INSTRUCTOR
Dr. Benjamin Brunner
Office: 404A Geology Building
E-mail: bbrunner@utep.edu
Associate Professor, Geological Sciences, Room 404A
Office hours:
preferred appointment via email to bbrunner@utep.edu
presence Tuesday & Wednesday 2:00 pm – 3:00 pm 404ABCDF
Please note Dr. B’s Killer Rule:
More than 2 missing/unexcused assignments & you are out!

IN A NUTSHELL: Meeting pattern, location, mandatory investments, grades
NOTE: Class is in person.

Historical Geology Lectures
Teaching Assistant: Leslie Bernal Lopez

Mandatory book
Earth System History, Steven M. Stanley and John A. Luczaj
NOTE: this book is available as e-book and also used
(older editions are ok!)

Reading of chapters is essential, the class is front-loaded

Mandatory participation in Packback Questions ($29)
Participation is a requirement for this course, and the Packback Questions platform will be used for online discussion about class topics. An email invitation will be sent to you from help@packback.co prompting you to finish registration (more information on Packback on pages 3 and 4).

Grades
25% Packback Questions, 40% Concept Sketches, 35% Quizzes/Exams, NO Final Exam

In person lab associated with Historical Geology class (not mandatory for class)
Please check out Lab Syllabi
Lab starts one week after the start of the course
Face-to-face labs plans/schedule will be discussed in first lab
Lab Leader:
Madison Woelfel, mcwoelfel@miners.utep.edu
Lab for GEOL 1314: GEOL 1104 CRN 12745 (currently 13 students)
Class 8:30 am – 10:20 am Tuesday Geology Building 404

Lab for GEOL 1314: GEOL 1104 CRN 14569 (currently 4 students – cancelled)
Class 8:30 am – 10:20 am Wednesday Geology Building 404
COURSE DESCRIPTION
The purpose of this class is to introduce students to the history of the Earth System. We learn about the development and interaction of physical, chemical and biological processes that lead to the today’s Earth System and explore the methods and thought concepts that lead scientists to their interpretations of Earth’s past.

REQUIRED TEXTBOOK
Earth System History, Steven M. Stanley and John A. Luczaj.
There will be handouts & material posted on Blackboard.

COURSE OBJECTIVES
1) Obtaining an overview of Earth’s Geologic past
   a. Geological, chemical, and biological evolution of Earth
   b. Key events in Earth’s history
   c. Major global tectonic cycles (Supercontinents)
   d. Geological timescale
2) Understanding of tools and concepts that allow scientists to draw conclusions about Earth’s Geologic past
   a. Relative and absolute dating approaches
   b. Evolution
   c. Biogeochemical cycles
3) Ability to apply achievements from objectives 1 and 2 to critical evaluation of statements about Earth’ past, present, and future.
YOUR PARTICIPATION AND TIME COMMITMENT IS ESSENTIAL

Your time commitment
Please do the math: the rule of thumb for a university class is that per contact hour, you have to invest 3 hours of self-study (homework, reading, preparing of exams, interacting with other students etc). The class meeting is twice a week for a duration of one hour and twenty minutes, which results in a total of 2 hours and 40 minutes. Multiply this by three, and you obtain 8 hours of self-study. In other words – your time investment of should be a full workday per week for the Historical Geology class!

Your participation - Packback

You can only retain knowledge and skills if you truly engage in using them. To foster this, we use Packback. Packback Questions is an online discussion platform powered by artificial intelligence. This platform is specifically designed to encourage curiosity and increase critical thinking & writing skills. On Packback, you’ll be encouraged & rewarded for asking complex questions about how what we’re studying relates to the real world. As it relates to this specific course, my goals for using Packback are to engage you in a critical evaluation of statements about Earth’s past, present, and future (course objective 3). Academic dialogue on Packback will:

- deepen your understanding of the course content by gaining diverse insights and perspectives from your peers;
- give you a space to relate what you are learning to real-life examples and personal experiences;
- help you develop writing skills necessary for any career path;
- reinforce the skill of justifying thoughts and claims with credible evidence.

