

Paper #3: An Evolutionary Exploration

This course can cover only a tiny fraction of the topics which have been researched in evolution. There is so much more out there! This is your opportunity to explore in depth any evolutionary topic that you find particularly fascinating. Good places to look for ideas include your course notes, the textbook, section readings, or your favorite nature show on TV. Also, web pages of Cornell faculty might be a particularly good place to look. Feel free to talk with graduate students or professors about your topic.

The paper should be 8 - 10 pages and tailored for a broad, but scientifically minded, audience. Writing about a topic that you choose has advantages and disadvantages. While you don't have to meet any preconceived expectations we might have about a particular subject, you do have to figure out the important questions/areas on your own and structure your paper accordingly. It is therefore essential to narrow your topic early on to a workable size. A one page (single-spaced) proposal is due in one week. It should state your topic and examples/material you plan to use. We encourage you to review each other's drafts.

TIMETABLE

November 2 Paper assigned

November 4 Narrow topic and find literature

November 11 Turn in proposal

November 23 Optional draft deadline (no drafts submitted for comments later than this day)

December 2 Final version due

Some topics you might consider are:

the relationship of virulence to transmission of disease
evolution of antibiotic resistance
punctuated equilibria vs gradualism
application of evolution to conservation of endangered species
coevolution and biodiversity
mass extinctions
macroevolution vs microevolution
the evolution of flight in insects
biogeography of marsupials