

**GEOL 20500**  
**ENVIRONMENTAL GEOLOGY**  
(Updated for Distance learning after 3/11/2020)  
*Tuesdays and Fridays 9.45 to 11am*  
**Spring 2020**

Instructor: Dr. Shruti Philips  
Office Hours: *Tuesday and Friday 9.15 to 9.45 am*  
E-mail: [sph0001@hunter.cuny.edu](mailto:sph0001@hunter.cuny.edu) (communications to me must have GEOL 205 in the subject line and you must sign your full name as it appears in CUNYFirst.)  
Department of Geography and Environmental Science Office: Rm 1006 HN, Phone: 212-772-5265

**Introduction:**

The main objective of this course is to give you an understanding of the interactions between humans and the geologic processes that shape your environment. As the human population continues to grow, resource depletion and hazards will become more severe. Many decisions concerning our use of resources, such as water, soil, minerals, energy and space to live, will determine our standard of living and the quality of our environment. Scientific knowledge, combined with our values, will dictate these decisions.

This course examines not only the way geological processes operate and impact society, but also how the Earth system responds to human activity. The difficult problems associated with extracting enormous quantities of resources needed to sustain modern societies will be discussed. We will also address ways we can minimize the risks associated with hazardous earth processes. Quantitative analysis of selected topics will also be introduced to provide a deeper understanding of the complexity of today's environmental issues.

**Basic material covered in the course includes:**

- Fundamental concepts and scientific methods
- Earth structure, materials and processes
- Hazardous earth processes such as *earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, floods, landslides and coastal erosion*; their impact and mitigation
- Study of resources such as *soils, water, minerals and energy*
- Study of practical environmental issues such as *groundwater contamination, landfill siting, and shoreline property assessment*
- Quantitative analysis of topics such as *population growth, earthquakes, rock and soil mechanics, soil salinity, landslide potential of slopes and groundwater flow*
- Carbon sequestration

This course is designed to produce the following learning outcomes:

- You will describe and discuss the impacts of hazardous geologic processes such as earthquakes, volcanoes, floods, landslides and coastal erosion.
- You will identify and discuss various geologic resources such as rocks, minerals, soils, water and energy and analyze the environmental impact of resource extraction.

- You will apply the scientific method to analyze and interpret geologic data to solve environmental problems associated with earthquakes, volcanoes, landslides, floods, groundwater contamination, landfill siting, soil quality, and shoreline erosion.

This is a **3-hr, 3.0-credit**, science-based course, which fulfills **GER 3/B**.

**Prerequisite: GEOL 10100**

**Required reading:**

- Keller, Edward A., **Introduction to Environmental Geology**, 5th Ed., 2012, Prentice Hall (paperback) ISBN: 978-0-321-72751-0  
<http://hunter.textbookx.com/institutional/index.php?action=browse#books/2217671/>

To access student resources for the text you may register:

<https://media.pearsoncmg.com/bc/abp/mygeoscienceplace/> with the access code **(PSWKIE-AHEAD-STOOD-GILET-ASTIR-HOLES)**

- **Hazard City** 5<sup>th</sup> Edition –Prentice Hall, *details on blackboard on how to purchase access code*

**Suggested Reading (Highly Recommended):**

- Rutberg, R., and Philips S., **A Literary Companion to Geology**, 1<sup>st</sup> Ed., 2018, Cognella Academic Publishing ISBN: 978-1-5165-0840-2. **Print price: \$75.95; E-book price: \$68.95.**

*A copy of this book is available at **the reserve desk** of the Hunter College library. If you wish to purchase this book, you may do so here: <https://store.cognella.com/81793-1B-NI-006>*

**Assessment and Grading Policy:** There will be a **midterm** exam given during the semester and a **final** exam at the end of the semester. Exams are based on lecture, assigned readings, films shown in class and text material and usually include multiple-choice and short-answer type questions. Exams will not be cumulative. Grades follow the Hunter College grading system: <http://catalog.hunter.cuny.edu/content.php?catoid=15&navoid=1433>

The exam dates are given on the calendar portion of the syllabus. **They are multiple-choice tests and will be administered on blackboard.**

**Attendance:** Attendance will be taken at all class meetings. Students are urged to attend ***all*** classes. ***There is a direct correlation between good grades and good attendance.*** All students are responsible for work covered in their absence and must be sure to obtain any hand-out material.

