

Spring 2012- GRG 301-C • The Natural Environment

Instructor: Dr. Edgardo Latrubesse- Associate Professor- GRG 118- (latrubesse@austin.utexas.edu)- phone:

Office hours: Tuesday 10:00 AM-11:00 AM

Teaching Assistants: Josh Rudow; jorudow@gmail.com; Naya Jones geonaya@gmail.com , Sharon Adams sharonwadams@utexas.edu

Schedule:

CLASS: TTH 2.00 – 3.30PM PAI 3.02

LECTURE AND LAB SECTIONS

Instructing Classes for Spring Semester 2012

GRG 301C THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

Unique	Day	Time
37210	TTH	2:00 - 3:30
	M	8:30 - 10:00
37215	TTH	2:00 - 3:30
	W	8:30 - 10:00
37220	TTH	2:00 - 3:30
	F	8:30 - 10:00
37225	TTH	2:00 - 3:30
	M	9:30 - 11:00

37230

TTH 2:00 - 3:30
W 9:30 - 11:00

37235

TTH 2:00 - 3:30
F 9:30 - 11:00

37240

TTH 2:00 - 3:30
M 2:00 - 3:30

37245

TTH 2:00 - 3:30
W 2:00 - 3:30

37250

TTH

2:00 - 3:30

F

2:00 - 3:30

Course Description

This course is called **The Natural Environment**, and focuses on the study of the general structure and functioning of Earth with emphasis on the physical **processes** that create and modify landscapes of **continental** areas. First, we will briefly examine Earth as a system and the interactions between lithosphere, atmosphere, hydrosphere and biosphere. Secondly, we will concentrate on the Endogenic processes that trigger mineral and rock formation, volcanoes, rock deformation and plate tectonics.

Thirdly, we will discuss the Exogenic processes that shape Earth surface such as weathering, soil formation and mass wasting as well as the generation and evolution of landforms at a variety of environments such as fluvial, glacial, periglacial, coastal and aeolian.

Students will be exposed to fundamental concepts in physical geography as well as to basic analytical skills for conducting landscape analysis. Particular attention is given to understanding the variability of geologic and geomorphic process. A major goal of the course is for students to understand the practical value of

possessing knowledge of physical processes especially for understanding environmental change.

Labs

Everyone enrolled in the course is **also** enrolled in a weekly, 90-minute laboratory section. Laboratory attendance is **mandatory**. Lab sections begin meeting the second week of classes. **TAs** for the course: TBA

Teaching assistants can normally be found in their office, located at the 4th floor, Dept. of Geography and the Environment. Office hours for each TA will be announced once assignment of individual laboratory sections has been finalized. There are laboratory assignments/exercises for each theme. Labs will be provided to students through blackboard. Each lab will involve basic data analysis, and a short write-up of the results. Please bring your own laptop/notebook computer to labs when solicit. We will use personal computers in some labs. If you do not have one, please inform it previously to the Professor and TAs, in this way we can be able to provide one.

EXAMS and GRADING policy. Your **final grade** will be calculated from these:

[a]- Three partial **lecture exams**, which will be worth **23 %** (first exam), **24 %** (second exam), and **23 %** (third exam) of your grade, for a total of **70 %**.

[b]- ...and the **laboratory grade** [which is **30 %** of the final grade].

-LECTURE GRADE:

(a) There will be three PARTIAL (i.e., "MID-TERM") exams. We will **not** have a comprehensive final exam.

*First partial Exam: Tuesday, **March 1st***

*Second partial Exam: Thursday, **April 5th***

*Third partial Exam: Thursday, **May 3th***

-LABORATORY GRADE:

(b) Attendance and weekly participation in exercises will count for 50 % of your Lab grade.

A Lab Mid-term and Final exam will count each for 25 % of the **lab grade**. Your lab grade (30 % of the final grade) will be averaged with your lecture grades (70 %). The specific dates for the two lab exams will be announced by the TAs during the third class week.

Course management

Course materials and grade will be posted on Blackboard. Students are required to consult this website frequently. Selected materials from different textbooks and pdf versions of power points presentations will be provided through Blackboard.

