

GEOL 11: Geology of California

Fall 2020 Course Syllabus

Instructor Contact Information

Rebecca Perlroth

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Office Hours: Mon, Weds, Fri: 2-3 pm, Tues & Thurs 11-12; Additional timeslots available most days by appointment

I typically respond to email and voicemail messages within 24 hours (may be longer on weekends or holidays).

Course Description

This course provides an introduction to the geologic principles and processes that formed and continue to influence California's geologic and tectonic environment. You will learn the origin and interpretation of rocks and fossils, volcanoes, earthquakes, plate tectonics, and the geologic history of California.

This course is a short format course, lasting only 15 weeks. The course begins August 31 (two weeks after the majority of SRJC classes begin) and ends December 11 (one week before the majority of SRJC classes take their final exams). As this is an online class, students should expect many hours of independent online work, including reading, watching videos, and completing homework assignments, quizzes and exams remotely.

Student Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of this course, the student will be able to:

1. Apply scientific methodologies to answer scientific questions.
2. Evaluate and classify earth materials.
3. Identify, locate, and interpret significant geologic and geomorphic features of California.
4. Identify and explain processes that have formed and continue to shape the landscape of California.
5. Recognize the complex interplay between humans and the environment.

Readings

REQUIRED READINGS:

1. Course Reader (available within the Canvas Modules)
2. [A Dangerous Place](#), by Marc Reisner
3. [Introduction to Water in California](#), by David Carle
4. [Geology of the San Francisco Bay Region](#), by Doris Sloan

RECOMMENDED READINGS:

1. Any general introductory geology textbook
2. [California Geology](#), by Deborah Harden
3. [Cadillac Desert](#), by Marc Reisner
4. [Fire Mountains of the West](#), by Stephen Harris
5. [Finding Fault in California](#), by Susan Elizabeth Hough
6. [Roadside Geology of Northern and Central California](#), by Alt and Hyndman
7. [Geologic History of Middle California](#), by Arthur Howard
8. [California Landscape: Origin and Evolution](#), by Mary Hill

Attendance and Dropping the Class

Online courses turn the idea of attendance on its head. Online, you can "attend" class in your pajamas at 2 am in the morning, or sitting by the pool on a sunny day. Attendance is not marked by your body in a class, but rather by your participation within the class activities.

Here are the brief "guidelines" we will follow to structure participation:

- **check-in with you instructor at least once a week;**
- **interact with peers during discussions due Wednesdays and Fridays;**
- **complete assignments due Sunday nights;**
- **connect ahead of time if you are going to be disconnected from the course for more than 5 days.**

While some courses are self-paced, **this course follows a weekly schedule**. Each week you will interact with your instructor and your classmates, and complete a series of quizzes and assignments. The weekly schedule allows us to learn from one another, and it keeps everyone on a path toward our learning goals.

With each of your assignments, I will provide grades and feedback, which opens another opportunity for revision, learning, and growth. Working within our weekly schedule allows both you and me to plan our time.

The course is designed to take about 6-10 hours per week. Please plan to log in to the course a few times each week—we have regular due dates for discussions on Wednesdays and Fridays, and assignments on Sundays.

Your participation is an important part of your success of this course, but I also recognize that we each have our own family and friends, and, because we are human, sometimes we are just swamped or under the weather. If for whatever reason you can't meet a deadline, **please contact me**—we will work together to make a path to success.

If you decide to drop this course, it is your responsibility to officially drop it. Please maintain regular contact with your instructor if you need to miss more than one homework deadline or weekly *Zoom* check-in to avoid being dropped by the instructor.

Evaluation and Grading

You will be evaluated by a written journal abstract, participation in an online discussion board, and a variety of in-class and homework activities. Grades will be distributed as follows:

Homework and In-Class Assignments: 60% of your final grade

You will complete various assignments, including quizzes and problem solving exercises. Assignments may be online or on paper, individual or group based. These are designed to ensure that you're following along with online material, course readings, and in class material.

Discussion Board Participation: 20% of your final grade

Each week, you will contribute to a class discussion on the Canvas Discussion Board. You are required to submit an initial comment based on the assigned readings (you may respond to the prompt provided or provide your thoughts about the reading material). After we meet, you will respond to at least two of your classmates' comments to keep the discussion going. One or two words is not considered an adequate comment or response. Be thoughtful and thorough with your initial comments, and be respectful and considerate of your classmates in your responses to their posts.

Journal Abstract: 20% of your final grade

Detailed information about this project is provided in the Assignments tab, Journal Abstract Project.

Grades

Grades will be assigned as follows. Note: D and F are not passing grades. If taking Pass/No Pass you need to earn at least 70% of the total class points in order to pass. You can keep track of your grades via the "Grades" link in Canvas.

A: 90+%

B: 80-89%

C: 70-79%

D: 60-69%

F: less than 60%

Standards of Conduct

Students who register in SRJC classes are required to abide by the SRJC Student Conduct Standards. Violation of the Standards is basis for referral to the Vice President of Student Services or dismissal from class or from the College. See the [Rights and Responsibilities](#) of SRJC students.

Copying of tests or homework in whole or in part will be considered an act of academic dishonesty and result in no credit for that test or assignment. Students are encouraged to share information and ideas, but not their work.

[What is Plagiarism?](#)

Suggestions for Success

- Devote the time necessary to succeed in this course – do the assigned reading, take and review lecture notes, take advantage of online and reading resources provided, complete ALL required assignments. **Everyone** can succeed in this class, so set high expectations and then work hard to meet them.
- Stay on top of the material the entire semester. You are expected to spend 6-10 per week to complete any viewings, readings, studying, and assignments. Falling behind will seriously impact your ability to proceed with the course.
- Class participation is encouraged, and in many instances, required. Do not ever hesitate to ask questions. Get to know your instructor. Participate in online discussions to get to know your classmates and utilize them as resources.

Special Needs

Students should contact the instructor as soon as possible if they find that they cannot access any course materials. If you need disability related accommodations for this class, please provide the Authorization for Academic Accommodations (AAA letter) from the Disability Resources Department (DRD) to the instructor as soon as possible. If you have not received authorization from DRD, please contact them directly.

Tentative Schedule (subject to change)

Week of:	Topic
8/31	Introduction, Scientific Method
9/7	Plate Tectonics
9/14	Rocks and the Rock Cycle
9/21	Volcanism and Igneous Rocks
9/28	Sedimentation and Sedimentary Rocks
10/5	Deformation and Metamorphic Rocks
10/12	Geologic Time
10/19	The Geologic Evolution of California through Time
10/26	Faults and Earthquakes
11/2	Earthquakes
11/9	The San Andreas Fault
11/16	Hydrology and Water in California
11/23	Deserts in California
11/30	Glaciation in California
12/7	Geologic Hazards in California