

GEOPHYSICS 4336/5335/6335: Introduction to Remote Sensing
CRNs: 14456/14458/15545
The University of Texas at El Paso
Department of Earth Environmental and Resource Sciences

Instructor:

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Note: Please only use the internal email system to Blackboard to communicate with the instructor, not utep.edu mail (see below)

Course Description, Objectives, and Expected Learning Outcomes:

The goal of this course is for the student to attain a firm understanding of the physics and basic principles of remote sensing. The emphasis in this course will be on basic concepts, and there will be mathematical treatments electromagnetism, statistical physics, physical chemistry, optics, orbital mechanics, and photogrammetry, among other topics. Other topics will include the spectral characteristics of biological and geological materials, sensor system design, image acquisition and processing, and applications of remote sensing to the Earth and planetary sciences. Students will be given access to state-of-the-art computer facilities, instruction on how to use the popular image processing software ENVI, experience with Google Earth Engine, and exposure to a variety of remotely sensed datasets including aerial photographs, satellite-based optical imagery (e.g. Landsat, SPOT, ASTER, IKONOS, etc.), LIDAR, and RADAR. Note that this course is intended to prepare the student for Geophysics 5336 (Digital Image Processing) and for doing research using remote sensing and digital image processing concepts and methods.

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 bare minimum requirement to pass the class

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(i.e. a “D-”). **Multiple missed assignments and/or exams will not allow you to pass.**

Your participation will, in part, be evaluated based on attendance, 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 in-class and 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: MW 10:30am-12:20pm in Geology 320 or Geology 409

The course will be face-to-face following a “flipped classroom” format enabled by Blackboard. 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 class meetings is expected of all students. Successful completion of ALL work is also expected of all students. Excessive absences and/or missing work will have negative grade consequences. Some accommodation can be made on a case-by-case basis, with a documented and valid rationale.

Office Hours:

Dr. Hurtado: M 2-4pm (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:

| Method | Response Time | Notes |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------------------|--|
| Blackboard Announcements | -- | Be sure to check Blackboard regularly. Blackboard is available on the web and also as a mobile app. |
| Blackboard Discussion Forum | Within <24 hours for replies to posts | Posts are visible to the instructors and the whole class. There are dedicated forums for technical help, general help, |

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| | | |
|--|---|--|
| | | fun posts, as well as specific assignments. |
| Microsoft Teams Zoom | New appointments available within 24-48 hours | Schedule new appointments via Blackboard email. Scheduled office hours are in a group setting. Private conversations are possible on request/by appointment. |
| Email (do not use utep.edu email; use Blackboard internal email <u>only</u> please) | Within <6 hours | For routine, 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. |
| Cell Phone (see numbers above) | Within <3 hours | Monday to Friday: 9am-5pm Weekend: emergencies only. Please leave voice mail! No texts, please. |
| Office Phone (see numbers above) | Within <24 hours | Instructors may work remotely on some days. Please leave voice mail! |

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**, books include:

John R. Jensen, 2007, *Remote Sensing of the Environment: An Earth Resource Perspective* (2nd edition): Pearson/Prentice Hall, 608 pp.; ISBN 0131889508.

John R. Jensen, 2005, *Introductory Digital Image Processing: A Remote Sensing Perspective* (3rd edition): Pearson/Prentice Hall, 526 pp.; ISBN 0131453610.

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

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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 Tutorial: <https://geoinfo.amu.edu.pl/wpk/rst/rst/Front/tofc.html>
- NRC Remote Sensing Tutorials: <https://www.nrcan.gc.ca/maps-tools-publications/satellite-imagery-air-photos/tutorial-fundamentals-remote-sensing/9309>
- The Remote Sensing Core Curriculum: <https://rscc.umn.edu/>
- USGS Spectroscopy Laboratory: <https://www.usgs.gov/labs/spec-lab>
- Google Earth Engine Developers Page: <https://developers.google.com/earth-engine>

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. Most of these are available to you through UTEP (or otherwise) at little to no cost.

