

The Age of Dinosaurs

Geo 302D

Prof. Timothy Rowe

Fall 2012

Syllabus

Course Overview:

The Age of Dinosaurs is an introduction to Natural History for non-science majors. The course focuses on current scientific theories and controversies surrounding the evolution and extinction of dinosaurs. In order to appreciate these issues, the course presents an introduction to Earth history, plate tectonics, surface geology, sedimentary processes, fossilization, and related topics. It also presents an introduction to the theory of evolution, an overview of the diversity of Life on Earth, along with a discussion on how modern scientists study the relationships among organisms and interpret the evolutionary history of Life. The geological and evolutionary processes that have affected the history of dinosaurs are the focus throughout the course. In the end, you will learn how Earth history and Life history are intricately intertwined, and how scientists are using their knowledge of the past to predict what's ahead for us all.

Course Website: <http://www.geo.utexas.edu/courses/302d/default.htm>

Instructor:

Prof. Timothy Rowe
Office: Geology 3.216EA
Office Hours:
Tuesday, 11:00-12:00
Thursday, 11:00-12:00
or by appointment
e-mail: rowe@mail.utexas.edu

Teaching Assistants:

William Gelnaw wgelnaw@gmail.com
Adam Marsh admarsh@utexas.edu
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James Proffitt jvproffitt@utexas.edu

TA office hours will be announced in Lab.

Course Web Site Homepage: <http://www.geo.utexas.edu/courses/302d/default.htm>

The course website site will be your source for information on the class schedule for all lectures, assignments, exams, and quizzes.

Lectures: GEO 2.324, Tuesday and Thursday, 9:30-11:00am

Labs: GEO 3.202; see catalog; your lab schedule is listed by the unique number of the section in which you are registered

Required Study Materials:

Electronic versions will be distributed at no cost during the first Lab section – bring your laptop or a thumbdrive.

1) **Text:** The Mistaken Extinction, by Lowell Dingus and Timothy Rowe, 1998, W. H. Freeman and Co., New York. Available free, online from the course website.

2) **Multimedia Software:** The Age of Dinosaurs CD-ROM, by Timothy Rowe, Kyoko Kishi, John W. Merck, Jr., and Matthew Colbert, 1998, W. H. Freeman and Co., New York. This software will be distributed at no cost during the first lab section.

Laboratory/Discussion: Weekly Lab sections are a required part of the course. The labs provide an opportunity to examine specimens, as well as a forum for group discussion of issues raised in the course. Starting Week 2 of the semester, quizzes will be given in Lab every week.

Policy on Grades:

1) **Final Grades:** Your final letter grade will be based on your total score from exams and labs. Grades are assigned using a standard curve that reflects the accomplishment of the class as a whole. The curve mean represents a 'C'.

2) **Exam (65%):** 3 midterms and 1 final exam will be given. All three midterm exams and the final exam must be taken. Your best 2 midterm scores plus the final exam score will be counted as 65% of your final grade - i.e., you may drop your lowest midterm score. The Exam Schedule is on the web. Exams are given only once. There are no make-up exams and no specially scheduled exams. Exceptions may be made for handicapped students, but they must request any special arrangements early in the semester. All exams are cumulative in their coverage. They will cover material from lectures, reading assignments, labs, software, web resources, and videos. You will be asked questions about general concepts as well as specific points of information. You will be held responsible for correct spelling and for writing with complete sentences that use proper grammar.

3) **Lab Quizzes (25%):** Lab quizzes will be given every week, starting Week 2. They must be taken at the scheduled times, and all assignments must be turned in on time. Lab assignments turned in late will receive no credit. Your cumulative score from lab assignments and quizzes will be counted as 25% of your final grade.

4) Lecture Quizzes (10%): A short quiz will be given during each lecture. Please bring a 4" x 6" note card to every class. You will write your quiz answers on these cards and turn them in by the end of the lecture.

5) Statue of Limitations: If you wish to appeal a grade received on an exam, quiz, or lab, your appeal must be made within 7 days from the time it is handed back. No appeals will be considered after that deadline.

6) Scholastic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Work submitted for a grade under your name must be exclusively your own. Evidence of dishonesty on even one exam, quiz, or assignment will result in an 'F' for the course and a report to the Dean of Students; if you were failing the course anyway, a recommendation of disciplinary probation will also be forwarded to the Dean of Students.