



Course Syllabus: Graduate Seminar GEOS 6001 -201 Spring 2021

Contact Information

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Course Description

With completion of your Master of Science degree, you are likely to be engaged in pursuits where you may be the sole authoritative voice of scientific evaluation. You will be the rare vessel of knowledge and understanding about Earth materials and processes. In some cases, you will be the defender of your insights to a body of experts. Very few of us are predisposed to serve these roles; this seminar course will engender the skills necessary and typical for those who hold an M.S. in Geoscience.

Additionally, when you complete your Master of Science degree, you will most likely seek employment or further educational opportunities. You will compete with graduates from a number of other excellent programs. It is my sincere hope that you are not merely competitive, but the clearly superior candidate in these evaluative processes. This seminar is preparation towards that goal.

But lastly, you need to get to completion. The seminar will endeavor to enhance skills that ease the thesis process and alerting you to the obstacles that you will need to overcome to walk away with the degree.

Graduate seminar should be a chance for

- Interactions and information exchange amongst the academically active grad cohort
- Broad dissemination of general and scientific information
- Honing critical thinking and communication skills
- Exploration of geologic topics

Our immediate objectives

- Enhance expository and reflective communication
- Strengthen critical thinking
- Explore new ideas

- Heighten academic, professional and interpersonal skills
- Develop a robust broad understanding of geoscience
- Grow as scientists

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Dishonesty: Cheating, collusion, and plagiarism (the act of using source material of other persons, either published or unpublished, without following the accepted techniques of crediting, or the submission for credit of work not the individual's to whom credit is given).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. As chair, I reserve the right to dismiss you from the program if you engage in academic dishonesty.

Student Handbook

Refer to: [Student Handbook](#)

Plagiarism Policy

Plagiarism is the use of someone else's thoughts, words, ideas, or lines of argument in your own work without appropriate documentation (a parenthetical citation at the end and a listing in "Works Cited")-regardless of its use in a quote, paraphrase, or summary. It is a theft of intellectual property and will not be tolerated, whether intentional or not.

Grading

Table 1: Points allocated to each assignment

Components	Points
Participation, engagement, weekly activities	25
Written assignments	20
Presentations	20
Resume/CV	5
Research fest	20
Reflection on scientific and professional ethics	5
Membership	5

Table 2: Total points for final grade.

Grade	Percentage
A	>90%
B	80-90%
C	70-79%
D	60-69%
F	<60%

Evaluation

I will provide feedback both formally and informally. Firstly, I will be evaluating your performance on the basis of quality presentation, participation and engagement in the seminar. I may call on other evaluation methods as needed, including (but not limited to) quizzes, worksheets, exercises, and extensive face-to-face questioning over beverages of my choosing. In all cases, I will be looking for your genuine growth as we progress; you need not try to outperform your classmates so much as outperform your previous self. Progress people! We are in search of progress.

Participation

Seminar classes rely on interaction and discussion. You will need to be actively involved in each session to receive full credit for participation. I have high expectations, so please showcase your engagement at every opportunity.

Colloquium and Talk Participation & Writing Assignments

To grow as a student and as a professional, you should attend presentations by other knowledgeable authorities as they arise.

The department offers a colloquium, although this semester, the presenters are likely to exclusively be candidates for our open position in environmental sciences. You need to definitely attend at least one of these and two other acceptable presentations.

Acceptable presentations include:

- Other sessions of our Colloquium
- NTGS or other geosociety meetings
- Conference presentations (GSA, AAPG, AGU, etc..)
- Short courses

I am requiring **a written summary within a week** for each attended presentation. The summary should include the title of the presentation, the speaker's name and affiliation, a short synopsis of the presentation, a few sentences on how the presentation related to your prior understanding of the topic, and a few sentences on your personal impressions of the presentation (style, execution, etc...). Each submission should be a third (or better) draft, exceptionally coherent, and free of spelling and grammatical errors.

Presentations

You will be asked to give a series of short presentations on topics. Some will involve your participating in a group presentation, others will be solo presentations.

Resume/C.V.

Early in the semester, I will have you construct or modify your resume. You will be asked to honor a list of guidelines. This will be a graded assignment.

Research Fest

Towards the end of the semester, you will organize and present a symposium of ongoing research. The topic: your thesis. As you are all at different stages, some of these will be presentations of your own research, while others will need to rely on increasing degrees of background material towards an evolving idea. As a group, you will need to pick a date in early November, secure a room, and organize a two hour event to which you invite the faculty and students of the Kimbell School of Geosciences. It would be nice to have refreshments...just sayin'.

