Course Description, Objectives, and Expected Learning Outcomes:
The goal of this course is for you to attain a firm understanding of the processing of (remotely-sensed) digital images in the context the Earth and environmental sciences. You will learn how, why, and when to apply digital image processing techniques in order to produce image products of value in answering scientific questions in your own research. The emphasis in this course will be on applications and basic concepts, but there will be mathematical treatments of topics in statistical analysis, Fourier analysis, and principal components analysis, among other topics. Students will be given access to state-of-the-art computer facilities and instruction on how to use Google Earth Engine and gain proficiency in basic MATLAB, JavaScript, and/or Python programming in the course of the laboratory work*. Students are expected to be active participants in the class and laboratory discussions.

*Note that there is no expectation of prior experience or proficiency with MATLAB, JavaScript or Python.

Grading:
~10 laboratory/homework assignments (60%); 1 midterm examination (15%), 1 final examination (15%); participation (10%).

Grades will be computed based on the above percentage breakdown applied to the total number of points computed at the end of the semester. Each graded item (assignment, exam, quiz, etc.) will have an assigned point value that may vary from item to item. Every graded item will have an associated rubric that will be used for evaluating it and assigning points. The rubric will have crucial information that could affect your grade for each activity. You will find these rubrics by clicking on the appropriate assignment link in Blackboard.
Successful completion and submission of all assignments and exams, and acceptable attendance, is the minimum requirement to pass the class (i.e. a “D”).

Your participation will, in part, be evaluated based on weekly quizzes, weekly posts made to the Blackboard discussion forums, etc. Discussion forum posts and responses will have specific requirements, to include your post as well as replies to at least two others. Some extra credit points from assignments, quizzes, etc. may be made available.

Graduate students will be held to a higher standard than undergraduates (and Ph.D students held to a higher standard than M.S. students). For example, selected homework assignments/problems/tasks and selected exam problems may be designated as required for graduate students and extra credit for undergraduates, etc.. Graduate students may also be expected to lead online discussions and/or be assigned additional tasks. Generally, there will be the expectation of more in-depth/detailed/higher-quality work from graduate students commensurate with their academic level.

Class Meetings:
Lecture/Lab: TTh 12-1:20 pm in Geology Room 320 or Geology Room 409. The lecture and lab portions of the course will be face-to-face following a “flipped classroom” format enabled by Blackboard, and I will make an effort to record class sessions. We will proceed on a weekly schedule (i.e. not at your own pace).
This is an IN-PERSON class, it is NOT a remote-only class. Attendance at ALL lecture and lab sessions is expected of all students, but do not attend class in person if you feel ill or have been exposed to a sick person (see Attendance and COVID-19 Policies below).

Office Hours:
Dr. Hurtado: TTh 3-4pm (or by appointment) face-to-face in Geology 301a or online by request/appointment.

You are strongly encouraged to participate in office hours so that you can stay engaged with the class and get help with the lab assignments and/or any material presented in the lectures.

Communication:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Response Time</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Blackboard Announcements</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>Be sure to check Blackboard regularly for updates, deadlines, and other important messages. Blackboard is available on the web and also as a mobile app.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blackboard Discussion Forum</td>
<td>Within &lt;24 hours for replies to posts</td>
<td>Posts are visible to the instructors and the whole class.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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There are dedicated forums for technical help, general help, fun posts, as well as specific assignments.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>New appointments available within 24-48 hours</th>
<th>Schedule new appointments via Blackboard email. Scheduled office hours are in a group setting. Private conversations are possible on request by appointment.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Microsoft Teams</td>
<td>New appointments available within 24-48 hours</td>
<td>Schedule new appointments via Blackboard email. Scheduled office hours are in a group setting. Private conversations are possible on request by appointment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zoom</td>
<td></td>
<td>For direct, confidential contact with instructors, this is the preferred method. Please always include the course name as the subject line, state your message clearly, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Email (do not use UTEP webmail, etc; use Blackboard internal email only please)</td>
<td>Within &lt;6 hours</td>
<td>For direct, confidential contact with instructors, this is the preferred method. Please always include the course name as the subject line, state your message clearly, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cell Phone (see numbers above)</td>
<td>Within &lt;3 hours</td>
<td>Monday to Friday: 9am-5pm Weekend: emergencies only. Please leave voice mail. No texts, please.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office Phone (see numbers above)</td>
<td>Within &lt;24 hours</td>
<td>Instructors may work remotely on some days. Please leave voice mail.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Class Online Materials:**

Check the Blackboard portal for this course often for updates and announcements. The online materials are the key part of the class and Blackboard will be the main venue all class business. Note that there is a single, merged Blackboard portal for this course, which will be the only portal we will use. The course is designed around weekly modules, each of which includes learning content to include “lecture” notes, videos, PDF readings, weblinks, assignments (labs, homeworks, discussions), and quizzes. These modules will be released to Blackboard weekly.

