

GEOL 710: Introduction to the UNR Geosciences Graduate Program Fall 2025

Course Information

Instructor Information

Instructor: Dr. Scott McCoy (he/him/his)

Office: LME 411

Phone: 775 – 682 – 7205

Email: scottmccoy@unr.edu

Office Hours: Monday 11:00-11:50. I'm also on campus almost every day and generally prefer to meet with folks during the afternoon. If I'm not meeting with someone else, you're welcome to interrupt me. Otherwise, please send me an e-mail to arrange a time to meet.

Course Description

This class will introduce you to the Geosciences program at UNR (including program requirements and resources) and the broader UNR benefits offered to you as part of your graduate assistantship. This class will also provide you with tips on how to succeed in graduate school (e.g., establishing a life–work balance, how to conduct literature reviews, how to plan a safe and productive field season, etc). Our goal is to reveal common obstacles faced by geoscience graduate students and provide dedicated time for cohort building.

Course Pre/Co-requisites

None.

Required Texts/Course Materials

None.

Class Procedures/Structures

This class will meet every Wednesday from 11:00 to 11:50 PM in LME 415. The goal is to have great discussion among those presenting and those in the class. You are encouraged to ask lots of questions! Presenters will be a mix of the instructor (Scott McCoy), your fellow graduate students, other UNR geoscience faculty, and UNR employees with relevant expertise (e.g., folks from the Title IX office, Student Health Center, etc). The overarching goal is to help you be successful in completing your degree!

Note: Communication will be via Canvas announcements. If you do not get these announcements, please let Scott know.

Student Learning Outcomes

- SLO1. Students will understand the requirements to obtain a MS or PhD with the DGSE graduate program.

- SLO2. Students will know where to find important department and graduate school documents and requirements.
- SLO3. Students will understand what resources are available across campus for field work, literature review, printing of posters, mental health, and more.

Course Requirements

Students need to attend class every week and participate in the discussion. If a student needs to miss a class due to observance of a religious holiday, to conduct field work, laboratory work, attend a professional meeting, and/or conduct another task related to their graduate work, please let Scott know multiple weeks in advance; these are all acceptable reasons to miss a class. If you need to miss class due to an illness (including Covid), please also let Scott know. We all have other life things come up, if you talk to me in advance, I can be flexible, if you wait until after the fact, it will be significantly harder for me to accommodate you. **If you have more than 4 unexcused absences, I will be forced to give you an unsatisfactory in the class, which is a shame.**

Grading Criteria, Scale, and Standards

This course is graded on a satisfactory/unsatisfactory basis. Your grade will be based on attendance and participation during the weekly class discussion.

Late Work or Make-up Exams Policies

There are a few class periods where I will ask you to either make a ~2-3 minute powerpoint on your research plans, read a non-scientific magazine-style article before class, or do something else that should take ~30 minutes of prep time. Please make sure to do this and to come to class prepared. This work cannot be made up late.

Course Calendar or Topics Outline

Below is a list of topics that will be covered during the class (subject to change based on first-day survey results and speaker availability). If there are additional things that you would like to see covered, please let Scott know. Many of the discussions will be led by other Nevada Geoscience faculty. Each faculty member will start the discussion with a quick introduction to themselves, their work, and resources they manage that could be useful to you. They might even share a few of their favorite tips/pieces of advice for succeeding in graduate school. Those tips I will try to compile here

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1mwL2eXH7ysWZB86swoSooaafHoG0yoRHOMREr96v14U/edit?usp=sharing>

- **Week 1: August 27**
 - Introductions
 - Overview of this course (+ survey for your feedback)
 - Overview of our program (Paula Noble, Department Chair)
 - Graduate Assistantship roles TA vs RA

