

GEOL 1211 – 1, PRINCIPLES OF EARTH SCIENCE I

Course Reference Number 14393



SYLLABUS version 1.0 **SUBJECT TO CHANGE!**

Online only, Fall Semester 2023: Course Delivered via Blackboard

Instructor: Dr. Tom Gill, Professor of Earth, Environmental and Resource Sciences

Email: tegill@utep.edu. You are encouraged to email me with questions and queries: it will be the preferred method of communication between us. **TO ENSURE I WILL SEE YOUR MESSAGE, PUT “GEOL 1211” IN THE SUBJECT LINE OF YOUR EMAIL.** I MAY NOT SEE OR RESPOND TO EMAILS THAT DO NOT HAVE “GEOL 1211” IN THE SUBJECT LINE. I will do my best to respond to emails within 48 hours except on weekends but may not always be able to do so depending on my schedule. USING THE EMAIL UTILITY WITHIN BLACKBOARD IS **NOT** PREFERRED AND MESSAGES SENT WITHIN BLACKBOARD’S EMAIL SYSTEM **MAY NOT** BE RESPONDED TO AS PROMPTLY.

Phone: 915-747-5168 [TO LEAVE VOICE MAILS ONLY: LEAVE PHONE NUMBER, **THIS IS NOT A PREFERRED METHOD OF COMMUNICATION AND DR. GILL MAY NOT CALL YOU BACK PROMPTLY**]. Office: GEOL 401A (Dr. Gill will only see students in his office by appointment, as this is a fully online course.)

Teaching Assistant for GEOL 1211 lecture: German Rodriguez, grodriguezortiz@miners.utep.edu

Regular weekly online open **office /discussion hours** will be held on Zoom through Blackboard: Day/time will be determined after consulting with students during the first week of class, in order to find time(s) that are most appropriate to this semester’s students. Meetings at other times can always be set by appointment. Appointments are encouraged, please set up through email. Although this is an online class, I will not be available at all times, and generally will not be available on weekends. You will be required to attend an online office hour at least one time during the semester for full credit for the course.

This is a 100% online course, and requires access to Blackboard, the official UTEP course management system. Please familiarize yourself with Blackboard. In addition to Blackboard, some other educational videos will be assigned to be watched on YouTube, Vimeo, and/or other platforms. If you experience any problems with Blackboard, please call the UTEP Help Desk at 915-747-HELP to report the problem and help get it solved.

Your UTEP email address is the official email address used for this class and by Blackboard. All class and personal communication from Blackboard including frequent official course announcements goes there automatically. It is your responsibility to check your UTEP email account often for announcements about this course. You may be able to set up automatic forwarding of messages from your UTEP email account to another email address.

Course Description: This course serves as an introduction to the topics of earth materials, plate tectonics, earthquakes, volcanoes, earth's atmosphere and climate. **Corequisite:** GEOL 1111 (You must take a GEOL 111 laboratory section alongside this course). As much as possible, the topics covered in each week’s lab assignment will be made available beforehand in this lecture portion of the class, so you will be prepared for the lab.

Textbook: (required for all students):

Earth Science, by Tarbuck, Lutgens and Tasa: 15th edition.

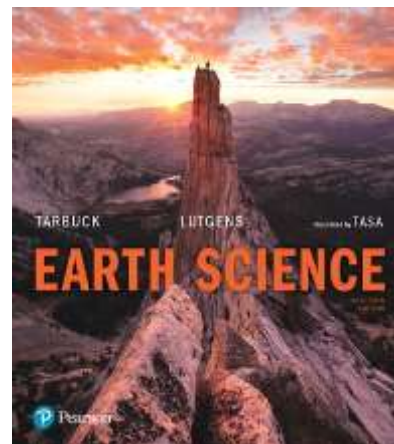
ISBN: 978-0134543536

Make sure you have the 15th edition: not responsible for issues due to anyone who has a different edition of the book or different book.

You may choose to use either the e-book or the printed version.