What I particularly like about Packback is that it is an online community where you can be fearlessly curious and ask open-ended questions to build on top of what we are covering in class and relate topics to real-world applications. For a brief introduction to Packback Questions and why we are using it in class, watch this video: vimeo.com/packback/Welcome-to-Packback-Questions

Packback Requirements

Your participation on Packback will count toward 25% of your overall course grade. There will be a Weekly Friday at 11:59PM MST deadline for submissions. In order to receive full credit, you should submit the following per each deadline period:

- One open-ended Question every week with a minimum Curiosity Score of 40, worth 33.33% of each assignment grade
- Two Responses every week with a minimum Curiosity Score of 40, worth 66.67% of each assignment grade
- Half credit will be provided for questions and responses that do not meet the minimum curiosity score.
How to Register on Packback
An email invitation was/will be sent to you from help@packback.co prompting you to finish registration. If you did not/don’t receive an email (be sure to check your spam), you may register by following the instructions below:

1. Create an account by navigating to https://questions.packback.co and clicking “Sign up for an Account”
   Note: If you already have an account on Packback you can log in with your credentials.
2. Then enter our class community’s lookup key into the “Looking to join a community you don't see here?” section in Packback at the bottom of the homepage.
   Community Lookup Key: 9e908122-8947-43f2-bfb9-c82804e8ad2
3. Follow the instructions on your screen to finish your registration.

What is the Packback Pricing?
Packback costs $29 per Packback community (course) discounted price if you have used Packback before

How to Get Help from the Packback Team
If you have any questions or concerns about Packback throughout the semester, please read their FAQ at help.packback.co. If you need more help, contact their customer support team directly at help@packback.co.

YOUR ARE IMPORTANT TO US, AND WE KNOW THAT “SHIT HAPPENS”
Please contact Dr. Brunner about any concerns, schedule conflicts, etc. in advance or otherwise as soon as possible! Valid excuses include illness, absence with the instructor's prior approval, official University business, etc.

Accommodations are possible for active duty military and others, but arrangements must be made in a timely manner. If you are in the military with the potential of being called to military service and/or training during the course of the semester, you are encouraged to contact the instructor as soon as possible.

If you think you may have a disability or if you are experiencing learning difficulties, please contact the Center for Accommodations and Support Services (CASS), East Union Bldg, Room 106:
Office: 915-747-5148 / Email: cass@utep.edu / https://www.utep.edu/student-affairs/cass/

Course Drop Deadline: Friday, October 29, 2021
The College of Science will not approve any student- or faculty-initiated drop requests for a course after that date, except under circumstances of complete withdrawal of all courses due to medical or non-medical reasons.

Never swim alone!
And now to some legal language and the joyes and woes of studying during a pandemic:

**Cheating/Plagiarism:**
Cheating is unethical and not acceptable. Plagiarism is using information or original wording in a paper without giving credit to the source of that information or wording: it is also not acceptable. Do not submit work under your name that you did not do yourself. You may not submit work for this class that you did for another class. If you are found to be cheating or plagiarizing, you will be subject to disciplinary action, per UTEP catalog policy. Refer to [http://www.utep.edu/dos/acadintg.htm](http://www.utep.edu/dos/acadintg.htm) for further information.

This is important for your Individual Concept Sketches – make sure that they are ‘yours’, even if you work in teams.

**COVID-19 PRECAUTION STATEMENT**

Please stay home if you have been diagnosed with COVID-19 or are experiencing COVID-19 symptoms. If you are feeling unwell, please let me know as soon as possible, so that we can work on appropriate accommodations. If you have tested positive for COVID-19, you are encouraged to report your results to [covidaction@utep.edu](mailto:covidaction@utep.edu), so that the Dean of Students Office can provide you with support and help with communication with your professors. The Student Health Center is equipped to provide COVID-19 testing.

