

Age of Dinosaurs Syllabus

Dr. Homer Montgomery

PROFESSOR'S CONTACT INFORMATION

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GENERAL COURSE INFORMATION

Pre-requisites, Co-requisites, & other restrictions	None
Course Description Objectives	<p><i>Age of Dinosaurs</i> 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”. Each week is designed as a student-centered encounter with the underpinnings of the Age of Dinosaurs. Students will produce several written abstracts focused on a subject of their choosing in the folder of the week. The abstract will be based predominantly on readings of primary research and research syntheses. Students will complete a midterm project as part of a small group. The professor will assign groups. As much as possible, the students will drive the online discussions. Note the work of previous students in the form of various papers and Podcasts (coming soon). Your work may end up being part of a future class.</p>
Objectives	All students will become conversant with the basics of paleontology, taphonomy, cladistics, various dinosaur groups, etc. All will engage in probing discussions and activities. We will encounter numerous topical and controversial issues.
Methodology	All midterm projects will respect student's prior knowledge and perspectives, be learner centered, and be products constructed by a group. The professor in this course will function as a coach. An active online discussion board will be maintained.
Activities	<p>The class is designed as an encounter with the underpinnings of the geologic history of the Mesozoic Era and the evolution and extinction of dinosaurs, and marine and flying reptiles. We also explore details of taphonomy and biology. Learning is accomplished through numerous readings and many online discussions.</p> <p>You must complete all of the readings and other assignments in the folder for each week.</p> <p>Students will produce weekly 500-word abstracts that address the Topic of the week. Paste your file into the box provided. Be sure to upload your file to TurnItIn.com. A quiz will time in on Friday at 1700. Quizzes will appear in the folder for each week. Both assignments time out at 1700 on Friday nights, Central Standard Time (Dallas time). The last three assignments are to produce a lesson that would require one class period to complete and is</p>

	<p>hands on in nature.</p> <p>Your major grades include a midterm group-research project and a detailed self-assessment at the end of the course. Groups will be assigned after class begins.</p> <p>You are also required to post to the discussion board.</p>
Learning Outcomes	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Students will recognize and describe the intricacies of the evolutionary history of select Mesozoic vertebrates. 2. Students will describe the biology and paleoecology of select Mesozoic vertebrates. 3. Students will evaluate a real-world dinosaur investigation in Big Bend National Park, TX utilizing criteria presented in the class and in primary sources.
Required Texts & Materials Provided	<p><i>The Evolution and Extinction of Dinosaurs</i> Fastovsky and Weishampel 2005 Cambridge</p>
Suggested Texts, Readings, & Materials	<p>Compiled in the folder for each week</p>

ASSIGNMENTS & ACADEMIC CALENDAR

[Topics, Reading Assignments, Due Dates, Etc.]

You may need to look up some terminology in the notes. There are several good Web sources for this task. You might also want to augment the notes with online sites and post the URLs on the discussion board. Remember to stick with reputable sites such as those produced by museums, universities, and the like.

Week	Topic	Book Assignments	Other Assignments Abstract and Quiz due at 1700 (CST) each Friday
One	Mesozoic Era, Geologic time	1-5	Abstract Quiz
Two	The fossil record Taphonomy		Abstract Quiz
Three	Patterns of evolution, form and function		Abstract Quiz
Four	Vertebrate Origins		Abstract Quiz

Five	Ornithischia	6-10	Abstract Quiz
Six	Sauropods	11	Abstract Quiz
Seven	Theropods	12	Abstract Quiz
Eight	Midterm paper due on Friday at 1700		Group projects are due Friday at 1700
Nine	Froude numbers and locomotion	13, 14	Abstract Quiz
Ten	Dinosaurian biology	15	Abstract Quiz
Eleven	Marine reptiles		Abstract Quiz
Twelve	Pterosaurs		Lesson 1
Thirteen	Extinction and other calamities		Lesson 2
Fourteen	Big Bend research		Lesson 3
Fifteen	Self-assessment discussions		Self-assessment due Wednesday at 1700

ABSTRACTS

Concept

Each abstract will focus on current research dealing with a topic of your choice in the folder for that week. The use of primary sources is best. (As a UTD student you can access numerous online journals.) The abstract will read as if it is the actual abstract to a research paper about the subject you have chosen. You simply do not have to write the actual research paper. You will find writing the abstract to be difficult enough.

