INTRODUCTION

Geology/Geography 321 is a three-credit course with two 75 minute lectures and one 110 minute lab. The course includes discussion of earth-surface processes, analysis of landforms, and quantification of geomorphic data. The course is intended for upper-level students in geology, geography, agronomy, forestry, wildlife management, landscape architecture, archeology, civil engineering and related fields. The prerequisites for this course are Geology 101 and 102 or Geol/Geog 110 and 111 or consent of the instructor (Dr. Kite). To get maximum benefit from this course, Geology majors should take this course after Geology 103 and 104; Geography majors after Geography 106 and 107.

Graduate students may take this course as GEOL 525: Problems in Geomorphology. Students enrolled in GEOL 525 will be required to complete extra assignments, such as a term paper or research project. The exact nature of this assignment will be documented in a supplemental course contract drawn up by the GEOL 525 student and approved by the instructor early in the semester.

WORKLOAD EXPECTATIONS

Prerequisites for this class are minimal because it serves students in many different majors with a great diversity of backgrounds. The course will not meet during all of the scheduled class and lab periods throughout the semester, but it will require more effort than many traditional three-credit courses. The workload is on par with other junior "Geology" major classes, such as "Sedimentation-Stratigraphy" and "Structure." Underclassmen and non-geology majors who work hard in this course generally do very well, commonly earning the highest grade in the class, but those who expect a workload comparable to GEOL 101 are apt to get disappointed in their outcome, typically because they fail to "shift gears" to reach the appropriate level of preparation.

You are expected to carefully read and digest all of the readings, generally before the material is covered in lecture or lab. You should attend lectures punctually and regularly to create a good set of study notes in the process. (Having someone else's notes or relying on PowerPoint lectures is insufficient; the action of taking notes is the important role of notes in the learning process.) You will be expected to thoroughly prepare for all assignments, tests and exams, and to be well rested on the day of the "performance" (a.k.a. "game day"). You need to understand the material as well as internalize some definitions, equations and classification schemes to your "RAM" (random access memory). Old tests, handouts, and study guides should become close friends! A good rule of thumb is that you should be investing about two "quality" hours outside of class for every hour you spend in lecture and one hour for ever hour spent in lab.
GRADING

Grades for most students in GEOL/GEOG 321 will be based on the following criteria:

2 lecture tests (each 20 % of grade)
1 final exam (25 % of grade)
2 lab tests, lab participation (30 % of grade)
Unannounced or announced quizzes in lab or lecture (5% of grade)

All aspects of class will be graded on a 10 point scale (<60 = F. 60-69.9 = D, etc.). Beware this scale differs from my grading in previous semesters, so old class materials may be misleading for this class. I reserve the right to curve test scores upward if warranted by the difficulty of tests or other factors. A majority of students have usually gotten "As" or "Bs" because they earn them through their preparation and performance!

I give “+” and “-” grades, even though they are not figured into the WVU GPA; they may be factored into a recalculated GPA at other schools if you transfer or apply to graduate school elsewhere. Grades of "I" = "Incomplete" are not given, except in truly exceptional circumstances beyond a student's control.

GEO 321: Tests and the final exams will differ from previous offerings of GEO 321. There will be no "great essay" but the tests will include definitions (10-20 percent of most tests), matching, multiple-choice, and short-response (1 paragraph) questions. Typically about 10-12 % of the questions come from material in the textbook that is not covered in the lecture. One-fifth of the final exam will be comprehensive (i.e. from the entire semester's material).

GEO 525 Test will be similar to old 321/525 tests, which are on line. Essay questions will be graded rigorously, using a traditional "10 point" scale. Students who come to a test or exam under-prepared may get "hammered' with low grades, so err of the side of over-preparation, especially for the first test!

The lecture tests and the final exam will include an essay question that will be limited to a single page (one side of a sheet of paper). Other "short answer" questions may require an answer of one or two paragraphs. To insure that the essay answers can be well written and clearly thought out, a list of 5 to 9 essay questions will be handed out before each test. One of the questions will appear as the essay on the test, and some short answer question may draw from the other essay questions on the list. To do well on tests under this format, you must have your answers clearly in mind BEFORE the test.

GEOL 525 (ONLY) PAPER OR PROJECT

Students enrolled in GEOL 525 will complete either a traditional class term paper or research project. Three critical deadlines for the topic, outline or research plan, and final product are given in the class schedule. The whole assignment will constitute 10% of the course grade, with the other 321 grade criteria listed above being multiplied by 0.9 for purposes of calculating the GEOL 525 grade. The title submission will be worth 1% of the whole GEOL 525 grade, the outline or research plan will be worth 2 %, and the final product will be worth 7%.

LABORATORY

Although the lab is an integral part of the class, the teaching assistant has considerable leeway on how to run lab sections. There will be at least 2 lab tests and at least 2 announced quizzes.
Attendance is essential. As a general rule, collective class performance determines how many formal requirements are made in lab. The more conscientious the class, the more less formal the structure. Your teaching assistant will address this issue in lab. A 10 point grade scale is used in lab.

FIELD TRIPS

A REQUIRED one-day field trip will be run, weather permitting. Transportation will be provided by the department for two van loads of students. In addition to some great landforms, we will examine the effects of repeated high-energy flooding on the Cheat River on this trip. At least one of the options for this day trip maybe physically demanding and somewhat dangerous, including hiking several miles over very steep terrain. If you have concerns about your ability to safely participate and enjoy this trip, I encourage you to see me to set up an alternative exercise.

At least one REQUIRED 2 hour trip will be run in lieu of lecture and lab during one week during the semester, weather permitting. The local trip is not physically demanding but may include a traverse of a muddy floodplain. Choose your footwear with "mud" in mind and dress according to the weather.

EXTRA CREDIT

All extra credit work will be averaged into the rest of the class grade, rather than added on. This grading method means that extra-credit work must be of superior quality for it to improve your grade. Extra credit will be graded under the same rigorous standards as other work in the class. Students who do extra credit work must submit a typed 100-200 word proposal describing the project before 6 April. Generally, the proposal will be approved or denied within 7 days of receipt.

ELECTRONIC DEVICES IN CLASS & LAB

It is your responsibility to insure that your electronic devices, including cell phones, do not disturb others in class. Theses devices should be turned off or operated in silent mode.

DISABILITY

If your are a person with a disability and anticipate needing any type of accommodation in order to participate in this class, please advise me or the T.A. early in the semester, and make appropriate arrangements with Disability Services (304-293-6700).

SOCIAL JUSTICE STATEMENT

West Virginia University is committed to social justice. We support that commitment and expect to maintain a positive learning environment based upon open communication, mutual respect, and non-discrimination. Our University does not discriminate on the basis of race, sex, age, disability, veteran status, religion, sexual orientation, color or national origin. Any suggestions as to how to further such a positive and open environment in this class will be appreciated and given serious consideration.

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY AND ETHICS

EVERYONE in this class is required to adhere the guidelines regarding academic dishonesty in the WVU Student Handbook. Everyone is required to read and understand these guidelines.