Syllabus

Importance of the Fossil Record

(Geo 371T/391)

Instructor: Prof. Timothy Rowe
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Office: JSG 3.216
Office Hours: by appointment

This course is open to graduate students, and undergraduates with sufficient background for meaningful participation.

Overview: This seminar will survey the history of paleontology through lectures and by reading classic publications on the importance of the fossil record. These will include chapters from Darwin's "On the Origin of Species" that treat the fossil record, followed by landmark papers from the 20th Century, as well as contemporary publications. The seminar will focus on systematics and evolution, but we will also discuss significant issues relating to taphonomy and macroevolution. I will pick some of the papers to be discussed, but participants will also be asked to pick literature and lead discussions. We can also use this forum as an opportunity to discuss developing thesis or dissertation chapters, if any of the participants want community input on their work. We will discuss one to three papers each week. The seminar will meet for two hours each week, from 3:00 – 5:00 in EPS 2.136.

Covid Contingencies: For the first two weeks, this will be a virtual seminar, and I believe that it will work reasonably well as an online discussion via Zoom. We will revert to in-person discussions as permitted by the course of the pandemic and UT policies.

Policy on grading: Grades will be based on participation and a ~10-page paper.

Students with disabilities may request appropriate accommodations.