

Course Syllabus Final: Physical Geology Online
McCoy College of Science, Mathematics, and Engineering
GEOS 1134 Section X10
Winter Mini-Term 2021-22

Contact Information

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Miniterm Office Hours – not applicable; will be checking email/D2L at least twice most days.

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Course Description

A Lecture-based overview of the Earth, its mineral and rock components, and the variety of physical processes, both surface and subsurface that have operated over the long history of Earth. Lectures, by their very nature are of limited length and cover only the most essential aspects of the 24 topics that comprise this course. These topics include the various components of the earth including minerals, igneous rocks, sedimentary rocks, and metamorphic rocks and their associated mineral and energy deposits. We will also look at the various subsurface processes such as weathering, erosion, mass movement due to water, wind, and gravity that largely shape the Earth's surface. We will also examine the subsurface processes that affect us such as earthquakes and volcanic activity and their associated hazards. Running throughout the course and providing a unifying theory for much of geology is the theory of plate tectonics originally put forward as a hypothesis in the early 1900's and only became widely accepted about 50 years ago. In addition to the PowerPoint-based lectures, you are also expected to read the appropriate chapters in the required course textbook. This course outline/syllabus contains a detailed schedule including a list of specific topics and corresponding textbook readings.

The Lab portion of the course includes projects ranging from mineral and rock identification to using and understanding maps to studying key surface processes such as mass wasting (landslides and rock falls), impact of water as an agent of weathering and transport medium, and the impact of more dramatic geological processes such as earthquakes and volcanoes. You will learn the importance of plate tectonics as a unifying theme for geology and as an explanation for the occurrence and distribution of oceans, mountains, earthquakes, volcanoes, and large geologically "quiet" regions such as the eastern portion of the United States. You will also understand the role of rivers, winds, oceans, and gravity that continuously shape the Earth's surface. **You will not need to purchase a lab kit that normally goes along with this course due to shipping delays related to the Winter holidays as well as Covid-19.**

Required or Recommended Textbook & Instructional Materials

Recommended textbook is Earth: An Introduction to Physical Geology (Tarbuck et al., 12th Edition) or prior version or an online Physical Geology textbook. A lab kit is not required for this year's Winter MiniTerm. Available online textbooks include: <https://opengeology.org/textbook/>, <https://opentextbc.ca/geology/>, <https://open.umn.edu/opentextbooks/textbooks/physical-geology-first-university-of-saskatchewan-edition>

Student Handbook

Refer to: <https://msutexas.edu/student-life/assets/files/handbook.pdf>

Academic Misconduct Policy & Procedures

Academic Dishonesty: Cheating, collusion, and plagiarism (the act of using source material of other persons, either published or unpublished, without following the accepted techniques of crediting, or the submission for credit of work not the individual's to whom credit is given). Additional guidelines on procedures in these matters may be found in the Office of Student Conduct. See Student Handbook.

Grading

There will be three lecture exams, the first two will each determine 15% of your final grade and the third ("final") exam will determine 20% of your course grade. Note that all lecture exams are "cumulative and comprehensive"; all prior material covered in lecture and lab, recommended textbook readings, and any assigned readings will be included on exams. The "lecture" portion of the course will account for 50% of your final course grade. The "lab" portion of your grade will account for a total 40% of your final course grade. The lab grade will be derived as follows: 75% based on assigned labs, 10% on homework assignments, 5% on your participation in online discussions (quality rather than quantity of contribution is most important), and 10% from the self-assessments. The self-assessments will help you assess your mastery of both the lab and the lecture material. Although you will receive a numerical self-assessment grade, the assessments are counted as completed or not as far as your final course grade is concerned. If you complete 75% of the self-assessments, your self-assessment "grade" for the semester is 75%; if you complete only 40% of the self-assessments, your self-assessment "grade" for the semester is 40%. Completion of all lab assignments on time is expected. You will submit your lab assignments via assignment-specific D2L dropboxes. Lab assignments are due per the syllabus. If you know you will miss a lab assignment due date you must email Dr. Meddaugh and the Course Assistant, if there is one, in advance. Given appropriate notice, labs must be made up within a day or two or a lab exercise grade penalty may be imposed (10% for one day past due; 25% for two-days past due; and 50% for three days past due). After three days, a missed lab may be given a grade of zero. Lab assignments are given on the syllabus and correspond to labs in the Lab Kit. You will be able to access the lab assignments

