

ERSC 1304 Earth and the Environment

Spring 2015

Instructor: Dr. Laura Ruhl

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Office Hours: Tuesdays 1:30-2:30; Wednesday 2-3pm

Textbook: Environmental Geology (2nd Ed) by James S. Reichard; ISBN: 978-007-809607-5

Course Meeting Times: Mon, Wed, Fri 10:00-10:50am, in SCLB 160

Office Hours: Mon 1-2pm, Tues/Thurs 1:30-2pm

Course Description:

This is an introductory environmental geology course that examines interactions between human beings and our ever-changing planet, the effects of geologic hazards on humans, and anthropogenic (human-caused) impacts on nature, geology, and society. Fundamental geologic concepts such as minerals, rock formation, plate tectonics, geologic time, and surficial processes are used as a basis for understanding a variety of natural processes. The course topics include geologic hazards (earthquakes, volcanoes, landslides, costal processes, and land subsidence), climate change, earth resources, as well as the impact of mineral extraction and water resource utilization.

Course Objectives:

Humans are heavily dependent on the earth's natural resources for our standard of living, yet also threatened by environmental hazards, both natural and anthropogenic. Throughout the course we will cover topics that shed light on our interactions with the earth. The course objectives include students gaining an understanding of:

- 1) Earth Processes (origin of solar system, minerals, rock cycle, and tectonics)
- 2) Hazardous Earth Processes (floods, landslides, earthquakes, volcanic eruptions)
- 3) Earth Resources (Soil resources, mineral resources, and energy resources)
- 4) Hydrologic processes (ground and surface water resources, water quantity and pollution)
- 5) Geologic Processes that occur naturally and how humans can change it.

GRADING SCALE

Exam #1 100 points

Exam #2 100 points

Exam #3 100 points

Exam #4 100 points

Quizzes 100 points

TOTAL 500 points

GRADES

A = 450-500 points = 90%

B = 400-449 points = 80%

C = 350-399 points = 70%

D = 300-349 points = 60%

F = Less than 300 points

ASSESSMENT

Exams

Exams will be held in class and will consist of 50 multiple-choice questions. Each question will be worth 2 points, for a total of one hundred 100 points per exam. Four exams will be given over the course of the semester. The only make-up exam will be a comprehensive final exam. Your grade on the make-up exam will be substituted for **ONE** missed exam. You may also choose to take the comprehensive final exam to replace a grade on one of the in-class exams, but only if all of the in-class exams were taken.

Quizzes

Eleven quizzes will be given at the beginning of class on Wednesdays throughout the semester (see schedule). Your best ten quiz grades will be counted. Quiz material will cover the previous Monday lecture material and the readings for the week in which the quiz is given (Mon, Wed, and Friday readings are eligible).

Extra Credit

An additional 50 points of extra credit will be made available to you: You can view your grades by checking the Blackboard site for the course. The number of points awarded for each exam will be entered as soon as it is graded.

-News Article Summary (5 points each- up to 3 article summaries throughout the semester): You may share a relevant news article with the class on the subject being taught that week (for example if we are learning about volcanoes- you could present an article on a volcanic eruption that is going on that week). To receive credit for this, you must turn in the article to me during the class, and briefly explain to the class what the article is about.

-Field Trip (up to 30 points) for attendance and participation on a field trip opportunity during a specified weekend during the semester. More details will be given in class about the field trip opportunities.

ATTENDANCE, EXPECTATIONS, and MAKEUP POLICY

Class attendance is expected. You should come to class and lab prepared, having completed the assigned reading prior to lecture. You are responsible for your own learning. You should understand that *for every class hour, two hours of preparation and reflection are usually necessary for true learning to occur.*

You are responsible for **ALL** material covered that was missed due to illness, etc. If you miss an exam you will receive zero points for that exam. **If you miss an exam you may take a comprehensive final make-up exam on the date specified.** The grade from the comprehensive final make-up exam may be substituted for any *one* missed exam.

PLEASE MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO BE ON TIME FOR CLASSES AND EXAMS. Once someone has finished an exam and left the room, no more tests will be handed out.

CLASS POLICIES

Participation:

Please feel free to ask questions at any time. I encourage you to contribute relevant comments to our class discussions. We will all learn more if there is active participation from all.

Electronic gadgets:

All cell phones, pagers, i-Pods, and other electronic gadgets must be turned OFF during class. Text messaging, checking Facebook, YouTube, etc. is NOT allowed in class. If you anticipate an important phone call, you must inform me **before** class begins, turn your ringer off (set phone to vibrate), and sit near the door so you will not disrupt the class. **You will be asked to leave if you fail to comply.**

Behavior:

Classroom behavior should be conducive to a positive learning environment. Students are expected to adhere to the Code of Conduct as outlined in the Student Handbook. Please treat all class members with respect and be thoughtful in your own contributions to the class. You will receive one warning concerning inappropriate behavior before you will be asked to leave the class. Students should read and understand UALR's Academic Misconduct Policy, which can be found in the student handbook or at: http://ualr.edu/law/files/2010/12/code_studconduct.pdf

Students with Disabilities:

Your success in this class is important to me, and it is the policy and practice of the University of Arkansas at Little Rock to create inclusive learning environments consistent with federal and state law. If you have a documented disability (or need to have a disability documented), and need an accommodation, please contact me privately as soon as possible, so that we can discuss with the Disability Resource Center (DRC) how to meet your specific needs and the requirements of the course. The DRC offers resources and coordinates reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. Reasonable accommodations are established through an interactive process among you, your instructor(s) and the DRC. Thus, if you have a disability, please contact me and/or the DRC, at 501-569-3143 (V/TTY) or 501-683-7629 (VP). For more information, please visit the DRC website at www.ualr.edu/disability.

UALR Honor Code:

All students shall abide by the UALR student handbook. Cheating will result in failing the class. The following is from your UALR student handbook: <http://www.ualr.edu/deanofstudents/assets/archive/HANDBOOK.pdf>