Welcome! In this course we will explore how we interact with our home planet by focusing on fundamental Earth processes, resources, natural hazards, and the scientific process. I want to help you become an informed citizen who is prepared for challenges including choosing a safe home location, understanding your water and energy resources, and discussing current events such as climate change and environmental justice. I also want to introduce you to the many wonders of geology and help you develop greater appreciation of the Earth. Your goal for this or any other class you take should be to build your knowledge and learn something that excites you.

Course Description: Fundamentals of Earth Science (GEOL 1301) – Three hours lecture (GEOL 1301, 3 credits), with the corequisite laboratory (GEOL 1001, 0 credits). An introduction to the fundamental principles of Earth Science. Topics include Earth’s structure and surface landforms; mineral and energy resources; geologic hazards such as volcanoes, earthquakes, and landslides; water resources; and the unifying theory of plate tectonics. No prerequisites. Corequisite GEOL 1001.

Course Modality: GEOL 1301-501 and the co-required GEOL-1001-501 lab are half-semester (7 week), fully online courses. The lecture and lab share a Brightspace site (GEOL-1301).

Course Schedule: There is a course calendar and a detailed course schedule with topics and deadlines at the end of this syllabus.

Course Materials:  
• This course requires reliable access to a computer and internet. We will use: Brightspace, reference websites, Microsoft Office (you have access to Office 365 on campus), Adobe Acrobat Reader, possibly some smartphone apps, etc.  
• I strongly recommend a calendar/planner/app to track deadlines and class meetings.

Program Learning Outcomes. There are no specific program learning outcomes addressed in this course. It is a general education core curriculum course and/or a service course.
General Education Core Curriculum Objectives/Outcomes: The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) has identified six core learning objectives: Critical Thinking Skills, Communication Skills, Empirical and Quantitative Skills, Teamwork, Personal Responsibility, and Social Responsibility. SFA is committed to the improvement of its general education core curriculum by regular assessment of student performance on these six objectives. By enrolling in GEOL 1301 Fundamentals of Earth Science, you are also enrolling in a Core Curriculum course that seeks to develop the six core objectives established by the THECB, and that focuses on Critical Thinking Skills, which includes creative thinking, innovation, inquiry, and analysis, evaluation, and synthesis of information. You will develop these skills through weekly discussion threads, data analysis in laboratory exercises, and written reports associated with Earthquake Analysis and Alternative Energy modules.

Student Learning Outcomes: After successful completion of this course, you will be able to:
SLO 1. Demonstrate an understanding of fundamental geologic concepts as they relate to Earth processes and landscape evolution through geologic time (CO 1, 3).
SLO 2. Use quantitative reasoning to interpret geologic data (tables, figures, graphs) from primary research, data assimilation, and models to assess the differences in competing scientific theories associated with rock formation (CO 1, 3).
SLO 3. Demonstrate knowledge of the interdependence of science and technology and the influences on geologic reasoning associated with identifiable and testable hypotheses of geologic processes (CO 1, 4).
SLO 4. Critically assess the interrelationships between geologic phenomena and communicate the resulting conclusions in oral, visual, and written formats (CO 1, 3, 4).
SLO 5. Demonstrate an understanding of the skills and attitudes necessary for effective teamwork in collaborative learning activities (CO 3, 4).

Workload: A unit of credit (the semester hour) is defined as one class meeting per week (or its equivalent) for one 15-week semester. In a full 15-week semester, this course meets for 2 lecture hours and 2 laboratory hours per week. You are also expected to spend at least 2 hours per credit per week in preparation and study. Thus, for a full-semester course, you would expect to spend 4 hours per week in class and 6 hours per week working outside of class. For this 7-week course, you should reasonably expect to spend 20+ hours per week on lecture and lab. This time will be spent reading module content, participating in discussion forums, completing writing assignments, completing quizzes and exams, completing laboratory assignments, reviewing, and studying.

Remember, you are expected to spend the same amount of time on an online course as you would spend in the classroom for face-to-face courses. Many of you are choosing to take an online course because of your work schedule, family responsibilities, and scheduling conflicts, so your time is precious. Be aware of the time commitment required by this course, and work responsibly.

