CSPS118G: Earth, Life, and Time Colloquium
SEMESTER II: The Evolution of Life and the Natural History of Humanity
Spring 2009
CCC1100 Tue, 3:30-4:50 pm
ELT Website: http://www.geol.umd.edu/~jmerck/eltsite/
Course Website: http://www.geol.umd.edu/~jmerck/eltsite/syl118GS09.html
ELMS Blackboard Website: http://elms.umd.edu/   Course ID: 200901_CPSP118G_THOLTZ

INSTRUCTORS:
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NOTE: It is your responsibility as a student to completely read through and understand this syllabus. If you have questions about it, please contact Dr. Holtz or Dr. Merck. You will be held responsible for following all requirements of this syllabus.

COURSE ORGANIZATION: One meeting per week, four weekend field trips (one required).

REQUIRED READINGS: This semester there are two primary required books, and several additional short readings:
• Shubin, N. 2008. Your Inner Fish: A Journey Into the 3.5 Billion-Year History of the Human Body (Pantheon)
Reading assignments must be done by the classtime listed.

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COURSE OBJECTIVES AND PHILOSOPHY: Semester 2 focuses on the patterns and processes in the evolution of Life, and its application in understanding human biology and behavior. We will see how scientists approach this view of life from an evolutionary perspective, especially as it relates to the primary question of the Earth, Life & Time program:
• How is the scientific understanding of the physical world and its living components (including our own species, our behavior, and our society) more completely comprehended when we take into account time (whether the “deep time” of evolution and geology, or the smaller scale of human history)?

CLASSROOM POLICIES: You should bring the following to every single colloquium meeting:
• A writing implement
• A notebook (containing this syllabus)
• The text for that part of the course
• A willingness to participate constructively, both in small groups and in the class as a whole
• A readiness and ability to discuss the readings for that week
This semester we will have a number of small-group in-class projects. We expect everyone to help move tables and chairs when necessary for a particular project, and to help restore the tables and chairs to the “neutral” position when we are done. Many hands make light work!

During classtime:

- **PLEASE** be courteous to your fellow students and your faculty, and do not engage in side conversations. Even what you might think are hushed whispers in the back row can be heard all the way up front, and are disruptive to the attention of your classmates who are interested in getting a good grade in the class.
- All electronic modes of communication (mobile phones, pagers, etc.) must be turned “off” or be in silent mode.
- Laptops may be used **ONLY** for taking notes and/or following along with webnotes for the class. If you are found to be using your laptop for other purposes you will be asked to shut it down. If you fail to do this, you will be considered “absent” for that day.
- No personal electronic listening devices (e.g., CD players, MP3 players, personal radios, etc.) will be allowed.
- No reading of material not germane to the class activity will be allowed.

Finally, please do not leave any debris behind: pick up all food/beverage containers, papers, newspapers, etc. near your seat and on your desk when you leave.

**ATTENDANCE:** Given the nature of the course and program, participation in colloquium meetings is **MANDATORY.** It is up to you to make certain that your presence has been recorded for every class.

- **Recording Your Presence:** On days with quizzes and/or group projects, your presence will be taken from these items. On other days, there will be a sign-up sheet. It is *your* responsibility to make certain that you have signed the quiz, project report, or sign up sheet.
  - Students observed leaving the colloquium before 4:50 or before it is formally dismissed will be counted absent.
  - **NOTE:** We expect students to adhere to proper academic decorum during colloquia. This means focusing your attention on presentations, refraining from conversations or activities that are not relevant (e.g., reading newspapers, doing homework for other classes, etc.), and showing proper respect for student, faculty, and guest presenters. *We reserve the right to count you absent from colloquium if you fail to uphold this standard!*

- **Excused Absences:** If you have a legitimate reason for being absent, such as a family emergency, unavoidable academic conflict, or other excuse according the University’s guidelines, we will usually excuse your absence. However you must notify us in a timely fashion. Requests for the excusing of an absence will **not be considered** after two workdays from the absence. Please use the Excused Absence Report form from http://www.geol.umd.edu/~jmerck/eltsite/rtfs/absence.pdf. **NOTE:** the next colloquium meeting is **too late** for requests for excuses.
  - Even if you miss a class from an excused absence, you are still held responsible for material during that class, included graded assignments such as quizzes and small group projects. See the faculty about arrangements for a make up. If the small group project is such that it cannot be done alone, it will not be factored into your grade if you have an excused absence that you informed the faculty about within two workdays from the absence.
  - **Religious Observances:** The University System of Maryland policy provides that students should not be penalized because of observances of their religious beliefs, students shall be given an opportunity, whenever feasible, to make up within a reasonable time any academic assignment that is missed due to individual participation in religious observances. It is the responsibility of the student to inform the instructor of any intended absences for religious observances in advance. Notice should be provided as soon as possible but **no later than the end of the schedule adjustment period (February 6).**

- **Unexcused Absences:** All other absences are considered unexcused absence. You may have one unexcused absence that does not directly affect your grade (except for missed quizzes or small group projects: see below). Each subsequent unexcused absence lowers your final course grade by 10 points.
If you miss a quiz or small group project because of an unexcused absence, you will not be allowed to make it up.

