

DEPARTMENT OF SCIENCE COURSE OUTLINE –WINTER 2026

BI2210 (A3): MECHANISMS OF EVOLUTION – 3 (3-0-0), 45 Hours for 15 Weeks

Northwestern Polytechnic acknowledges that our campuses are located on Treaty 8 territory, the ancestral and present-day home to many diverse First Nations, Metis, and Inuit people. We are grateful to work, live and learn on the traditional territory of Duncan's First Nation, Horse Lake First Nation and Sturgeon Lake Cree Nation, who are the original caretakers of this land.

We acknowledge the history of this land and we are thankful for the opportunity to walk together in friendship, where we will encourage and promote positive change for present and future generations.

INSTRUCTOR:	Dr. Jessie Zgurski	PHONE:	780-539-2863
OFFICE:	J221	E-MAIL:	JZgurski@nwpolytech.ca
OFFICE HOURS:	Drop-in (my schedule is on my office door), or by appointment.		

CALENDAR DESCRIPTION: Discusses the major features of the evolutionary process, including the fossil record, basic population genetics, variation, natural selection, adaptation, and speciation.

PREREQUISITE(S)/COREQUISITE: BI1080 and BI1070

REQUIRED TEXT/RESOURCE MATERIALS:

Futuyma, D., and Kirkpatrick, M. 2022. *Evolution, Fifth Edition*. Oxford University Press.
(Recommended Textbook)

Other required readings will be placed on the course website throughout the semester.

DELIVERY MODE(S): Lecture (Tuesday and Thursday 11:30 AM – 12:50 PM in B201).

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

By the end of the course, students should be able to:

1. Describe the history and development of evolutionary thought.
2. List and describe evidence for evolution from various fields of study, including paleontology, genetics, ecology, and developmental biology.
3. Describe the mechanisms by which evolution occurs, and explain the effects of mutation, migration, genetic drift, non-random mating and natural selection on the genetics of a population.

4. Explain the methodologies used to reconstruct phylogenetic trees and use freely-available software to reconstruct a phylogenetic tree from DNA sequence data.
5. Describe the processes and mechanisms that lead to speciation.

TRANSFERABILITY:

Please consult the Alberta Transfer Guide for more information. You may check to ensure the transferability of this course at the Alberta Transfer Guide main page <http://www.transferralberta.ca>.

**** Grade of D or D+ may not be acceptable for transfer to other post-secondary institutions. Students are cautioned that it is their responsibility to contact the receiving institutions to ensure transferability**

EVALUATIONS: Midterm – 30% (February 24, 2025)

Final exam – 30%

Quizzes – 20%

Assignments – 20%

Instructions and due dates for the assignments will be announced in class. The final exam will take place during the scheduled exam period. Failure to write the midterm or final exam will result in a grade of zero unless the exam was missed for a compelling reason (such as an illness). In such a case, the exam will be deferred.

GRADING CRITERIA:

Please note that most universities will not accept your course for transfer credit **IF** your grade is **less than C-**.

Alpha Grade	4-point Equivalent	Percentage Guidelines		Alpha Grade	4-point Equivalent	Percentage Guidelines
A+	4.0	95-100		C+	2.3	67-69
A	4.0	85-94		C	2.0	63-66
A-	3.7	80-84		C-	1.7	60-62
B+	3.3	77-79		D+	1.3	55-59
B	3.0	73-76		D	1.0	50-54
B-	2.7	70-72		F	0.0	00-49

COURSE SCHEDULE/TENTATIVE TIMELINE:

Topic	Tentative Dates
Introduction to BI2210	January 6
Topic One: The History and Development of Modern Evolutionary Thought.	January 6, 8, 13
Topic Two: Taxonomic Practice, Phylogenies and Tree-Thinking.	January 13, 15, 20
Topic Three: Natural Selection and Adaptation	January 22, 27
Topic Four: Mutation and Variation	January 29 February 5
Topic Five: Genetical Theory of Natural Selection (Includes unit on domestication).	February 10, 12, 26
Winter Break – No Classes	February 17, 19
Midterm Exam	February 24
Topic Six: Species and Speciation	March 3, 5
Topic Seven: Sex and Sexual Selection	March 10, 12
Topic Eight: Conflict and Cooperation	March 17, 19
Topic Nine: Evolution of Genes and Genomes	March 24, 26, 31
Topic Ten: History of Life on Earth	April 2, 7, 9

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES: Students are expected to attend classes and complete all assignments. Refer to the College Policy on Student Rights and Responsibilities at https://www.nwpolytech.ca/about/administration/policies/#academic_policies

Typically, late assignments will be docked 5% per day late and they will not be accepted after one week. However, if you have a compelling reason for requiring an extension (such as an illness), please contact the instructor and the late penalty will be waived.

STATEMENT ON PLAGIARISM AND CHEATING:

Cheating and plagiarism will not be tolerated and there will be penalties. For a more precise definition of plagiarism and its consequences, refer to the Student Conduct section of the College Calendar at <https://www.nwpolytech.ca/programs/calendar/or> the College Policy on Student Misconduct: Plagiarism and Cheating at <https://www.nwpolytech.ca/about/administration/policies/>

****Note:** all Academic and Administrative policies are available on the same page.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: Students are expected to frequently check the course website and their college E-mail accounts for announcements regarding the class. Other learning resources, including practice exam questions and supplemental articles to read, will be added to the page during the semester.