via D2L or the eScience website. Homework assignments will also be given during the course of the semester; several per week. The homework assignments will be posted in D2L. The homework assignments will include questions to answer that focus on lecture and lab content. The homework assignments will have a due date and a grade penalty may be assessed for late assignments as follows: up to 25% for two days past due; up to 50% for three days past due; after three days a grade of zero for the missed homework may be recorded. Homework will be submitted via D2L (look for assignment specific dropboxes!). Homework due dates are listed in the syllabus. Finally, your Research Paper (details in separate section below) will account for the remaining 10% of your final grade. An electronic (MSWord) version of your completed Research Paper is due per the syllabus schedule. The penalty for late submission of the research paper is as follows: 10% for one day past due; 25% for two days past due; 50% for more than three days past due; after three days a grade of zero may be recorded for the Research Paper grade. The topic for your Research Paper is due per the syllabus schedule. Note: No work may be submitted after 12/31/2021.

Table 1: Points allocated to graded item or group of items discussed in the Grading Section above.

Graded Items	Contribution to Final Course Grade
Exams 1 and 2 (each)	15%
Exam 3 (aka Final Exam)	20%
Lab Assignments (11 in total)	30% (total)
Homework Assignments (12 in total)	4% (total)
Research Paper	10%
Discussion Questions	2% (if applicable)
Self-Assessments (12 in total)	4% (total)

Table 2: Final grade determination (grades are normally rounded up to the nearest integer before assigning the final course letter grade. This means, for example, that a final calculated course grade of 89.8% will be rounded up to a final course grade of 90.)

Grade	
A	90
B	80-89
C	70-79
D	60-69
F	Less than 60

Homework

See Grading Section for details – All Homework to be submitted via the appropriate and specific D2L dropbox.

Lab Assignments

See Grading Section for details – All Lab Assignments to be submitted via the appropriate and specific D2L dropbox.

Exams

See Grading Section for details – All Exams will be provided in D2L. Details regarding the “open” period for completing the exams are provided in the Course Schedule. All exams will have a time limit of 55 minutes for the two “midterm” Exams and 100 minutes for the final Exam. The open and close times for the three exams are given in the Course Schedule.

Research Paper

Research paper grade is 10% of final course grade.

Research papers must be between 2250 and 3250 words (about 4-6 pages of text based on 11-pt or 12-pt font; word count per MSWord’s word count tool) and be no longer than thirteen total pages including illustrations and title page. Figures and/or tables (with captions) may be included within text or at end of paper (proper credit must be given for figures, maps, pictures that you include in your report). Format for the report is MS Word or pdf file. The digital copy to be submitted per the course schedule/syllabus. Your paper must be organized as follows:

1. Title and author name on front page. Nothing else on the front page, please!
2. Abstract – 250 word limit summarizing your paper **including a sentence on why you chose the particular topic**
3. Introduction – Opening paragraphs of your paper that describe the topic in general, its importance or application to you and the community, **and why you choose the particular topic**
4. Main Body – Discussion of what your research revealed to you and what you want to share
5. Conclusion – the key message or “take-away” points that you expect the reader to remember
6. References – list of references you used to research and write your paper; minimum number of references is three.

Failure to follow the organizational and heading structure given above may result in a 20% grade deduction! Failure to follow the length requirement may result in additional 10% grade deduction. Failure to properly cite your sources in the text (generally at least one citation/reference per paragraph is expected) and figures may result in a 5% grade reduction. Please make sure that for any map, picture, etc. that

you have used in your paper that you provide the source/reference in the map, picture, or image caption. Papers are due as per the syllabus schedule. The penalty for late submission of the research paper is as follows: 10% for one day past due; 25% for two days past due; 50% for more than three days past due; after three days a grade of zero may be recorded for the Research Paper grade. Note: No work may be submitted after 1/2/2021. All Research Papers must be submitted in Microsoft Word or PDF format via the appropriate and specific D2L dropbox.

