



# PENSACOLA STATE COLLEGE

## SYLLABUS

Physical Geology

GLY 1010-D9315

Spring 2026, Session A

**Instructor:** Vicki Knoch

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**Office Hours:** TBD

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**Last Date of Drop/Add:** January 15, 2026

**Last Date for Student to Withdraw:** April 6, 2026

**Final Exam Date:** TBD

**Class Meeting Time:** Online (asynchronous)

**Class Location:** Canvas

**Prerequisites:** Placement at the college level or completion of the appropriate exit-level developmental course(s) with a grade of C or better.

**Course Description:** Using the scientific method, critical thinking skills, data analysis, this course will examine the fundamental processes of the earth system, composed of an atmosphere, hydrosphere, cryosphere, lithosphere, biosphere, and exosphere through time. The course will also explore the interactions between these spheres, including critical analysis of scientific theories and emphasize lithospheric connections with humanity.

**Credit Hours:** 3 credit hours

**Semester Offered:** Fall, Spring

**Course Designations:** **College Transfer.** Meets AA General Education Core, Natural Sciences (Physical Sciences) requirement.

**General Education Core Course Standard:** Per Florida Statute 1007.25, "Natural science courses must afford students the ability to critically examine and evaluate the principles of the scientific method, model construction, and use the scientific method to explain natural experiences and phenomena."

### Course Learning Outcomes:

1. Describe the composition of Earth's crust including minerals, igneous rocks, sedimentary rocks, and metamorphic rocks.
2. Discuss the internal forces of the earth resulting in earthquakes, mountain building, volcanic activity, and the processes of plate tectonics.
3. Appreciate the power of external geologic processes on the earth such as weathering and the various methods of erosion.
4. Define and explain erosional processes such as wind, groundwater, running water, ice and gravity and the effects they have on the earth.
5. Synthesize the above processes describing how together, and separately, they affect landform development.

6. Apply the concept of geologic time and appreciate how the earth has changed many times over in its long history, creating a massive puzzle for exploration by geologists.
7. Locate the major physiographic provinces of the United States, and to identify each with major geologic processes and common landforms.
8. Appreciate our country's great beauty and become familiar with the major national parks and monuments created by various geologic processes.

#### **General Education Student Learning Outcomes:**

- 1. Critical Thinking:** The student analyzes, evaluates, and, if necessary, challenges the validity of ideas, principles, or data in order to develop informed opinions, probable predictions, or defensible conclusions.
- 2. Scientific and Mathematical Literacy:** The student properly identifies and applies scientific or mathematical principles and methods.
- 3. Information Literacy:** The student effectively locates, evaluates, and applies information from a variety of sources.

**Methods of Evaluation:** At minimum, the instructor will cover content which aligns with statewide and institutional learning outcomes for the course. The instructor will measure student performance using the following:

- Assignments
- Summative assessments – Weekly Quizzes, Midterm Exam, Final Exam
- Individual Project – National Park Capstone

#### **Grading Scale:**

<b>Graded Items</b>	<b>Points</b>
Syllabus Quiz (1@ 10 points)	10
Assignments (1 @20 points)	20
Discussions (14@10 points)	140
Quizzes (14 @ 20 points)	280
Midterm Exam	180
National Park Project (Part I = 20 points, Part III = 40 points, Part V=150 points)	210
Peer Review	50
Final Exam	200
<b>Total Points</b>	<b>1090</b>

The following table converts the assignment points to actual grades awarded at the end of the semester:

<b>Letter Grade Awarded</b>	<b>Points</b>
A	1090-900
B	899-800
C	799-700
D	699-600
F	599-0

#### **Late Policy:**

**Late assignments are not accepted.** What is a late assignment? A late assignment is: An assignment (quiz, discussion response, or other assignment) submitted outside of the specified grace period or extended availability date, where you did not request an approved extension prior to the due date.

Your professor is here to support you. We understand it can be difficult to find focused time to complete quality work. Sometimes personal, family, and/or work events occur, or you have unforeseen technical difficulties. All quizzes and

assignments in the first seven units of the course have an automatic 24-hour grace period. If you need more time beyond the automatic 24-hour grace period, communicate this to the professor as soon as possible, before the due date. There are exceptions to the automatic grace period:

- All discussions, quizzes, assignments, and exam(s) due in the last module of the course have firm due dates. No assignments will be accepted after the final day of the class unless you have prior approval for a grade of Incomplete.
- When applicable, late group work will be addressed by the professor on a case-by-case basis.

**All extension requests must be made before the due date.** If you experience a personal, family, or work emergency that may require a longer extension, please contact your professor to evaluate options for an extended availability date. It is your responsibility to keep the professor informed about issues that may interfere with your course work, and how long it will interfere with your ability to concentrate and participate in this course. In many cases, an arrangement can be made that will allow you to continue and complete the course, but the professor needs to be kept informed.

You can always contact the professor by email. If requested by the professor, provide appropriate documentation of a personal or work emergency, and they will review your options.

#### **Online Classroom Management:**

Individualized feedback will be given for written assignments and written response quiz questions when needed to clarify answers or justify point deductions. Your professor welcomes student feedback about the content, flow, and management of this course, especially when broken links are discovered. Your professor will monitor discussion threads and respond as needed to answer questions, to address incorrect answers, or to provide additional information.

Your professor will support you by doing the following:

- Respond back to email requests within 24 to 48 hours. Email correspondence can be used for questions about course content, assignment instructions, and identification of broken or missing links.
- Contribute engaging and supportive comments on unit-based discussion forums.
- Provide individualized feedback on your assignments, discussions, and quizzes within a week of the due date, unless otherwise stated in the online classroom. This feedback may include strengths, areas that need improvement, and additional resources to help you with difficult topics.

