

Introduction to Fossil Identification

GEY 175 (Special Topics)

Class time and dates: Saturdays, November 7 and 14, 2015, 9:00 am – 4:45 pm

Class Location: West Building 2573

Course Description: Introduces the basics of fossil identification, including high-taxonomic-level classification, geological context, and use of conventional and online identification resources.

Instructor: Dr. F. Nicole Peavey, Ph.D.

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Textbook: The Golden Guide: Fossils (Rhodes, Zim, Shaffer). Several copies will be available in class.

Travel: Students will need to arrange their own transportation to the Denver Museum of Nature and Science (carpooling and the use of public transit is encouraged).

Course Objectives: Upon completion of GEY 175, students will be able to:

1. Distinguish between fossil and non-fossil items
2. Distinguish between major invertebrate fossil groups
3. Identify fossil vertebrates as a group and explain their special legal status
4. Use the 'binning' process to categorize fossil leaves
5. Describe how geological context can be used to aid fossil identification
6. Describe ethical and legal best practices for hobby fossil collecting

Evaluation Methods:

Attendance = 10 points

Participation = 10 points

Fossil Description Exercise = 15 points

Week 1 Short Paper = 25 points

Week 2 Short Paper (Field Trip Essay) = 25 points

Final Quiz = 15 points

TOTAL = 100 points

Grading Policy:

A = 90-100

B = 80-89

C = 70-79

D = 60-69

F = 0-59

Evaluation Notes:

Latecomers will lose their attendance points (up to 5 points per day of class).

Participation credit will be awarded based on in-class group work. Five activities are planned at two points each, which will be credited to the students upon completion and submission of each group activity. Points may be reduced for an individual if it becomes apparent that the individual is not contributing to the group.

Two short papers (about 2 pages) will be required for the class. The first will be assigned during week 1 and due prior to the start of the week 2 class period, and the second will be assigned during week 2 and due approximately four days later. Due to extremely tight grading deadlines, no late submissions will be accepted for partial credit or otherwise (see full assignments policy below).

The Fossil Description exercise will be graded based on appropriate observations and descriptions, not on accurate identifications. The Final Quiz will be graded based on accurate identifications, to the appropriate taxonomic level as requested for each specimen.

General Policies

Attendance Policy: Because of the short-term nature of GEY 175, attendance is absolutely required for all class days, and any missed quizzes or assignments may not be made up. Students are responsible for ensuring that they do not have previous commitments on class days. **Latecomers will have their attendance grade reduced by up to the maximum for the day.** Incompletes will not be given; students who find themselves unable to attend class for emergency reasons will be responsible for initiating the drop or withdrawal process to prevent a grade of “F” being recorded for the class.

Assignments Policy: Due to very tight grade submission deadlines for weekend classes, all assignments must be submitted by their stated deadlines, and **NO credit, either full or partial, will be awarded for late assignments.** Students with deadline accommodations requested by the Office of Disability Services may have a separate agreed-upon deadline, but will not receive any credit for assignments submitted after that deadline.

In the event of a documented medical emergency that may prevent on-time completion of an assignment, the instructor should be contacted as soon as possible via an email stating the nature of the delay so that appropriate accommodations may be made and thoroughly documented with the college.

Academic Integrity (From: RRCC Student Handbook): The College is an academic community. Its fundamental purpose is the pursuit of knowledge. Like all other communities, the College can function properly only if its members adhere to clearly established goals and values. Essential to the fundamental purpose of the College is the commitment to the principles of truth and academic honesty. Accordingly, The Student Code of Conduct is designed to ensure that the principle of academic honesty is upheld. Everyone associated with the College’s academic community has a responsibility for establishing, maintaining, and fostering academic integrity. Anyone who becomes aware

of an incident of academic dishonesty should report the occurrence to a faculty member, department chair, or administrator.

Those committing academic dishonesty will be subject to disciplinary actions which may include failing the assignment and/or the course, and/or being suspended or expelled from the college. Disciplinary procedures are outlined in Student Code of Conduct. Guidelines for the definition of cheating (Article I.I.) and plagiarism (Article I.J.) can also be found in the Student Code of Conduct.

The following are some principles associated with academic integrity:

- Cite (give credit for) words and/or ideas that are not your own
- Use information, computer programs, others' work, study aids, and/or other materials only when permitted by your instructor
- Remove materials from the library, labs, and other college facilities only when an official representative of the college grants permission
- Use copyrighted materials only with permission
- Refuse to help anyone commit an act of academic dishonesty
- Use only the resources specifically allowed when completing a test or other assignment

Learning or physical disability: ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act of 2008) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973: Red Rocks Community College is committed to access for students with disabilities. If you are a student with a disability and need assistance or are interested in requesting accommodations, please contact Accessibility Services. Faculty are not obligated to provide accommodations without proper notification by Accessibility Services and accommodations are not retroactive. Students may contact the Access staff by telephone or email to make an intake appointment at 303-914-6733 or access@rrcc.edu. Accessibility Services is located in Suite 1182 at the Lakewood campus. More information is available at www.rrcc.edu/accessibility-services.

Student Grievances: Please consult the Student Handbook.

Student Publications: *Claro*, RRCC's scholarly journal, publishes students' high-quality academic work. Publications look great on scholarship applications and resumes. If you feel that you have done superior work on an assignment for this class, ask me if I would consider submitting it to *Claro*! *Claro* accepts any type of academic work, including research papers, charts/graphs, reports, reviews, websites, videos, etc. Go to www.rrcc.edu/claro to view online versions of the last two editions.

Tentative Course Schedule:

Saturday, November 7

9:00 am – 4:45 pm

Introductions, Roll, Syllabus

Identifying Fossils and Pseudofossils

Timescale Review

Use of the guidebook

Invertebrate Fossil Types

Invertebrate Scenario I

Invertebrate Scenario II

Lunch: *12:30pm – 1:30pm*

Saturday, November 14

9:00 am – 4:45 pm

Field Trip: Denver Museum of Nature and Science

Identifying Vertebrate Fossils

Vertebrate Scenario I

Vertebrate Scenario II

Identifying plant fossils using the Binning System

Plants Scenario I

Hobby Collecting

Final Quiz

Lunch: *12:30pm – 1:30pm*

Statement of Understanding of Syllabus Content

I, (student name, printed) _____,
certify that I have read and understood the syllabus for GEY 175 (Intro to Fossil ID, Sp. Top.),
and that I will abide by the policies stated therein. I take responsibility for knowing the class
times and assignment deadlines for this class, and I understand that missing these class times and
deadlines may result in a reduced or failing grade.

(Student Signature) _____

Please sign and detach this statement and submit to the instructor.