Students requiring accommodations as a result of a disability must contact the Centre for Students with Disabilities (778-782-3112 or csdo@sfu.ca).

BIOLICAL SCIENCES 434
PALEOECOLOGY AND PALYNOLOGY

Fall 2008 (1087)

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Course Prerequisites: Minimum 60 credit hours including BISC 204, or GEOG 215. Some background in Botany, biogeography, or earth sciences is desirable.

Course Description: This course is designed to introduce the subject of paleoecology, or the ecology of the past. By interpreting the fossil records of organisms, it is possible to reconstruct the histories of populations or communities through time. Such information is useful to archaeologists, biogeographers, biologists, stratigraphic geologists, climatologists, and others. Once the principles of paleoecology are outlined, the emphasis will be on microfossils to show how fossil data can be applied to solve problems in a range of different disciplines. Applications can range from understanding past climatic changes, the origins of agriculture, fire history, or changing forest dynamics since the last ice age. Although the emphasis is on pollen and spores, other types of fossils will also be discussed.

Outline of Topics: Topics will be introduced during the two lectures each week, and “hands-on” experience in microfossil and macrofossil identification will be provided in the laboratories.

Required Textbook(s):


Mark Distribution:
Midterm Exam: 25%
Lab Exam: 25%
Final Exam: 25%
Term Paper or Project: 25%