

Age of Dinosaurs

University of Florida (Online) FALL 2025

GLY 1102



Course Description & Goals

Welcome to Age of Dinosaurs! As the name suggests, the focus of this course is dinosaurs. To understand dinosaurs and their place in Earth's history, we will explore the basics of geology including how the Earth changes over time and how rocks and fossils form. To understand dinosaurs as living organisms, we will cover biology basics including organization and classification of taxa, anatomy and ecosystems. We will also discuss topics related to modern paleontology. The primary goals of this course are to:

- Introduce the science of Paleontology through an examination of dinosaurs and other Mesozoic life.
- Learn about the materials, processes and events that comprise and shape the Earth over time.
- Examine the concepts of Deep Time including the geologic time scale and determining the age of rocks and fossils.
- Learn the basic concepts of biology, ecology and anatomy needed to understand dinosaurs as living organisms.
- Improve scientific literacy and critical thinking by exploring recent developments and current events in paleontology.

Course Format

This course is asynchronous, which means you work through modules on your own and there are no required "live" class meetings. However, you can chat with the instructor or TAs during weekly optional Office Hours on Zoom and use the class discussion boards to interact with the whole class.

Textbook:

Dinosaurs: The Textbook, 7th Edition by Spencer Lucas
Hard copy, pdf, online, new, used – any format is acceptable.

Lead Instructor

Dr. Anita Marshall (she/her)

Email: anita.marshall@ufl.edu, or message through Canvas.

Virtual Office Hours*:

Wednesday 10:00am - 12:00pm EST

Teaching Assistants

TA1: Joo Jang (he/him)

Email: hyungjoojang@ufl.edu or message through Canvas.

Virtual Office Hours*:

Mondays 2:00 – 4:00 pm EST

TA2: Megan Black (she/her)

Email: meganmblack@ufl.edu or message through Canvas.

Virtual Office Hours*:

Tuesdays 2:00 – 4:00 pm EST

*See Canvas for Zoom links.

Important Dates

Exam 1 Open: Sept 20 - 24

Exam 2 Open: Oct 25 - 29

Exam 3 Open: Dec 6 - 10

COURSE MATERIALS & TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS

Textbook: The textbook for this course is *Dinosaurs: The Textbook*, 7th Edition by Spencer Lucas. You may purchase it through the UF bookstore or rent/buy through 3rd party sellers. Any format that you prefer is ok (physical, pdf, online access, whatever). You won't need access codes, so used is also fine. The first two week's reading assignments are from open online sources to give you time to get the book, but you will need the textbook for the rest of the course. *Note: The science of paleontology is constantly updating our understanding of dinosaurs, so the most recent edition is preferred. However, there are minor differences between the 6th and 7th edition, so the 6th would work.*

Technology Requirements: Course work will require use of a computer and internet. All assignments will be turned in online through the Canvas course page. For additional information on UF College of Liberal Arts and Sciences policy regarding computer requirements you can visit: <http://it.clas.ufl.edu/policies/student-computer-requirement/>

COURSE DETAILS

Prerequisites and Course Info: This is an introductory course with no prerequisites. GLY 1102 is a General Education Physical Science (P) and Biological Science (B) course. Credit hours: 3.

Student Learning outcomes:

These outcomes align with UF's Subject Area Objectives for Physical and Biological Sciences.

1. Identify and explain the basic concepts and terminology of geology and paleontology, including plate tectonic theory, geologic time, rock formation and fossilization and preservation of biological information in the rock record. Assessed with Quizzes and Exams.
2. Identify and describe the relevant processes and concepts of biological sciences including vertebrate anatomy, phylogeny, and evolutionary theory. Assessed with Quizzes and Exams.
3. Apply logical reasoning skills and critical thinking effectively to solve scientific problems and evaluate outcomes. Assessed in Assignments.
4. Describe and explain major historic and modern discoveries in the field of dinosaur paleontology and the impacts of those discoveries on science and society. Assessed through Discussions.
5. Communicate knowledge of paleontology and the ethical and social contexts in which it exists, clearly and effectively. Assessed through Discussions.