All materials used in this course are protected by copyright law. The course materials are only for the use of students currently enrolled in this course and only for the purpose of this course. They may not be further disseminated.

**Text:**

Useful, but not required to purchase, books include:


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Excerpts from these and other texts, as well as supplemental materials from a variety of other sources, including journal articles, will be provided in the form of PDF readings throughout the semester. These resources will be posted on the class Blackboard portal and will be continually updated throughout the semester.

In addition, the documentation for Python, JavaScript, Google Earth Engine, MATLAB, ENVI, and other software we will use will be critical resources during the semester. The following websites will also be good resources:

- The Remote Sensing Core Curriculum: [https://rscc.umn.edu/](https://rscc.umn.edu/)
- USGS Spectroscopy Laboratory: [https://www.usgs.gov/labs/spec-lab](https://www.usgs.gov/labs/spec-lab)
- ENVI software tutorials: [https://www.l3harrisgeospatial.com/docs/Tutorials.html](https://www.l3harrisgeospatial.com/docs/Tutorials.html)
- Google Earth Engine Developers Page: [https://developers.google.com/earth-engine](https://developers.google.com/earth-engine)
- Companion website to the DIP and DIPUM books: [http://www.imageprocessingplace.com](http://www.imageprocessingplace.com)

**Required Information Technology Tools and Resources:**

To fully engage in and complete the work for this course, everyone will individually need to have daily access to a reliable, preferably broadband, internet connection, ideally on a laptop or a desktop computer equipped with a camera and microphone and a selection of software (see below). Check that your computer hardware and software are up-to-date and are able to access all parts of the course.

All students will be expected to have access to the following information technology, software, tools, and resources:

1. *Microsoft Office* (Word, Excel, and PowerPoint) or equivalent productivity software (e.g. Google Docs, etc.). This will be used to write reports, analyze data, make illustrations, etc. for assignments.
2. *Microsoft Paint* (or your favorite other image viewing/editing software, e.g. GIMP, Adobe Photoshop, Inkscape, Adobe Illustrator, etc.). This will be used to make/view illustrations.
3. *Adobe Reader* (or your favorite other PDF viewer). This will be used to view PDF documents posted by the instructors.
4. *Windows Media Player, QuickTime Player, VLC or equivalent video player*. This will be used to view video files.

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5. Access to your UTEP email account. We may need to communicate via external email throughout the semester. Note, however, that the primary means of email communication will be through the Blackboard internal email function.

6. Access to Blackboard. Please be sure to check that you have access to the Blackboard site for this course by the first day. We will use Blackboard as our primary means of communication (including email) and for all course business. In particular, we will make use of the Discussion Board. Please check that you can use all Blackboard functions, as well as the Blackboard email system. Mozilla FireFox and Google Chrome are the best-supported browsers for Blackboard.

7. Access to the UTEP VPN (see this link for more information https://www.utep.edu/technologysupport/ServiceCatalog/NET_VPNGlobalProtect.html). Connecting to the VPN will be necessary to access UTEP library resources and for running UTEP-licensed software (but not for Blackboard) when you are off-campus.

8. Google Earth Engine (GEE). If you are new to GEE, you must first create (or verify that you already have) a Google Gmail account. Then use that Gmail account to register for GEE access at https://earthengine.google.com/signup/. Once you are registered, you can log in as a GEE user to access all of the functionality of GEE. GEE will be one of the primary software tools we will use this semester.

9. MATLAB. UTEP has a site license for this software and a large number of MATLAB toolboxes, including mapping, image processing, etc.: https://www.utep.edu/technologysupport/ServiceCatalog/SOFTWARE_PAGES/soft_matlab.html. GNU Octave is a largely compatible, free/open source alternative to MATLAB: https://www.gnu.org/software/octave/. MATLAB is also available in various on-campus labs, but please try to get it (or GNU Octave) installed on your own computer if possible. MATLAB will be one of the primary software tools we will use this semester.

10. ImageJ. This venerable software is a simple, but powerful, image processing tool: https://imagej.nih.gov/ij/. There is a version that runs in a browser and does not require specific installation.