Brightspace: This course runs in the Brightspace (D2L) learning environment, which you can access through mySFA. It is your responsibility to check the site regularly for assignments and course announcements, and to complete assignments efficiently. Grades will be posted on Brightspace. For technical assistance with Brightspace, please contact 936-468-1919, d2l@sfasu.edu, https://www.sfactl.com/student-support, or the Virtual Lab zoom hours (see purple box on the Brightspace home page).
**Lecture Modules:** Lecture modules contain your primary source reading, discussion forums, quizzes, and other assignments. Be sure to complete all assignments by the module deadline (see schedule).

**Laboratory Assignments:** Each laboratory module corresponds with a lecture module, and contains information and exercises to expand upon what you've learned in lecture. Modules can include practice quizzes to help internalize concepts and vocabulary, exercises, and a quiz to assess your knowledge of the module content. Answers to the laboratory exercises will be posted on the Friday after the module closes to help you assess your work. A laboratory kit that contains minerals, rocks, sediments, and disposable lab equipment is required in order to complete lab exercises.

**Exams:** Five lecture exams will assess course concepts introduced in lecture modules, module activities, and any outside sources (e.g., videos, webpages) that are referred to within the modules. Two lab exams will assess content from lab content and activities. Exams will be open on the scheduled day only, from 12:01 a.m. to 11:59 p.m.; module content cannot be viewed on the day of an exam.

Exams will include any or all of the following question formats: multiple choice, true/false, fill-in-the-blank, short answer, figure illustration, and short essay. All exams will take place on Brightspace. Each exam contains ~30-50 questions, and you will have ~60-75 minutes to complete them. The exams are not cumulative, but they are timed and you will not have adequate time to refer to reference material. The exams consist of questions randomly selected by Brightspace from a test bank written by the instructor, and they appear one question at a time. You may not return to any question to change your answer after leaving that page, so be sure of your response before answering. I recommend that you save your responses as you complete each question in case of computer or power failure. I cannot help you if questions have not been saved. Once the allotted time expires, the exam will end. Exam grades will not be available until I have had a chance to grade all exams independently.

**Late Work:** This is not a self-paced course, and you must keep up with the weekly assignments. Each week you will be required to interact with your classmates and with me by participating in discussion forums, completing lab activities, and completing quizzes in both lecture and lab. You must check the course calendar daily and be aware of the opening and closing dates of the modules and associated activities. If you miss one of the deadlines for an exam or quiz, please contact me through email (stevenslm@sfasu.edu or D2L). For late work, the time stamp on your submitted quiz or exam will be used to determine the grade deduction.

- **Discussion Posts** – No extensions are available for late discussion posts as you will have already missed the opportunity to interact with your peers.
- **Lecture Quizzes, Lecture Exams, Lab Quizzes, Lab Assignments** – You will automatically lose 25% of your earned grade if you submit late work within 24 hours after the due date. You will lose 50% of your earned grade if your work is submitted within 24-48 hours. After 48 hours, or once answers to lab activities have been posted – whichever comes first – no credit will be given.

**Dependable Internet Connection:** Especially when taking quizzes or exams, always rely on a dependable internet connection. I do not recommend taking an assessment via your phone or using any public wireless connection (e.g., McDonalds, Starbucks, etc.).
**Final Grades:** You will receive one final grade that integrates your lecture and lab grades. Note that lecture work is worth 67% of your final grade, while lab work is worth 33% of your final grade. Your final grade is determined by summing the weighted averages of your grades in each of the categories below. Letter grades will be assigned as follows: A (90.0–100), B (80.0–89.9), C (70.0–79.9), D (60.0–69.9), F (< 60.0).

- Lecture Quizzes 20%
- Lecture Discussion Posts 20%
- Lecture Exams 27%
- Lab Quizzes 10%
- Lab Activities 10%
- Lab Exams 13%

**Extra Credit:** There are no extra credit assignments – focus your attention on the tasks at hand.

**Success!** Your academic achievement naturally depends on your level of involvement in this course. You improve your chances of success if you: complete all readings and module activities, keep course materials organized, participate fully in activities and discussions, take advantage of student hours, review regularly, make use of available resources, ask questions, plan your time, sleep regularly, eat well, get outdoors, etc. I am committed to helping you be successful in all ways. My office (and Zoom) is open to you and I hope you will find it a safe space. Do not hesitate to ask for help!

