



Instructor: Dr. Mark Abbott  
Office: room 200 and 315 SRCC building  
Office Phone: 412-624-1408  
Email: mabbott1@pitt.edu  
Office Hours: *Mon 5:00–6:00 pm and by appt.*

---

**1. Objective:** A survey of geology designed for the non-science major. This lecture course examines the accretion of the earth four and a half billion years ago, and follows the evolution of the planet and its inhabitants since that time. On the way, we will discuss the composition of the earth (rocks and minerals), its dynamic surface (plate tectonics), and the internal and external processes such as volcanoes, earthquakes, erosion and landslides that have a profound effect on human populations. We will also cover exploration for geological resources such as fossil fuels and mineral deposits, and the importance of the geologic record in understanding global environment change.

**2. Required Text:** *Essentials of Geology, 3rd edition, Stephen Marshak.*

**3. Lecture Times:** Mon 6:00-8:30 pm in 203 Thaw Hall. Attendance is expected at all scheduled class meetings. Much of the exam material will be derived from the class notes and video presentations.

**4. Course Requirements:** The goal of this course is not to make you memorize an endless stream of facts that you will quickly forget after taking the final exam. Rather, this should be a fun and interactive experience. Knowing the fundamentals and learning to think objectively will give you a framework to appreciate the landscape around you and understand the natural processes that impact our lives.

**5. Exams:** There will be 2 exams and a final exam. Each exam will consist of true-false, multiple-choice, short essay questions. Exam questions will be based on material covered in the lectures and assigned reading. Make-up exams will only be given in extreme circumstances and with a written excuse.

**6. Grading:** Your final grade will be based on your performance on the two exams, recitation and in-class participation. The grade will be calculated using the following breakdown: 2 exams = 30% each, final exam = 30%, and class participation/attendance = 10%.

**7. Web Site:** The course web site is located at:  
<http://www.pitt.edu/~mabbott1/climate/mark/Teaching/teaching.html>

The site will contain the syllabus, lecture notes, announcements and assignments for the class. I tend to revise the class schedule as the term progresses, so please check there for the most current class information.

**8. Disability Resources:** If you have a disability for which you are or may be requesting an accommodation, you are encouraged to contact both your instructor and the Office of Disability Resources and Services, 216 William Pitt Union, 412-648-7890/412-383-7355 (TTY), as early as possible in the term. Disability Resources and Services will verify your disability and determine reasonable accommodations for this course.

**9. Academic Integrity:** Academic Integrity Policy on cheating/plagiarism must be in the syllabus. [Academic Integrity Policy: Cheating/plagiarism will not be tolerated. Students suspected of violating the University of Pittsburgh Policy on Academic Integrity, noted below, will be required to participate in the outlined procedural process as initiated by the instructor. A minimum sanction of a zero score for the quiz, exam or paper will be imposed.]

**10. E-mail Communication Policy:** Each student is issued a University e-mail address (username@pitt.edu) upon admittance. This e-mail address may be used by the University for official communication with students. Students are expected to read e-mail sent to this account on a regular basis. Failure to read and react to University communications in a timely manner does not absolve the student from knowing and complying with the content of the communications. The University provides an e-mail forwarding service that allows students to read their e-mail via other service providers (e.g., Hotmail, AOL, Yahoo). Students that choose to forward their e-mail from their pitt.edu address to another address do so at their own risk. If e-mail is lost as a result of forwarding, it does not absolve the student from responding to official communications sent to their University e-mail address. To forward e-mail sent to your University account, go to <http://accounts.pitt.edu>, log into your account, click on **Edit Forwarding Addresses**, and follow the instructions on the page. Be sure to log out of your account when you have finished. (For the full E-mail Communication Policy, go to [www.bc.pitt.edu/policies/policy/09/09-10-01.html](http://www.bc.pitt.edu/policies/policy/09/09-10-01.html).)

**11. Course Schedule:** Subject to change.

<u>WEEK</u>	<u>DATE:</u>	<u>TOPIC</u>	<u>CHAPTER/Interlude</u>
1	Aug 25	Introduction and plate Tectonics	1 and 2
2	Sept 1	<b>No Class – Labor Day</b>	3, 4 and A
3	Sept 8	Minerals and Rocks groups	3, 4 and A
4	Sept 15	Volcanic eruptions	5
5	Sept 22	Sedimentary rocks	6
6	Sept 29	<b>Exam #1</b>	
7	Oct 6	Earthquakes and Mountain building	8 and 9
8	Oct 14	(Note this is a Tuesday) Deep Time	10
9	Oct 20	Earth history	11
10	Oct 27	<b>Exam #2</b>	
11	Nov 3	Landslides and movements	13
12	Nov 10	Running water	14
13	Nov 17	Glaciers	17
14	Nov 24	Deserts	18
15	Dec 1	<b>Final Exam</b>	