The Center for Disease Control and Prevention recommends that people in areas of substantial or high COVID-19 transmission wear face masks when indoors in groups of people. The best way that Miners can take care of Miners is to get the vaccine. If you still need the vaccine, it is widely available in the El Paso area, and will be available at no charge on campus during the first week of classes. For more information about the current rates, testing, and vaccinations, please visit [epstrong.org](http://epstrong.org).

To say it with the words of UTEP President Dr. Heather Wilson:

(Message from President’s Office from August 18, 2021)

At this time, masks and vaccination are not required for UTEP students and employees. As a Texas public university, we are a state agency subject to state regulations and UT System rules. Accordingly, we do not deny anyone services based on a vaccination status or whether or not they’re wearing a mask.

* I'll be wearing my mask as the CDC recommends and I encourage you to do the same.
# SCHEDULE OF TOPICS—subject to change!—always expect quizzes, and two larger exams!

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic: Other assignments include Packback and Concept Sketches!</th>
<th>Reading Assignments</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Week 1</strong>&lt;br&gt;08/23/21</td>
<td>• Why are you here? – Expectations for this class&lt;br&gt;• How to read a book chapter&lt;br&gt;• Concept sketches – Examples: 1) Rain in El Paso&lt;br&gt;2) A traffic accident&lt;br&gt;2) A geological event: extinction of dinosaurs&lt;br&gt;• Packback</td>
<td>Syllabus</td>
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<td><strong>Week 2</strong>&lt;br&gt;08/30/21</td>
<td>• Concept sketches – Examples: 1) Rain in El Paso&lt;br&gt;2) A traffic accident&lt;br&gt;2) A geological event: extinction of dinosaurs&lt;br&gt;• Packback</td>
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<td><strong>Week 3</strong>&lt;br&gt;09/06/21</td>
<td>• Labor Day&lt;br&gt;• Earth as a System, Minerals and Rocks, Diversity of Life</td>
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<td><strong>Week 4</strong>&lt;br&gt;09/13/21</td>
<td>• Environments and Life, Sediments</td>
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<td><strong>Week 5</strong>&lt;br&gt;09/20/21</td>
<td>• Rock Record, Evolution, Fossil Record</td>
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<td><strong>Week 7</strong>&lt;br&gt;10/04/21</td>
<td>• Geochemical Cycles, Hadean and Archean Eons</td>
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<td><strong>Week 8</strong>&lt;br&gt;10/11/21</td>
<td>• Proterozoic Eon, Early Paleozoic</td>
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<td><strong>Week 9</strong>&lt;br&gt;10/18/21</td>
<td>• Middle and Late Paleozoic</td>
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<td><strong>Week 10</strong>&lt;br&gt;10/25/21</td>
<td>• Early Mesozoic, Cretaceous&lt;br&gt;<strong>Friday 10/29/21 Fall Drop/Withdrawal Deadline</strong></td>
<td>Chapter 16&lt;br&gt;Chapter 17</td>
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<td><strong>Week 11</strong>&lt;br&gt;11/01/21</td>
<td>• Paleogene, Late Cenozoic</td>
<td>Chapter 18&lt;br&gt;Chapter 19</td>
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<td><strong>Week 12</strong>&lt;br&gt;11/08/21</td>
<td>• Holocene, Anthropocene</td>
<td>Chapter 20</td>
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<td><strong>Week 13</strong>&lt;br&gt;11/15/21</td>
<td>• Buffer time / Extra topics: Earth’s Future</td>
<td>Research</td>
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<td><strong>Week 14</strong>&lt;br&gt;11/22/21</td>
<td>• Buffer time / Review of class / Thu/Fri: Thanksgiving</td>
<td>Research</td>
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<td><strong>Week 15</strong>&lt;br&gt;11/29/21</td>
<td>• Review of class / Friday Dec 03, 2022: Dead Day</td>
<td>Don’t Panic!</td>
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<td><strong>Week 16</strong></td>
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<td>Final Exams: GOOD LUCK! None for us!</td>
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