

OXFORD COLLEGE

Geology 142 - Evolution of the Earth

Spring, 2008

Goals for the course: Geology 142 (Evolution of the Earth) has been designed for either the geology/environmental studies major or for a student who wants to complete an interesting laboratory science course sequence as part of their liberal arts education. This course continues the concepts learned in physical geology. Thus, Geology 141 is a prerequisite.

Some key elements in the study of geology include the scientific method and observational skills. The course will introduce these early in the semester and continue to reinforce them throughout the rest of the term. At the end of the course, students will understand how the scientific method applies to geology. Their observational skills will be considerably improved through the analysis of rock and fossil specimens.

The focus of the course is on the history of the earth in context of changing environments. As such, the methods for analysis of Earth history are highly stressed. The students will critically examine the evidence for the interpretation of Earth history throughout the semester. At the end of the course, students will be able to understand the nature of evidence and the basis of scientific interpretations. This will be done through an integration of lecture, laboratory, and field trips.

Much of this evidence is in the form of changes in tectonic plate distribution, changing environments as represented by the rock record, and biological change as seen through fossils. The students will gain a considerable knowledge of biology, ecology, and paleoecology. We will spend time studying modern environments of deposition so that we may interpret past environments as seen in the rocks. The geologic history of North America will be the primary focus. It is my hope that at the end of the course, students will have developed a deep appreciation for the planet that we live on through an understanding of its geologic nature and history.

Course Announcements

Instructor: Dr. Stephen W. Henderson

Office: 106 Pierce Hall

Office Phone: (770) 784-8345

Office Hours: Monday and Wednesday (9:30–12:00), other times by appointment or stopping by. I'm usually in my office and available.

Text: Levin, 2006, The Earth Through Time, 8th ed.

Lab Manual: Gastaldo, Savrda, and Lewis, 2006, Deciphering Earth History, 4nd ed.

Organization: The class will meet for lecture two times each week: Tuesday and Thursday at 10:00 a.m. The laboratory section is from 2:30-5:30 p.m. on Tuesday.

Attendance: All students are expected to attend all scheduled lecture and laboratory sessions. Attendance will be taken. No unexcused cuts are allowed in lab. Lab quizzes cannot be made-up without a valid excuse. Students who have an unexcused absence in lab will have their final grade reduced 3 points per absence. A student who has three or fewer lecture absences for the entire semester will receive the addition of two points to the final course average. There are no excused absences. Students having five or more lecture absences will have their final course grade reduced one point per absence starting with the fifth absence. Being late to class is rude and distracting. Therefore, three tardies will be considered equal to one absence. If you come in more than 15 minutes tardy, you will be counted absent. If you come in late, it is your responsibility to see me immediately after class to ensure that you are marked tardy and not absent. No adjustments will be made at a later time. When you are in class, you must be attentive and not disturb others. Leaving a class early, counts as an absence as does sleeping through a class or being generally inattentive. Cell phones are to be turned off and can't be used during lecture or laboratory tests (including use as calculators). Bring a calculator to lab.

Honor Code: The Honor Code of Oxford College applies to Geology 142. All quizzes, tests, and exams will be done individually with no non-sanctioned additional materials or help. The laboratory exercises can be done with other students and with the instructor's help. If you are unsure whether or not an action may result in an honor code violation, ask the instructor first. The Honor Code at Oxford College is quite serious.

Grading System: Geology 142 will use the plus-minus grading system. The distribution of grades is as follows:

A	93-100	C+	77-79
A-	90-92	C	73-76
B+	87-89	C-	70-72
B	83-86	D+	67-69
B-	80-82	D	60-66
		F	59 and below

Evaluation: Lecture work will comprise 50% of your final average. Lab will comprise the remaining 45%. Class participation 5%.

Highest half-test 15%
(lowest half-test grade is dropped)
Lecture half-test #1 on 1/31

Lecture half-test #2 on 3/27

Lecture Test on 2/28	15%
Final Exam on 5/6 @ 9:00am	20%
Lab Reports	15%
Lab Exam #1 on 3/4 in Lab	10%
Lab Exam #2 on 4/29 in Lab	10%
Sapelo Field Trip Report or Paper	10%
Class Participation	5%

Tentative Lecture Schedule and Reading Assignments:

<u>Day</u>	<u>Topic for the Week</u>	<u>Text Assignment for the Week</u>
Th 1/17	Introduction, Early Geologists & Geologic Time	Chapters 1, 2, & 3
Tu 1/22		
Th 1/24		
Tu 1/29	Sedimentary Rocks	Chapter 5
Th 1/31	Lecture Half-Test #1	
Tu 2/5	Environments of Deposition	Chapter 5
Th 2/7		
Tu 2/12	The Fossil Record	Chapter 6
Th 2/14		
Tu 2/19		
Th 2/21	The Archean & Proterozoic Eons	Chapters 8 & 9
Tu 2/26		
Th 2/28	Lecture Test	
Tu 3/4	Early Paleozoic Events	Chapter 10
Th 3/6		

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Tu 3/18	Late Paleozoic Events	Chapter 11
Th 3/20		
Tu 3/25	Paleozoic Life	Chapter 12
Th 3/27	Lecture Half-Test #2	

Tu 4/1		
Th 4/3	Mesozoic Events	Chapter 13

SAPELO ISLAND FIELD TRIP APRIL 4-6

Tu 4/8	
Th 4/10	No Class

Tu 4/15	Mesozoic Life	Chapter 14
Th 4/17		

Tu 4/22	Cenozoic Events & Life	Chapters 15 & 16
Th 4/24		

Tu 4/29

Laboratory Schedule for Geology 142:

Lab Day	Title of Exercise
1/22	#3 Relative Time
1/29	#1 Description & Classification of Sedimentary Rocks
2/5	#2 Interpretation of Sedimentary Rocks
2/12	#8 Fossil Preservation & Taphonomy
2/19	#10 Early Paleozoic Life: The Cambrian Fauna
2/26	Field Trip
3/4	Lab Test #1
3/18	#11 Late Paleozoic Life
3/25	#12 Mesozoic & Cenozoic Life
4/1	#12 Mesozoic & Cenozoic Life

4/8	No Lab
4/15	Paleoecology Slab Lab
4/22	#15 Geologic Maps & Earth History
4/29	Lab Test #2