

Vertebrate Evolution Spring 2008: Student/Faculty Covenant

SUBJECT MATTER AND GOALS

Vertebrate Evolution is an upper-level science program, which presumes that you have a solid background in the biology, scientific thinking, and library research. As such, my expectations of you are high, and you should plan on devoting at least 40 hours per week to this course.

EXPECTATIONS FOR STUDENT LEARNING

By the end of this program, I expect that you will have demonstrated proficiency in and/or knowledge of:

- macroevolutionary theory and philosophy, as it applies to the evolutionary history of vertebrates
- the diversity of vertebrate forms and anatomical systems
- Scientific methods for creative problem solving;
- Critical thinking as demonstrated through written work and discussions.

My primary goal in this program is for students to become intellectually bold, creative, and rigorous, and not only willing, but eager, to take intellectual risks.

COMMITMENTS OF THE FACULTY TO THE STUDENTS

I agree to enter into a learning community with you and the other students and to:

- Prepare for, participate in, and guide learning throughout the program;
- Read, evaluate, and return your work within relatively short order;
- Respond to students' questions and concerns about the material, pace, and/or organization of the program;
- Keep regular office hours, for two hours every week, during which time I am available for one-on-one discussions with students.
- Keep students informed about their progress and notify students by the end of the sixth week of the term if her/his work is not satisfactory;
- Be aware of my own needs as a scholar, reserving the right to reevaluate and adjust the pace of the program should I deem it necessary;
- Provide a written evaluation of each student's work at the end of the term.

FACULTY EXPECTATIONS OF STUDENTS

I expect a high degree of personal commitment from you—to your own learning, to group work, and to the class as a whole. Within this program there are both opportunities and responsibilities: opportunities to learn about a variety of subjects, and to develop your intellect and critical thinking; responsibilities to maximize your learning from the program, maximize the learning of your classmates, and apply what you have learned to a variety of topics and situations.

Student Responsibilities

1. **Carefully read the syllabus and all other handouts.** If you have questions or something is unclear, ask.
2. **Come on time to all class activities, with any assigned readings or work completed.** Your presence is crucial, both for yourself and for your classmates. Furthermore, it is rude and selfish to expect others to wait for you to show up.
3. **Turn in all required assignments on time.** You should not expect me to read or comment on work received late.

4. **Discuss any problems or issues with the involved parties as soon as possible.** If you are having difficulty with some aspect of the program, see me ASAP in order to minimize potential problems and negotiate loss of credit.
5. **Show a positive, cooperative attitude towards the faculty, other students, and the program as a whole.** Students will be working together and helping one another. Those who understand are encouraged to help those who don't. Share what you know in such a way so as not to belittle or silence others.
6. **Maintain a portfolio of all your work,** to be submitted at the end of the term.
7. **Write a thoughtful self-evaluation** at the end of the term. You do *not* need to include this in your transcript, but you *do* need to write it and submit a final draft to me.
8. **Write a thoughtful faculty evaluation** at the end of the term. I can not award credit until you have turned in both a self- and a faculty evaluation.

REQUIREMENTS FOR AWARDING OF CREDIT

Credit will be awarded for participating in and completing the entire body of work for the program at an acceptable level. See the "First day handout" for details.

1. Each student who regularly attends and participates in all program activities, who satisfactorily completes the exams and all assignments, and who turns in self- and faculty evaluations—*all with acceptable levels of quality*—can expect to receive full upper division credit. You will lose credit, or receive lower-division credit, for weak or incomplete work.
2. Any student who plagiarizes material through failure to attribute and acknowledge sources, or who cheats on quizzes, is liable to lose all credit for the quarter.
3. Failure to complete any aspect of the program, or to abide by the covenant, will result in loss credit. If miss class more than twice, or do not hand in required work, you may receive no credit for the term. In rare cases, partial credit may be awarded for partial completion of the course work. Incompletes will not be granted: all work must be completed by the end of the term.

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES

Evergreen has a long-standing policy that conflicts should, if at all possible, be resolved through respectful, face-to-face discourse. Students agree to the following steps should a conflict arise with another student.

1. Inform the other person that a problem exists and initiate an open discussion.
2. Should no satisfactory resolution be obtained, the student shall inform the faculty, who will initiate dialogue with the involved students.
3. If step 2 is not successful, a neutral third party will be asked to mediate.
4. If step 3 is unsuccessful, the neutral third party will ask an Academic Dean to intervene. Should a student have a conflict with the faculty, including disagreement over the content of his or her evaluation, s/he should follow steps 2 - 4 above as appropriate.

STUDENTS LEAVING THE PROGRAM

A student may be asked to leave the program if s/he doesn't have the prerequisite academic background for the program, or for failure to meet the guidelines set forth in this covenant, or for behavior that is consistently disruptive or antagonistic to the program or its participants.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF COVENANT

By your continued enrollment in this program, you hereby acknowledge, accept and agree to the conditions outlined herein.