GLY 225: Prehistoric Life

Spring 2015

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Class Meeting: TR 10:50-12:05 pm, FH 526

Office Hours: by appointment

CATALOG DESCRIPTION: GLY 225 Prehistoric Life (3,0,3) Description: The study of prehistoric life as documented in the fossil record. The course will cover the evolution of life over geologic time from simple forms in Precambrian through trilobites, dinosaurs, woolly mammoths, and man. Emphasis is placed on the fossil record and prehistoric life of the tri-state region. GENERAL EDUCATION: Science Inquiry - Lecture.

Textbook:

There is not a required “textbook” in this class – I will be presenting all technical material needed - but there are two small REQUIRED books. Written in Stone by Brian Switek, ISBN:9781934137291 from which I will assign readings for discussion in class that go along with the material we are learning. Cincinnati Fossils by R.A. Davis ISBN:9781882151004 which will help us to identify and understand local fossils.

Course Requirements & Grading Policy

GRADES:

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<th>ITEM</th>
<th>% OF TOTAL GRADE</th>
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<td>EXAMS</td>
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<td>HOMEWORK and DISCUSSIONS</td>
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Unit Exams: Each unit will have a unit exam. Because the information in the class is cumulative in the sense that information from one unit is used in another unit, key points from previous units will be included on subsequent unit exams. Exams will be multiple choice, fill-in-the-blank, short answer, and short essay format. Material for exam questions will be taken from Powerpoints, videos and additional information I give during lecture, assigned readings, and any homework or in-class activities.

Mid-term grades will be posted in myNKU by the deadline established in the Academic Calendar (http://registrar.nku.edu/academiccalendar.html).

Review Questions: There will be one set of open-book, open-note online (through Blackboard) review questions for each unit of material (1 per exam). These will help you to study for the exam, give you an additional grade, and many exam questions will be similar to them. They MUST be completed by the time you come to class to take that exam – no makeups will be allowed.
Field Trip: There will be a required field trip for this class to a local (very close, possibly a 10-minute drive) fossil site that will occur DURING class time. Date will be announced later, since it is weather-dependent.

Website: The Blackboard website will be used extensively in this class to post grades, reading assignments and other announcements. YOU will be responsible for checking the website regularly – if you miss class, please check Blackboard for any homework assignments so you do not get behind. To access Blackboard, log on to http://learnonline.nku.edu/. Your classes should be listed. If you are not sure of your username and password, go to www.nku.edu/password and enter the last eight digits of your ISO number on your All-Card and the last four digits of your SSN. Blackboard passwords are now the same as passwords used to access the network and the library.

Email & Instant Messaging: If you need to contact me, the fastest way to get answers to questions is to ASK me in person before or after class! Please do not rely on email unless you need information outside of class time. Although I am often online and available to answer questions, you should not depend on this for last minute questions the night before an assignment is due. I do not have set “online office hours” and if I am not there, you are still responsible for completing the assignment on time. Talking to me before or after class is ALWAYS the best way to contact me!

How to Succeed in this Class:

1. Take adequate notes in class – do not watch movies on your laptop or text on your phone, either in lecture in lab. Not only is it extremely rude and distracting to myself and to others, but students who do these things do not tend to pass this class. YOU signed up for this class, so YOU need to do the work to do well in it.

2. Do the homework assignments and, please, do them on your own, particularly the online quizzes. They are meant as a study tool. Some test questions WILL be similar to or identical to them.

3. Read the text and learning material as we go along. DO NOT WAIT UNTIL THE LAST MINUTE. 20 minutes of study every day is a LOT better than cramming for 2 hours the day of the exam!

4. Read and understand as well as you can the Chapters before the lecture on the topic. I will be going over the important topics in lecture, showing videos and drawing pictures, and answering questions, but like all college courses, you must make an effort to learn the material on your own time before we get to class.

Student Evaluation of Instructor and Course

Northern Kentucky University takes Instructor and Course Evaluations very seriously as an important means of gathering information for the enhancement of learning opportunities for its students. It is an important responsibility of NKU students as citizens of the University to participate in the instructor and course evaluation process. During the two weeks* prior to the end of each semester classes, you will be asked to reflect upon what you have learned in this course, the extent to which you have invested the necessary effort to maximize your learning, and the role your instructor has played in the learning process. It is very important that you complete the online evaluations with thoughtfully written comments.