**Midterm → 30%**

**Final → 30%**

**Homework and classroom exercises → 30%**

**Class participation in class and on Blackboard Collaborate → 10%**

**Extra Credit → 8% (A Literary Companion to Geology)**

**Extra Credit:** For Extra Credit you may submit answers to **two discussion questions** from each of **any 8 chapters** from **'A Literary Companion to Geology'** (i.e. a total of 16 questions). This is

worth **8%** and will be added to of your overall grade. This assignment is due no later than **May 5<sup>th</sup> 2020**.

**Tips for getting good grades:** *The more time you put in, the better your grade will be.*

- Attend class and take detailed notes.
- Read the assigned material in the text (or other) before coming to class.
- Re-write your notes as soon as possible after class. This will allow you to fill in the details still fresh in your memory, and prepare questions for the next time the class meets.
- Test yourself by answering the questions in the book and in class.
- Carefully study the diagrams and charts in the book and in the lectures.

**Additional reading:** Keep abreast of news stories related to topics discussed in class. Articles may be found in the science section of the New York Times (Tuesday), magazines such as *National Geographic*, *Scientific American*, *Discover*, etc. or online sources such as *New Scientist*, *Science Daily*, *NASA's Earth Observatory*, *BBC News—science-nature*, etc.

**Blackboard:** Course documents, hand-out sheets, and useful links will be posted on Blackboard. Announcements and other information will also be posted from time to time, so please check the site regularly. **Important:** Students should check their Hunter e-mail messages regularly for messages from the instructor.

**Academic Integrity:** Hunter College regards acts of academic dishonesty (e.g., plagiarism, cheating on examinations, obtaining unfair advantage, and falsification of records and official documents) as serious offenses against the values of intellectual honesty. The college is committed to enforcing CUNY Policy on Academic Integrity and will pursue cases of academic dishonesty according to the Hunter College Academic Integrity Procedures. See the following report by the Hunter College Senate for more details:  
<http://www.hunter.cuny.edu/senate/assets/Documents/Hunter%20College%20Policy%20on%20Academic%20Integrity.pdf>

**ADA Policy:** In compliance with the American Disability Act of 1990 (ADA) and with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Hunter College is committed to ensuring educational parity and accommodations for all students with documented disabilities and/or medical conditions. It is recommended that all students with documented disabilities (Emotional, Medical, Physical, and/or Learning) consult the Office of AccessABILITY, located in Room E1214B, to secure necessary academic accommodations. For further information and assistance, please call: (212)772-4857 or (212)650-3230.

**Hunter College Policy on Sexual Misconduct:** In compliance with the CUNY Policy on Sexual Misconduct, Hunter College affirms the prohibition of any sexual misconduct, which includes sexual violence, sexual harassment, and gender-based harassment retaliation against students, employees, or visitors, as well as certain intimate relationship. Students who have experienced any form of sexual violence on or off campus (including CUNY-sponsored trips and events) are entitled to the rights outlined in the Bill of Rights for Hunter College.

- a. Sexual Violence: Students are strongly encouraged to immediately report the incident by calling 911, contacting NYPD Special Victims Division Hotline (646-610-7272) or their local police precinct, on contacting the College's Public Safety Office (212-772-4444)

- b. All Other Forms of Sexual Misconduct: Students are also encouraged to contact the College's Title IX Campus Coordinator, Dean John Rose ([jtrose@hunter.cuny.edu](mailto:jtrose@hunter.cuny.edu) or 212-650-3262) or Colleen Barry ([colleen.barry@hunter.cuny.edu](mailto:colleen.barry@hunter.cuny.edu) or 212-772-4534) and seek complimentary services through the Counseling and Wellness Services Office, Hunter East 1123.

CUNY Policy on Sexual Misconduct Link:

<http://www.cuny.edu/about/administration/offices/la/Policy-on-Sexual-Misconduct-12-1-14-with-links.pdf>

### **New Policy: Credit/No Credit Grading**

Recognizing the difficulty in transitioning to remote learning, CUNY has now created a new Credit/No Credit grading policy for the Spring 2020 semester. Students will have **twenty days after receiving their letter grade to switch to a Credit/No Credit grade**. This policy will override all program-level grading policies currently in effect at CUNY institutions, including those related to courses within the major, pre-requisite courses, honors courses and maximum number of credits that a student can earn with Credit/No Credit grades. This policy will go into effect **April 1**, pending approval by the CUNY Board of Trustees. We will have additional information about the impact of CR/NC on their financial aid and academic progress.

