GEOL 1121-03 Introduction to Physical Geology  
Fall 2014 Syllabus  
T R 12:30 – 1:50, TLC 1301  

INSTRUCTOR: Dr. Christopher Berg  
OFFICE: Callaway 101  
OFFICE HOURS: MTWR 3:00 – 5:00; MW 10:00 – 12:00  
OFFICE PHONE: 678-839-4059 (dial 9-4059 on campus)  
EMAIL: cberg at westga.edu; use CourseDen email (preferred)  

REQUIRED TEXTS: Essentials of Geology, 11e (or 10e, 12e) by Lutgens, Tarbuck, Tasa  
GEOL 1121-03 Course Packet (**only the one with my name on it!!**)  

I am aware of the costs of college textbooks, and I have taken care to select a version that I feel is the best combination of topicality, readability, depth and breadth of coverage, and affordability. I do think it is important for you to have (and read!) the textbook for this course; economical options do exist for this book, including rentals and electronic editions. You may also have success finding inexpensive used copies of earlier editions. Review questions and other activities in the Course Packet, available at the UWG Bookstore, will be part of your course grade.  

COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES & OUTCOMES:  
Physical geology is the study of the materials and forces, both internal and external, which shape the Earth. Over the course of this semester we will examine the features and processes that affect our world, with an eye towards their impacts on the environment and on our society. By the end of this course, I expect that you will be able to:  

• Identify the principles of scientific investigation;  
• Develop and demonstrate critical thinking skills;  
• Describe the Earth and the operation of the fundamental geologic processes (e.g. plate tectonics, erosion, sedimentation, mountain building, streamflow, and glaciation) that have shaped it throughout its history;  
• Recognize how geology and geologic processes affect our everyday lives;  
• Become an informed citizen on a variety of issues relevant to geology, natural resources, and the environment; and  
• Demonstrate a greater understanding (and appreciation?) of the natural world around you.  

Class assignments, activities, and exams will be designed to reinforce your ability in these areas.  

ONLINE LEARNING:  
The CourseDen D2L page for this course will contain copies of this syllabus, useful links, copies of “traditional” lecture slides, reading quizzes, an online gradebook, and important announcements related to the course; it will also be the easiest way to get in contact with me throughout the term. It is your responsibility to access this page regularly. You can access the site through the UWG portal (http://myuwg.westga.edu), from the log in prompt on the UWG homepage, or log on directly to the site itself (http://westga.view.usg.edu). Your User ID is the same as your email ID, and your initial password will be the last two digits of your birth year and the last four digits of your SSN. If you have problems connecting, contact the Distance Learning helpdesk (distance@westga.edu or 678-839-6248).
COURSE POLICIES & GUIDELINES:

✓ Success in a class of this nature depends, in part, on your regular attendance and active participation. You are responsible for arriving on-time and prepared, and staying through the end of the class period. If you must arrive late or leave early, do so quietly and use the back door. If you miss class, you are responsible for the material that was covered, including any assignments or announcements.

✓ In-class activities will be part of your grade in this course. These may be assigned at any point during the class period; there are no makeups for these activities if you arrive late or leave early and miss one.

✓ This is an environment that demands mutual respect and professional conduct by all and for all. If you make yourself a distraction to those around you, you will be asked to leave; persistent offenders may be dropped from the course by the instructor.

✓ Cheating of any sort will not be tolerated. This includes copying answers on assignments or tests, or using other people’s ideas or words on assigned work without attribution (plagiarism). Cheating in any form will result in at minimum a zero grade on that assignment or exam (which may not be dropped—if you cheat on an exam, you will fail the course) in addition to any sanctions levied by the University. See http://tinyurl.com/UWGSyllabusPolicies for details regarding the UWG Honor Code.

✓ Technology policy: Part of your responsibility to your classmates is to participate in the class lectures and discussions without being a distraction to other around you. The bright glow of a computer screen or phone creates a bubble of distraction and is disruptive not just to your level of engagement, but also to the efforts of those around you—especially if you’re not using your devices appropriately for the classroom. Checking Facebook, Reddit, Vines, Twitter, emails, texts, Youtube, listening to music… all of that can wait. The wonders of the internet will still be there after class is over. I promise. (And yes, I can tell if you’re using your technology, and if it’s being used appropriately during class.) If you really can’t wait, please do your classmates and the learning environment a favor and stay home.

✓ Lectures may not be recorded without the prior consent of the instructor. See me first if you need special arrangements.

✓ Beyond those opportunities announced in class and the activities related to learning modules, there is no “extra credit” available in this course. Build good habits from the start of the term in order to get the grade you’re hoping for at the end of the semester.

✓ Have questions? Ask! Need more help? Come to my office hours! It’s what I’m here for.

IMPORTANT DATES:
Exam 1: Thursday 9/18 Exam 2: Tuesday 10/21 Exam 3: Thursday 11/20
Final Exam Period: Thursday 12/11 11:00 – 1:30

GRADING POLICY:
Grades in this course will be based on the following components:
1. Your top two exam scores (100 points each – lowest score dropped);
2. The comprehensive final exam (100 points);
3. CourseDen pre-class reading quizzes (100 points – top 20 scores counted);
4. In-class activities / modules (50 points); and
5. Homework assignments and other participation (50 points).