You will be responsible for readings in the book- generally one chapter per week. Topics covered in the book may **not** also be covered in Dr. Gill's lectures, and topics covered in the lectures may **not** be covered in the book.

You are responsible for knowing both for quizzes, assignments and other assessments.



Course Objectives: By successfully completing this course, you should be able to do these things and more:

- 1) understand many of the different fields and disciplines of the earth sciences;
- 2) understand Earth as a dynamic planet, and the concept of Earth systems, including how other sciences such as biology, chemistry, and physics are used to understand the Earth;
- 3) have a basic understanding of the vast temporal and spatial cycles involved in Earth science;
- 4) understand the basic structure of Earth as a planet;
- 5) identify minerals, rocks and other earth materials;
- 6) have a basic understanding of the process of plate tectonics and explain rock and landform occurrences using plate tectonics;
- 7) describe the processes that form rocks, including volcanism, plutonism, and metamorphism;
- 8) describe earthquake and volcano processes;
- 9) obtain a basic understanding of Earth's atmosphere and weather phenomena;
- 10) understand deserts and the basics of aeolian phenomena, and why a desert is here around El Paso;
- 11) describe earth's climate processes and regimes, and the causes and consequences of climate change.

This class will rely extensively on basic concepts and vocabulary. All of the earth sciences rely on and build from some very basic concepts and terminology which you will be introduced to this semester. An important part of any technical discipline is a specific vocabulary: the same words must mean the same thing for people to communicate about science.

El Paso and the surrounding area are perfect places to learn about the Earth. Our mountains, river, landforms, rocks, desert and weather phenomena are very diverse and are a useful tool to illustrate many of the things we will learn about in this class. Please keep your eyes open and think about how the world you sense every day ties in to what we are studying. Dr. Gill will often use local examples, or items from the news, to illustrate the concepts we discuss.

ABOUT YOUR PROFESSOR: Dr. Thomas E. (Tom) Gill is Professor of Earth, Environmental and Resource Sciences and Environmental Science & Engineering at UTEP. Originally from Northern California, he's lived in West Texas since 1995. Dr. Gill earned a B.S. in Atmospheric Science and a Ph.D. in Earth Sciences and Resources from the University of California at Davis. His scientific work focuses on the connections between the different parts of the earth system, and the geology and environment of deserts and drylands. Dr. Gill's primary research emphasis is the study of aeolian (wind-related) processes (Chapter 10), especially dust storms and sandstorms- so he loves being in El Paso on very windy days. He has published approximately 100 peer-reviewed papers in scientific journals, and his research work has been funded by grants and contracts from agencies including NASA, the National Science Foundation, the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, the U.S. Army Research Laboratory, the Environmental Protection Agency, and others.

Additional Technology Requirements:

In order to participate in this course, the following requirements must be met:

- Internet connection. You will need to access Internet pages regularly in this class such as Blackboard and Youtube.
- Computer and software with the ability to display and download graphics files (.gif, .jpg, .png), create and display document files (.txt, .doc, .pdf) and to play videos (on Windows Media Player, QuickTime, and/or Java)
- Working utep.edu email account and Blackboard-compatible Web browser (Google Chrome or Mozilla Firefox are recommended).

Check that your computer hardware and software are up-to-date and able to access all parts of the course.

Course Format: This class will be offered completely online and asynchronously. Office hours will be provided as described above. Materials will include pre-recorded lectures and videos, reading and homework assignments, discussion boards, quizzes and other assessments, and/or other items.

Attendance: Attendance will not be taken *per se* since this is an asynchronous course but you will fall behind if you do not complete all the assigned materials each week. *If you know you cannot participate in class during a particular week, please let Dr. Gill or the TA Mr. Rodriguez know in advance!*

During many if not all weeks, there will be online discussion boards set up with topics to discuss and respond to: in those weeks, you will be required to respond/post at least once for credit. Or, an assignment will be given that must be turned in before the end of the week: turning in the assignment signifies attendance.

