lab. Occasionally additional short readings relating to current events may be assigned for in class discussion (Again – check Blackboard).

ASSIGNMENTS AND QUIZZES: Quizzes, in-class assignments, and participation contribute to 15% of your grade for the course. Short lecture quizzes (and in-class assignments) will be given without advance notice. These may commonly follow opening class announcements. If you arrive late for a quiz you do not get extra time. If you arrive after the quiz has been turned in, you will receive a zero for that quiz. There will be no make-up quizzes. The quizzes serve a useful purpose: (1) they let me assess how well the class is assimilating the lecture and reading material, and (2) they let you get a feel for the types of questions they will find on the exams.

ATTENDANCE AND ABSENCE: Attendance is required and essential to understand the core material. Quizzes, in-class exercises, and assignments assess attendance and, at least after a short while, I will generally notice if you are not in class.

LAB: You are required to attend the lab section for which you are registered. If you have to miss a lab for any reason, make arrangements with your TA **in advance** to attend a different section. All lab quizzes **must** be taken in your scheduled section at the scheduled meeting time. Your TAs will have additional policies that you must follow. Your TAs are students just like you are and they are there to help you. Lab grades are a significant part of your overall course grade.

EXAMS: Students are required to take all exams. There is no exam given during the finals period. Grades will be posted to Blackboard. If you have a university sanctioned scheduling conflict with an exam date, you must notify me at least 14 days in advance of the scheduled exam; failure to notify me **prior to exam day** will result in a zero for that exam. There are no make-up exams.

OFFICE HOURS: If you have questions that are not answered during lecture, or if you need clarification of a concept or topic we cover, or need more information about a topic, do not hesitate to see us during office hours, or even send us an email with questions.

Feedback is an important part of any kind of learning. Without feedback on how well you understand the material, it is more difficult for you to make significant progress. During this course you will give me feedback on your learning in informal and formal ways, such as assignments or exams. I want you to let me know when something we discuss is not clear.

This kind of communication will enable me to provide additional information when needed or to explain a concept in different terms.

CHEATING/UNIVERSITY HONOR CODE: We maintain a zero-tolerance policy on cheating. Scholastic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, collusion, using, buying, stealing, and/or divulging the contents of an examination, removing a test from the examination room, substituting for another person, having someone take a test for you, misplacing or damaging property of the University or destroying information so another student may not have materials, falsifying research data, misrepresenting facts including providing false grades or resumes, presenting someone else's work as one's own academic work, and falsifying academic records. A full and comprehensive statement about what constitutes academic dishonesty can be found in Appendix C, section 11-802 in the General Information bulletin. The Student Judicial Services office in the Office of the Dean of Students has the responsibility for following up and making the final determination.

You are responsible for knowing and following the UT Policies and the UT Honor Code, available through Blackboard when you log in to the course page. The UT Honor Code states:

The core values of The University of Texas at Austin are learning, discovery, freedom, leadership, individual opportunity, and responsibility. Each member of the University is expected to uphold these values through integrity, honesty, trust, fairness, and respect toward peers and community.

EMAIL: All students should become familiar with the University's official e-mail student notification policy. It is the student's responsibility to keep the University informed as to changes in his or her e-mail address. Students are expected to check e-mail on a frequent and regular basis in order to stay current with University-related communications, recognizing that certain communications may be time-critical. It is recommended that e-mail be checked daily. The complete text of this policy and instructions for updating your e-mail address are available at <http://www.utexas.edu/its/policies/emailnotify.html>.

In this course e-mail will be used as a means of communication with students. You will be responsible for checking your e-mail regularly for class work and announcements. Note: if you are an employee of the University, your e-mail address in Blackboard is your employee address.

FOOD AND PHONES: Food is not permitted in lecture or lab. The same rules for drinks that apply in the library apply in the lecture (coffee and other drinks must be in a secure cup or bottle). Please turn off your cell phone when you are in class or lab. No text messaging in class or lab; if you are on your phone you will be asked to leave class. Laptop computers are allowed. If you are on social networking sites (Facebook etc.) or email during class, you may lose your right to bring a laptop to class. No electronic devices are permitted during exams or quizzes.

OTHER POINTS:

*Students with disabilities who require special accommodations need to get a letter that documents the disability from the Services for Students with Disabilities area of the Office of the Dean of Students (471-6259 voice or 471-4641 TTY for users who are deaf or hard of hearing). This letter should be presented to the instructor in each course at the beginning of the semester and accommodations needed should be discussed at that time. Five business days before an exam the student should remind the instructor of any testing accommodations that will be needed.

See following website for more information:

<http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/ssd/providing.php>

*Religious holy days sometimes conflict with class and examination schedules. If you miss an examination, work assignment, or other project due to the observance of a religious holy day you will be given an opportunity to complete the work missed within a reasonable time after the absence. It is the policy of The University of Texas at Austin that you must notify each of your instructors at least fourteen days prior to the classes scheduled on dates you will be absent to observe a religious holy day.

*I do not give extra credit assignments to individuals, as they are unfair to other students who worked hard on the regular assignments.

DROP DATES: The last day to drop the course for academic reasons (with approval of the dean) is **Wednesday, November 1, 2011**. After this date, students may go to the office of the Chair of the Department of Geological Sciences, GEO 2.106, to appeal for non-academic reasons. Not attending class does not automatically drop you from the course.