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. Google Docs is **free**.
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. MS Paint is **free**.
3. *Adobe Reader* (or your favorite other PDF viewer). This will be used to view PDF documents posted by the instructors. Adobe Reader is **free**.
4. *Windows Media Player, QuickTime Player, VLC, or equivalent video player*. This will be used to view video files. These tools are **free**.
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 UTEP 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 and Blackboard Collaborate. Please check that you can use both of

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these functions, as well as the Blackboard email system. **Mozilla FireFox and Google Chrome are the best-supported browsers for Blackboard.**

7. *Access to Zoom and/or Microsoft Teams.* Please be sure to check that you can use these videoconferencing tools. We may need to meet for class using these tools at some points during the semester as well as for remote office hours for those who choose. These tools are **free**.
8. *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.
9. *ImageJ.* This venerable (and **free**) software is a simple, but powerful, image processing tool: <https://imagej.nih.gov/ij/>.
10. *ENVI.* This is an industry-leading package for remote sensing digital image processing. The software will be made available to you either in an on-campus lab or via remote log-in via the UTEP VPN (details TBD).
11. *Google Earth Engine (GEE).* If you are new to GEE, you must first create (or verify that you already have) a **free** 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.
12. *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/>).
13. 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 most work will be assigned and handed-in electronically via Blackboard only. Email or hardcopies will only be accepted as directed by the instructor.**

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

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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. To use the Department assets from off-campus, you will 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.

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:

Some class sessions may be recorded. The use of recordings will enable you to have access to class lectures, group discussions, etc. in the event you miss any required synchronous or in-person class meetings. 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.

Attendance and Engagement Policies:

I expect everyone in the class to attend all lecture and lab meetings, and attendance will be taken. If you miss a class meeting with a valid, documented excuse, accommodations can 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
- 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

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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 am MT). Generally, you will have at least one week to do work (homework, labs, quizzes, discussion board posts, etc.) which will generally be due on Blackboard on Mondays no later than midnight (11:59 pm MT). **Due dates may change/vary, though, so be sure to read the instructions carefully.**

Unless other arrangements are made in advance, or you have a documented and 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.** Note that any make-up work or exams may be in a different format than the original work, may include a different scope than the original work, may require more intensive preparation, and may be graded with penalty points. If you miss an assignment, quiz, exam, etc. 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**

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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>) to initiate the drop process. **If you cannot complete this course for whatever reason, please contact me ASAP. 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 of the semester!

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 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 (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>), and the guidelines here (see <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-**

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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 and interpretations (especially in the field) 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.

Guidance on Artificial Intelligence:

The use of generative AI tools such as Chat GPT will only be permitted in this course for explicitly specified activities. Any use of such tools **must** be clearly and explicitly noted or cited: Students must cite any borrowed or AI generated content sources to comply with all applicable citation guidelines and copyright law, and to avoid plagiarism. Instances that violate these guidelines will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution. See Academic Dishonesty Policies (above) for more information.

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 these group environments 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:

- 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 behavior will be tolerated.
- When reacting to someone else's message online, 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 on 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 other space. If students wish to do so, they have the ethical obligation to first request the permission of the writer(s).

The instructors will be exercising other important leadership skills with you throughout the course, emphasizing good team behavior and dynamics.

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Accommodations Policies:

UTEP is committed to providing reasonable accommodations and auxiliary services to students, staff, faculty, job applicants, applicants for admissions, and other beneficiaries of University programs, services and activities with documented disabilities in order to provide them with equal opportunities to participate in programs, services, and activities in compliance with sections 503 and 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 and the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act (ADAAA) of 2008. Reasonable accommodations will be made unless it is determined that doing so would cause undue hardship on the University. Students requesting an accommodation based on a disability must register with the UTEP Center for Accommodations and Support Services (CASS) (<https://www.utep.edu/student-affairs/cass/ada-policies/accommodations-for-individuals-with-disabilities%20.html>) Note that the student is responsible for following up with the instructors about any accommodation letters and instructions.

Military Service:

If you are a military student with the potential of being called to military service and/or training during the course of the semester, you are encouraged to contact the instructors as soon as possible.