Policies

a) Attendance

This course is intensive and relatively complex. This is due, primarily, to the amount of topics and material to be covered during the semester. You are required to attend all classes and arrive on time. It is, therefore, my philosophy that your success in this course will surely vary directly with your class attendance. Do not routinely arrive 5 minutes late to class with the excuse that parking was a problem (the obvious solution is to routinely depart 5 minutes earlier).

Lateness: Late labs and papers will be assessed as part of your participation and commitment. Laptops are NOT allowed except with prior permission and in exceptional situations.

b) Academic Integrity

The core values of The University of Texas at Austin are learning, discovery, freedom, leadership, individual opportunity, and responsibility. Each member of the university is expected to uphold these values through integrity, honesty, trust, fairness, and respect toward peers and community. Each student in this course is expected to abide by the University of Texas Honor Code (see University guidelines on Academic Dishonesty (section 11-802)). In this class, there is zero tolerance for students who violate university rules on scholastic dishonesty with all suspected cases turned over to the University's Dean of Students office. Penalties for scholastic include possibility of failure of course and dismissal from the University. Since dishonesty harms the individual, fellow students and the integrity of the University, policies on scholastic dishonesty will be STRICTLY ENFORCED in this class. Any work submitted by a student in this course for academic credit will be the student's own work. Using other person's work without appropriate citation is plagiarism.

Disabilities

The University of Texas at Austin provides upon request appropriate academic accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. Present the letter to the professor at the beginning of the semester so that needed accommodations can be discussed. The student should remind the professor of any testing accommodations no later than five business days before an exam. For more information, contact the Office of the Dean of Students at 471-6259, 471-4641. <http://www.utexas.edu/diversity/ddce/ssd/>.

Examination Absence Policy

If you miss any exam, and you have a valid written excuse, you will be given an opportunity to make up a similar exam but with different questions or approach that previously applied. In order to be allowed to makeup the exam you will need to present to Prof. Latrubesse a copy of a valid written excuse. If you miss more than one exam due to valid written excuses, you may be asked to take an incomplete and to complete the course requirements the following semester.

What is a valid written excuse?

- Doctor's note. This note should specifically say that you were unable to come to class because of a verified illness. It must be signed.
- Note from athletic department, music department, etc. asking for an excuse due to a university function. These notes need to be presented well before the exam.
- Military Service activation note.
- Trial or jury duty note.
- Religious holy day. Religious holy day conflicts must be brought to the attention of Prof. Latrubesse in advance. Please check the syllabus calendar to be sure that your religious holy days don't conflict with exams. If there is a conflict: please provide a written, signed request before the end of the second week of class.
- If you do not have a valid excuse, you will receive a zero for that exam.

► *All notes must be on letterhead, signed, include a contact name and phone number.*

Texts

Because it is an introductory course we will use as a reference the following textbook: *Essentials of Geology (10th. edition), by F. K. Lutgens and E. J. Tarbuck. Prentice Hall, New Jersey, 2008. (ISBN-13: 9780136003762)*

Selected materials from different textbooks and pdf versions of power points presentations will be provided through Blackboard. It is my philosophy

that an experienced professor with a strong background on research does not necessarily follow and uses a textbook but contributes to student education transmitting his own experience to the students and discussing a variety of sources from the specialized literature. However, because of the introductory character of GRG 301-C, I consider that using a textbook will provide a remarkable support for students.

Recommended textbook: *Essential of Geology (10th. edition), by F. K. Lutgens and E. J. Tarbuck. Prentice Hall, New Jersey, 2008. (ISBN-13: 9780136003762)*

UT POLICY ON EMAIL NOTIFICATION

Instructor to student email is a recognized and accepted form of official communication here at the University of Texas. For the University policy, read this. It is critically important that (1) you make sure to have your current and most frequently checked email address on file in UT Direct and (2) you check it on a daily basis. I will send class email frequently during the semester and you'll be given updates and notices in references to lectures as well as exams.

Religious Holidays

By UT Austin policy, students must notify the professor of a pending absence at least fourteen days prior to the date of observance of a religious holy day in special if it is coincident with the date of a test.

Office Hours

My office hours this semester are Tuesdays 10:00AM-11:00PM. You may also arrange to meet with me at another time by e-mailing me to set up an appointment.