Extra Credit

There are no Extra Credit opportunities in this course.

Late Work

Late work will be accepted through 1/2/2021. However, the following penalties will apply in all cases of late submittals (unless other arrangements have been made): 10% for week day past due; 20% for two weeks past due; 30% for weeks days past due; after weeks days a grade of zero may be recorded. No course assignments will be accepted after 1/2/2021.

Important Dates

Last Day to drop with a grade of "W:" May Not Applicable to Winter Miniterm courses - Contact Registrar's Office.

Refer to: <https://calendar.msutexas.edu/event/last-day-for-w-drops---spring-2021/>

Desire-to-Learn (D2L)

Extensive use of the MSU D2L program is a part of this course. Each student is expected to be familiar with this program as it provides a primary source of communication regarding assignments, examination materials, and general course information. You can log into [D2L](#) through the MSU Homepage. If you experience difficulties, please contact the technicians listed for the program or contact your instructor.

Online Computer Requirements

Taking an online class requires you to have access to a computer with reasonable Internet access to complete and upload your assignments. It is your responsibility to have (or have access to) a working computer in this class. Assignments and tests are due by the due date, and personal computer technical difficulties may not be considered as a reason for the instructor to allow students extra time to submit assignments, tests, or discussion postings. Computers are available on campus in various areas of the buildings as well as the Academic Success Center. Your computer being down is not an excuse for missing a deadline! There are many places to access your class! Our online classes can be accessed from any computer in the world which is connected to the internet. Contact your instructor immediately upon having computer trouble. If you have

technical difficulties in the course, there is also a student helpdesk available to you. The college cannot work directly on student computers due to both liability and resource limitations however they are able to help you get connected to our online services. For help, log into [D2L](#).

Change of Schedule

A student dropping a course (but not withdrawing from the University) within the first 12 class days of a regular semester or the first four class days of a summer semester is eligible for a 100% refund of applicable tuition and fees. Dates are published in the Schedule of Classes each semester. **Consult the Registrar's office for policies and deadlines related to summer classes or winter mini-term classes.**

Refund and Repayment Policy

A student who withdraws or is administratively withdrawn from Midwestern State University (MSU) may be eligible to receive a refund for all or a portion of the tuition, fees and room/board charges that were paid to MSU for the semester. HOWEVER, if the student received financial aid (federal/state/institutional grants, loans and/or scholarships), all or a portion of the refund may be returned to the financial aid programs. As described below, two formulas (federal and state) exists in determining the amount of the refund. (Examples of each refund calculation will be made available upon request).

Services for Students With Disabilities

In accordance with Section 504 of the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, Midwestern State University endeavors to make reasonable accommodations to ensure equal opportunity for qualified persons with disabilities to participate in all educational, social, and recreational programs and activities. After notification of acceptance, students requiring accommodations should make application for such assistance through Disability Support Services, located in the Clark Student Center, Room 168, (940) 397-4140. Current documentation of a disability will be required in order to provide appropriate services, and each request will be individually reviewed. For more details, please go to [Disability Support Services](#).

College Policies

Campus Carry Rules/Policies are given here: [Campus Carry Rules and Policies](#)

Smoking/Tobacco Policy

College policy strictly prohibits the use of tobacco products in any building owned or operated by WATC. Adult students may smoke only in the outside designated-smoking areas at each location.

Alcohol and Drug Policy

To comply with the Drug Free Schools and Communities Act of 1989 and subsequent amendments, students and employees of Midwestern State are

informed that strictly enforced policies are in place, which prohibits the unlawful possession, use or distribution of any illicit drugs, including alcohol, on university property or as part of any university-sponsored activity. Students and employees are also subject to all applicable legal sanctions under local, state and federal law for any offenses involving illicit drugs on University property or at University-sponsored activities.