YOUR COURSE RESPONSIBILITIES

- Complete all Module assignments in a timely fashion. Each module includes reading assignments from the textbook and other sources, video lectures and other video content (with accompanying PowerPoint presentations as pdfs), a Module Quiz, and an Assignment and/or Discussion. Requirements for class participation, make-up exams and other work is consistent with university policies: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>
- Check the announcements and your e-mail regularly - at least three times a week. It is the only way I can directly communicate with you in an online class. Checking in on course Discussion boards is also highly encouraged (and fun – that's where some of the best conversations in the course happen!)
- Respect your fellow class members and follow "Netiquette" Guidelines.

COURSE ACTIVITY TYPES

Modules are content and activities grouped by topic. Each module contains assigned readings and videos to introduce concepts and activities to help you engage with the material and a Quiz to help assess what you've learned. We complete one module per week.

Assignments: Activities enable you to explore concepts related to the module learning objectives in more detail. All module assignments are due no later than 11:55 on the last day of the module. Assignments are worth 50 points each. Your lowest assignment grade will be dropped. Assignments count for 30% of your grade.

Quizzes: Each Module has a quiz worth 100 points that draws from all assigned module material – lecture, other videos and readings. Module Quizzes are not timed or proctored, and you have two chances on each quiz. Your lowest quiz grade will be dropped. Quizzes are worth 30% of your grade.

Discussions: This is your chance to thoughtfully engage in topics that are being actively debated in the world of dinosaur paleontology. You will be expected to post a thoughtful, detailed response according to the Substantive Post Guidelines and Discussion Rubrics on the class website. You have 2 weeks for each discussion: one for your initial post, and one for your follow-up replies. It is easy to forget to do initial posts, so please keep an eye on due dates! Full participation, as outlined in the instructions for each Discussion, is worth 50 points, and Discussions are worth 20% of your total grade. Your lowest discussion grade drops.

Exams: There are 3 Exams. Exam 1 covers Modules 1-4, Exam 2 covers Modules 5-8, and Exam 3 covers Modules 9-12. Each exam has 15 questions from each module and is worth a total of 300 points. Exams are 20% of your total grade and are proctored with Honorlock. You have two hours for each exam unless accommodated for more. Here are some key points about Honorlock Proctoring:

- You do not need to make a separate account or pre-schedule your exam, just login to Canvas and start the exam when you are ready.
- You will need a computer with reliable internet access and a webcam. You will not be video recorded during your exam but will need video capabilities to show a photo ID to the proctor.
- You will be required to show picture identification at the time of your exam. Approved forms of identification include, but are not limited to, a driver's license, military identification card, passport, or school-issued identification card.
- You are allowed to use your notes for exams, but internet browsing will be disabled while your exam is open, so it is important that any digital notes you wish to access are stored on your local hard drive and not stored online.

GRADES & ASSIGNMENT POLICIES

A minimum grade of C is required for general education credit. See

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx> for general UF grading policies.

Grades will be weighted as follows:

Assignments	30% of total grade
Module Quizzes	30% of total grade
Discussions	20% of total grade
Exams	20% of total grade

Grading Scale for Overall Course Grade:

% Grade	Letter Grade	GPA Value
90 +	A	4.0
85-90	B+	3.5
80-84.9	B	3.0
75-79.9	C+	2.5
70-74.9	C	2.0
65-69.9	D+	1.5
59-65.9	D	1
< 58.9	E	0

Late work: Assignments and Quizzes can be turned in up to one week late with no penalty. The one exception is Module 12, where the late submission window is shortened due to the end of the semester. Discussions and Exams are not accepted late without approval from the instructor, so get those in on time!

Religious Observances, Military Duty & other Unavoidable Absences: Students who anticipate the necessity of missing deadlines due to religious observances must provide notice of the dates to the instructor, in writing (email is fine) at least one week in advance of the missed class days so accommodations to be made. For other unavoidable absences, contact me as soon as you know the dates. Please do not wait until after you have missed assignments to ask for an exception, as we may not be able to help - especially near the end of the semester.

Plagiarism: This course encourages collaboration, but you are ultimately responsible for your own work. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: "On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment." See the [UF Conduct Code](#) website for more information.