According to UTEP Catalog, “At the discretion of the instructor, a student can be dropped from a course because of excessive absences or lack of effort. A grade of “W” will be assigned before the course drop deadline and a grade of “F” after the course drop deadline.” If I find that, due to non-attendance in the course, you are at risk of failing, you MAY (not necessarily, but possibly) be dropped from the course. I will provide multiple advance notices via email before dropping anyone.

Course Communication: How we will stay in contact with each other

Because this is an online class, we won't see each other in the ways you may be accustomed to: during class time, small group meetings, and office hours. However, there are a number of ways we will keep the communication channels open:

- **Office Hours:** We will probably not meet on campus, but I will still have office hours for your questions and comments about the course. My office hours will be held on Zoom through Blackboard via a link on the course Blackboard page. Times will be determined after the first week of class. You are expected to attend office hours at least once during the semester.
- **Email:** UTEP e-mail is the best way to contact me. I will make every attempt to respond to your e-mail within 48 hours of receipt. When e-mailing me, be sure to email from your UTEP student account and put GEOL 1211 in the subject line of your message (otherwise, I may not see your message promptly). In the body of your e-mail, clearly state your question. At the end of your e-mail, be sure to put your first and last name.
- **Discussion Board:** If you have a question that you believe other students may also have, please post it in the Help Board of the discussion boards inside of Blackboard. Please respond to other students' questions if you have a helpful response.
- **Announcements:** Check the Announcements for the class on Blackboard frequently for any updates, deadlines, or other important messages.

Netiquette

As we know, sometimes communication online can be challenging. It's possible to miscommunicate what we mean or to misunderstand what our classmates mean given the lack of body language and immediate feedback. Therefore, please keep these netiquette (network etiquette) guidelines in mind. Failure to observe them may result in disciplinary action.

- o Always consider the audience. This is a college-level course for adults; therefore, all communication should reflect polite consideration of other's ideas.
- o Respect and courtesy must be provided to classmates and to the instructor at all times. No harassment or inappropriate postings will be tolerated.
- o 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.
- o Blackboard is not a public internet venue; all postings to it should be considered private and confidential. Whatever is posted on in these online spaces is intended for classmates, TA and professor only. Please do not copy documents and paste them to a publicly accessible website, blog, or other space.

HOW TO COMPLETE THIS COURSE

This is an asynchronous class which means you can watch the videos, read the book, and review the other assigned materials whenever you want; and can turn in assignments and assessments for credit anytime you wish as long as it is before the deadline. Attendance in the course is determined by participation in the course activities and completion of assignments.

Every week, you are expected to review the posted materials including presentations from Dr. Gill, videos and other materials assigned in Blackboard in each week's "Instructions and Assignments," and reading the assigned chapter in the textbook. Pay particularly close attention to the "Concepts in Review" and "Give It Some Thought" sections at the end of each chapter. By the end of each week and each chapter, make sure you can answer the questions and explain the queries in the "Concepts in Review" and "Give it Some Thought" sections.

Each week, you will have an assignment to turn in, a quiz to complete, and/or will be required to comment on at least one Discussion Board topic on Blackboard.

ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

The final grade for the course will be based on:

70% Homework/ exercises/ weekly assignments. Each week you will have a short assignment to complete: it may be a short writing assignment, answers to questions, making posts or comments on a discussion board, or something else. It will be worth ten points. There will be a total of thirteen such assignments, but the one with your lowest score will be dropped: thus, there is a potential for 120 points.

30% Best Three Out of Four Quizzes. Quizzes to be completed online will be assigned every three to four weeks and cover three or four chapters, including Dr. Gill's video lecture presentations, assigned readings from the textbook, and other assigned material. The schedule is shown on the last page of the syllabus and will be announced in advance. There will be four quizzes: each one will count seventeen points, which is 10% of your grade. However, your lowest quiz score will be dropped.

