

GEOS 3332 Age of Dinosaurs Syllabus

(*NOTE: Links active on WebCT)

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COURSE DESCRIPTION AND GOALS

Age of Dinosaurs is an introductory survey of the anatomy, physiology, life-styles, population, and evolution of dinosaurs and swimming and flying reptiles, as well as Mesozoic climates and basic Earth history of the "Age of Dinosaurs". There is one (optional attendance) field trip to visit dinosaurs at the Fort Worth Museum and at Dinosaur Valley State Park. Required field trip forms: www.utdallas.edu/dept/sci_ed/Homer/forms/forms.html

No prerequisites required. GEOS 3132 is a separate and optional one hour lab course.

Syllabus

Suggested class notes are hyper-linked below. You may need to look up some terminology in the notes. There are several good web sources for this task. Google seems to be the best search engine for this. You might also want to augment the notes with online sites and post the URLs on the WebCT discussion board. Remember to stick with reputable sites such as those produced by museums, universities, and the like.

Free QuickTime download www.apple.com/quicktime/download

Free Adobe Acrobat Reader download www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/

Week of	Topic	Suggested Readings Read the appropriate chapter in Lucas before coming to class
Jan 11	Introduction to the Mesozoic Earth WebCT question(s) on Thursday available from noon until midnight	Mesozoic Cretaceous (skim around) begin USGS
Jan 18	Taphonomy WebCT question(s) on Thursday available from noon until midnight	Taphonomy complete USGS Coprolites
Jan 25	Big Bend National Park research WebCT question(s) on Thursday available from noon until midnight	Big Bend Project Big Bend
Feb 1	Evolution/Cladistics WebCT question(s) on Thursday available from noon until midnight	Evolution Transitional Forms Cladistics
Feb 8	Predatory Dinosaurs WebCT question(s) on Thursday available from noon until midnight	Theropods Sue
Feb 12	Field trip to Dinosaur Valley State Park (attendance optional)	
Feb 15	Sauropodomorphs WebCT question(s) on Thursday available from noon until midnight	Sauropods
Feb 22	NO CLASS - Dr. Montgomery will be in Japan WebCT question(s) on Thursday available from noon until midnight	
Mar 1	Ornithischians WebCT Exam 1 on Thursday available from noon until midnight	Ornithischians Parasaurolophus
Mar 8	Spring Break	
	Tracking Dinosaurs Trackway calculations	Tracks

Mar 15	WebCT question(s) on Thursday available from noon until midnight	T. rex
Mar 22	Dinosaur Biology WebCT question(s) on Thursday available from noon until midnight	Biology Histology
Mar 29	Marine Reptiles WebCT question(s) on Thursday available from noon until midnight Optional (but highly recommended) paper copies of rough drafts of term paper due no later than 5 pm in my office	Marine Reptiles Marine Reptiles Mosasaurs Plesiosaurs Gastroliths
Apr 5	Pterosaurs WebCT question(s) on Thursday available from noon until midnight	Pterosaurs Pterosaurs
April 12	Mammals and their ancestors Birds WebCT question(s) on Thursday available from noon until midnight	Pterosaurs Pterosaurs Birds
April 19	KT Extinctions WebCT Exam 2 on Thursday available from noon until midnight	KT What Killed the Dinosaurs?
April 25	All term papers due by midnight at: www.turnitin.com and on WebCT	

COURSE FORMAT

GEOS 3332 is a WebCT-assisted course. Active participation is required in order to make a top grade. Attendance in class on Tuesdays is highly recommended. Questions are presented each Thursday on WebCT. Questions cover information in the linked material on the syllabus and in the text as well as material discussed in class.

PREREQUISITES

None

TEXT (required)

DINOSAURS, the textbook
Spencer Lucas
any edition
Wm C. Brown Publishing
ISBN 0-697-14429-1

QUIZZES and EXAMS

Question(s) are on WebCT each Thursday and are available from noon until midnight. All are open-book. Some of the questions are rather tricky and thought provoking.
Exam 1 and Exam 2 are also available on WebCT and are largely composed of a collection of questions similar to those you have seen each Thursday. Exams are comprehensive. No correct answer feedback will be provided on WebCT. Answers will be discussed in class.

TERM PAPER

Concept

In no way should a term paper be thought of a weighty tome of facts or descriptions. You must introduce a concept, show data, and offer logical interpretations.

Your paper must be on a subject from this course. You might want to choose some discovery in the science news. The science link at news.bbc.co.uk is a good source for ideas. Use the search window and you will get lots of the latest discoveries.

I would strongly advise running your ideas past me before launching into a misguided effort. Do not make the mistake of hurting your grade by choosing inappropriate topics. A paper arguing evolution (science) vs. creationism (theology) is not acceptable.

Get started with each paper as early as possible in the semester. I will certainly be happy to review your paper for you if you get it to me before the cutoff dates in the syllabus. My review does not take into account what TurnItIn may turn up as direct material from the web. Note the cutoff dates for review.

Present data first and interpretation after.

Do not include any illustrations.