Appropriate Use of Artificial Intelligence: AI programs are not a replacement for human creativity and critical thinking. You are free to use AI tools to enhance your understanding of the course content, but you need to be aware of its potential to both aid and suppress learning. You are responsible for ensuring that you are providing assignment responses that are high-quality and correct, and AI is often neither of those things. Simply put: if you write an assignment using AI, or use it as the sole resource for information, you will not be marked down for using AI - you will be marked down because the ideas are generic, expressed poorly, and/or contain elements that uncited, use fake citations, are factually inaccurate or off-topic. It is your responsibility to review and ensure the appropriateness, accuracy and quality of your submissions. *Think of it this way; you can go to the gym and use a forklift to move weights around. But that doesn't get you in shape. Similarly with AI, it is the process of learning – not the end product – that is important for your education.*

ACCESSIBILITY, INCLUSION & RESPECT

Respect & Inclusion: In this classroom (physical or virtual), everyone should feel welcome to share their thoughts in a respectful way. Treat your classmates the way you would like to be treated. You deserve to be called by the name and pronouns you prefer and with the correct pronunciation. If you like, you can record the correct pronunciation of your name and your pronouns using the NameCoach tool on Canvas (find it in the links on the left side of our class Canvas page). If something in the course material, instruction or class interactions make you feel excluded or uncomfortable, please let me know so I can address it. See the Netiquette section under "UF Policies" for more details on how to interact respectfully online.

UF Statement on Accommodating Students with Disabilities: Students requesting accommodation Students with disabilities requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center by calling 352-392-8565 or online at <https://disability.ufl.edu/students/get-started/>. Once registered, students will receive an accommodation letter which must be presented to the instructor when requesting accommodation. Students should follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester, as *accommodations are not retroactive*.

My Statement on Accessibility: We all learn differently. You don't have to have a formally recognized disability to find yourself having difficulty with some aspect of the college learning environment. For example, colorblindness is not typically recognized in formal accommodations, but very much impacts a student's ability to process visual information. Please let me know if something in the course material presents a barrier to your full participation in the course so we can work together to find a reasonable solution – *even if you don't have, or don't yet have, a formal accommodation letter*. And please contact me during the semester if your accommodation needs change. All videos used in this course have closed captioning. Many also have transcripts (I'm working on transcripts for the rest). Need something else? Just ask!

COURSE SCHEDULE

Modules open and close on Wednesdays. New Modules open at noon, prior modules close and module components are due on Wednesday at 11:59 pm (US Eastern Time) unless otherwise noted. Changes to the schedule will be posted on Canvas.

Week	Modules	Discussions
1.) 8/21 – 8/27	Start Here Module & Module 1: Intro to Geology and Paleontology <u>To do:</u> - Extra Credit Syllabus quiz - Module 1 Quiz - Assignment: Plate tectonics and Earth's Change Over Geologic Time.	D1: Me and My Dinosaur
2.) 8/27 – 9/3	Module 2: Fossils and Paleoenvironments <u>To do:</u> - Module 2 Quiz - Assignment: Stratigraphy and Geologic Maps	
3.) 9/3 – 9/10	Module 3: Evolution, Phylogeny and Classification <u>To do:</u> - Module 3 Quiz - Assignment: Diversity and Evolution of Species and working with Phylogenetic data	D2: Fossils - Bones or Minerals?
4.) 9/10 – 9/17	Module 4: The Origin of Dinosaurs <u>To do:</u> - Module 4 Quiz - No assignment for this module	
5.) 9/17 – 9/24	Exam 1: Modules 1-4.	
6.) 9/24 – 10/1	Module 5: Sharp Teeth and Quick Feet – Theropods <u>To do:</u> - Module 5 Quiz - Assignment: Interpreting Dinosaur Footprints and Trackways	D3: Stormy Legacy of the Thunder Lizard