Grade Appeal Process

Students who wish to appeal a grade should consult the Midwestern State University [Undergraduate Catalog](#)

Notice

Changes in the course syllabus, procedure, assignments, and schedule may be made at the discretion of the instructor. Changes will be communicated to all students through [D2L](#). Please check the course news on a regular basis for schedule updates.

Course Schedule

Course schedule detail given on the next pages. The first table lists lecture topics, exams, and textbook readings. The second table lists the dates for the three exams and the lab, research paper, homework, and self-assessment assignments and submission deadlines.

For Winter Mini-Term courses, you may work ahead but may not fall behind the deadlines given in the Course Schedule portion of this syllabus. This means, for example, that all exams are open starting Day 2 of the Winter Mini-term, but will close per the schedule below. Likewise, labs, homework, research paper, etc. may be submitted ahead of the due dates in the schedule below but may receive penalties per the syllabus if submitted late. The mini-term course content is the same as the full semester course. It will require the following time commitment:

- Lectures (voice-over PowerPoint files in mp4 format) – 2-3 hours per day
- Lab Exercises – about 1-2 hours per lab
- Homework and Assessment Review – about 0.5 -1 hour per day
- Textbook reading – The textbook is required though many students choose to access online resources as needed rather than purchase/rent the textbook. Historically, students “claim” to average about 1 hour per subject/topic to supplement the lectures.

The total time commitment is about 4-5 hours per day; seven days a week for the mini-term (Christmas Day is a holiday)! Students cannot afford to fall behind. The intent of the syllabus schedule is to keep you on track!

Course Schedule – Lecture Topics and Exams, Text Reading (Page 1 of 2)

Date	Topic and Topic Number	Textbook Pages
13-Dec	Course Overview. What is Science? What is the Scientific Method? Geology as a Science. Why Study Geology? Time and Geology - Relative Time, Absolute Time, Age of the Earth. (Topics 1 and 2)	Pages 2-13; Pages 272-281
14-Dec	Seismology and the Gross Internal Structure of the Earth (Topic 3); Plate Tectonics as the Unifying Principle for Geology - Part 1 (Topic 4); Plate Tectonics as the Unifying Principle for Geology - Part 2 (Topic 4);	Pages 19-35 and Pages 362-385 (Topic 3) and Pages 36-71 (Topic 4)
15-Dec	Mineralogy - Part 1. Basic Concepts (Topic 5); Mineralogy - Part 2. Important Mineral Classes and Specific Minerals (Topic 5);	Pages 72-105 (Topic 5)
16-Dec	Igneous Rocks - Part 1. Introduction (Topic 6); Igneous Rocks - Part 2. Magma and Intrusive Igneous Activity (Topic 6); Igneous Rocks - Part 3. Volcanoes and Associated Hazards and Economic Geology of Igneous Rocks (Topic 7, 8);	Pages 106-139 (Topic 6); Pages 140-179 (Topic 7, 8);
17-Dec	Weathering and Soil Formation (Topic 9); Sedimentary Rocks - Part 1. (Topic 10); Sedimentary Rocks - Part 2. (Topic 10);	Pages 180-209 (Topic 9); Pages 210-239 (Topic 10);
20-Dec	Sedimentary Rocks - Part 3. Sedimentary Textures and Depositional Environments (Topic 10); Sedimentary Rocks - Part 4. Diagenesis and Lithification (Topic 10)	Pages 210-239 (Topic 10);
21-Dec	Sedimentary Rocks - Part 4. Diagenesis and Lithification (topic 10); Economic Geology of Sedimentary Rocks (Topic 11)	Pages 210-239 (Topic 10); Possible additional reading TBA for oil and gas (Topic 11).
22-Dec	Course Review 1 Exam 1 (all Topics through Topic 11) (open 12/13/2021 at 9am and close at 12/22/2021 at 10pm)	

Continued on next page

Course Schedule – Lecture Topics and Exams, Text Reading (Page 2 of 2)

