

*Syllabus (version 1.1. Subject to Change) for:*  
**Arid Lands**  
GEOG 4307 (CRN 16479), ESCI 5315 (CRN 14995)  
Lecture: Tuesday 5:30- 8:20 PM  
Room GEOL 320

**Instructors:** Dr. Tom Gill, Geology 401A, Phone: 747-5168: E-mail: tegill@utep.edu  
Dr. Rip Langford, Geology 401B, Phone: 747-5968: E-mail: langford@utep.edu  
**Office Hours:** Gill M 3:30 to 5:30, Th 2:30 to 3:30, and Tuesday immediately after class  
**Office Hours:** Langford M and W 10:30-11:20, Thursday 2:30 to 3:30, and Tuesday after class  
**Required Text:** *Deserts and desert environments*, by Julie Laity, 2008 (Laity)  
John Wiley & Sons. ISBN 978-1-57718-033-3  
**Additional text:** *Global Deserts Outlook*, by U.N. Environment Programme, 2006 (GDO)  
Available online at <http://www.unep.org/geo/gdoutlook/> and on Blackboard.  
PDF downloadable at [http://www.unep.org/pdf/Global\\_Deserts\\_Outlook.pdf](http://www.unep.org/pdf/Global_Deserts_Outlook.pdf)  
**Additional readings will be assigned on a week-to-week basis.**

### **Course Description**

A study of the physical complexes of the world's dry regions. Salient factors emphasized include climate, landforms, water, soils, natural vegetation and human occupation. Prerequisites: GEOG 1306 or GEOG 1310 or GEOL 1303 or GEOL 1311 or GEOL 1313. GEOG 3306 is recommended.

Specifically students will learn

1. The definition, extent, and geographic features of drylands (arid, semiarid, and subhumid).
2. The geological processes that shape and characterize drylands.
3. The atmospheric and climatic conditions that create and characterize drylands.
4. The role of water and the hydrologic cycle in drylands.
5. The soils, ecosystems and biota of dry landscapes.
6. The human histories, occupation, and land use of some of the world's most important deserts.

There will be several one-day field trips during the course of the semester.

### **Grading (for undergraduate credit):**

Extra credit assignments- TBA.

Final exam (not completely comprehensive) 20%

\*Homework assignments: 30%

\*Quizzes/tests 50%

There will be required readings from one or both texts every week, as well as additional readings assigned during many weeks.

\*For each chapter covered in the test, Drs. Langford and Gill will develop approximately ten critical thinking questions based on the lecture and/or assigned readings. Several of these questions will be assigned to be answered as a take-home homework assignment every week. Approximately every three weeks (five times during the semester), there will be an in-class test (taking up about 45 minutes of the class period) covering the understanding of these key questions for a set of two or three chapters (for example, one test might cover Desert Hydrology and Desert Lakes).

**For graduate credit**, students must additionally write a professional research paper on one aspect of Arid Lands: the topic must be agreed to in advance (a deadline will be given) with either Dr. Gill or Dr. Langford. The paper will be in the format of the *Journal of Arid Environments* ( <http://www.journals.elsevier.com/journal-of-arid-environments> and <http://www.elsevier.com/journals/journal-of-arid-environments/0140-1963/guide-for-authors> ) and should summarize the recent advances in a particular topic. This assignment will comprise 15% of your overall grade: other assessments will comprise a proportionally reduced percentage of the grade assessments (tests 40%, homework 27%, final 18%).

**Students with Disabilities:** If you have (or think you may have) a disability, and need accommodation, contact the Disabled Student Services Office (DSSO) at (915) 747-5148 (voice or TTY), visit their office in Union East Room 106, or by E-Mail at [dss@utep.edu](mailto:dss@utep.edu). DSSO is the office at UTEP that is designated to determine eligibility for accommodations and services to students with disabilities, and will arrange for any necessary accommodations.

**Academic (dis)honesty and other issues:** Academic dishonesty is prohibited and considered a violation of the UTEP Handbook of Operating Procedures. It includes but is not limited to cheating, plagiarism, and collusion. In this class, since it is a course for advanced scientific students, you are expected to complete your own work, but working together with your classmates and others (collaboration) is encouraged though not required.

## **Tentative Class Schedule**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Chapter</b>	<b>Instructor</b>	<b>Topic</b>
AUG 26	Laity 1 GDO Executive Summary GDO 1	Gill/Langford	Introduction: Defining Deserts
SEP 2	Laity 2	Langford	Deserts of the World
SEP 9	Laity 3	Gill	Desert Climate / Weather
SEP 16	Laity 4	Langford	Desert Hydrology
SEP 23	Laity 5	Gill	Desert Lakes
SEP 30	Laity 6	Langford	Desert Weathering and Hillslope Systems
OCT 7	Laity 7	Langford/Gill	Desert Soils
OCT 14	Laity 8	Langford	Fluvial Geomorphology of Deserts
OCT 21	Laity 12	Floyd	Desert Animals
OCT 28	Laity 9	Langford	Aeolian Geomorphology of Deserts
NOV 4	Laity 10	Gill	Desert Dust
NOV 11	Laity 11	Gill	Desert Ecosystems and Vegetation
NOV 18	Laity 13 GDO 4,5	Gill/Langford	Desertification
NOV 25	GDO 2	Gill/Langford	Humans and Deserts: Desert People & Cultures
DEC 2		TBA	
DEC 9		Final Exam	