

ERS 103 – Dynamic Earth

Course Syllabus – Spring Semester

[Blackboard](#)

About the Professor

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Course Description

This 3-credit undergraduate course explores Earth, examining the various processes that have shaped our wonderful planet and how they affect and interact with humans. After taking this course, your perception of the world around you will change. Next time you travel by air you will be able to appreciate how mountains, rivers and deserts were formed, and why they are located where they are. While hiking, you will understand how the multicolored pebbles in a stream formed. Earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, tsunamis and other geologic hazards will take on new meaning with your greater understand of the processes that cause them. We will explore climate change, considering the various natural and anthropogenic contributions. And we'll examine where our natural resources come from, and why their supply is limited.

The Blackboard Learning System

Blackboard is a web-based software platform that provides a complete course management system. To log in, please use the link above. When you register for a course that uses Blackboard, you will automatically be added to that Blackboard course. Once I make the course available to students, you should be able to see and access the course when you log into your Blackboard account. If you are having problems, go to the above link for a number to call for help.

Required Textbook

Understanding Earth (7th Edition) by John Grotzinger and Tom Jordan. To assist you in purchasing your books, visit the [University of Maine bookstore](#). You can also find the book at online booksellers like Amazon, Barnes and Noble, etc.

Disability and Accommodation

If you have a disability for which you may be requesting an accommodation, please contact the [Student Accessibility Services](#) office.

Course Schedule Disclaimer

In the event of an extended disruption of normal classroom activities, the format for this course may be modified to enable its completion within its programmed time frame. In that event, you will be provided an addendum to the syllabus that will supersede this version.

Sexual Discrimination Reporting

The University of Maine is committed to making campus a safe place for students. Because of this commitment, if you tell a teacher about an experience of sexual assault, sexual harassment, stalking, relationship abuse (dating violence and domestic violence), sexual misconduct or any form of gender discrimination involving members of the campus, your teacher is required to report this information to the campus Office of Sexual Assault & Violence Prevention or the Office of Equal Opportunity.

If you want to talk in confidence to someone about an experience of sexual discrimination, please contact these resources:

For confidential resources on campus: Counseling Center: 207.581.1392 or Cutler Health Center: 207.581.4000.

For confidential resources off campus: Rape Response Services: 1.800.310.0000 or Spruce Run: 1.800.863.9909.

Other resources: The resources listed below can offer support but may need to report the incident to others who can help:

For support services on campus: Office of Sexual Assault & Violence Prevention: 207.581.1406, Office of Community Standards: 207.581.1409, University of Maine Police: 207.581.4040 or 911. Or see the [OSAVP website](#) for a complete list of services.

On Academic Honesty - Please Read This Carefully!!!

Academic honesty is very important. It is dishonest to cheat on exams, to submit assignments written by another person, or to copy or reword parts of books or articles into your own papers without appropriately citing the source. Students committing or aiding in any of these violations may be given failing grades for an assignment or for an entire course, at the discretion of the instructor. In addition to any academic action taken by an instructor, these

violations are also subject to action under the [University of Maine Student Conduct Code](#). The maximum possible sanction under the student conduct code is dismissal from the University.

Every semester we catch students cheating. This generally involves a student taking material directly from web sites and using it in their weekly writing assignments - **this is plagiarism**. **PLEASE, DO NOT RISK IT!** Students caught in the past have been reported directly to the Director, [Office of Community Standards, Rights and Responsibilities](#) for disciplinary action.

Course Assessment - Please Read Carefully!!!

ALL STUDENTS IN THIS COURSE WILL TAKE THE EXAMS ONLINE THROUGH BLACKBOARD AND PARTICIPATE IN WEEKLY WRITING ASSIGNMENTS THROUGH BLACKBOARD.