11. ENVI. This is an industry-leading package for remote sensing digital image processing. If we use it, this software will be made available to you in the on-campus lab (details TBD).

12. Ability to install new software and/or access websites not specified here. As the semester progresses, you may be asked to install and use new software or other assets. Please let the instructors know if you have difficulty.
You will also be expected to stay continually up to date with all information posted on Blackboard, which will include the syllabus, course calendar/schedule, grades, announcements, email, discussion boards, video conferencing, course notes, readings, supplemental material, and assignments. All communications, including email, for the course will be exclusively via Blackboard. Also, all course materials will be disseminated electronically, and all work will be assigned and handed-in electronically via Blackboard only. **Also, all course materials will be disseminated electronically, and most work will be assigned and handed-in electronically via Blackboard.** Follow all instructions regarding turning in materials electronically or hardcopy.

That said, always keep off-line backups of any work you produce in the event of a problem with Blackboard. This way, you will have evidence that you completed the work and will not lose credit. Always submit your work with plenty of time to spare in the event that you have a technical issue with the Blackboard, the network, and/or your computer (see below).

As necessary, storage space, data, and additional software may be made available to you on the Geology Department computer system (details TBD). To use the Department assets from off-campus, you may need to connect to the UTEP VPN first. Contact me AND the Geology Department system administrator, Carlos Montana (montana@utep.edu), if you have difficulties or any technical problems with Department resources and software. Carlos will be the one to fix things, but also I need to know what is going on. The UTEP IT Helpdesk is who to contact for problems with the UTEP VPN and any other University computing resource.

**If at any time you have problems accessing Blackboard, the internet, or any of the resources described here, or have any other technical difficulties, please reach out to the instructors ASAP.** For troubleshooting, note that the Help Desk (https://www.utep.edu/technologysupport/) is trained specifically in assisting with technological needs of students.

**Class Recording Policies:**

The use of recordings will enable you to have access to class lectures, group discussions, etc. in the event you miss any synchronous or in-person class meetings due to illness or other extenuating circumstances. Our use of such technology is governed by the Federal Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and UTEP’s acceptable-use policy. A recording of class sessions will be kept and stored by UTEP, in accordance with FERPA and UTEP policies. Your instructor will not share the recordings of your class activities outside of course participants, which include your fellow students, teaching assistants, or graduate assistants, and any guest faculty or community-based learning partners with whom we may engage during a class session. You may not share recordings outside of this course. Doing so may result in disciplinary action.

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Attendance and Engagement Policies:
I expect everyone in the class to regularly attend all lecture and lab meetings, and attendance will be taken. However, do not attend class in person if you feel ill or have been exposed to a sick person (see COVID-19 Policies below). If you miss a class meeting with a valid excuse, accommodations will be made. Because of the fast, week-to-week pace of the course, it will be particularly important that every student maintain engagement. The onus will be on each one of you to make your own experience in the class a success. That means you need to keep on schedule and on task from week-to-week, including:

- attending all scheduled class meetings (whether they are virtual or face-to-face)
- staying in the loop on and being proactive about communication;
- participating in all discussions and other interactive activities;
- being diligent in reading/viewing all materials posted to Blackboard and making progress on assignments from week-to-week, e.g., for every hour of “class time” you should be devoting 3 hours to preparatory/study time and/or working on assignments. You are responsible for any and all material posted to Blackboard.
- not hesitating to ask questions about material posted to Blackboard, e.g. by emailing the instructors directly, posting questions to Blackboard, attending office hours (virtual or face-to-face), etc.
- meeting deadlines and keeping your commitment to complete all work (major assignments and other graded work) and completing it on time.

Each one of the above items will contribute to how you will be evaluated for class participation/attendance. Your success in each of them will also contribute to high scores on your assignments and exams.

Late and Missing Work Policies:
Generally, the instructors will post new material (including assignments, readings, lectures, etc.) to Blackboard on Mondays by midnight (11:59 pm MT). Generally, you will have at least one week to do work (homework, labs, quizzes, discussion board posts, etc.) which will due, typically on Blackboard, on Mondays no later than midnight (11:59 pm MT). Due dates and mode of turning in (electronic vs. hardcopy) may change/vary, though, so be sure to read all instructions carefully.

