Geological Sciences 101
Class Policies - Fall 2002

1. Professionals who study the Earth are known as Earth Scientists, or Geoscientists. In this class you will work with the other members of the class as Geoscientists. You will learn by doing. You will get a lot of hands-on experience studying the Earth, asking questions about it, making measurements, observations, designing and performing experiments. We will take advantage of the natural resources around us, of computer technology, and some state-of-the-art equipment.

2. You will have homework/lab assignments every week. These are very important, they are 60% of your grade and you must turn in all the assignments on time. There are two exams during the semester, and a final exam during finals week. Make sure you know when these exams are coming up (check the class web page for the latest schedule). Prior to each lab you will need to complete a short pre-lab assignment. These will be found on the lab web page each week. You need to bring the pre-lab assignment with you when you come to your lab section.

3. If you find that you need an extension on a lab or project, you MUST ask the instructor or your TA ahead of time. We are almost always willing to accommodate your schedule, but will not do so after the fact.

* Similarly, if you miss an exam without making arrangements with me prior to the exam date, it will not be made up! *

4. All written assignments must be word processed. Hand-written work is fine for graphical assignments or calculations, but all short answers or essays must be completed on a computer. You will work in groups, and you will be asked, from time to time, to report on what your group is up to. Often, we will work together in one big group, other times you may be asked to work individually. It is important to work well with the members of your group. It is also VERY IMPORTANT to know when you are supposed to be working on your own. All of your written assignments MUST be your own work, even if you've discussed the material or collaborated with your group during class time. We'll talk more about this throughout the semester.

5. Very important: Please read the section on "Academic Honesty" in the the Student Handbook. Cheating, plagiarism, copying and any similar devious behavior are not tolerated. Copied answers are very obvious--nothing is gained in cheating and you risk being dismissed from school. You are allowed, in fact encouraged to work in groups during class time. However the discussion of a problem and its final resolution are two completely different things. When you are writing up your final lab report or homework, the ideas and work you turn in MUST be your own. My patience with dishonesty is extraordinarily short and the consequences for you are extremely grave. You won't learn anything and will have a terrible time with the exams unless you do your own work.

6. Grading policy: Learning occurs in lab, thus the labs are the most important aspect of the course. An approximate point breakdown for the class assignments is as follows:
Point breakdown:

Exam 1 = 10%
Exam 2 = 10%
Final = 20%
Homework, labs and other = 60%

7. Exams: There will be two evening prelims during the semester. Practice questions will be posted on the web site a few days prior to exams. Exam questions will be short answer format and are designed to test your ability to apply what you’ve learned in lecture and lab.

8. Homeworks & Labs: Answer format--all answers are expected to be written in complete sentences and accompanied by an explanation. Getting the answer right for the wrong reason is completely useless, and its much better to arrive at the wrong answer and have sound reasoning. Much partial credit is given for good reasons. Note that these remarks apply to exam answers as well. Make sure that you check the weekly lab web site for each week’s pre-lab assignment.

9. Use of computers: As mentioned above, all of your written work must be word-processed. Additionally, we will communicate with you frequently via e-mail. E-mail is a great way to ask questions of the instructor and Tas, (or of each other!). You probably check your e-mail every day anyway, but you are also responsible for checking the class web site for assignments & notices.

The class web page is also a very important resource. This is where you will find the latest updates to the syllabus, important information about each week’s lab, and valuable resources related to each class period. Take advantage of our web site!

http://www.geo.cornell.edu/geology/classes/Geo101/home_f01.html

10. This course is about thinking as well as about Geology. Learn to critically assess available information--some of the course material is very controversial and some is poorly understood. Making judgments about the value of certain kinds of information is a very important skill! Finally--what you get out of this class depends on what you put into it. It is important for you to take responsibility for your education. This means being as complete and thorough as possible when doing assignments. It means asking questions when you don't understand. It means being an active participant in lecture, lab and on field trips. It means being creative and imaginative with your work. Don't drift with the current--get out there and swim!

EVERY DAY IS EARTH DAY!