TOTAL POSSIBLE POINTS: 171 (120 points from weekly assignments, 51 points from quizzes)

● *Planned Letter Grading:*

- A : greater than 153 total points
- B : 136 to 153 points
- C : 118 to 135 points
- D : 100 to 117 points
- F : Fewer than 100 total points

NOTE: Dr. Gill reserves the right to adjust the above grading rubric with a curve, but if so it will only be to decrease the number of points needed to achieve a grade- i.e., to make it easier to earn a higher grade.

Alternate Means of Submitting Work Online In Case of Technical Issues: Since assignments are to be submitted online, you should plan to submit your work with plenty of time to spare in the event that you have a technical issue with the course website, network, and/or your computer. It is strongly advised that you save all your work (copies of your discussion posts, quiz answers, and other assignments) in a separate document as a back-up. This way, you will have evidence that you completed the work and may not lose credit. If you are experiencing difficulties submitting your work through the course website on Blackboard, please contact the UTEP Help Desk. You can email Dr. Gill and Mr. Rodriguez the TA your back-up document as a last resort.

Policy on Late Homework/ Assignments: Unless otherwise notified by Dr. Gill, NO homework or other assignments will be accepted late except for reasons other than illness or injury (health care practitioner's note required), the instructor's prior approval, or when a student is required to be on official University or government business (documentation required). Since labs on each week's topic for GEOL 1111 will follow the lectures, it is crucial that all assignments be turned in on time.

Policy on Make Up of Assignments: Unless otherwise notified by Dr. Gill, NO make-up assignments or quizzes will be given. All students may drop the lowest grade on one of the four assigned quizzes and one of the thirteen weekly assignments, so all students may miss one quiz or one week's assignments without penalty. Make-up work will be given only in the case of a **documented** emergency. Note that make-up work may be in a different format than the original work, may require more intensive preparation, and may be more difficult. If you miss an assignment and the reason is not considered excusable, you will receive a zero, and that will be considered one of your skipped assignments. It is therefore important to reach out to Dr. Gill—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, no further extensions or exceptions will be granted.

Incomplete Grade (I) Policy: Incomplete grades may be requested only in exceptional circumstances after you have completed at least half of the course requirements. Discuss with Dr. Gill immediately if you believe an incomplete is warranted. If granted, we will establish a contract of work to be completed with deadlines.

Homework Assignment Due Dates and Posting of Course Materials:

Homework assignments and discussion board responses must be uploaded to Blackboard by the assigned deadline date and time, generally one week from the time the assignments are posted online. Class materials for each week/chapter including homework assignments will be uploaded to Blackboard by the dates shown on the class schedule shown on the last page of the syllabus. On the Blackboard page for this class will be a set of folders for each chapter where material is organized to view and download lectures and other materials for every week, links to video and audio files which are part of the official class presentation for every week, and instructions for any additional reading and viewing assignments. The Blackboard site will be organized by week of the course (corresponding to chapter).

OFFICIAL INFORMATION

Your continued enrollment in this course implies that you have read and understand the contents of this syllabus, and that you agree to abide by the conditions herein.

Students with Disabilities/ Accommodations Policy: If you have (or think you may have) a disability, and need accommodation, contact the Center for Accommodations and Support Services at (915) 747-5148 (voice or TTY), visit their office in Union East Room 106, visit their web site at <https://www.utep.edu/student-affairs/cass/> or contact them by email at cass@utep.edu. This 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. In order to receive an accommodation for this class due to disability, it must be requested through CASS and Dr. Gill must receive the appropriate paperwork from CASS. Please note that CASS is available to help students with any documented disabilities, including mental health issues, as well as physical injuries and illnesses.

Academic (dis)honesty: All students are expected to engage in their academic pursuits in a professional manner and to maintain honesty and integrity. Students are responsible for knowing the requirements of academic honesty set forth by UTEP. The University and its official representatives may initiate disciplinary proceedings against a student accused of any form of academic dishonesty, including but not limited to cheating, plagiarism, and collusion. See the UTEP policy on academic integrity and scholastic dishonesty: <https://www.utep.edu/student-affairs/osccr/student-conduct/academic-integrity.html>. In this class, you are expected to complete your own work, though consultation and discussion with your classmates and others (collaboration) is encouraged though not required on course content and topics, but NOT (it is prohibited) for tests and assignments. Students must cite any borrowed content sources (including AI: see below) to comply with all applicable citation guidelines, copyright law, and avoid plagiarism. Any and all suspected academic misconduct in this course will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct & Conflict Resolution and may result in failure in this course.

