

GEL 120 - Origins: From the Big Bang to Today
David Osleger, Dept. of Earth & Planetary Sciences

Spring, 2020

Textbook: *Big History: Between Nothing and Everything* (Christian, Brown, & Benjamin, 2014)

Course description: “Origins” focuses on the long-term and large-scale perspectives on the origins of the universe, stars and planets, life, humanity, the rise of civilization, and the modern world.

Goals for the course:

- To learn to think critically at a wide range of scales of both time and space.
- To provide a chronology of key thresholds and events in the history of the universe, our planet, life, and humanity.
- To make you a more informed, scientifically literate citizen of the world and a life-long learner.

Please be sure to carefully read the homepage on the GEL120 Canvas site.

Date	Topic	Reading
March 30	What is Big History? Scales of Space & Time	Introduction
April 1-3	Threshold 1: Big Bang Origin of the Universe	Chapter 1
April 6-8	Threshold 2: The Stars Light Up <i>(quiz: April 6)</i>	Chapter 1
April 10-13	Threshold 3: Origin of the Elements	Chapter 1
April 15-22	Threshold 4: Our Solar System & Early Earth	Chapter 2
April 20	Midterm 1 (27%)	
April 24–29	Threshold 5: Emergence of Life & Early Life Great Oxygenation Event <i>(quiz: April 27)</i>	Chapter 3
May 1-6	Origin of Continents, Snowball Earth, Metazoans	Chapters 2, 3
May 8-18	Phanerozoic Earth & Life <i>(quiz: May 18)</i>	Chapter 3
May 13	Midterm 2 (27%)	
May 20-27	Threshold 6: Quaternary Climate & Human Evolution	Chapter 4
May 29	Threshold 7: Agriculture & Civilization <i>(quiz: May 29)</i>	Chapters 5, 6
June 1-3	Threshold 8: Great Acceleration, Anthropocene, the Future	Chapters 11, 12
June 8, 10:30-12:30	Final Exam (33%)	