Format

Abstracts are formal scientific writing and must be seriously concise. Each word should be weighed for effectiveness. The length is 500 words (± 5 words) as determined by "Word Count" in MS Word or other word processor. Highlight the body of your abstract. That is the important number. The count includes just the body of the text. Your title and references are not counted. Missing the word count will produce penalties. For assistance in writing effective abstracts please see: <http://research.berkeley.edu/ucday/abstract.html>

QUIZZES

Concept

Each quiz is based on the material in the folder for that week. The weekly quiz may be taken any time during the week from Monday at 0800 through Friday at 1700 (Central Standard Time). You may want to post your tentative answer to the discussion board so that others may comment.

Format

The expected length is usually in the range of 200-300 words. Be concise. List a reference or two.

MIDTERM PROJECT

Concept

Students will collaborate within their assigned groups and will produce a quality research project. An important consideration is that dinosaurs are endlessly fascinating to many, many students. Cleverly utilizing this enhanced level of interest will permit the designers of midterm projects to explore concepts of biology, chemistry, physics, and even engineering. Craft projects to make them work in your classrooms and in your disciplines.

Each project:

- will produce a mini-module that will require two or three class periods to complete.
- will be of innovative design and must be an original product that your group created. Do NOT recycle something you have done or seen.
- will observe proper 5E format.
- will be one that you would love to use in your own classroom.
- will be of verified **group** effort (I will pop in and out of your groups checking on progress and collaboration).
- will be uploaded to Midterm Project by the due date and time. Please upload ONE PDF document for each group.

Each student will:

- peer-review the work of all of the other groups based on the rubric below.
- make remarks that are both critical and helpful.
- send these as an email attachment to your professor before the end of the week following the midterm project due date.

Topics

Numerous areas of focus are possible in disciplines such as the origin of vertebrates, evolution of dinosaurs, biology of the really huge, mechanics of flight with a focus on pterosaurs, etc. We will discuss potential subjects whenever anyone desires. Simply post a message.

Assessment rubric

Please use the Excel form provided in the Midterm Projects folder.

LESSONS

Concept

Students will apply their skills to produce hands on lessons focused on the subject of the week. Each lesson should require one class period to complete.

Format

As long as it is hands on, this is your call.

SELF-ASSESSMENT

Concept

Your final exam is a thorough, thoughtful self-assessment. Ask yourself what you have learned and what you do not understand. Provide clear evidence for all statements. You will produce an insightful window onto your progress. During this process you will learn more about yourself. A tip to consider: begin today with short self-evaluations based on a rubric of your creation.

Format

Your self-assessment should include samples of a variety of the following:

- Discussions (class and/or group)
- Reflections
- Weekly self-evaluations
- Checklists and/or inventories
- Synopses of interviews with your professor
- Highlights of your group project including surveys, photos, etc.
- Other examples of learning and creativity

You will submit your assessment document on WebCT.

COURSE POLICIES

Grading (credit)

Abstracts: 100 points

Quizzes: 100 points

Group research project: 80 points

Self-assessment: 110 points (comprehensive)

Lessons: 60 points

Discussion posts: 50 points (for a minimum of 50 substantive posts over the course of the semester)

Make-up Assignments

None without prior approval of instructor

Extra Credit

None

Late Work

Accepted only with written excuse

Special Assignments

None

Classroom Citizenship

Respect should be shown at all times.

Student Conduct and Discipline

The University of Texas System and The University of Texas at Dallas have rules and regulations for the orderly and efficient conduct of their business. It is the responsibility of each student and each student organization to be knowledgeable about the rules and regulations that govern student conduct and activities. General information on student conduct and discipline is contained in the UTD publication, A to Z. Guide, which is provided to all registered students each academic year.