**POLICY ON GRADES:** There are five components, each of which contributes to your grade: Field Trip Report (25%); Quizzes (25%); Small In-Class Projects (20%); Family History Take-Home Project (15%); Academic Showcase/Undergraduate Research Day Report (15%). There will also be opportunity for Extra Credit. Here are the details:

1) **Field Trip Report:** (25%) This semester there will be four (4) field trips. It is mandatory that every student participates in one (1) of these trips. While most trips have only minimal expenses, the Scholars in New York trip will require you to pay for all costs except transportation and museum entry. These trips are:
   - 3/1 (Sunday): *Fossils and Paleoenvironments of West Virginia*
   - 4/17-19 (Friday-Sunday): *The American Museum of Natural History*, New York City, as part of the “Scholars in New York” trip
   - 5/9 (Saturday): *National Zoo*

   If you do not go on any field trip, this part of your grade will be a 0. However, you may go on all field trips if you like (we don’t suffer from the same space restrictions as Semester I).

   In order to get credit for attending a field trip, you must complete a short **WEB-BASED** report concerning aspects of the natural sciences you learned about on this event. You will be handed out the questions on the day of the trip. The assignments will be due on the second colloquium meeting after the trip (except for the final trip, for which the report will be due the last day of class). Although you may consult in small groups on the trip itself, each student is responsible for their own individual report. Please be aware that the University regulations on plagiarism (http://www.lib.umd.edu/UES/plag_stud_what.html) apply to web-based assignments just as much as to hardcopy assignments.

2) **Quizzes:** (25%) To verify that you are, in fact, mastering the material of the course, six (6) scheduled quizzes will be administered during the semester. We will automatically drop the lowest of the six grades. **NOTE:** Quiz materials will cover both the classes and the readings.

3) **Small Projects:** (20%) Throughout the semester there will be a series of small assignments; some in-class, some take home. Those in-class will be conducted in small groups (to be created on those dates), with your results handed in at the end of that classtime. Everyone in each small group receives the same grade for that day’s work.

4) **Family History Take-Home Project:** (15%) Before Spring Break, you will be provided with a take home project to trace the geographic distribution of your ancestors over the past two millennia. This packet will be due BY CLASSTIME on April 14, and will be necessary for you to complete your small group project that day. You can find information that will help you on this project at http://www.geol.umd.edu/~jmerck/eltsite/reading/pershist/nations.html.

5) **Academic Showcase/Undergraduate Research Day Report:** (15%) Later this semester your sophomore colleagues will be presenting the results of their individual research, service-learning, or internship work during the Scholars Academic Showcase (May 1); others will also be presenting at the campus-wide Undergraduate Research Day (April 26). You are required to attend the Showcase &/or the Research Day, and interview at least three (3) of the presenters, at least two (2) of whom must be ELT students. Your report on these short interviews will be part of the grade for this semester, but will also give you an idea of some of the experiential learning opportunities afforded by Scholars. **NOTE WELL:** Next Spring **YOU** will be presenting at the Academic Showcase or Undergraduate Research Day, so observe carefully!! Don’t just talk to three sophomores and leave as soon as you can; instead, use this time to survey a large number of these projects so that you get an idea of the possibilities.)

EXTRA CREDIT) ELT offers several different means of earning extra credit this semester. You earn 5 points maximum extra credit per item, up to a total of two items (i.e., 10 points total). Below are the options and requirements for Academic and Service extra credit. You may do two items in one category, or one in each.

**Academic:** You may write an additional report on colloquium-related academic material, and mount this report as a separate page on your website. Topics could include:

- An online reaction paper to a second field trip, or alternatively do a second field trip assignment
- An online reaction paper to any full-length chapter in the Zimmer, Shubin, or Diamond books.
- An online reaction paper to any of the Supplementary Readings for the semester listed on the website http://www.geol.umd.edu/~jmerck/eltsite/readings.html
- An online reaction paper to a non-classroom academic presentation on or off campus, such as a departmental seminar.
- An online reaction paper to either of the nights of *Appalachia*
- An online reaction paper to the video series *The Voyage of Charles Darwin* available on Non-Print Media in one hour installments (one episode per week) from February 2 until March 22.
- An online reaction paper to some other academic event: check with the ELT faculty to make sure it qualifies.

