

GEOL 323 – Search for Our Past Fall 2013

Instructor: Dr. Christina Belanger

e-mail: Christina.Belanger@sdsmt.edu

Office Hours: Monday 10-11 and Tuesday 11-12 in PRL 111, or by appointment

Lectures: MWF 9:00-9:50 am in MEP 251A

Course website on D2L

Course Description

The Earth is a dynamic and changing system and was vastly different in the past. In this course, we will learn the tools needed to investigate the Earth's past and trace the history of the Earth, life, and environments through the Earth's ~4.6 billion year history. We will explore the interactions between the history of the Earth's environment, the evolution of life, and the geologically recent development of human societies.

Specific Outcomes

- Students will know the geological timescale, the placement of major events in Earth history, and key terminology for communicating about Earth history.
- Students will be able to interpret the stratigraphic record and evaluate the history of environmental changes from geological records.
- Students will describe the links between (a) the plate tectonic system, (b) the climate system, and (c) the biosphere through their shared histories.
- Students will critically evaluate hypotheses about the Earth's past and predictions for the Earth's future.

Textbook (Highly Recommended)

The Earth Through Time, Levin, 10th ed. (*Previous Editions acceptable*)

Assignments

- There will be weekly assignments meant to help you understand and relate to the material from lectures and the text.

Exams

- There will be two in-class mid-term exams. These will not be cumulative.
- The final exam will be cumulative and include a short final report.
- **There are no make-up exams without prior arrangement.**

Class Participation

- Regular attendance is required to receive participation credit.
- To receive a full participation grade, students should:
 - Ask and answer questions in class
 - Contribute to in-class discussions and activities
 - Actively listen to the instructor and other students
 - Be courteous when others are speaking (no texting, cell phones, social media, headphones, talking over others)

Desire2Learn (D2L)

- Please check D2L before each class. Discussion reading, class activities, notes, and assignments will be posted on D2L. You are responsible for bringing the material to class – print outs will not be provided.

Class Policies

- All assignments are due in class on their due date. Late work will receive a 10% deduction for each day it is late. Late work will not be accepted more than a week after its due date. Special circumstances may apply; please see me if you have a specific concern.
- All work you turn in should be your own and written in your own words. This includes assignments you work on with a partner.

Grading

- Your total grade will be based upon the following point system:
 - Midterm I: 100 pts (October 2)
 - Midterm II: 100 pts (November 15)
 - Final: 150 pts (80 pts exam, 70 pts report)
 - December 12 (11:00-12:50 pm)
 - Weekly Assignments: 13 x 10 pts each = 130 pts
 - Participation/Attendance: 20 pts
- Your letter grade will be determined the percentage of points you earn:
 - A: 90-100%
 - B: 80-89%
 - C: 70-79%
 - D: 60-69%
 - F: <60%

Freedom in Learning Statement

Students are responsible for learning the content of any course of study in which they are enrolled. Under Board of Regents and University policy, student academic performance shall be evaluated solely on an academic basis and students should be free to take reasoned exception to the data or views offered in any course of study. Students who believe that an academic evaluation is unrelated to academic standards but is related instead to judgment of their personal opinion or conduct should contact the dean of the college which offers the class to initiate a review of the evaluation.

ADA Statement

Students with special needs or requiring special accommodations should contact the instructor, Dr. Christina Belanger, and/or the campus ADA coordinator, Ms. Jolie McCoy, at 394-1924 at the earliest opportunity.