The University of Texas at Dallas administers student discipline within the procedures of

recognized and established due process. Procedures are defined and described in the Rules and Regulations, Board of Regents, The University of Texas System, Part 1, Chapter VI, Section 3, and in Title V, Rules on Student Services and Activities of the university's Handbook of Operating Procedures. Copies of these rules and regulations are available to students in the Office of the Dean of Students, where staff members are available to assist students in interpreting the rules and regulations (SU 1.602, 972/883-6391).

A student at the university neither loses the rights nor escapes the responsibilities of citizenship. He or she is expected to obey federal, state, and local laws as well as the Regents' Rules, university regulations, and administrative rules. Students are subject to discipline for violating the standards of conduct whether such conduct takes place on or off campus, or whether civil or criminal penalties are also imposed for such conduct.

Academic Integrity

The faculty expects from its students a high level of responsibility and academic honesty. Because the value of an academic degree depends upon the absolute integrity of the work done by the student for that degree, it is imperative that a student demonstrates a high standard of individual honor in his or her scholastic work.

Scholastic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, statements, acts, or omissions related to applications for enrollment or the award of a degree, and/or the submission as one's own work or material that is not one's own. As a general rule, scholastic dishonesty involves one of the following acts: cheating, plagiarism, collusion, and/or falsifying academic records. Students suspected of academic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary proceedings.

Plagiarism, especially from the Web, from portions of papers for other classes, and from any other source is unacceptable and will be dealt with under the university's policy on plagiarism (see general catalog for details). This course will use the resources of turnitin.com, which searches the web for possible plagiarism and is over 90% effective.

Email Use

The University of Texas at Dallas recognizes the value and efficiency of communication between faculty/staff and students through electronic mail. At the same time, email raises some issues concerning security and the identity of each individual in an email exchange. The university encourages all official student email correspondence be sent only to a student's U.T. Dallas email address, and that faculty and staff consider email from students official only if it originates from a UTD student account. This allows the university to maintain a high degree of confidence in the identity of all individuals corresponding and the security of the transmitted information. UTD furnishes each student with a free email account that is to be used in all communication with university personnel. The Department of Information Resources at U.T. Dallas provides a method for students to have their U.T. Dallas mail forwarded to other accounts.

Withdrawal from Class

The administration of this institution has set deadlines for withdrawal of any college-level courses. These dates and times are published in that semester's course catalog. Administration procedures must be followed. It is the student's responsibility to handle withdrawal requirements from any class. In other words, I cannot drop or withdraw any student. You must do the proper paperwork to ensure that you will not receive a final grade of F in a course if you choose not to attend the class once you are enrolled.

Student Grievance Procedures

Procedures for student grievances are found in Title V, Rules on Student Services and Activities, of the university's Handbook of Operating Procedures.

In attempting to resolve any student grievance regarding grades, evaluations, or other fulfillments

of academic responsibility, it is the obligation of the student first to make a serious effort to resolve the matter with the instructor, supervisor, administrator, or committee with whom the grievance originates (hereafter called "the respondent"). Individual faculty members retain primary responsibility for assigning grades and evaluations. If the matter cannot be resolved at that level, the grievance must be submitted in writing to the respondent with a copy to the respondent's School Dean. If the matter is not resolved by the written response provided by the respondent, the student may submit a written appeal to the School Dean. If the grievance is not resolved by the School Dean's decision, the student may make a written appeal to the Dean of Graduate or Undergraduate Education, and the dean will appoint and convene an Academic Appeals Panel. The decision of the Academic Appeals Panel is final. The results of the academic-appeals process will be distributed to all involved parties.

Copies of these rules and regulations are available to students in the Office of the Dean of Students, where staff members are available to assist students in interpreting the rules and regulations.

Incomplete Grades

As per university policy, incomplete grades will be granted only for work unavoidably missed at the semester's end and only if 70% of the course work has been completed. An incomplete grade must be resolved within eight (8) weeks from the first day of the subsequent long semester. If the required work to complete the course and to remove the incomplete grade is not submitted by the specified deadline, the incomplete grade is changed automatically to a grade of F.

