



**Course Syllabus: Physical Geology**  
**McCoy College of Science, Mathematics, and Engineering**  
GEOS 1134 Section 102  
FALL 2025

**Contact Information**

Instructor: Dr. Brad Carter  
Office: Bolin Hall, 101F  
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**Course Description**

In this course, you will discover that geology is more connected to your everyday life than you might expect. You will learn about minerals and rocks, which are the building blocks of planet Earth and also contain the natural resources we depend on in our daily our lives and advance our technology. You will also learn about how Earth's internal processes drive earthquakes, volcanoes and mountain building and how Earth's external surface processes, such as weathering and erosion by water and wind, shape the surface of the Earth. You will also learn about the geologic hazards associated with Earth's internal and surface processes.

**Textbook**

Physical Geology, 17<sup>th</sup> Edition; Authors: Charles C. Plummer, Diane H. Carlson, and Lisa Hammersley

**Grading**

There will be three lecture exams. Each of these exams will each count for 20% of your final grade. Lab assignments will count for 30% of your final grade. The remaining 10% will be assigned to a research paper.

Table 1: Points allocated to each assignment.

Graded Items	Contribution to Final Course Grade
Exam 1	20%
Exam 2	20%
Exam 3	20%
Research Paper	10%
Lab Assignments	30%

Table 2: Total points for final grade.

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

### Exams

The first two exams will be given during a class session, thus must be completed within 50 minutes. The Final Exam will be cumulative and can be 110 minutes long. There will be two review sessions before the Final Exam. Students who have worked with DSS will be given additional time to complete exams.

### Research Paper

Students will be asked to submit topics of interests on which they will write a 3-4 page long research paper. Instructions and a grading rubric will be posted in D2L. The use of AI tools in preparing the research paper is not permitted.

### Extra Credit

As the semester progresses, the instructor may give extra credit assignments. If assigned, these extra credit assignments will be given to the entire class, not individual students. If the extra credit assignment is not completed by the due date, no extra credit will be given.

### Make-Up Work/Tests

For legal, paper-documented excuses make-ups for homework, quizzes, and examinations can be completed. Make-up work should be arranged for in advance wherever possible. The instructor will give you a new deadline that is reasonable for the course timeline. **\*No make-up work will be allowed beyond 10 days past the original deadline.**

### Late Work

No late work will be accepted. Missed homework, quizzes, and examinations may be turned in late with a legal, paper-documented excuse.

## **Class Policies**

The following policies are the policies that are integral for our successful completion of the course and should be read thoroughly. If you have any questions, please see the instructor.

### Academic Honesty

Academic dishonesty is considered cheating, collusion, and plagiarism. Any unauthorized assistance during the completion of assignments, using on aids beyond those authorized for an assignment, or the use of other people or services to complete assignments is considered cheating. Working with others in a way that is not authorized by the instructor to complete assignments is considered to be collusion. Plagiarism is the use of another person's materials (by paraphrase or direct quotation)

without giving them full and clear acknowledgement. The use of material prepared by another person or agency selling term papers and academic materials is also considered plagiarism.

The use of any artificial intelligence (AI) in completing course assignments is NOT allowed. AI in this sense is any technology that summarizes, writes, or answers questions on its own. College is about you learning to write, you developing your voice, and you learning how to process, summarize, and properly cite information. Any use of AI is considered a violation of this academic honesty policy.

If a student is caught cheating, colluding, or plagiarizing on any assignment the assignment grade will automatically be a zero. Two or more violations will result in failure of the course.

#### Desire-to-Learn (D2L)

Extensive use of the MSU D2L learning management system is required in this course. Each student is expected to be familiar with this program as it provides a primary source of communication regarding assignments, lecture materials, and general course information. You can log into through the MSU Homepage. If you experience difficulties, please contact the technicians listed for the program or contact your instructor.

#### Electronic Devices

Use of electronic devices for taking notes is allowed in my classroom. Recording (audio or video) is not allowed unless approved by the instructor for educational purposes. The use of social media or streaming anything is not an appropriate use of technology during class. If your use of technology is non-educational or is being disruptive to your peers, you will be asked to leave.

### **University Policies and Information**

The following information and policies apply to this course. Please read each of these policies and ask your instructor if you have any questions.

#### Important Dates (Check dates on [Academic Calendar](#))

Fall 2025 Classes Begin: August 25, 2025

Last day for term schedule changes: August 26, 2025

Last day to drop with a grade of W for Fall 2025: November 24, 2025

Refer to: [Withdrawals and Drops](#)

#### Attendance

Students are expected to attend all meetings of the classes in which they are enrolled. Although in general students are graded on intellectual effort and performance rather than attendance, absences may lower the student's grade where class attendance and class participation are deemed essential by the faculty member. In those classes where attendance is considered as part of the grade, the instructor should so inform students of the specifics in writing at the beginning of the semester in a syllabus or separate attendance policy statement. An instructor who has an attendance policy must keep records on a daily basis. The instructor must give the student a verbal or written warning prior to being dropped from the class. Instructor's records will stand as evidence of absences. A student with excessive absences may be dropped from a course by the instructor. Any individual faculty member or college has the authority to establish an attendance policy, providing the policy is in accordance with the General University Policies.