### **Resources for Students**

Hunter has instituted a **long-term laptop loan program**. If you are a student in need of a laptop, [please request one here](#). We are distributing laptops on campus in a limited way, but are moving to mailing students technology where possible. In-home broadband access is also available for free to CUNY students. Please visit the [CUNY Continuity For Students](#) website for more information.

In addition, we encourage students to apply for a grant from the **Coronavirus Emergency Assistance Fund** if they have unexpected expenses related to the current crisis. Students can [apply here](#).

As a result of the closing of the Brookdale campus, we are consolidating **Hunter's two food pantries** and adjusting the hours on an ongoing basis to best meet student demand. The 68th Street location remains open for limited hours. Please check the [Food Pantry website](#) before you visit.

**Except for changes that substantially affect implementation of the evaluation (grading) statement, this syllabus is a guide for the course and is subject to change with advance notice. Any changes to the syllabus will be posted on Blackboard.**

**PLEASE SCROLL DOWN TO THE DETAILED CLASS MEETING SCHEDULE ON THE NEXT PAGE**

## Tentative Syllabus for Spring 2020

Dates	Topic	Chap EG	Read LCG
T 1/28	INTRODUCTION	1	1,14
F 1/31	Fundamental concepts	1	10
T 2/4	<b>Exercise#1: Population Growth</b>		
F 2/7	Earth Processes	2	3,4,5
T 2/11	Plate Tectonics		
F 2/14	Earthquakes	6	9
T 2/18	Earthquakes	6	7
F 2/21	Tsunami	7	
T 2/25	Stress Triggering Hypothesis,		8
F 2/28	Seismic Engineering		
T 3/3	<b>Exercise #2: Seismic Hazards + Hazard City Earthquake Hazard</b>		6
F 3/6	Volcanic Activity <b>Exercise #3: Hazard City Volcanoes Hazard</b>	8	
T 3/10	Earth materials: Minerals and Rocks	3	11,6
F 3/13	<b>NO CLASS- COVID-19 RECESS</b>		
T 3/17	Minerals <b>Exercise#4 Hazard City Landfill Siting</b>	3	
F 3/20	Rocks		
T 3/24	Rocks		
<b>F 3/37</b>	<b>NO CLASS 'CUNY RECALIBRATION RECESS'</b>		
<b>T 3/31</b>	<b>NO CLASS 'CUNY RECALIBRATION RECESS'</b>		
<b>F 4/3</b>	<b>MIDTERM EXAMINATION</b>		
T 4/7	<b>NO CLASS –Wednesday at Hunter</b>		
4/8-4/10	<b>SPRING BREAK</b>		
T 4/14	Soils and the Environment	17	
F 4/17	Soils and the Environment <b>HW Exercise#5 Soil pollution</b>		
T 4/21	Landslides <b>Exercise #6 Hazard City Landslides</b>	10	
F 4/24	Rivers and Flooding	9	
T 4/27	Rivers and Flooding <b>Exercise #7 Hazard City Flood Insurance</b>		
F 5/1	Water resources <b>Exercise #8 Hazard City Groundwater contamination</b>		
<b>*T 5/5</b>	Coastal processes <b>Exercise #9 Hazard City Shoreline Property evaluation</b>	11	
F 5/8	Mineral Resources	15	2
T 5/12	Carbon Sequestration		13
<b>TBA</b>	<b>FINAL EXAMINATION</b>		

- **EG:** Introduction to Environmental Geology; **LCG:** A Literary Companion to Geology
- Classroom assignments will often include quantitative analysis. Students are expected to always have on hand a **scientific calculator, metric ruler, pen and pencil.**
- Classroom and homework assignments will be graded weekly. Answers must be in full sentences. If calculations are expected, show your work. The grading will be as follows: **5= excellent, 4= good, 3= fair, 2= poor, 1= attendance, 0= not handed in.** You will

automatically lose points if your work is sloppy or incomplete. [If you are absent, but handed in the work, you can get a maximum of 4 points.]

- \* **all Assignments due**