

Life Through Time (GEO 405)

Fall 2010 Lecture Syllabus

- TIME & PLACE:** T-Th 2:00-3:30 pm, JGB 3.116
- INSTRUCTOR:** Jennifer Olori – jen_olori@mail.utexas.edu
JGB 3.314B
- OFFICE HOURS:** W 5-6pm & TH 10:30-11:30am; JGB 3.314B
(or by appointment)
- LAB INSTRUCTORS:** Travis Wicks
Nick Perez
All labs meet in JGB 2.310
- 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:
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| a) Exam 1 | 15% |
| b) Exam 2 | 15% |
| c) Exam 3 | 15% |
| d) Final Exam | 15% |
| e) Quizzes, assignments, & participation | 10% |
| f) Laboratory | 30% |

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).

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: You will be held responsible for all the material designated as readings on the lecture schedule, and other reading that will 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. Reading complexity increases through the semester, so plan ahead to complete your readings on time. 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.

EXAMS: Students are required to take all exams. Grades will be posted to Blackboard. There are no make-up exams. If you have a 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.

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.

QUIZZES: Lecture quizzes will be given infrequently. All quizzes will be announced the previous class day (i.e., on the Tuesday before a Thursday quiz or the Thursday before a Tuesday quiz). Quiz dates will also be posted to Blackboard. The quizzes will be short and will be given immediately following opening 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. Quizzes, assignments (see below), and participation contribute to 10% of your grade for the course – which could be the difference between an ‘A’ and a ‘B’. The quizzes serve a useful purpose: (1) they let me judge how well the class is assimilating the lecture and reading material, and (2) they let the student get a feel for the types of questions they will find on the exams. The quizzes are important – don’t blow them off.

ASSIGNMENTS: Occasionally a small in-class or homework project will be assigned. You can work on and turn in these assignments by yourself or with one partner. If you work with a partner, both of you will receive the same grade for the project.

ATTENDANCE AND ABSENCE: Attendance is required, but I do not take a roll on a daily basis. Quizzes, in-class exercises, and assignments are used to evaluate attendance and, at least after a short while, I will generally notice if you are not in class. Students who regularly miss class do not, on the whole, do as well as those who regularly attend lectures. Students who do not attend lecture do not pass the 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 exams **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 – don’t blow off lab.

BLACKBOARD: 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. Powerpoint files for each lecture will be posted before each class – take advantage of this.

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.

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. Laptop computers are allowed, but please mute the sound. Absolutely no electronic devices are permitted during exams or quizzes.

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.

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.

OTHER ISSUES: 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>

DROP DATES: The last day to drop this class without academic penalty is **Wednesday, September 22, 2010**. The last day to drop the course for academic reasons (with approval of the dean) is **Wednesday, October 20, 2010**. 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. **You must explicitly drop the course yourself.**