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

Guidance on Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) such as ChatGPT: Dr. Gill considers the use of an AI such as ChatGPT to provide answers to assignments and assessments, without disclosure of its use, to be an example of academic dishonesty. Please note that Dr. Gill has discovered that AI tools including ChatGPT often give the wrong answers! The use of generative AI tools such as Chat GPT is permitted *only with a disclosure that it was used, in every instance that it is used.*

COVID precautions: COVID-19 and other diseases are still a significant threat, and at the time of the start of the semester are increasing once again. While most current cases of COVID are mild, it can still be a deadly disease to many persons such as the elderly, immunocompromised, infants, and pregnant. And the long-term effects of COVID can be disabling or fatal. Please email Professor Gill ASAP if you are unable to complete course requirements or need temporary accommodations due to COVID-19. Please stay home and seek medical treatment if you have been diagnosed with COVID-19 or are experiencing COVID-19 symptoms or otherwise feeling ill, even if your symptoms are mild. If you are not yet vaccinated, please visit <https://www.epcovidvaccine.com> and get fully vaccinated! Being vaccinated (with booster shots), wearing masks, and social distancing are still the most effective measures we have to keep one another safe.

Policy for Student Absences on Religious Holy Days: Section 51.911(b) of the Texas Education Code requires that an institution of higher education excuse a student from attending classes or other required activities, including examinations, for the observance of a religious holy day, including travel for that purpose. Section 51.911 (a) (2) defines a religious holy day as: “a holy day observed by a religion whose places of worship are exempt from property taxation under Section 11.20...” Since this class is online and asynchronous, this policy should not restrict you from completing the required work, but if you believe it may do so, contact Dr. Gill in advance if observance of a religious holy day will impact your coursework.

Course Drop: The College of Science aligns with UTEP with respect to course drop dates. Requests for withdrawal will not be approved after the College of Science drop date deadline. Students can always petition the Registrar for a complete withdrawal from all courses pending documentation.

EXPECTED Course Outline:

NOTE: This schedule could change (just like the Earth system does) based on the needs, requirements and opportunities of the students, professor, availability of new materials, and the actual earth phenomena which may be observable or happening on any given day.

Reading of various chapters from the book is required for each week of online study below. You will be expected to do the readings and access the materials on Blackboard, every week, as detailed above in the syllabus. The online lectures, videos, and other assignments and posted materials on Blackboard are considered an addition to the readings, and may not always match what is in the text.

READ TEXTBOOK CHAPTER #	MATERIALS AVAILABLE ON BLACKBOARD	TOPIC
1.1 – 1.3	August 28	Introduction to Course, Introduction to Earth Science
2	September 4	Minerals
3	September 11	Rocks
QUIZ 1		
6	September 18	Volcanoes
5	September 25	Earthquakes
4	October 2	Plate Tectonics
7	October 9	Crustal Deformation and Mountain Building
QUIZ 2		
1.4 and 9	October 16	Water
13	October 23	Ocean
16	October 30	Atmosphere
QUIZ 3		
10	November 6	Deserts
19	November 13	Weather Phenomena and Storms
20	November 20	Climate (Thanksgiving Week)
20	November 27	Climate Change
QUIZ 4		
	December 4	TBA: Class wrap-up or special presentation
	December 11	FINAL EXAM WEEK There is not a regularly scheduled final examination for this asynchronous course. There may be a final assignment due this week.

Important Dates for Fall 2023:

Classes begin: Aug.28

Census day: Sep. 13

Course drop deadline: Nov. 03

Thanksgiving holidays: Nov. 23 -24

Dead Day: Dec. 08

Final Exams: Dec. 11 -15