

GEOL 120: Environmental Geology - Fall 2012
Sections 0101-0105 Tue/Thur 12:30-1:45pm, Shoemaker Building (SHM) room 2102

Instructor: Tracey Centorbi
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Office hours: Mondays 12:00-1:00pm or by appointment
Class website: <https://elms.umd.edu>

Text: *Geology and the Environment 6th Edition*, by Pipkin, Trent, Hazlett, and Bierman
ISBN-10: 0538737557 or ISBN-13: 978-0538737555

Discussions:

Mondays 3-3:50 (0101), 4-4:50 (0102), 5-5:50 (0103) Plant Sciences (PLS) room 1158

TA: Carolyn Plank Email: caplank@umd.edu Office: GEOL 3108

Mondays 3-3:50 (0104), 4-4:50 (0105) Plant Sciences (PLS) room 1168

TA: Anna Statkiewicz Email: astatkie@umd.edu Office: GEOL 4108

Course Description and Objectives:

Humans are intimately connected with the physical environment, even though we have only been present for a fraction of the vast history of the Earth. We strive to understand how the Earth has evolved since its formation over 4 billion years ago and what types of processes have fostered these changes. Our knowledge of the Earth is critical, not only for piecing together its history, but also to aid in the understanding of issues relevant to our present-day lives. The goal of this course is, simply enough, to raise your awareness of the environment in which you live and your relationship with it. We will examine the geologic factors tied to many of our environmental concerns including environmental hazards, natural resources, and waste disposal. By the end of the course, you should have gained enough lay knowledge to be able to discuss pressing environmental issues with a sound understanding of the scientific principles involved as well as the social considerations that sometimes make finding solutions difficult.

Class Policies:

The course takes a traditional lecture format and attendance will not be taken. However, examinations will be based largely on material presented in the class, discussion exercises, and the reading assignments. If you miss a lecture, it is your responsibility to obtain notes from a colleague. Attendance will be taken during discussions and count towards your grade. Most lecture periods will have either in-class clicker questions or an exercise, which are held at any time on any day during lecture. If you miss a class, arrive late, or leave early, you will not be permitted to make up these points without prior approval from the instructor.

I mostly will communicate with you during class. However, if necessary to communicate with you between classes I will post announcements on the ELMS website for this class. ELMS also sends e-mail to your university account. Please make sure this account functions and that you check it regularly. I will post handouts and grades on the ELMS site, and you will complete your exams on ELMS. Be sure to check the ELMS site regularly as well. You can access this website at <http://elms.umd.edu> using your official university directory ID and password. It is your responsibility to check ELMS and your e-mail for announcements and ELMS for exams, handouts, and your grades. If you cannot access your e-mail or ELMS call the OIT helpdesk at 301-405-1400 or visit <http://www.oit.umd.edu/>.

If you are a student with a documented disability, please contact me so that we may discuss any academic accommodations you may require.

Please respect the learning environment of your fellow students by arriving to class on time, remaining quiet during lecture, and silencing your electronic devices. Computers are to be used **ONLY** for note taking during lectures, not for catching up on email or social networking.

The University of Maryland, College Park has a nationally recognized Code of Academic Integrity, administered by the Student Honor Council. This Code sets standards for academic integrity at Maryland for all undergraduate and graduate students. As a student you are responsible for upholding these standards for this course. It is very important for you to be aware of the consequences of cheating, fabrication, facilitation, and plagiarism. For more information on the Code of Academic Integrity or the Student Honor Council, please visit <http://www.shc.umd.edu>.

University policy excuses the absences of students for illness, religious observances, participation in official University activities at the request of university authorities and compelling circumstances beyond the student's control. Students who miss a single class for a medical reason are not required to provide medical documentation. Students who miss a single class (lecture or discussion) for a medical reason must make a reasonable effort to contact their instructor in advance, and upon return to class, present the instructor with a self-signed note which acknowledges that the information provided is accurate. A student's failure to provide an accurate statement is a violation of the Honor Code. Subsequent absences will require medical documentation. Students who have a prolonged absence due to illness (multiple consecutive absences) are required to provide written documentation from a health care provider. If you know that you may miss classes for religious observances or university-approved activities, you must notify me *by the end of the drop/add period!* Students who do not notify the instructor and/or TA in the given time period will not be permitted to hand in makeup work.

Some exams will be administered online through the testing program built into the ELMS Blackboard system. You will have a study day to prepare for each exam and an open testing period during which you may complete the exam at the time of your choosing. Exams will be based on lecture material, reading assignments, class activities and discussion topics. The final exam will be cumulative. Some course material (at times substantial proportions) does not appear in the textbook, and will be on the exams. **There are no makeup exams.**

Although some exams will be administered online, you will be expected to uphold the UMD Code of Academic Integrity. Please note that running other programs while using the exam software often causes the exam software to freeze or crash, so I recommend against doing both at the same time on the same computer. During the exam you may not receive individualized help from any source including verbal or written discussion in a face-to-face interaction or by telephone, email, text, or instant message. You may not discuss the content of the exams with your classmates in any way until after the deadline for completing the exam has passed.

The final exam will be administered in the lecture hall on Tuesday, Dec. 18 at 1:30pm. All students must take the final exam! The final exam will be cumulative and will cover material from the previous exams plus material since exam 3.

I strongly encourage you to study for the exams. Do not make the mistake of not studying because the exams are "open book." If you must look up the answer to every exam question the allotted time will expire before you complete the exam.

As an alternate grading opportunity, you may participate in a class discussion board throughout the semester. You would be required to both seek out articles related to the topics we discuss in class and contribute to the discussion of articles that your classmates have posted. Your grade for participation in the discussion board can replace **ONE** of the midterm exams in your final class grade. It cannot replace your final exam grade. Details on the discussion board can be found on the class website.