Reaction papers are reports that would address both a summary of the material encountered as well as your thoughts and comments on this material and how it relates to related matter you may have encountered (in colloquium, other classes, etc.) Reaction papers require that you to show insight into the matters concerned, not a simple retelling of what was there nor your feelings about it.

Full extra credit will only be earned if all format issues are properly completed (sufficient length, proper html coding, no spelling or factual errors, etc.). Problems with these issues will result in a decrease in the extra credit grade received, as per the ELT website grading rubric (http://www.geol.umd.edu/~jmerck/eltsite/templates/rubric.html). **All Academic extra credit assignments must be online by the end of classes (i.e., before finals).**

**Service:** College Park Scholars seeks to promote civic responsibility among its students and faculty. To help fulfill Scholars’ commitment to community service, we offer extra credit to your grade total for students who participate in some form of community service this semester.

- You cannot be paid for this service activity, nor be receiving credit for it in any other classes, nor be doing this service for disciplinary purpose for some other entity on campus (i.e., no “double-dipping”)
- This service must be conducted between Move-In Day and the last day of exams this semester
- This activity must be approved by the Faculty Directors of ELT, or else you will not receive credit for it. Your best bet is to get it pre-approved, so you know in advance if it will count for extra credit!

- You must **turn in an Activity Report form** (see http://www.geol.umd.edu/~jmerck/eltsite/rtfs/activityreport.pdf) signed and dated by yourself and a site/activity supervisor in order to get credit

- This extra credit can be earned by any of a number of activities. The list below is by no means exhaustive, but gives you an example of some of the sorts of activities that would count:
  - Serve as the ELT freshman representative on the Scholars Student Advisory Board
  - Serve as a Scholars Ambassador, or in the Student Program Council, or in the Residence Halls Association
  - Go to a high school to promote ELT (and Scholars, and UMCP)
  - Participate in a Voting Drive
  - Donate blood
  - Volunteer at a clinic, shelter, or other similar institution
  - Volunteer at a non-profit organization
  - Serve as an officer in an SGA group
  - Volunteer at the ELT booth for a Scholars Open House (Mar. 6, Mar. 27, Apr. 3, Apr. 17)

**GRADE SCALE (Course):** ≥90, A; 80-89, B; 70-79, C; 60-69, D; <60, F. “+” and “-” grades are given to the top and bottom two-point range, respectively, within each grade.
GRADE SCALE (Small Projects): +, 100; √+, 90; √, 80; √-, 70; -, 60; 0, 0 points

COMMUNICATION: Because many of our communications will be by e-mail, all students are expected to maintain e-mail accounts and arrange for access to the Internet. Although not a course requirement per se, students should get into the habit of checking their e-mail daily. Failure to do so may cause you to miss crucial course information. See [http://www.oit.umd.edu/wheretogo/seeTable.cfm](http://www.oit.umd.edu/wheretogo/seeTable.cfm) for a list of available computer labs on campus.

The primary function for the ELMS Blackboard site will be to record your grades, although we will also use it as a secondary site for documents, handouts, etc. We will use the Comments function for graded items to convey information about projects this semester (such as Field Trip Webreports): please look at these for help in understanding your grade and correcting errors.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY: The University of Maryland has a nationally recognized Code of Academic Integrity, administered by the Student Honor Council. This Code sets standards for academic integrity at Maryland for all undergraduate and graduate students. As a student you are responsible for upholding these standards for this course. It is very important for you to be aware of the consequences of cheating, fabrication, facilitation, and plagiarism. For more information on the Code of Academic Integrity or the Student Honor Council, please visit [http://www.studenthonorcouncil.umd.edu/whatis.html](http://www.studenthonorcouncil.umd.edu/whatis.html)

The University of Maryland is one of a small number of universities with a student-administered Honors Code and an Honors Pledge, available on the web at [http://www.jpo.umd.edu/aca/honorpledge.html](http://www.jpo.umd.edu/aca/honorpledge.html). The code prohibits students from cheating on exams, plagiarizing papers, submitting the same paper for credit in two courses without authorization, buying papers, submitting fraudulent documents, and forging signatures. The University Senate encourages instructors to ask students to write the following signed statement on each examination or assignment: “I pledge on my honor that I have not given or received any unauthorized assistance on this examination (or assignment).”

ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATIONS: If you have a documented disability, you should contact Disability Support Services 0126 Shoemaker Hall. Each semester students with documented disabilities should apply to DSS for accommodation request forms which you can provide to your professors as proof of your eligibility for accommodations. The rules for eligibility and the types of accommodations a student may request can be reviewed on the DSS web site at [http://www.counseling.umd.edu/DSS/receiving_serv.html](http://www.counseling.umd.edu/DSS/receiving_serv.html).

COURSE EVALUATIONS: CourseEvalUM will be open for students to complete their evaluations for Spring 2009 courses between Tuesday, April 28, and Wednesday, May 13. Students can go directly to the website ([www.courseevalum.umd.edu](http://www.courseevalum.umd.edu)) to complete their evaluations, beginning April 28. You will be alerted about these dates and provided more information closer to that time, and students will be alerted via their official University e-mail account.

Students who complete evaluations for all of their courses in the previous semester (excluding summer), can access the posted results via Testudo’s CourseEvalUM Reporting link for any course on campus that has at least a 70% response rate. You can find more information, including periodic updates, at the IRPA course evaluation website: [https://www.irpa.umd.edu/Assessment/CourseEval/fac_faq.shtml](https://www.irpa.umd.edu/Assessment/CourseEval/fac_faq.shtml)

The expectation is that all students will complete these. This is YOUR chance to anonymously evaluate this class: please use this opportunity!
1/27/09  CANCELLED DUE TO SNOW

2/3/09  Welcome Back; Semester Orientation
The Evidence of Evolution
Reading: Zimmer Prologue, Introduction, Chaps. 1-2, 4

2/9/09 (Mon.)  FILM: *Appalachiia*, pt. 1 & 2

2/10/09  Charles Darwin and the Discovery of Natural Selection
Reading: Zimmer Chaps. 5-8

2/12/09 (Thurs.)  FILM: *Appalachiia*, pt. 3 & 4

2/17/09  Quiz 1
Mechanisms of Evolution
Reading: Zimmer Chaps. 9-12

2/21/09 (Sat.)  Field Trip 1: Smithsonian Institution National Museum of Natural History, Washington, D.C.

2/24/09  How to Reconstruct the Tree of Life
Reading: Shubin Chaps. 1-4

3/1/09 (Sun.)  Field Trip 2: Fossils and Paleoenvironments of West Virginia

3/3/09  Raw Animal Sexuality!
Reading: Shubin Chaps. 5-8

3/6/09 (Fri.)  Open House, CCC 1205, 12-3 pm

3/10/09  Quiz 2
“Fearfully Great Lizards”: Dinosaurs
Reading: Shubin Chaps. 9-11, Epilogue

3/16-3/20  SPRING BREAK!!

3/24/09  The Scatterlings of Africa: The Origins of Humanity
Reading: Diamond Prologue, Part One Intro, Chaps. 1-2

3/27/09 (Fri.)  Scholars Open House, CCC 1205, 12-3 pm

3/31/09  Quiz 3
Out of Eden: From the Origin of our Species to You
Reading: Diamond Part Two Intro, Chaps. 3-5

4/3/09 (Fri.)  Scholars Open House, CCC 1205, 12-3 pm

4/7/09  Human Biological Diversity and “Race”
Reading: Diamond Chap. 6-7

4/14/09  Quiz 4
Your Family: A Historical Perspective
**DUE:** Family History Take-Home Project
Reading: Diamond Part Three Intro, Chaps. 8-10
4/17/09 (Fri.) Scholars Open House, CCC 1205, 12-3 pm

4/17-19 Field Trip 3: American Museum of Natural History, New York City (“Scholars in New York”)

4/21/09 What is Language? The Evolutionary Biology of the “Humanities”
Reading: Diamond Chap. 11, Part Four Intro, Chaps. 13-14

4/22 (Wed.) Undergraduate Research Day

4/25 (Sat.) Maryland Day

4/28/09 Quiz 5
Languages Have a History
Reading: Diamond Chaps. 15-17

5/1 (Fri.) College Park Scholars Academic Showcase

5/2 (Sat.) Scholars Softball Tournament

5/5/09 Life in Darwin’s Universe: The Possibility of Life on Other Worlds
Reading: Diamond Chap. 12, 18-19, Epilogue

5/9/09 (Sat.) Field Trip 4: National Zoo

5/12/09 Quiz 6
Human Natural History; Valediction
DUE: Academic Showcase Report