7.) 10/1 – 10/8	Module 6: The Giants – Saruopodomorphs <u>To do:</u> - Module 6 Quiz - Assignment: Care and Feeding of Your Dinosaur – exploring metabolism and ecosystem requirements of the largest land animals.	
8.) 10/8 – 10/15	Module 7: Duckbills and Crests – Ornithopods <u>To do:</u> - Module 7 Quiz - No Assignment for this module	D4: Clever Girl - How Intelligent were Dinosaurs?
9.) 10/15 – 10/22	Module 8: Armor Up! – Thyreophorans <u>To do:</u> - Module 8 Quiz - No Assignment for this module	
10.) 10/22– 10/29	Exam 2: Modules 5-8.	
11.) 10/29 – 11/5	Module 9: Boneheads & Beaks – Marginocephalians <u>To do:</u> - Module 9 Quiz - Assignment: Growing Up Triceratops – reconstructing growth series for extinct animals	D5: Paleo Ethics – Ancient past, modern challenges
12.) 11/5 – 11/12	Module 10: The Mesozoic World <u>To do:</u> - Module 10 Quiz - No Assignment for this Module	
13.) 11/12– 11/19	Module 11: Life as a Dinosaur <u>To do:</u> - Module 11 Quiz - Assignment: Bringing the Heat – Dinosaur metabolisms and body heat regulation.	D1: Me and My Dinosaur Pt 2.
14.) 11/19-12/3	Module 12: The Survivors – Extinction & Beyond This module straddles FALL BREAK . Work on it before or after - your choice. <u>To do:</u> - Module 12 Quiz - No Assignment for this Module	
15.) 12/3 - 12/10	Exam 3: Modules 9-12. Note: Grace period for Module 12 ends 12/10,	

NEED HELP?

Who is my TA? This course is large, so we split the class into groups so you have more of a small-class experience for things like discussions. We then assign each of these groups to a primary point of contact (your TA). This system keeps this large course manageable, so please start with your assigned TA for course questions. Please check the Course Info page on Canvas for your TA assignment.

Office hours are for your benefit - ask questions, get assignment help, discuss geoscience degrees and career options, talk dinosaurs, etc. You are not required to attend office hours, they are there if you wish to interact with your teaching team in real time. You may also request a meeting at a

different time if you can't find an office hour time that works for you. Any student can attend any office hours – regardless of which TA or instructor is hosting.

Message Boards: We have a message board set up for class questions. Posting here lets everyone be part of the conversation and can often get you an answer faster than emailing an individual instructor or TA. Plus, we can answer a question once instead of many times.

Email: Please check to make sure your question hasn't been answered already in the Announcements or Class Questions Discussion Board before reaching out. For questions about grading, please contact your TA first. All of us (myself and the TAs) can help with questions about the material. *Emailing Dr. Marshall:* Please note, this class is huge, usually over 400 students per semester, and this is not the only course I teach. My inbox is frequently overloaded and while I try to answer quickly, sometimes it takes a day or two. TAs are usually much faster to reply.

Technical Support: For issues with technical difficulties for E-learning, please contact the UF Help Desk: <http://helpdesk.ufl.edu>, or (352) 392-4357 and select option 2. If you miss a deadline due to technical issues, requests for extensions or make-up activities should be accompanied by the ticket number received from The Help Desk when the problem was reported to them. The ticket number will document the time and date of the problem. You MUST e-mail your instructor within 24 hours of the technical difficulty if you wish to request a due-date extension or make-up.

Mental Health and well-being: Sometimes being a college student, or just a human being, can be hard. If you are mentally or emotionally struggling for any reason, you can contact the [Counseling and Wellness Center](#). They have one-click access to people who can help you connect to the right resources for your situation. If these struggles are negatively impacting your performance in any of your courses, I encourage you to contact the [Dean of Students Care Area](#) to connect with a support team that can help with temporary accommodations, authorization to make up missing course work, etc. Additionally, if you are comfortable doing so, please reach out to me and I will provide any accommodations in this course that I can.

Other Resources: Didn't see the kind of help you were looking for listed here? Links to a variety of support resources for online students are consolidated on this page: <http://www.distance.ufl.edu/getting-help>.

UF POLICIES

University Policies on academic misconduct and honesty, class recording, course evaluation and academic resources can be found here: <https://syllabus.ufl.edu/syllabus-policy/uf-syllabus-policy-links/>

UF Undergraduate Student Handbook: The student handbook has all the details on UF policies for students. <https://dso.ufl.edu/resources/student-handbook/>