1. Three Exams (60% of final grade/600 points)

There will be three, 40-question, multiple-choice exams based on readings from the text book. Exams will be taken on-line. Each exam is timed - you will have 50 minutes to complete each one. The results will automatically be recorded. You will generally be able to access your results directly after you take the exam. I recommend that you study the exercises and thought questions at the end of relevant chapters in preparation for the exams.

** Exam #1 = 200 points – To be available starting at 6 am on the Wednesday prior to the designated exam day (see assignment schedule in Blackboard). Covers Chapters 1 through 5. To be completed by 6 pm on the following Saturday.*

** Exam #2 = 200 points – To be available starting at 6 am on the Wednesday prior to the designated exam day (see assignment schedule in Blackboard). Covers Chapters 6, 7, 12 and 13. To be completed by 6 pm on the following Saturday.*

** Exam #3 = 200 points – To be available starting at 6 am on the Wednesday prior to the designated exam day (see assignment schedule in Blackboard). Covers Chapters 15, 17, 18, 20 and 21. To be completed by 6 pm on the following Saturday.*

2. Weekly Assignments (40% of final grade/400 points)

Starting in Week 2, you are required to complete ONE writing assignment per week except for (a) the week of Spring break, and (b) the week before finals week. You will complete these assignments in Blackboard. Each assignment is worth 32 points. **Before you submit any writing assignments, you must complete the Statement of Responsibility assignment, which is worth 16 points.** So, 12 weeks of writing assignments = 384 points. Add the 16 points for the Statement of Responsibility and that is 400 points total.

Length and style of writing assignments: Each writing assignment must be a **minimum of 200 words**. You will receive **0 points** if you submit an assignment with less than 200 words, or if your writing does not relate to the reading for the week. Please note that

references, quoted text that is taken directly from a source like the textbook, and information like your name, date, chapter, etc., are NOT counted in the word total. We only count what you have written, in your own words, about the weekly reading. **There are detailed guidelines, example writing assignments, and a list of common grammatical errors that can be found in the Weekly Writing Assignments guidelines in the Blackboard course.**

All writing assignments are run through a plagiarism checker in Blackboard called *SafeAssign*. After you submit an assignment, you should check the SafeAssign analysis to see if it picked up any plagiarism. If so, then you should work on your assignment to eliminate the plagiarism and resubmit it. SafeAssign will also pick up things that you may not need to change, like your name, which it may find when checking your assignment against any previous assignments you have submitted.

*Please note that you will receive zero points for posts that contain spelling or grammatical errors. This is the writing component of your assessment, so **proofread your writing carefully** before submitting it. You should construct your assignments in a word processor that has a spelling and grammar checker, then cut and paste your final draft into Blackboard.*

*****Extra Credit (worth up to 50 points)**

You can complete extra credit assignments in Blackboard. Read up to 5 chapters from the textbook that we do not cover in class, and write a review focusing on what you have learned.

Each review should be at least 500 words and if properly done is worth 10 points.

Summarize the content of the chapter and describe your reaction, **in your own words**, based on knowledge gained in the course. A full chapter has a lot of information in it, so focus on the aspects that you found interesting. The purpose here is to practice your writing skills, and your ability to summarize a chapter of information in 500 words. The grading of these reviews is all or nothing (no partial credit). Make sure it is at least 500 words, well written, and clearly on topic and you will get full credit (10 points). DO NOT submit a review that contains spelling and grammatical errors or you will receive zero points for it. So, proofread it carefully. **Due no later than Wednesday at midnight following the third and last exam (see assignment schedule in Blackboard for the due date).**

Determining your grade for the course

Note that there are no plus or minus grades in this course!!!

1. Exams: 60% of grade

Exam #1 200 points

Exam #2 200 points

Exam #3 200 points

2. Writing assignments: 40% of grade

Due weekly, 400 points

TOTAL:

1000 points (plus up to 50 points of extra credit)

Grading:

A = 900 or more points

B = 800 - 899 points

C = 700 - 799 points

D = 600 - 699 points

F = 599 or fewer points