LECTURER: Dr. Ronald D. Lewis, Associate Professor

OFFICE: Petrie Hall, room 205  
OFFICE HOURS: Monday 3:00-4:00 p.m.  
Tuesday 1:30-2:30 p.m.  
Telephone: 844-4886  
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Monitor this Web site for syllabus changes!

CLASS MEETINGS: Lectures will be given in Petrie Hall, room 118, from 9:45 to 11:15 a.m. Monday through Friday. The laboratory will meet in Haley Center, room 2174. Remember that there are two lab sessions each week, one on Tuesdays and one on Thursdays, and you are required to attend both. It will be very important for you to attend each lab session and to do the assigned reading in the lab manual before the lab meets. Your GTA, Chris Smith, will provide a separate syllabus for the laboratory portion of the course.

COURSE OBJECTIVES: The main objectives of this course are to provide you with an overview of the Earth's history and an appreciation for the methods by which this history is determined. Topics discussed will be new to some of you but very familiar to others. For all students, I see my role as one who provides you with a context in which particular historical events can be placed. The approach I will use is to define broad episodes of the evolution of our planet and of its life. But we will also take a detailed look at specific "points in time". You might want to think of these as "windows to the past" and imagine traveling in time back to these points. I will attempt to show that the Earth is an integrated system: its lithosphere, hydrosphere, atmosphere and biosphere are so intimately related that the evolution of one is dependent upon the evolution of the others. The laboratory is designed to give you practical experience with the materials and methods of the historical geologist. Topics covered closely parallel the lecture discussions.

ATTENDANCE: Attendance is expected at all lecture and laboratory sessions. It is your first responsibility in this course. Attendance is important in the lecture because information not found in the textbook will be presented, and you will be held responsible for this information on the examinations. In fact, most examination questions will come from the lectures; however, most students find that reading the text by Levin helps them to understand and remember the material. And a few exam questions will be taken from the textbook on subjects not discussed in class. Roll will be taken at intervals, and lecture attendance will be used as one of the factors in determining your final letter grade at the end of the course (see below). Lecture exams can be made up only if you have a University approved excuse or its equivalent, and only if you see me within one week of your return to class. Attendance is important in the laboratories because the laboratory sessions are the best time for you to get help from the GTA. It will be difficult or impossible to make up late labs (unless you have an excused absence). This will be explained to you in more detail by your lab instructor.

GRADING: Your final letter grade for the course will be based on a score consisting of your laboratory average (25%) and lecture average (75%). The grading system for the laboratory portion of the course will be explained to you by your GTA and will be on your lab syllabus. Your lecture average will consist of your grade on one minor exam/quiz (15% of the final score), one or two midterm exam(s) (30%), and the final exam (30%). Both the midterm and final are primarily unit tests, but a few questions from previous material may also be included. The schedule below shows the approximate times for the lecture exams. See the Tiger Cub for what constitutes cheating. Specifically, be sure to avoid wondering eyes during exams and do not copy other students’ labs. Attendance and trends (e.g., improvement during the term) will be taken into account in assigning letter grades in border-line cases. Two extra-credit options provide the opportunity to add up to 6 points to your final average: (1) supplementary Web-based questions in the lab manual, and/or (2) a time-travel narrative or research paper. Both are due at the time of the final examination, Tuesday, July 29. The final letter grade for the course will be determined based on the following scale: A: 90-100%, B: 80-89%, C: 70-79%, D: 60-69%, F: 59-0%. PLEASE NOTE that, according to departmental policy, a failing grade in lab (less than 60%) will result in a grade of F for the course regardless of your performance in the lecture part of the course.

TEXTS:  