Most lecture periods will have either in-class clicker questions and/or an exercise, which are held at any time on any day during lecture. As these clicker points and in-class exercises make up a significant portion of your final course grade, they are taken quite seriously. **If you are not physically present in the classroom, your clicker should NOT be there with another student!!!** This is a violation of the Honor Code and will result in referral for discipline of both the absent student and the student who entered the responses. The lowest **five** days of clickers/exercises will be dropped from your final course grade.

In order to submit clicker responses, you must either purchase a clicker keypad device or buy a ResponseWare license for a web enabled device such as an ipad/ipod, smart phone, or laptop. You must register your device at my.umd.edu in order for your responses to be properly graded. Failure to register your clicker may result in no credit being awarded. **You MUST be physically present in class in order to enter clicker responses!**

Additional information is available at www.clickers.umd.edu

The breakdown of grading will be:

- 35% Midterm exams and/or discussion board average
- 30% Discussion average
- 25% Cumulative Final Exam
- 10% Lecture clickers/quizzes

The grading scale is: >98 (without EC) A+, 91-97.9 A, 90-90.9 A-, 88-89.9 B+, 81-87.9 B, 80-80.9 B-, 78-79.9 C+, 71-77.9 C, 70-70.9 C-, 68-69.9 D+, 61-67.9 D, 60-60.9 D-, <60 F

There will be an optional field trip on Saturday, November 17. If you have a schedule conflict, see the instructor. In order to attend, you need to reserve a space and pay a small fee (usually about \$15). Extra credit up to 5% will be awarded to participants. Additional information TBD.

The instructor reserves the right to adjust the course schedule as the needs of the class may warrant. The instructor will notify the class of any changes during lecture and via email to the course email list

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Partial list of important dates:

- 10/2: Midterm exam 1 due
- 10/30: Midterm exam 2 due
- 11/30: Midterm exam 3
- 12/18: Final exam at 1:30 PM.

Additional expectations: In addition to the academic expectations listed in this document, you are expected to treat your classmates, the TAs, and me with respect. You are also expected to behave in a safe and legal manner at all times – particularly important during the field trip. Failure to meet these expectations may result in your dismissal from class or the field trip.

Keys for success:

- 1) **Attend** all classes and **participate actively** – MOST IMPORTANT.
- 2) **Take good notes.** If you don't understand something, ask immediately.
- 3) **Keep up** with reading, homework, and other assignments. If you feel that you don't understand the material, ask for help right away.
- 4) **Study** for the exams.

Weekly Discussion classes:

This portion of the course is designed to supplement the lecture with applied exercises, videos, debates, and discussions of current events. This will also be an opportunity for you to interact and ask questions in a smaller class setting. The schedule of activities will be posted on the class website. *You will need a calculator that can calculate exponents, natural logs, and large numbers for some discussions!*

Makeup assignments will *only* be permitted for those absences approved by University policy. If you are absent due to illness, *your missed assignment is due at the next discussion class*. If it is not handed in at the next class, it will be considered late and be assessed a 10% point penalty per day late.

As with lecture, you are expected to attend all discussions and arrive on time. Each discussion will begin with a brief quiz on the assigned reading. The quiz will last no longer than 5 minutes. If you arrive after the quizzes are handed in, you will not be permitted to take the quiz and will receive a zero.

Online Discussion Board:

This portion of the course is designed to supplement the lecture with a discussion of the current events in the world related to what we discuss in class. Your participation is optional. Your discussion board postings will be graded out of 100%, as follows:

- 1) Each week the instructor will post the new topic. The posting period will be open until a new topic thread begins. When a new topic begins, the previous thread will be closed to new *original posts* but students who have been participating may continue to post *responses* and discuss the issues. Guidelines for posts:
 - Original Posting(s)**
Your original posting(s) should:
 - * give a link to the article, report, or website that you are discussing
 - * mention at least 2 points from the week's readings or lecture
 - * relate new content to what you have learned in the course or relate content to your personal experiences
 - * critically analyze the content - your posting should not be just a summary of the source material
 - * be grammatically correct and proofread for spelling errors. Spelling counts in the real world, it counts here too!
 - Responses to Student Postings**
Your responses to other students and the instructor should:
 - * incorporate quotes or subjects from the other postings
 - * relate the material to the course or articles you have read
 - * be logically reasoned and supported; if you quote statistics or another source of information CITE IT!
 - * be grammatically correct and proofread for spelling errors.
- 2) An example of a discussion board thread will be posted to the class website so that you know what level of discussion is expected. Your discussion board grade will be based on this rubric:
 - 90-100%** - a minimum of 6 original posts on at least 6 different topics, 25 responses on at least 5 topics
Postings:
 - * are made in a timely fashion, giving others an opportunity to respond
 - * are thoughtful, and analyze the content or question asked
 - * make connections to other content and real-life situations
 - * extend discussions already taking place, or pose new possibilities or opinions not previously voiced
 - 70-89%** - a minimum of 6 original posts on at least 6 topics, 20 responses on at least 4 topics
Postings:
 - * are made in a timely fashion, giving others an opportunity to respond
 - * are thoughtful, and analyze the content or question asked
 - * make connections to previous or current content or to real-life situations, but the connections are unclear, not firmly established or are not obvious
 - * contain novel ideas, connections, and/or real-world applications, but lack depth, detail and/or explanation
 - 50 - 69%** - a minimum of 4 original posts on at least 4 subjects, 15-20 responses on at least 4 topics
Postings:
 - * are usually, but not always, made in a timely fashion
 - * make limited, vague connections between class readings and postings by other students
 - * contain few novel ideas; reflect what other students have already posted, or what the text clearly states
 - 0-49%** - participated below the standards defined above