Unless other arrangements are made in advance, or you have a valid excuse (see below), late work may lose up to 50% of its value for each day it is late, and work may not be accepted more than one week late. In general, make-up exams and assignments may not be available unless in the case of a documented emergency, etc.. Note that any make-up work may be in a different format than the original work, may require more intensive preparation, and may be graded with
penalty points. If you miss an assignment and the reason is not considered excusable, you may receive a zero. It is therefore important to reach out to the instructor, in advance if at all possible, and explain with proper documentation why you missed a given course requirement. Once a deadline has been established for make-up work, it is possible that no further extensions or exceptions will be granted. **Bottom line: stay on time with assigned work and don’t fall behind, but, if you do, TALK WITH THE INSTRUCTORS – do not just give up on work you are behind on.**

According to UTEP Curriculum and Classroom Policies: **“When, in the judgment of the instructor, a student has been absent to such a degree as to impair his or her status relative to credit for the course, the instructor may drop the student from the class with a grade of “W” before the course drop deadline and with a grade of “F” after the course drop deadline.”** See the UTEP Undergraduate Catalog for a list of excuse absences which include, but are not limited to, illness, absence with the instructor's prior approval, official University business, etc., but all require documentation. **Because you may be dropped from the course if you have excessive missing work or are not sufficiently engaged in the course, please contact Dr. Hurtado about any concerns, schedule conflicts, missing work, etc. ASAP and, whenever possible, in advance. Note that I will not entertain entreaties to grant extensions or an incomplete grade for the course at the last minute!**

**Course Drop and Incomplete Grade Policies:**

To drop this class, please contact the Registrar’s Office ([https://www.utep.edu/student-affairs/registrar/students/registration.html](https://www.utep.edu/student-affairs/registrar/students/registration.html) to initiate the drop process. **If you cannot complete this course for whatever reason, please contact me. If you do not, you are at risk of receiving an “F” for the course.**

**Note that I will not entertain entreaties to grant extensions or an incomplete grade for the course at the last minute!**

Incomplete grades may be requested/assigned only in exceptional circumstances after you have completed at least half of the course requirements. Talk to me immediately if you believe an incomplete is warranted. If granted, we will establish a contract of work to be completed with deadlines. If the deadlines are missed, the incomplete grade will automatically turn into an F.

**Academic Dishonesty Policies:**

Academic dishonesty is prohibited and is considered a violation of the UTEP Handbook of Operating Procedures (HOOP). It includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, and collusion. Cheating may involve copying from or providing information to another student, possessing unauthorized materials during a test, or falsifying research data on laboratory reports. Plagiarism occurs when someone intentionally or knowingly represents the words or ideas of another as

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ones' own. Collusion involves collaborating with another person to commit any academically dishonest act. **Any act of academic dishonesty attempted by a UTEP student is unacceptable and will not be tolerated.** The University guidelines for academic dishonesty are very specific and will be strictly followed. All suspected violations of academic integrity must be reported to the Office of Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution ([https://www.utep.edu/student-affairs/osccr/](https://www.utep.edu/student-affairs/osccr/)) for possible disciplinary action. Refer to the UTEP HOOP ([https://www.utep.edu/hoop/section-2/student-conduct-and-discipline.html](https://www.utep.edu/hoop/section-2/student-conduct-and-discipline.html)), and the guidelines here ([https://www.utep.edu/student-affairs/osccr/student-conduct/academic-integrity.html](https://www.utep.edu/student-affairs/osccr/student-conduct/academic-integrity.html)) for more information, and contact the Dean of Students or Dr. Hurtado if you have any concerns.

*Some of your course work and assessments may submitted to SafeAssign, a plagiarism detecting software. SafeAssign is used review assignment submissions for originality and will help you learn how to properly attribute sources rather than paraphrase.*

Note that this course may require you to work in groups at times and individually at other times. **Although reasonable collaboration will occur from time-to-time (on assignments, not exams), all work you turn for a grade in is expected to be your own!** You MUST learn to trust your own observations, calculations, programs, and interpretations and NOT rely on those of others. This is your opportunity to learn the material and to hone your skills, so do not cheat yourself by copying the work of others. Show all your work and be prepared to explain it! Copying of other's work WILL be noticed and WILL NOT be tolerated.