Student evaluations of courses and instructors are regarded as strictly confidential. They are not available to the instructor until after final grades are submitted, and extensive precautions are taken to prevent your comments from being identified as coming from you. Students who complete an evaluation for a particular course (or opt out of doing so in the evaluation) will be
rewarded for their participation by having access to their course grade as soon as that grade is submitted by the instructor. On the other hand, any student who does not complete the course evaluation (or opt out of doing so in the evaluation) should expect to incur a two week delay in access to his or her course grade beyond the university's official date for grade availability. To complete online evaluations go to http://eval.nku.edu. Click on "student login" and use the same USERNAME and PASSWORD as used on campus.

In addition, you should be aware of:

- Evaluations can affect changes in courses. Evaluations without comments are less valuable and less credible than those filled out thoughtfully. Comments that are expressed well are more effective than those that are not.
- Positive feedback is just as important as criticism. Moreover, negative evaluations without any explanation and specifics are not especially useful.
- Once grades are submitted, all evaluations are read not only by the instructor, but also by the instructor's department chairperson.
- Evaluations not only provide feedback to your instructor, but also provide information to the department chair for use in performance evaluations. This information affects reappointments, promotions, salaries, and teaching assignments.

Course Policies:

Submission of Assignments:

Assignments may be given in class as group activities, or as take home assignments. Take home assignments must be completed on the date they are due. Often these assignments, especially assigned readings, will be used for discussion in the class the following day. Without completing these assignments you will not be able to participate fully in the discussion.

~~No late assignments will be accepted after the associated exam has taken place.~~

Attendance Policy:

Attendance will be taken periodically, but will not count directly toward your grade in the class. However, students that attend each class tend to do much better on exams than those who do not, and since we will be participating in several discussions and group activities together (which obviously cannot be made up), it is in your best interest to BE HERE.

Classroom Behavior Policies:

Laptops may be allowed ONLY if they are being used to take notes. If I suspect that you are watching movies or doing something not class-related on your laptop, I WILL take it without warning and you may not be allowed to use it for the rest of the semester. Cell phones also must remain off and away during class – if you desperately need to text someone, please leave the room. It is extremely distracting to myself and to your classmates.
Student Honor Code

This Student Honor Code [the "Honor Code"] is a commitment by students of Northern Kentucky University, through their matriculation or continued enrollment at the University, to adhere to the highest degree of ethical integrity in academic conduct. It is a commitment individually and collectively that the students of Northern Kentucky University will not lie, cheat, or plagiarize to gain an academic advantage over fellow students or avoid academic requirements.

The purpose of the Honor Code is to establish standards of academic conduct for students at Northern Kentucky University and to provide a procedure that offers basic assurances of fundamental fairness to any person accused of violations of these rules. Each Northern Kentucky University student is bound by the provisions of the Honor Code and is presumed to be familiar with all of its provisions. Students also should aspire to conduct themselves in a manner that is consistent with the highest degree of ethical integrity in all matters, whether covered in the Honor Code or not. The success of this commitment begins in the diligence with which students uphold the letter and the spirit of the Honor Code. Students may view the complete honor code at http://deanofstudents.nku.edu/policies/student-rights.html#policies.

Accommodations Due to Disability:

The University is committed to making reasonable efforts to assist individuals with disabilities in their efforts to avail themselves of services and programs offered by the University. To this end, Northern Kentucky University will provide reasonable accommodations for persons with documented qualifying disabilities. If you have a disability and feel you need accommodations in this course, you must present a letter to me from the Disability Programs and Services Office (SU 303), indicating the existence of a disability and the suggested accommodations. More information can be found at http://disability.nku.edu.

Credit Hour Policy Statement

In accordance with federal policy, NKU defines a credit hour as the amount of work represented in the achievement of student learning outcomes (verified by evidence of student achievement) that reasonably approximates one hour (50 minutes) of classroom instruction and a minimum of two hours of out-of-class student work. For every course credit hour, a typical student should expect to spend at least three hours per week of concentrated attention on course-related work including, but not limited to, class meeting time, reading, reviewing, organizing notes, studying and completing assignments. At least an equivalent amount of time is expected for other academic activities such as online courses, laboratory work, internships, practica, studio work and other academic work leading to the award of credit hours.

Estimates of the time required for a typical student to complete course expectations are as follows: 135 hours (3 credit hours x 3 hours per week x 15 weeks).