Syllabus

Earth History and Evolution

GEO 211

Instructor: Dr. Neil Suits

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Office: Science 118

Office Hours: Mondays and Fridays: 9-11, and of course by appointment.

Class meets in the Science Auditorium Tuesdays and Thursdays, 2:00-3:30 pm

Required Texts:


Geologic Map of Montana

There will also be occasional handouts and readings from:

Roadside Geology of Montana, David Alt and Donald Hyndman, Mountain Press, 1986.


Your Inner Fish, Neil Shubin, Pantheon, 2008.
Grading:

Quizzes on Reading material - 2 lowest grades dropped (Tuesdays) 40%

Homework (Thursdays) 15%

Exams: 2 midterms + Final (12.5 + 12.5 + 15) 40%

Class Participation 5%

I am convinced that if you keep up with the reading and do a little bit each week that you will find by the end of the term that you have learned a lot. Consequently, much of your grade will depend on the weekly quizzes. The will be approximately 10-15 minute quizzes, consisting of about 15 questions based on the reading assignments and meant primarily to see if you have done it. I will occasionally give you the questions before hand to help you focus on the material that I think is most important.

Homework is ungraded, i.e., you either get credit or you don't. However, I may ask you to redo an assignment if I think it is not up to snuff. There will be homework nearly every week. These are very short (sometimes mindless) exercises intended to reinforce basic knowledge and ideas.

Homework will be given out on Thursday and will be due the following Thursday. Some of these will involve reproducing 'visual overviews' found at the beginning of many of our textbook's chapters. Homework may also include a Physical Map of the World, Geologic timescales, Mesozoic and Paleozoic geologic sections for the Billings area, maps of Montana's geologic features, collecting rocks and sand from the Yellowstone River, etc.

As part of the homework you will also be asked to bring in one fossil to class. This can be done anytime during the semester, though I would like to stagger them somewhat so we don't have everybody bringing in fossils all at the same time. You will be asked to identify the fossil and give some basic information about it, i.e. where was it found, when did it live and in what kind of environment, how was it preserved/fossilized, what does it mean, etc. The fossil can be something you found, bought or borrowed.

We are planning to take a field trip to the Museum of the Rockies near the end of semester. This is a required field trip.