**Student Hours:** Student hours (aka office hours) are the times when I guarantee my availability to you with no appointment necessary, so please drop in. Student hours are a good time to discuss course topics, ask questions, discuss your course progress, talk about ways to improve your understanding, ask questions about your future (other courses, research, grad school, careers, etc.), or just chat. My student hours for this semester are listed at the top of this syllabus. Student hours are held both on Zoom and in my office. To plan longer meetings or for meetings at other days and times, please email me. When you drop in on student hours by Zoom, I will admit you unless I am speaking privately with another student, in which case I will keep you in the waiting room or admit you and send you to a breakout room.

**Communication:** Get in touch whenever you have questions or concerns. You are not pestering me. Not only is it my job to help you, but I really like doing it! Email me at stevenslm@sfasu.edu (preferred) or through D2L, drop in during student hours, or schedule a meeting with me. I typically respond to emails quickly during the workday, but responses will be slow during evenings and weekends; you may not get a response until the next business day, so plan accordingly. I don’t check my office voicemail when I’m off campus. When I have important information to communicate to you, I will post a news item on Brightspace, or I will contact you directly through your SFA email when privacy is required. It is your responsibility to check both Brightspace and your Jacks email every day.

**Students with Disabilities:** To obtain disability related accommodations, alternate formats, and/or auxiliary aids, students with disabilities must contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS), Room 325, Human Services Building, 936-468-3004/1004 (TDD) as early as possible in the semester. Once verified, ODS will notify me and outline the accommodations and/or auxiliary aids to be provided. Failure to request services in a timely manner may delay your accommodations. For additional information, go to [http://www.sfasu.edu/disabilityservices](http://www.sfasu.edu/disabilityservices). Please get in touch with me at the beginning of the semester to discuss arrangements for accommodations.
**Color Vision Deficiency:** Color vision deficiency (CVD, aka color blindness) may pose additional challenges when working with samples and thin sections. If you experience CVD, please notify me so that I can better assist you.

**Getting Through This:** You are human. It is challenging to do your best work if basic needs like safe shelter, sleep, and nutrition are not met. Throw in all of the instability in the world, and are any of us really “fine”? You are always welcome to talk to me, and I aim to make my office or Zoom a safe space, but you do not owe me any personal information about your health or anything else. If you’re having trouble, I will not judge or think less of you, and I hope you’ll extend the same grace to each other and to me. If you need help accessing sufficient food, a safe and stable place to live, mental or physical health resources, or other basic needs, please just ask. If I can’t help you I’ll direct you to the person who can. Please refer to the list of student resources on Brightspace. I am here to help you.

**Student Wellness & Well-Being:** SFASU values students’ overall well-being, mental health, and the roles both play in academic and overall student success. Students may experience stressors that can impact both their academic experience and their personal well-being. These may include academic pressure, challenges associated with relationships, emotional well-being, alcohol and other drugs, identities, finances, etc. If you are experiencing concerns and seeking help, SFA provides a variety of resources to support students’ mental health and wellness. Many of these resources are free, and all of them are confidential.

**On Campus:**

- **The Dean of Students Office**
  
  * [www.sfasu.edu/deanofstudents](http://www.sfasu.edu/deanofstudents)  
  * 3rd floor lobby, Rusk Building  
  * 936-468-7249  
  * dos@sfasu.edu

- **SFASU Human Services Counseling Clinic**
  
  * [www.sfasu.edu/humanservices/139.asp](http://www.sfasu.edu/humanservices/139.asp)  
  * Human Services Room 202  
  * 936-468-1041

- **The Health and Wellness Hub**
  
  Health and Counseling Services, Student Outreach and Support, Food Pantry, Wellness Coaching, Alcohol and other Drug Education...  
  