Date	Topic and Topic Number	Textbook Pages
23-Dec	Metamorphic Rocks - Part 1. Metamorphism, Metamorphic Textures, Common Metamorphic Rocks (Topic 12); Metamorphic Rocks - Part 2. Burial/Regional Metamorphism (Topic 12); Metamorphic Rocks - Part 3. Contact and Hydrothermal Metamorphism; Economic Geology of Metamorphic Rocks (Topic 12)	Pages 240-271
24-Dec	Crustal Processes - Surface Geological Observations; Deformation - Folds and Fractures (Topic 14); Crustal Processes - Earthquakes (Topic 13)	Pages 302-325 (Topic 14) Pages 326-361 (Topic 13)
25-Dec	Holiday- Mini Break	
26-Dec	Crustal Processes – Oceans (Topic 15) and Crustal Processes – Mountains (Topic 16), and Crustal Processes - Mass Wasting (Topic 17); Crustal Processes - Surface and Running Water (Topic 18) and Ground Water (Topic 19)	Pages 386-417 (Topic 15), Pages 418-441 (Topic 16), Pages 442-465 (Topic 17) and Pages 466-499 (Topic 18); Pages 500-531 (Topic 19)
27-Dec	Course Review 2 Exam 2 – All Topics through Topic 19 (open 12/13/2021 at 9am and close at 12/27/2021 at 10pm)	
28-Dec	Crustal Processes – Glaciers (Topic 20); Crustal Processes - Winds and Deserts (Topic 22) and Crustal Processes - Oceans and Shorelines (Topic 21);	Pages 532-569 (Topic 20) and Pages 594-629 (Topic 22)
29-Dec	Climate Change - Experimenting on a Small Planet (Topic 23), A Very Short Version of Earth's Geological History (Topic 24)	Pages 570-593 and Pages 630-665 (Topic 23), Pages 666-701 (Topic 24)
30-Dec	Course Review	
31-Dec	Final Exam – Comprehensive; all Lecture and Lab Topics (open 12/13/2021 at 9am and close at 12/31/2021 at 5pm)	

Course Schedule –Due Dates for Labs, Homework, **Research Paper, and Assessments (Page 1 of 2).**

Date	Lab Assignment Due Dates. (The corresponding eScience Lab Number and Exercise Number(s) is also given)	Homework and Self-Assessment Assignments Due Dates
12/14/2021	No lab due.	None Due. Please send an email to the instructor acknowledging that you have read and understand the course syllabus.
12/15/2021	No lab due.	HW 1 and Assessment 1
12/16/2021	Lab A: Geological Age Dating	HW 2 and Assessment 2
12/17/2021	No Lab due.	HW 3 and Assessment 3
12/18/2021	Lab B: Mineral Identification	
12/19/2021	Lab C: Igneous Rock Identification	HW 4 and Assessment 4
12/20/2021	Lab D: Sedimentary Rock Identification	HW 5 and Assessment 5
12/21/2021	Lab E: Metamorphic Rock identification	HW 6 and Assessment 6
12/22/2021	Lab F: Plate Tectonics and Earthquakes	HW 7 and Assessment 7
12/23/2021	No Lab Due. Research Paper Topic is Due.	HW 8 and Assessment 8
12/24/2021	Lab G: Mass Wasting/Angle of Repose	HW 9 and Assessment 9
12/25/2021	Holiday Mini-Break	
12/26/2021	Lab H: Fluvial Processes	HW 10 and Assessment 10
12/27/2021	Lab I: Groundwater	HW 11 and Assessment 11
12/28/2021	Lab J: Wind/Deserts	No HW or Assessment Due
12/29/2021	Lab K: Topographic and Geological Maps	No HW or Assessment Due
12/31/2021	Research Paper Due	HW 12 and Assessment 12.

Date	Lab Assignment Due Dates. (The corresponding eScience Lab Number and Exercise Number(s) is also given)	Homework and Self-Assessment Assignments Due Dates
12/31/2021	Last Day to Submit Any Work for Credit (excluding Exams). Any items must be submitted by 2pm CDT. Grade penalties per the Course Syllabus may apply.	

End of course syllabus