**Course Citizenship Policies:**

This class will require interactions with your instructors and fellow students in both face-to-face and online, asynchronous environments. Think about your colleagues and your role in this group environment and in the current global circumstances. Collegiality, teamwork, and self-organization will make this class a great experience. Please consider the following guidelines as you interact with others online:

- Always consider your audience. Remember that other members of the class and the instructors will be reading any online postings and that they will be present at face-to-face meetings.
- Respect and courtesy must be provided to classmates and to the instructors at all times. No harassment or inappropriate postings will be tolerated.
- When reacting to someone else’s message, address the ideas, not the person. Post only what anyone would comfortably state in a face-to-face situation.
- Blackboard is not a public internet venue, so all postings to it should be considered private and confidential. Whatever is posted in these online spaces is intended for classmates and the instructors only. Please do not copy documents and paste them to a publicly-accessible website, blog, or

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Course Outline and Schedule:

Note that the details of our schedule are subject to change as the semester progresses. Please be flexible, and let Dr. Hurtado know if you have any questions or concerns. A preliminary, detailed schedule is attached.

Schedule Notes:

1. Dr. Hurtado may be called out of town for field work or other business on certain other days to be determined. This, however, DOES NOT imply that class will be cancelled on those days! Unless you are otherwise notified, always assume class will meet (perhaps online), regardless of whether Dr. Hurtado is out of town or not!

2. All new materials, including assignments, will be posted to Blackboard on Mondays. Note that the course is NOT self-paced. We will follow a tight, weekly schedule.

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week #</th>
<th>Dates (MW)</th>
<th>Lecture Topics (readings available on Blackboard)</th>
<th>Lab Assignment (materials available on Blackboard)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week 1</td>
<td>Jan. 17, 19</td>
<td>Course Introduction</td>
<td>Lab 1: Introduction to Google Earth Engine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 2</td>
<td>Jan. 24, 26</td>
<td>Review of Remote Sensing; Introduction to Signal and Image Processing (Jensen Ch. 1, 6; DIP Ch. 1; DIPUM Ch. 1)</td>
<td>Lab 2: Image Pre-Processing with Google Earth Engine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 3</td>
<td>Jan. 31, Feb. 2</td>
<td>Digital Images; Image Math and Statistics; (Jensen Ch. 4, 5; DIP Ch. 2; DIPUM Ch. 2)</td>
<td>Lab 3: Image Processing with Google Earth Engine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 4</td>
<td>Feb. 7, 9</td>
<td>Image Pre-processing (Geometric and Radiometric) (Jensen Ch. 7; DIP Ch. 2, 3; DIPUM Ch. 2, 3, 6)</td>
<td>Lab 4: Introduction to MATLAB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 5</td>
<td>Feb. 14, 16</td>
<td>Spatial-Domain Filtering (Jensen Ch. 8; DIP Ch. 3; DIPUM Ch. 3)</td>
<td>Lab 5: Spatial and Frequency Domain Processing (MATLAB)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 6</td>
<td>Feb. 21, 23</td>
<td>Frequency-Domain Processing (Jensen Ch. 8; DIP Ch. 4, 8; DIPUM Ch. 4, 7)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 7</td>
<td>Feb. 28, Mar. 2</td>
<td>Image Enhancement and Reconstruction (Jensen Ch. 8; DIP Ch. 5; DIPUM Ch. 5)</td>
<td>Lab 6: Image Enhancement (MATLAB)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 8</td>
<td>Mar. 7, 9</td>
<td>Midterm Week</td>
<td>Midterm exam will be available on Blackboard Monday, March 7 and due Friday, March 11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mar. 13-17</td>
<td>Spring Break</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 9</td>
<td>Mar. 21, 23</td>
<td>Image Transforms; Principal Components (Jensen Ch. 8)</td>
<td>Lab 7: Image Statistics and Principal Component Analysis (MATLAB)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 10</th>
<th>Mar. 28, 30</th>
<th>Morphology and Segmentation; Classification; Color Image Processing (Jensen Ch. 8, 9, 11, 12; DIP Ch. 6, 9, 10; DIPUM Ch. 7, 10, 11)</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week 11</td>
<td>Apr. 4, 6</td>
<td>Morphology and Segmentation; Classification; Color Image Processing (Jensen Ch. 8, 9, 11, 12; DIP Ch. 6, 9, 10; DIPUM Ch. 7, 10, 11)</td>
<td>Lab 8: Image Segmentation and Classification (MATLAB)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 12</td>
<td>Apr. 11, 13</td>
<td>Change Detection (Jensen Ch. 12)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 13</td>
<td>Apr. 18, 20</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>Lab 9: TBD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 14</td>
<td>Apr. 25, 27</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 15</td>
<td>May 2, 4</td>
<td>Review</td>
<td>Final exam will be available on Blackboard Monday, May 8 and due Friday, May 12; Final grades will be available by May 17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>