#### **Attendance:**

You are expected to participate regularly in class discussion for each unit and submit deliverables per syllabus dates. You are expected to know when the start (Mondays at 12:00 am ET) and end (Sundays at 11:59 pm ET) dates of each unit are for each course.

#### **Discussion Participation:**

By registering for a Web-based course, you have made a commitment to participate in your course discussions as well as other online activities. Please plan to participate regularly. Participation in this course is defined as a proactive engagement in the weekly discussions. This requires you to actively reflect on the weekly module and textbook readings and to develop original ideas in your responses.

You are expected to demonstrate critical thinking and your understanding of the content in the assigned readings as they relate to the issues identified in each discussion. You are expected to make your own contribution to the main topic as well as respond with value-added comments to at least two of your classmates. You are encouraged to respond to other students as well as to your instructor.

You will note in the grading policy that your online discussion participation counts significantly toward your final grade.

You are expected to adhere to the general rules of online etiquette. It is important to follow the guidelines of proper online etiquette to ensure good communication between you, your classmates, and your instructors. Keep the five online etiquette tips below in mind during your online course:

1. **Respect.** Whether the class is online or on-site, respect is essential. It allows all involved parties to focus on the objective and prevents distracting disagreements. Be sure to use a polite tone, read before responding and be constructive with your criticism. It is important to treat all online interactions the same as face-to-face interactions.
2. **Use Proper Formatting, Punctuation, and Grammar.** The same rules of English apply in the online classroom setting. Capitalize letters, when necessary, use appropriate punctuation and avoid using slang and abbreviations. You will not only make your posts easier to read; you will demonstrate your professionalism and personal value.
3. **Be Careful.** Because tone is difficult to convey online, sarcasm or humor can easily be misinterpreted. Though you may be tempted to joke around with your classmates, something written for a laugh may offend others. If you are unsure whether your message will be misconstrued, consider using an emoticon to lighten the tone.
4. **Go to Your Instructor First.** If you have a disagreement or issue with a fellow classmate, go to your instructor before the situation escalates. It is best to make your instructor aware of the situation before it affects the classroom dynamics or the way you engage with your peers.
5. **Stay on Topic and Keep it Brief.** Online classes require a lot of reading, and when responding, it may be difficult to decide where to start. Focus your comments on short topics to keep the conversation flowing. Avoid being too wordy, and instead, say what you need to say without veering off-topic.

**Extra Credit Policy:**

There is no extra credit offered in this course.

**Student Expectations:** Students enrolled in this course can expect the following:

1. Clearly identified course objectives.
2. Productive class meetings.
3. A positive learning environment.
4. Opportunities for appropriate student participation.
5. Effective instruction.
6. Positive and appropriate interactions.
7. Assistance with meeting course objectives during and beyond class hours.
8. Evaluation of student performance and appropriate and timely feedback.
9. Clear and well-organized instruction.

**Academic Dishonesty Statement:** Pensacola State College is committed to upholding the highest standards of academic conduct. All forms of academic dishonesty, to include plagiarism and cheating, are prohibited. Penalties for academic dishonesty include but are not limited to one or more of the following: the awarding of no credit on the assignment, a reduction in the course grade, or the assignment of a final course grade of F and removal from the course. See the College Catalog for more details: [Academic Integrity](#)

**ADA Statement:** Students with a disability that falls under the Americans with Disability Act Amendments Act of 2008 or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act should contact the Student Resource Center for ADA Services to discuss academic accommodations. Appropriate academic accommodations are determined on an individual basis with careful consideration of the course learning outcomes and the documentation of the disability. For more information, students should visit the Student Resource Center for ADA Services on the Pensacola campus in building 6, room 603; call 850-484-1637; email [ADAservices@pensacolastate.edu](mailto:ADAservices@pensacolastate.edu); or complete the online intake form in the ADA Services app within the MyPSC apps dashboard.

**Emergency Statement:** In the case of severe weather or other emergency, the College administration maintains communication with appropriate state and local agencies and makes a determination regarding the cancellation of classes. Notices of cancellation will be made through the College's PSC Alert system and on the College's website.

**Flexibility Statement:** It is the intention of the instructor to accomplish the objectives specified in the course syllabus. However, circumstances may arise which prohibit the fulfilling of this endeavor. Therefore, this syllabus is subject to change. When possible, students will be notified of any change in advance of its occurrence.

**Non-Discrimination Statement:** Pensacola State College does not discriminate against any person on the basis of race, color, ethnicity, religion, sex (as defined by applicable federal and state law), national origin, age, disability, genetic information, pregnancy, or marital status in its educational programs, activities, or employment. For inquiries regarding the College's nondiscrimination policies, contact the Civil Rights Compliance Officer at (850) 484-1759, Pensacola State College, 1000 College Blvd., Pensacola, Florida 32504.

**Security Statement:** Pensacola State College is committed to encouraging all members of the College community to be proactive in personal safety measures. In case of emergency, students should ensure that they are aware of the building exit closest to each of their classrooms, as well as all alternative building exits in case circumstances require using a different route.

**Student Email Accounts:** Pensacola State College provides an institutional email account to all students enrolled in courses for credit. PirateMail is the official method of communication, and students must use PirateMail when communicating with the College. In cases where companion software is used for a particular class, email may be exchanged between instructor and student using the companion software.