Your final grade will be calculated out of 500 total points (A = 450 and above; B = 400-449; C = 350-399; D = 300-349; F = below 300 points).
EXAMS
Tests in this course will cover material presented and discussed during lecture, described in readings in the textbook, reviewed in the course packet, assessed in homework assignments, and/or presented by the instructor via CourseDen. In general, I will not be testing your ability to regurgitate trivial facts on command – this means that last-minute “cramming” is a very poor study strategy! As part of this course, I want you to build the connections between concepts discussed in the book and in lecture. This will require consistent, periodic review of your notes.

On exam days, you will only need to bring a #2 pencil to class; Scantron forms will be provided for you. All personal items will be brought to the front of the room—this includes music players, cellphones (switched to silent!), calculators, purses, bookbags, notebooks, etc. The lowest of the three in-term exam scores will be dropped when computing your final grade. Barring extreme circumstances (as defined by the instructor), there will be no makeup exams offered in this course—a missed exam will be counted as your “free drop”. The comprehensive final exam cannot be dropped.

HOMEWORK
Short (five-question) worksheet assignments are contained within the Course Packet; these will occasionally be assigned as homework or as questions for small-group discussions during lecture, collected, and graded. All homework is due at the start of the class session; any work that is late for any reason (barring extreme, documented circumstance) will be accepted for reduced credit. A 20% per 24-hour day penalty will be applied to late work.

READING QUIZZES
Lecture is designed to build upon a common ground based on reading assignments that should be completed before class. Prior to each class, there will be a short (generally 5-8 question) quiz on CourseDen based on these readings. Quizzes may be taken multiple times, but must be completed before noon on class days.

USING THE COURSE PACKET
The Course Packet contains many of the figures and tables reproduced from your textbook, along with spaces for notes. Studies have shown that the act of writing greatly increases retention of information. The best way to use the Course Packet is to take notes as you are reading, then fill in gaps (or add notebook pages) from lecture discussions. In addition to end-of-chapter questions, there are also lecture-summary and feedback pages at the end of the packet that will be periodically assigned in-class for participation scores. The course packet is not a substitute for the textbook or for being attentive during class.

LEARNING MODULE ACTIVITIES
Certain in-class activities will substitute for traditional lectures during the term. These are meant to immerse you into the analytical techniques, models, materials, and methods actually used by geologists to explore and interpret geologic processes. Pre- and post-tests will be administered, and there will be a short online post-activity survey for participants. Participation credit will be given if a student completes all aspects of the activity. There will also be activities offered outside class meeting hours; these will be optional, but participation points for these activities can be a form of ‘extra-credit’. Details on dates, sessions, and topics will be forthcoming. These module activities are the subject of a study on teaching and learning effectiveness. All students will be asked for consent to use your data as part of this study later this semester.
**COURSE TOPICS / LAYOUT**

Unit I: Earth Materials & the Rock Cycle
✓ An Introduction to Geology (Ch.1)
✓ Minerals: Building Blocks of Rocks (Ch.2)
✓ Igneous Rocks (Ch.3)
✓ Volcanoes and Other Igneous Activity (Ch.4)
✓ Weathering & Soils (Ch.5)
✓ Sedimentary Rocks (Ch.6)
✓ Metamorphic Rocks (Ch.7)

Unit II: Shaping the Surface
✓ Mass Wasting: The Work of Gravity (Ch.8)
✓ Running Water (Ch.9)
✓ Groundwater (Ch.10)
✓ Glaciers and Glaciation (Ch.11)
✓ Deserts and Wind (Ch.12)
✓ Shorelines (Ch.13)

Unit III: The Paradigm of Plate Tectonics
✓ Geologic Time (Ch.18)
✓ Earthquakes and Earth’s Interior (Ch.14)
✓ Plate Tectonics: A Scientific Revolution Unfolds (Ch.15)
✓ Origin and Evolution of the Ocean Floor (Ch.16)
✓ Crustal Deformation and Mountain Building (Ch.17)
✓ Earth’s Evolution through Geologic Time (Ch.19)

**ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**
✓ Center for Academic Success (formerly EXCEL Center) – peer tutoring; visit UCC 200 or call 9-6280 to make an appointment
✓ UWG Counseling Center – support services; counseling@westga.edu or 9-6428 for appt.
✓ UWG Career Services – career counseling, student employment; careers@westga.edu
✓ Enrollment Services Center – registrar, financial aid; Parker Hall, 9-6140
✓ UWG Student Handbook: http://www.westga.edu/handbook/
✓ Student ITS – sits@westga.edu, 9-5067
✓ On Facebook? Visit “The Earth Story”, “USGS”, “National Park Foundation”, or the “NASA Earth Observatory” official pages for frequent updates and news relevant to the course