Reflections on Ethics

Your professor would like to believe that ethical behavior is second nature to everyone, but he subscribes a newspaper, and so knows that universal ethics is not reality. Experience suggests that exposure to ethical guidelines is useful, even for upstanding citizens such as yourselves. We'll engage an exercise to evaluate ethical behavior in the science and profession of geology.

Membership

Professional geologists seek ways to interact with the greater community. It provides information and feedback throughout your career, and can permit opportunities to network and communicate. You need to hold a current membership in one or more geological or geophysical professional organizations before the end of the semester.

To receive credit, you need to provide some form of proof of current membership and a paragraph statement that mentions why you joined that organization.

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.

Attendance

This class is targeted at graduate students. At this point, you undoubtedly realize the importance of interactions with your professor and colleagues in the classroom and lab settings. You need to be both present and fully engaged in each meeting. In the rare case you are missing a meeting, you should contact the professor and the other members of the class to inform us of your absence.

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.

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) exist 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](#).

Learning environment

Dr. Price is committed to providing an equitable and inclusive forum for learning and endeavors to keep this class an open, supporting, and safe space for all students. He is available and willing to address your issues and concerns. He also wants you to be aware of the following supporting structures that assist in this environment.

MOSAIC Cross Cultural Center: a "support, resource, and advocacy center providing multicultural opportunities for the MSU Community that promotes self-awareness, identity, and culture" <https://msutexas.edu/student-life/mosaic/index.php>

Policies for general student complaints are available at <https://msutexas.edu/student-life/dean/general.php>. General student complaints should start with the informal process form https://cm.maxient.com/reportingform.php?MSUTexas&layout_id=4

Sexual misconduct is handled by the Title IX Coordinator, and misconduct information and reporting is [https://msutexas.edu/human-resources/policy/4-general-university-policies/4.161-A-Title IX Sexual Misconduct.asp](https://msutexas.edu/human-resources/policy/4-general-university-policies/4.161-A-Title_IX_Sexual_Misconduct.asp)

Anonymous complaints can be made through EthicsPoint: <https://secure.ethicspoint.com/domain/media/en/gui/45483/index.html>

Pandemic

The pandemic remains a concern. The instructor would appreciate your thoughtful engagement of the class, including respecting the health, safety, and concerns of your colleagues.

As always – illness is an excused absence. So is isolation and quarantining.

Please report positive tests and exposures to COVID-19 to

https://cm.maxient.com/reportingform.php?MSUTexas&layout_id=9 . I will work with you to stay current in this class in the case of absences.

Distancing, masks, and hygiene are strongly encouraged when area infection rates are high. We're not a big class, thankfully reduces our risk of serving as disease vectors.

Vaccination is key to disarming the virus. Vaccines remain free and widely available. The vaccines are safe and effective and will protect the student and other members of the MSU Texas community. The following are suggested resources:

- Vinson Health Center by appointment (940-397-4231).
- Local retail pharmacy location such as CVS, United Supermarkets and Market Street, and Walgreens.
- Your primary care physician.
- Find a vaccine location statewide: [COVIDvaccine.texas.gov](https://www.covidvaccine.texas.gov) or call 833-832-7067 for assistance.

Fully vaccinated students who are not experiencing symptoms will NOT be required to quarantine or seek testing following exposure. Following a known exposure, students should monitor for symptoms over the course of 14 days and quarantine if symptoms develop.

Unvaccinated students having a known exposure will be required to quarantine for a minimum of 10 days or longer. An exception is made for unvaccinated exposed with a COVID-19 diagnosis and recovery in the last 90 days and is symptom free.

Self-isolation will be required for all students who test positive for COVID-19. Any student who has a laboratory confirmed case of COVID-19 must complete the COVID-19 Reporting Form for Students.

The Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center and Texas Tech Health Sciences Center El Paso hosted a virtual town hall "This is Your Shot: Vaccine

Facts & Science” (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rTmP1aLOVtE>) this week to answer questions regarding the COVID-19 vaccine. Please note the program begins at the 10:24 mark of the recording.

Notice

Changes in the course syllabus, procedure, assignments, and schedule may be made at the discretion of the instructor.

Course Schedule

We meet each Friday at 1PM.

Important due dates and other requirements will be imparted as the semester progresses.

We will not meet

Sept 3 – pre-Labor Day weekend, 'cause the prof says so

Oct 22 – prof is doing hard time at DDRS

Nov 26 – black Friday annual consumer holiday