Syllabus

Text: Reading material will be provided through blackboard

Class Meetings: Tue 05:30 – 06:20 p.m. selected dates EN108

Office Hours: Mon and Wed 9:00 a.m. to noon, or by appointment. I encourage you to email me with any questions or concerns you may have (see email address listed above).

Course Description

This course offers a primarily field-based experience of geology. Excursions into the field may vary from shorter half-day trips to a three-day field trip to various locations within Texas, visiting sites that serve as examples of a variety of geologic phenomena. Field trip locations will include sites that display the processes that shape the landscape, that result in the deposition or formation of rock units and mineral resources, and that deform the Earth’s crust. We will discuss how these processes relate to life on Earth, human civilization, and societal needs for natural resources.

Several stops will require hiking away from the car. Expect variable weather conditions. We will camp at established campsites that may offer limited amenities. You are expected to participate in camping logistics (buying and cooking food, clean-up, setting up and breaking down camp).

Prerequisites: none

Student Learning Outcomes

As geologists, we are trained to recognize and reconstruct the natural processes that result in the geologic phenomena we observe in the field. This course will introduce you to the study of rocks, fossils, geologic structures, etc. in the field, as well as basic techniques that geologists use in their field-based research. You will learn how to observe in the field, how to take notes, basic principles of scientific reasoning, and also how to navigate the field safely.

Evaluation and Grade Assignment

Your final grade for this course will be based on:

A) completing a set of questions that relate to topics that we will be discussing during the trip/s and to basic field observations (50% of grade). You are expected to answer these questions during the outcrop visits.

B) completeness and neatness of notes taken during the trip (50% of grade). We will assist you with note taking during the trip, look over your shoulders, and give you immediate feedback. Neatness counts!

Letter grades will be assigned as follows:

100-90% = A; 90-80% = B; 80-70% = C; 70-60% = D; <60% = F

Participation in the field trip/s is required for successful completion of this course! There is no scheduled final examination.

Major Course Requirements

Attendance of the field trip/s and class meetings before and after the trip/s is mandatory and will be checked. While group discussion and collaboration is encouraged during the trip/s, the work you hand in is expected to be your own. Please note that alcohol and drug policies are strictly enforced. Violations will result in immediate expulsion and a failing grade.

Classroom/ Professional Behavior

Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi, as an academic community, requires that each individual respect the needs of others to study and learn in a peaceful atmosphere. Under Article III of the Student Code of Conduct, classroom behavior that interferes with either (a) the instructor’s ability to conduct the class or (b) the ability of other students to profit from the instructional program may be considered a breach of the peace and is subject to disciplinary sanction outlined in
article VII of the Student Code of Conduct. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior may be instructed to leave the classroom. This prohibition applies to all instructional forums, including classrooms, electronic classrooms, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc.

**Academic Integrity/Plagiarism**
University students are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with the highest standards of academic honesty. Academic misconduct for which a student is subject to penalty includes all forms of cheating, such as illicit possession of examinations or examination materials, falsification, forgery, complicity or plagiarism. (Plagiarism is the presentation of the work of another as one’s own work.) In this class, academic misconduct or complicity in an act of academic misconduct on an assignment will result in a failing grade.

**Notice to Students with Disabilities**
Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act in making reasonable accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. If you suspect that you may have a disability (physical impairment, learning disability, psychiatric disability, etc.), please contact the Services for Students with Disabilities Office, located in Corpus Christi Hall (CCH) 116, at 825-5816. If you need disability accommodations in this class, please see me as soon as possible.

**Academic Advising**
The College of Science and Engineering requires that students meet with an Academic Advisor as soon as they are ready to declare a major. The Academic Advisor will set up a degree plan, which must be signed by the student, a faculty mentor, and the department chair. The College's Academic Advising Center is located in Center for Instructions CI 350, and can be reached at 825-6094.

**Grade Appeal Process**
As stated in University Rule 13.02.99.C2, Student Grade Appeals, a student who believes that he or she has not been held to appropriate academic standards as outlined in the class syllabus, equitable evaluation procedures, or appropriate grading, may appeal the final grade given in the course. The burden of proof is upon the student to demonstrate the appropriateness of the appeal. A student with a complaint about a grade is encouraged to first discuss the matter with the instructor. For complete details, including the responsibilities of the parties involved in the process and the number of days allowed for completing the steps in the process, see University Rule 13.02.99.C2, Student Grade Appeals, and University Procedure 13.02.99.C2.01, Student Grade Appeal Procedures. These documents are accessible through the University Rules Web site at [http://www.tamucc.edu/provost/university_rules/index.html](http://www.tamucc.edu/provost/university_rules/index.html). For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Office of Student Affairs.

**Dropping a Class**
I hope that you never find it necessary to drop this or any other class. However, events can sometimes occur that make dropping a course necessary or wise. Please consult with me before you decide to drop to be sure it is the best thing to do. Should dropping the course be the best course of action, you must initiate the process to drop the course by going to the Student Services Center and filling out a course drop form. Just stopping attendance and participation WILL NOT automatically result in your being dropped from the class. **November 2, 2012** is the last day to drop a class with an automatic grade of “W” this term.

**Course Schedule**

*Beginning of the Semester:* Several class meetings will be scheduled to introduce you to basic geologic principles, including geologic maps and the study of rocks and minerals. Field trip dates will be determined.

*2-3 weeks prior to trip:* Orientation meetings: Introduction to the geology of Texas; overview over field trip route, places to be visited, things to be seen, and topics to be discussed. Assignment of cooking groups, tent parties.
1 week prior to trip: Second orientation meeting. Remaining logistic issues. Lecture topics to be covered: Basic principles of field-based research; how to take notes, field hazards and how to avoid them.

1 week after trip: Post-trip gathering. Discussion what we have seen and learned, return of graded questionnaires and field notes, general critiquing of work, feedback and suggestions.

Field Gear Recommendations

Bring along:
- Backpack to store day-use gear
- Canteens or water bottles holding 2 quarts minimum
- Hat with wide brim
- Sunglasses
- Sun block
- Hiking boots or sturdy sneakers that are broken in
- Clothes that provide sufficient weather protection (rain or shine)
- Sleeping bag
- Tarp to place sleeping bag on and/or tent; tents have to be shared!
- Flash light
- Personal hygiene stuff
- Personal medication
- Mug/cup
- Plate and personal utensils (WE WILL NOT PROVIDE PAPER PLATES/CUPS!)
- Note book with stiff cover (preferred) or note pad on clipboard
- Pen
- Pencils
- Eraser

Optional:
- Camera
- Colored pencils
- Small musical instruments; Larger musical equipment, e.g. guitars, drums: Let’s coordinate to minimize excessive gear.

You may not bring:
Your personal car, sporting equipment other than small stuff (soccer ball, Frisbee, etc, but no bicycles), pets, alcohol or illegal substances, fire arms, your friends or your parents unless they have signed up for the class.