

South Plains College

Course Syllabus

Course: Earth Science 1 (GEOL 1401)

Semester: Spring 2026

Credit Hours: 4

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Course Overview

Purpose Statement

This course provides a comprehensive survey of Astronomy, Meteorology, Oceanography, and Geology, exploring Earth's place in the universe and the dynamic processes that shape our planet.

Prerequisites

No previous college-level courses are required.

Course Description

This introductory course overviews the components and processes of four major earth science disciplines. Students will explore geological processes and structures, record and observe meteorological data and processes, examine oceanographic formations and mapping, and trace astronomical exploration and formation over time from the human perspective on Earth.

Required Course Materials

Textbook: No longer required

Platform: All course content delivered through SPC Blackboard

Course Structure

This course is divided into four major units:

1. **Astronomy**
2. **Meteorology**
3. **Oceanography**
4. **Geology**

Both online lecture and lab components will be conducted through the SPC Blackboard platform. A detailed schedule will be provided on Blackboard. **Please note: All due dates are subject to change.** Check course announcements weekly for any scheduling updates.

Learning Outcomes

Lab Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Classify rocks and minerals based on chemical composition, physical properties, and origin
2. Apply knowledge of topographic maps, diagrams, and photographs to identify landforms and explain the processes that created them
3. Differentiate types of plate boundaries, explain the processes that occur at each, and identify associated structural features on maps, block diagrams, and cross sections
4. Apply relative and numerical age-dating techniques to construct geologic histories
5. Measure atmospheric processes that affect weather and climate
6. Describe the composition and motion of ocean water and analyze the factors controlling both
7. Compare properties and motions of objects in the solar system
8. Demonstrate the collection, analysis, and reporting of data

Lecture Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Explain the current theories concerning the origin of the Universe and the Solar System
2. Explain Earth's place in the Solar System and its relationships with other objects in the Solar System
3. Relate the origin and evolution of Earth's internal structures to its resulting geologic systems, including earth materials and plate tectonic activities

4. Explain the operation of Earth's geologic systems and the interactions among the atmosphere, geosphere, and hydrosphere, including meteorology and oceanography
 5. Explain the history of Earth including the evolution of earth systems and life forms
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Intellectual Competencies

Students will develop proficiency in the following areas:

- **Reading:** Ability to analyze and interpret a variety of printed materials above the 12th grade level
 - **Writing:** Ability to produce clear, correct, and coherent prose adapted to purpose, occasion, and audience above the 12th grade level
 - **Listening:** Ability to analyze and interpret various forms of spoken communication with sufficient literacy skills above the 12th grade level
 - **Critical Thinking:** Ability to think and analyze independently at a critical level
 - **Computer Literacy:** Ability to use computer-based technology in communications, problem-solving, and acquiring information, including proficiency with PowerPoint, Word, Excel, and screen recording software within the Blackboard platform
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Course Requirements

Students are required to:

- Read all assigned readings online
 - Watch all online lecture video content on Blackboard
 - Take notes over online lectures
 - Submit assignments weekly by the due date (files or videos)
 - Participate in class activities offered online or in field activities
 - Complete reading material and homework using Blackboard ULTRA
 - View audiovisual materials on selected topics
 - Abide by the Integrity Agreement for the course
 - Complete all assignments, quizzes, and exams by the assigned dates
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Grading Policy

Please refer to the Blackboard video under "Syllabus and Schedule" in the Start Here folder for detailed information about the weighting of assignments, quizzes, discussions, and other assessments for this semester.

Most grades are entered on a 100% scale for clarity. Grades are updated weekly, though some assignments (such as presentations and drawings) may require additional time to grade. Zeros may take up to two weeks to be entered for assignments.

Note: When extra credit opportunities or additional assignments are given, grade calculations may be adjusted accordingly. The grading policy is generally consistent but remains subject to change.

If you have questions about your grades or believe an error has been made, please contact me via Blackboard Messenger or phone. I strive for 100% accuracy and am always happy to help.

Attendance Policy

Online Attendance: In this online course, attendance is demonstrated by completing tasks, assignments, quizzes, and exams by their due dates. Students typically have 6-7 days to submit assignments.

Late Work: Late work will rarely be accepted. Exceptions are only made in cases of extreme hardship or loss (such as hospitalization or death in the immediate family). Documentation may be required at the instructor's discretion. Prompt communication is essential.

Student Responsibility: Students who stop submitting work will not be automatically dropped from the course. It is the individual student's responsibility to officially drop the course if needed. A Student Initiated Drop Form can be found on the South Plains College website.

Academic Integrity

Complete honesty is required in all aspects of coursework. Students are expected to produce their own individual work on all assignments. The work you submit should reflect your own thoughts and solutions.

Prohibited behaviors include:

- Dishonesty on examinations or written assignments

- Illegal possession of examinations
- Use of unauthorized notes during an examination
- Obtaining information during an examination from textbooks or other students
- Assisting others to cheat
- Copying from digital sources (including AI) or other students
- Plagiarism of any kind
- Alteration of grade records
- Illegal entry or unauthorized presence in an office

Academic integrity is vital in the professional world. Violations will be taken seriously.

(Reference: Student Code — SPC Student Guide, Pg. 12)

Online Expectations and Classroom Conduct

Acceptable Behavior:

- Respectful, polite communication at all times
- Discussion of different opinions and positions in a courteous manner
- Asking questions if unsure whether something is appropriate

Prohibited Behavior:

- Violations of the Integrity Agreement (including Proctorio rules and guidelines)
- Disruptive, rude, or crude behavior in any format
- Aggressive tones and argumentative behavior

Warning Policy: Aggressive or argumentative behavior will be given only one warning. If a directive to stop a behavior has been given and the behavior continues, a student may be dropped at the discretion of the instructor.

Instructor-Initiated Drop

Students may be dropped from the course at the instructor's discretion for the following reasons:

1. **Behavioral Issues:** Rude behavior that continues after one warning (in extreme cases, no warning will be given)
2. **Academic Dishonesty:** Plagiarism or submitting work that is not the student's own. Such cases will also be referred to the Dean of Students for violating the SPC Code of Conduct

3. **Attendance Violations:** Failure to complete assignments and maintain attendance as outlined in the attendance policy
 4. **Integrity Agreement Violations:** Failure to follow the course integrity agreement
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Outcomes Assessment

Assessment questions will be integrated into assignments throughout the course to determine mastery of course learning objectives. These assessments will be given at the discretion of the instructor.

Official South Plains College Statements

For information regarding official South Plains College statements about intellectual exchange, disabilities, non-discrimination, Title IX Pregnancy Accommodations, CARE Team, and Campus Concealed Carry, please visit:

<https://www.southplainscollege.edu/syllabusstatements/>

Important Reminders

- Check Blackboard announcements weekly for schedule changes and important updates
- Communicate promptly if you anticipate difficulties meeting deadlines
- Take advantage of office hours if you need assistance
- Remember that all due dates and policies are subject to change as announced

Success in this course requires consistent effort, timely completion of assignments, and academic integrity. I look forward to working with you this semester!