Format

Put these headings in your paper:

1. TITLE (do not include a title page)
2. INTRODUCTION (what is the purpose of your paper?, what is your hypothesis?, what are you going to tell us?)
3. Include a pertinent literature review
4. body of your paper with whatever SUBHEADINGS you choose
5. CONCLUSIONS (sum up succinctly, what did you tell us)
6. REFERENCES (see detailed instructions below)

Length of papers (use the Word Count utility)

The term paper must be between **3,000 and 5,000 words** (approximately 6 to 10 double-spaced pages in 12 pt Times)
You may incur a penalty for not falling in this range. A tip: more words frequently does not make the paper better.

Example papers are from a previous semester.

Example of a good paper (Note: many topics are possible.)

Example of a paper with serious TurnItIn problems

Reference sources

I expect a minimum of 6 reputable sources. Only include those references that you actually cited. All sources should be reputable. Reputable means library journals (Science, Nature, National Geographic, Discover, Paleontology, etc.) or web sites put up by universities, museums, or respected media with entire science sections such as the BBC. Do not use newspapers. URLs for web sites should be complete to permit navigation to the actual page from which you drew your information. I am not concerned about the format of references as long as it is relatively standard and consistent. Cite passages in the text and include those references in your References Cited. Please number your references and simply put corresponding numbers in the text. A reference would then be: Birds clearly evolved from dromaeosaurids (3).

Cautions about TurnItIn results

Use only a couple of short quotes **at most**. Direct quotes must have quotation marks. Otherwise, paraphrase and reference the part you paraphrased. Direct quotes (properly cited) incur no penalty if they are kept under a threshold of 5% of your paper. Papers exceeding 5% direct quotes (as determined by TurnItIn) will likely incur a steep penalty. Papers with excessive non-original material (above 50%) that is not placed in quotes (plagiarism) will be reported for possible official disciplinary action.

Cautions about theology

This course is not designed to debate evolution vs. creationism (or "intelligent design"). That debate is more appropriately hosted in a theology course, not in a science course. Neither creationism nor intelligent design is science. Neither idea has been able to produce peer-reviewed research in the scientific literature.

Because this is a Natural Science course, your research should rely on widely accepted, scientific information. A failure to utilize clear scientific research material will only serve to weaken the strength of your argument as the topics of this course are based in scientific research.

While you are certainly entitled to your own belief system, your personal beliefs do not form the basis of this course. The study of science requires the use of scientific research, and scientific thinking.

Term paper grading rubric

1. Well presented thesis posing thoughtful scientific problem(s)
2. Evidence of understanding of the concepts and pertinent literature
3. Well-reasoned conclusions compatible with your arguments
4. Top marks will be earned for papers that both miss none of the important research and that also propose (even minor)

5. Did you take a solid scientific position and defend that position well? (Make strong statements and defend them well.)

6. Possible deductions for paper length and certainly for TurnItIn problems

TurnItIn does not automatically grade your papers. I do this one at a time, a process that can take a few days. No paper will be returned to you. It remains in the reference archive at TurnItIn.com. Log in to the term paper section of WebCT and you can view my comments. You can also access your TurnItIn report at that site.

Due dates and procedures (rough drafts and final editions)

Rough drafts and term papers are due on the dates indicated in this Syllabus. No drafts or papers will be accepted after posted deadlines without talking to me in advance of the deadlines. A good reason will be necessary.

Rough drafts: must be given to me in class, left it in my office, or mailed to my office. I will edit your paper draft within a day or two and put it in the box outside my office (FN3.308A).

Final editions: The only way to receive credit for your paper is to follow the procedure below. Your paper must be uploaded to TurnItIn and to WebCT. TurnItIn and WebCT are programmed to stop accepting papers after the indicated day. Do not give me a hard copy of your edited papers. Do not e-mail me your paper.

Submitting your papers to TurnItIn and WebCT

Any paper not uploaded to TurnItIn and not uploaded by the cutoff will be considered as not turned in. No credit will be awarded.

Go to: www.turnitin.com

Follow the directions

For class id enter:

For "Enrollment Password" enter: (case sensitive)

Course is GEOS 3332

Use your name for the title of your paper

Upload your paper

Now go to WebCT and upload your paper

I have no ability to make comments on your paper in TurnItIn. All comments will appear in WebCT. If you do not submit your paper to WebCT, you will not receive comments.

COURSE GRADE (500 possible points)

Quizzes: 120 points (mostly short answer with a few multiple choice)

Exam 1: 60 points

Exam 2: 140 points (comprehensive)

Term Paper: 180 points (submitted through TurnItIn and WebCT)

No grades are curved.

INCOMPLETES

I do not give incompletes without proof of major medical or similar serious problems. A suitable explanatory letter is required.

FIELD TRIP

Field trip participation is optional. No refunds are offered if you choose not to attend the field trip. The field trip actually costs more per student to run than is covered by each fee. Thus, the fund works something like a social security system with many paying for those who actually go. Those who choose not to go this semester may certainly go the next.

STATEMENTS

In this course students will conform to the University rules for academic honesty. For further information see

<http://www.utdallas.edu/student/sliffe/dishonesty.html>

Information from this course can be provided to students with disabilities through University services. For more information see

<http://www.utdallas.edu/student/sliffe/hcsvc.html>