  * [www.sfasu.edu/thehub](http://www.sfasu.edu/thehub)  
  * Corner of E. College and Raguet St.  
  * 936-468-4008  
  * thehub@sfasu.edu

**Crisis Resources:**

- Burke 24-hour crisis line: 1-800-392-8343
- National Suicide Crisis Prevention: 988
- Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-TALK (8255)
- Crisis Text Line: Text HOME to 741741

**COVID-19:** While masks are no longer required, your responsible and considerate behavior regarding communicable illnesses is appreciated. Continue to wash your hands well, use sanitizer, wear a mask, or keep your distance when appropriate. If you are feeling unwell, test positive, or were exposed to COVID-19, please do not attend any F2F classes or events.
**Academic Integrity**: Abiding by university policy on academic integrity is the responsibility of all university faculty and students. **You are encouraged to ask questions about completing your coursework with academic integrity.** Articles IV, VI, and VII of the new Code of Student Conduct and Academic Integrity outline the violations and procedures concerning academic conduct, including cheating, plagiarism, collusion, and misrepresentation. **Cheating** includes, but is not limited to: (1) Copying from the test paper (or other assignment) of another student, (2) Possession and/or use during a test of materials that are not authorized by the person giving the test, (3) Using, obtaining, or attempting to obtain by any means the whole or any part of a non-administered test, test key, homework solution, or computer program, or using a test that has been administered in prior classes or semesters without permission of the Faculty member, (4) Substituting for another person, or permitting another person to substitute for one’s self, to take a test, (5) Falsifying research data, laboratory reports, and/or other records or academic work offered for credit, (6) Using any sort of unauthorized resources or technology in completion of educational activities. **Plagiarism** is the appropriation of material that is attributable in whole or in part to another source or the use of one’s own previous work in another context without citing that it was used previously, without any indication of the original source, including words, ideas, illustrations, structure, computer code, and other expression or media, and presenting that material as one’s own academic work being offered for credit or in conjunction with a program course or degree requirements. **Collusion** is the unauthorized collaboration with another person in preparing academic assignments offered for credit or collaboration with another person to commit a violation of any provision of the rules on academic dishonesty, including disclosing and/or distributing the contents of an exam. **Misrepresentation** is providing false grades or résumés; providing false or misleading information in an effort to receive a postponement or an extension on a test, quiz, or other assignment for the purpose of obtaining an academic or financial benefit for oneself or another individual or to injure another student academically or financially.

**My Expectations for Academic Integrity**: As scientists and as humans, our reputations are directly linked to our honesty, trustworthiness, and personal ethics; otherwise, what’s the point? What does academic integrity look like in our classroom?

- The university and course policies in this syllabus outline basic expectations for all students.
- You will complete assignments according to the instructions given regarding permitted tools and resources, collaboration, time limits, etc.
- Unless explicitly instructed otherwise, only your online modules and your own lecture notes are acceptable resources.
- If you are asked to work with classmates, it is meant to be a collaboration, where all partners contribute equally. Collaboration allows for discussion, but be careful not to cross the boundary between collaboration and groupthink. Your submitted work will be entirely your own words and thoughts. Always note your collaborator(s) on your work.
- Sharing your work with another student, whether or not it is used word-for-word, is cheating. Avoid asking classmates questions like, “What did you get?”
- Websites or other resources that answer students’ questions or gather and disperse course materials are never acceptable.
- Most often we run into trouble when we’re feeling pressured for time. Try to plan your schedule and give yourself plenty of time before due dates. If you start feeling panicked, please...
come and talk with me. I don’t want you to be tempted to lower your own personal standards. Similarly, always *ask for clarification or assistance whenever it is needed.*

- Your classmates’ grades are not your business. All that matters is how you learn from your own mistakes, and how you improve.
- For assignments, your first offense will result in a conversation. All other offenses will result in the initiation of an Academic Integrity Case. Recommended sanctions will include an assignment or exam grade of 0, or a 0 grade for the course.

**Withheld Grades:** At my discretion and with the approval of the chair of the department, a grade of WH will be assigned only if you cannot complete the course work because of unavoidable circumstances. You must complete the work by a mutually agreed upon deadline, which is not to exceed one calendar year from the end of the semester in which you receive a WH, or the grade automatically becomes an F, except as allowed through policy [i.e., Military Service Activation (6.14)]. If you register for the same course in future semesters, the WH will automatically become an F and will be counted as a repeated course for the purpose of computing the grade point average. [Policy 5.5](#).
**Course Schedule:** The calendar below is a visual that may help you understand how this course will run. A detailed course schedule with deadlines is on the following page, and is available in Module 1. Note that the schedule (next page) is arranged by starting date, not by due date – pay attention to deadlines! Also note that some modules or labs may contain assignments due earlier than the deadline shown.