Disability Services

The goal of Disability Services is to provide students with disabilities educational opportunities equal to those of their non-disabled peers. Disability Services is located in room 1.610 in the Student Union. Office hours are Monday and Thursday, 8:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m.; Tuesday and Wednesday, 8:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m.; and Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

The contact information for the Office of Disability Services is:

The University of Texas at Dallas, SU 22

PO Box 830688

Richardson, Texas 75083-0688

(972) 883-2098 (voice or TTY)

Essentially, the law requires that colleges and universities make those reasonable adjustments necessary to eliminate discrimination on the basis of disability. For example, it may be necessary to remove classroom prohibitions against tape recorders or animals (in the case of dog guides) for students who are blind. Occasionally an assignment requirement may be substituted (for example, a research paper versus an oral presentation for a student who is hearing impaired). Classes enrolling students with mobility impairments may have to be rescheduled in accessible facilities. The college or university may need to provide special services such as registration, note-taking, or mobility assistance.

It is the student's responsibility to notify his or her professors of the need for such an accommodation. Disability Services provides students with letters to present to faculty members to verify that the student has a disability and needs accommodations. Individuals requiring special accommodation should contact the professor after class or during office hours.

Religious Holy Days

The University of Texas at Dallas will excuse a student from class or other required activities for the travel to and observance of a religious holy day for a religion whose places of worship are exempt from property tax under Section 11.20, Tax Code, Texas Code Annotated.

The student is encouraged to notify the instructor or activity sponsor as soon as possible regarding the absence, preferably in advance of the assignment. The student, so excused, will be allowed to take the exam or complete the assignment within a reasonable time after the absence: a period equal to the length of the absence, up to a maximum of one week. A student who notifies the instructor and completes any missed exam or assignment may not be penalized for the absence. A student who fails to complete the exam or assignment within the prescribed period may receive a failing grade for that exam or assignment. If a student or an instructor disagrees about the nature of the absence [i.e., for the purpose of observing a religious holy day] or if there is similar disagreement about whether the student has been given a reasonable time to complete any missed assignments or examinations, either the student or the instructor may request a ruling from the chief executive officer of the institution, or his or her designee. The chief executive officer or designee must take into account the legislative intent of TEC 51.911(b), and the student and instructor will abide by the decision of the chief executive officer or designee.

Off-campus instruction and course activities that are off-campus, out-of-state, or foreign are all subject to state law and University policies and procedures regarding travel and risk-related activities. Information regarding these rules and regulations may be found at http://www.utdallas.edu/BusinessAffairs/Travel_Risk_Activities.htm. Additional information is available from the office of the school dean.

These descriptions and timelines are subject to change at the discretion of the professor.

Discussion Board

The Discussion Board is used for student-student and student-instructor discussion and is available via the 'Discussion Board' button in the primary navigation area on the left-hand side of the Blackboard window.

UTTC Technical Requirements

Technical requirements for taking an online class via the UT TeleCampus are available at <http://www.telecampus.utsystem.edu/index.cfm/4,0,83.html>. Review the 'Computer Requirements' and 'Browser Configuration' areas before logging in to your course.

UTTC Technical Support

All technical issues should be reported to Embanet, the TeleCampus's 24 x 7 professional helpdesk. Information on how to contact Embanet is available at <http://www.telecampus.utsystem.edu/index.cfm/4,0,83,87.html>.

Technical Support FAQs are also available at <http://www.telecampus.utsystem.edu/index.cfm/4,0,83,88.html>.

Digital Library

The UT TeleCampus Digital Library supports the research and library needs of UTTC students and faculty by providing and coordinating a variety of library resources and services, including remote access to electronic resources, borrowing privileges at numerous academic and public libraries, reference and technical assistance.

Information on using the Digital Library is available at <http://www.telecampus.utsystem.edu/index.cfm/4,0,64.html>.