Texts and Required Materials

Evolution, Second Edition (2005), by Stephen Stearns and Rolf Hoekstra
Oxford University Press

There will be an Angel site for the class that we will use to disseminate assignments and other materials. The most current class schedule will always be on the Angel site.

Course Descriptions and Objectives

This course provides a mechanistic, data driven explanation for the unity and diversity of form and function of all species. We will examine evidence from genetics, biochemistry, geology, physiology, and ecology in an exploration of biological evolution. We will also spend a lot of time developing our primary literature research skills and our written communication since these skills are essential to success in science.

Assignments

Reading

All reading assignments should be considered as assignments. I make every attempt to minimize the amount of reading and will post the most current list on the course Angel site. In order to have productive discussions in class, everyone needs to have read the material ahead of time. There may be brief quizzes or short writing assignments to test reading comprehension. All assigned reading is subject to examination.

Assignments

Assignments that we do during class, presentations to the class, and homework assignments will be averaged to create a final score in this category. You may be asked to write reflectively about your reading, or you may be given a task to find information as an individual or a group, for example. Assignments will be posted on the course Angel site.

Exams

We will have a midterm and final exam. They will be composed of content oriented short answer questions as well as analytical essay questions where you will analyze data from published studies and/or imaginary studies. While the final is not strictly cumulative, the entire course is cumulative by nature. The midterm will be in class on Mon. Mar. 10, and the final on Thursday, 4/24 at 2pm.

Papers

In addition to the shorter assignments described above, two longer (10 page) research papers will be assigned throughout the semester. Due dates will be posted on the Angel site but expect
one due before spring break and one due close to the end of the semester. You will be required to
choose a topic (subject to instructor approval) and make a thesis statement that you can support
with evidence. The papers will require that you find and read primary literature and synthesize
ideas to support your thesis. These skills are invaluable to you in your career as a student and
beyond. Absolutely no plagiarism will be tolerated. Work that is not entirely your own will
receive a zero. If you ever have a question about how to use the work of others just ask, I’m
happy to help.

**Academic Honesty:**
“Westminster College operates on the assumption that all academic work is the honest product of
each student’s own endeavors. The faculty and staff at Westminster expect such integrity from
the students, and violations are cause for disciplinary action…” See Policies and Procedures in
the Student Handbook, Academic Standards in the catalog, or ask if you have questions or
concerns.

**Grading**
The grading of the assignments in this course is designed to measure your efforts and your
abilities. There will be no extra credit, so please take each opportunity to better your grade
seriously. If you choose not to participate in the course at the level indicated required for a grade
of “A,” that’s OK, just don’t expect an A. You are choosing your own grade by your level of
effort. One helpful hint to budgeting your time is that each hour of class time will generate at
least 2 hours of work outside of class. Please do not ask me for your current grade, you can
estimate it based on the grades that you have earned on returned assignments.

**Weight of Assignments**
- In-class and other assignments: 10%
- Papers: 30%
- Exams: 60% (exams are 25% midterm, 35% final)

**Grading Scale**
- A: 94-100
- A-: 90-93
- B+: 87-89
- B: 84-86
- B-: 80-83
- C+: 77-79
- C: 74-76
- C-: 70-73
- D+: 67-69
- D: 64-66

**Accommodations:**
Westminster College seeks to provide equal access to the college’s programs, services, and
activities to people with disabilities as defined by the ADA and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation
Act of 1973. If you have a disability for which you will need accommodations in this class,
please let me know as soon as possible. You will also be required to provide documentation of
your disability to the Services for the Students with Disabilities program in the START Center in
Carleson Hall at 832-2280.

This syllabus is subject to change at the discretion of the instructor.