Module 1 (1301-501) and Lab 1 (1001-501) must both be completed during the first week (M-F) of the term; **no other course materials will be available to you until you have completed the quizzes associated with both modules.** All modules and all labs open at 12:01 a.m. on Wednesdays and all relevant assignments are due by 11:59 p.m. on Tuesdays. Lecture Exams 1-4 occur on the Thursday following the closure date for each of the relevant modules; Lecture Exam 5 is on the day after the relevant modules are due. Lab Exams are on September 18 and October 13.

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<th>Sunday</th>
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<td>September 1</td>
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<td>Course Intro: M1, Lab 1</td>
<td>Course Begins</td>
<td>Unit 1: M2, Lab 2, M3, Lab 3</td>
<td>Lecture Exam 1</td>
<td>Unit 2: M4, Lab 4, M5, Lab 5, M6, Lab 6</td>
<td>Lecture Exam 2</td>
<td>Unit 3: M7, Lab 7, M8, Lab 8, M9, Lab 9</td>
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<td>Lab Midterm</td>
<td>Unit 4: M10, Lab 10, M11,</td>
<td>Lecture Exam 3</td>
<td>Lecture Exam 4</td>
<td>Unit 5: M14, Lab 14, M15</td>
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### Important dates for Fall I:
- August 28 – First class day;
- August 29 – Last to register for Fall I online;
- September 1 – Last day to register for Fall I with permission, last day to drop a Fall I class;
- September 2 – Drop Request or Withdrawal forms now required;
- October 6 – Last Day to submit drop request form, last day to submit withdrawal form;
- October 13 – Last Day of Fall I.

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<tr>
<th>Starting at 12:01 a.m.</th>
<th>Modules / Labs / Exams / Assignments</th>
<th>Due by 11:59 p.m.</th>
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<td><strong>M Aug. 28</strong></td>
<td>Course Intro</td>
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<td><strong>W Aug. 30</strong></td>
<td>Intro: Earth in Context</td>
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<td><strong>W Sept. 6</strong></td>
<td>Unit 2: Earth’s Processes &amp; the Rock Cycle</td>
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<td><strong>R Sept. 7</strong></td>
<td><strong>LECTURE EXAM 1</strong> (Unit 1, Modules 2-3)</td>
<td><strong>R Sept. 7</strong></td>
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<td><strong>W Sept. 13</strong></td>
<td>Unit 3: Earth’s Processes</td>
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<td><strong>R Sept. 14</strong></td>
<td><strong>LECTURE EXAM 2</strong> (Unit 2, Modules 4-6)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>M Sept. 18</strong></td>
<td><strong>LAB MIDTERM</strong> (Labs 2-6)</td>
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<td><strong>W Sept. 20</strong></td>
<td><strong>M10: Fossil Fuels</strong> (9/20-10/4)</td>
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<td><strong>R Sept. 21</strong></td>
<td><strong>LECTURE EXAM 3</strong> (Unit 3, Modules 7-9)</td>
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<td><strong>W Sept. 27</strong></td>
<td><strong>M13: Soils</strong> (9/27-10/4)</td>
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<td><strong>W Oct. 4</strong></td>
<td><strong>M14: Alternative Energy</strong> (10/4-10/10)</td>
<td><strong>M Oct. 10</strong></td>
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<td><strong>R Oct. 5</strong></td>
<td><strong>LECTURE EXAM 4</strong> (Unit 4, Modules 10-13)</td>
<td><strong>R Oct. 5</strong></td>
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<td><strong>W Oct. 11</strong></td>
<td><strong>LECTURE EXAM 5</strong> (Unit 5, Modules 14-15)</td>
<td><strong>W Oct. 11</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>F Oct. 13</strong></td>
<td><strong>LAB FINAL</strong> (Labs 7-14)</td>
<td><strong>T Oct. 13</strong></td>
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**This schedule is subject to change. I will notify you of any changes and provide an updated syllabus schedule.**