Student Resources:

UTEP provides a variety of student services and support, including:

- UTEP Library: Access a wide range of resources including online, full-text access to thousands of journals and eBooks plus reference service and librarian assistance for enrolled students.
- RefWorks: A bibliographic citation tool; check out the RefWorks tutorial and Fact Sheet and Quick-Start Guide.
- University Writing Center (UWC): Submit papers here for assistance with writing style and formatting, ask a tutor for help and explore other writing resources.
- Math Tutoring Center (MaRCS): Ask a tutor for help and explore other available math resources.
- History Tutoring Center (HTC): Receive assistance with writing history papers, get help from a tutor and explore other history resources.
- Help Desk: Students experiencing technological challenges (email, Blackboard, software, etc.) can submit a ticket to the UTEP Helpdesk for assistance. Contact the Helpdesk via phone, email, chat, website, or in person if on campus.
- Military Student Success Center: UTEP welcomes military-affiliated students to its degree programs, and the Military Student Success Center and its

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dedicated staff (many of whom are veterans and students themselves) are here to help personnel in any branch of service to reach their educational goals.

- Center for Accommodations and Support Services (CASS): Assists students with ADA-related accommodations for coursework, housing, and internships.
- Counseling and Psychological Services: Provides a variety of counseling services including individual, couples, and group sessions as well as career and disability assessments.
- **Student Success Help Desk (SSHD)**: Students experiencing challenges or obstacles to academic success including registration, financial, food, housing, and transposition resources may submit a ticket request assistance to studentsuccess@utep.edu
- **UTEP Food Pantry**: Non-perishable food items are available to students who are currently enrolled in classes. Bring a Miner Gold Card to Memorial Gym, Room 105, Monday through Friday, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

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. *There will be no class meetings (lab or lecture) on the following days: September 4 (Labor Day); Nov. 22 (Thanksgiving). In addition, Dr. Hurtado may be 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! Meetings when Dr. Hurtado is away may occur over Zoom/Teams/Blackboard.*
2. *All new materials, including assignments, will be posted to Blackboard on Mondays. Assignments are due the following Monday, or when otherwise indicated. Note that the course is NOT self-paced. We will follow a tight, weekly schedule.*

| Week | Dates (MW) | Topics | Assignments |
|---------|--------------------------|---|---|
| Week 1 | Aug. 28, 30 | Introduction: Definition, History, and Overview | Homework 1: Research/Reading Assignment Discussion Board #1 |
| Week 2 | Sept. 4, 6 | Electromagnetic Radiation (EMR) and the Electromagnetic Spectrum; Resolution | Homework 2: Electromagnetism Discussion Board #2 |
| Week 3 | Sept. 11, 13 | EMR Interactions with Matter; Atmospheric Scattering and Absorption | Discussion Board #3 |
| Week 4 | Sept. 18, <u>20</u> | Visible and Near-Infrared (VNIR), Shortwave-Infrared (SWIR) | Homework 3: VNIR-SWIR Discussion Board #4 |
| Week 5 | Sept. 25, 27 | Thermal Infrared (TIR); Color and Vision | Discussion Board #5 |
| Week 6 | Oct. <u>2</u> , <u>4</u> | Microwave Remote Sensing | Homework 4: TIR and Radar Discussion Board #6 |
| Week 7 | Oct. <u>9</u> , 11 | Sensors and Satellites | Discussion Board #7 |
| Week 8 | Oct. 16, 18 | Midterm Exam Review | Discussion Board #8 Midterm Exam: will be <u>online this week</u> |
| Week 9 | Oct. 23, 25 | Aerial Photography, Image Interpretation, and Photogrammetry | Lab 1: Aerial Photography, Image Interpretation, and Photogrammetry Discussion Board #9 |
| Week 10 | Oct. 30, Nov. 1 | LiDAR Remote Sensing; UAS | Lab 2: Remote Sensing with Uncrewed Aerial Systems (UAS) Discussion Board #10 |
| Week 11 | Nov. 6, 8 | Remote Sensing of Rocks and Minerals; Spectroradiometry | Lab 3: Geologic Remote Sensing with Google Earth Engine and ENVI Discussion Board #11 |
| Week 12 | Nov. 13, 15 | Google Earth Engine; ENVI | Discussion Board #12 |
| Week 13 | Nov. 20, 22 | Thanksgiving Week | Discussion Board #13 |
| Week 14 | Nov. 27, 29 | Remote Sensing of Vegetation and Water and Applications to Environmental Science; Spectroradiometry | Lab 4: Environmental Remote Sensing with Google Earth Engine and ENVI Discussion Board #14 |
| Week 15 | Dec. 4, 6 | Final Exam Review | Final Exam: will be <u>online week of Dec. 11</u> |

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