### 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. 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](#).

### Campus Carry Rules/Policies

Effective August 1, 2016, the Campus Carry law (Senate Bill 11) allows those licensed individuals to carry a concealed handgun in buildings on public university campuses, except in locations the University establishes as prohibited. The new Constitutional Carry law does not change this process. Concealed carry still requires a License to Carry permit, and openly carrying handguns is not allowed on college campuses. For more information, visit [Campus Carry Rules and Policies](#).

### Active Shooter

The safety and security of our campus is the responsibility of everyone in our community. Each of us has an obligation to be prepared to appropriately respond to threats to our campus, such as an active aggressor. Please review the information provided by MSU Police Department regarding the options and strategies we can all use to stay safe during difficult situations. For more information, visit [Safety / Emergency Procedures](#).

### Smoking/Tobacco Policy

College policy strictly prohibits the use of tobacco products in any building owned or operated by MSU. 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

Following the appropriate procedure for grade appeals requires you to speak to your instructor first, so talk to your instructor. Students who wish to appeal a grade should consult the Midwestern State University [Undergraduate Catalog](#).

### **Course Schedule**

<b>Week</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>
Week 1	Monday, August 25, 2025	Introducing Geology, the Essentials of Plate Tectonics, and Other Important Concepts
	Wednesday, August 27, 2025	Atoms, Elements, and Minerals I
	Friday, August 29, 2025	Atoms, Elements, and Minerals II
Week 2	Wednesday, September 3, 2025	Igneous Rocks, the Origin and Evolution of Magma, and Intrusive Activity I
	Friday, September 5, 2025	Igneous Rocks, the Origin and Evolution of Magma, and Intrusive Activity II
Week 3	Monday, September 8, 2025	Volcanism and Extrusive Rocks I
	Wednesday, September 10, 2025	Volcanism and Extrusive Rocks II
	Friday, September 12, 2025	Weathering and Soil I
Week 4	Monday, September 15, 2025	Weathering and Soil II
	Wednesday, September 17, 2025	Sediment and Sedimentary Rocks I
	Friday, September 19, 2025	Sediment and Sedimentary Rocks II
Week 5	Monday, September 22, 2025	Metamorphism and Metamorphic Rocks
	Wednesday, September 24, 2025	Time and Geology I
	Friday, September 26, 2025	ZOOM CLASS - Time and Geology II
Week 6	Monday, September 29, 2025	Mass Wasting
	<b>Wednesday, October 1, 2025</b>	<b>Exam 1</b>
	Friday, October 3, 2025	Streams and Floods I
Week 7	Monday, October 6, 2025	Streams and Floods II
	Wednesday, October 8, 2025	Groundwater I
	Friday, October 10, 2025	Groundwater II
Week 8	Monday, October 13, 2025	Glaciers and Glaciation
	Wednesday, October 15, 2025	Deserts and Wind Action
	Friday, October 17, 2025	Waves, Beaches, and Coasts

Week 9	Monday, October 20, 2025	NO CLASS – Geology Conference, San Antonio, TX
	Wednesday, October 22, 2025	NO CLASS – Geology Conference, San Antonio, TX
	Friday, October 24, 2025	Geologic Structures I
Week 10	Monday, October 27, 2025	Geologic Structures II
	Wednesday, October 29, 2025	Earthquakes
	Friday, October 31, 2025	ZOOM CLASS - Earth's Interior and Geophysical Properties
Week 11	Monday, November 3, 2025	Earth's Interior and Geophysical Properties
	<b>Wednesday, November 5, 2025</b>	<b>Exam 2</b>
	Friday, November 7, 2025	The Sea Floor
Week 12	Monday, November 10, 2025	Plate Tectonics—The Unifying Theory I
	Wednesday, November 12, 2025	Plate Tectonics—The Unifying Theory II
	Friday, November 14, 2025	Plate Tectonics—The Unifying Theory III
Week 13	Monday, November 17, 2025	Mountain Belts and the Continental Crust I
	Wednesday, November 19, 2025	Mountain Belts and the Continental Crust II
	Friday, November 21, 2025	Global Climate Change
Week 14	Monday, November 24, 2025	Resources I
Week 15	Monday, December 1, 2025	Resources II
	Wednesday, December 3, 2025	Exam Review I
	Friday, December 5, 2025	Exam Review II
Week 16	<b>Monday, December 8, 2025</b>	<b>Exam 3</b>