- Overview of organizational structure of COS -> Mackay -> DGSE and state agencies (Nevada Seismological Lab and Nevada Bureau of Mines and Geology)
- **Week 2: September 3**
 - Present your research topic (and anything else you want to include about your background) in two or three slides or less and less than 3 minutes. Everyone will give a 3-minute presentation with 2 minutes afterwards for questions.
 - For those that have time and are interested, Scott will take the entire course to Buzzed Café (across the street from campus) for a coffee or we could grab lunch at Pub and Sub (Scott's treat) for continued socialization.
- **Week 3: September 10**
 - Research Habits: work-life balance, self-directed research, and asking big questions (**Scott**)
 - Nevada Resource Geoscientists (Nicole Wagoner)
 - AEG (Cody Russo)
 - Geosciences For All committee
- **Week 4: September 17**
 - How to read a scientific paper and field safety/planning (**Dr. Philipp Ruprecht - DGSE**)
- **Week 5: September 24**
 - Grad student panel on preparing (and not over-stressing) for Quads and Comps (**student panelists**)
- **Week 6: October 1**
 - Securing external funding as a graduate student (**Dr. Daniel Trugman - NSL**)
- **Week 7: October 8**
 - DeLaMare Library overview and resources (**Chrissy Klenke - Earth Sciences, GIS & Maps Librarian**)
- **Week 8: October 15**
 - Building effective mentor relationships and networks (**Dr. Ben Mason-DGSE**)
 - How to select a committee
 - Dealing with imposter syndrome
(Check out this video starting at minute 6:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BoHDDgeQtlc>)
- **Week 9: October 22**
 - How to use citation managers and techniques for doing a literature review (**Chrissy Klenke - Earth Sciences, GIS & Maps Librarian**)
- **Week 10: October 29**
 - Open Science and tools (Github) to do this easily (**Dr. Kyren Bogolub- NSL**)

- **Week 11: November 5**
 - Making an individual development plan (*Dr. Joel Scheingross- DGSE*)
- **Week 12: November 12**
 - Scientific ethics AND Time Management (*Dr. Kait Keegan - DGSE*)
- **Week 13: November 19**
 - Intro to State Agencies (NSL and NBMG) (*Dr. Andrew Zuza – NBMG and Field Camp Director*)
 - Overview of publishing scientific papers from initial draft through peer review and eventual publication (
- **Week 14: November 26**
 - *Wednesday before Thanksgiving – No class.*
- **Week 15: December 3**
 - Post-grad career panel (*Dr. Rich Koehler - NBMG*)
- **Week 16: December 10**
 - *University-wide Prep Day. No class.*

University Policies

Statement on Academic Dishonesty

The University Academic Standards Policy defines academic dishonesty, and mandates specific sanctions for violations. See the University Academic Standards policy: [UAM 6,502](#).

Statement on Student Compliance with University Policies

In accordance with section 6,502 of the University Administrative Manual, a student may receive academic and disciplinary sanctions for failure to comply with policy, including this syllabus, for failure to comply with the directions of a University Official, for disruptive behavior in the classroom, or any other prohibited action. "Disruptive behavior" is defined in part as behavior, including but not limited to failure to follow course, laboratory or safety rules, or endangering the health of others. A student may be dropped from class at any time for misconduct or disruptive behavior in the classroom upon recommendation of the instructor and with approval of the college dean. A student may also receive disciplinary sanctions through the Office of Student Conduct for misconduct or disruptive behavior, including endangering the health of others, in the classroom. The student shall not receive a refund for course fees or tuition.

Statement of Disability Services

Use either the traditional or online statement, in addition to the last sentence regarding third party materials.

For Traditional and Seated Classrooms:

Any student with a disability needing academic adjustments or accommodations is requested to speak with me or the [Disability Resource Center](#) (Pennington Achievement Center Suite 230) as soon as possible to arrange for appropriate accommodations.

For Online Courses:

If you are a student who would normally seek accommodations in a traditional classroom, please contact me as soon as possible. You may also contact the Disability Resource Center for services for online courses by emailing drc@unr.edu or calling 775-784-6000. Academic accommodations for online courses may be different than those for seated classrooms; it is important that you contact us as soon as possible to discuss services. The University of Nevada, Reno supports equal access for students with disabilities. For more information, visit the [Disability Resource Center](#).

This course may leverage 3rd party web/multimedia content, if you experience any issues accessing this content, please notify your instructor.

Statement on Audio and Video Recording

Student-created Recordings

Surreptitious or covert video-taping of class or unauthorized audio recording of class is prohibited by law and by Board of Regents policy. This class may be videotaped, or audio recorded only with the written permission of the instructor. In order to accommodate students with disabilities, some students may have been given permission to record class lectures and discussions. Therefore, students should understand that their comments during class may be recorded.

Instructor-created Recordings

Class sessions may be audio-visually recorded for students in the class to review and for enrolled students who are unable to attend live to view. Students who participate with their camera on or who use a profile image are consenting to have their video or image recorded. If you do not consent to have your profile or video image recorded, keep your camera off and do not use a profile image. Students who un-mute during class and participate orally are consenting to have their voices recorded. If you do not consent to have your voice recorded during class, keep your mute button activated and only communicate by using the "chat" feature, which allows you to type questions and comments live.

Statement on Maintaining a Safe Learning and Work Environment

The University of Nevada, Reno is committed to providing a safe learning and work environment for all. If you believe you have experienced discrimination, sexual harassment, sexual assault, domestic/dating violence, or stalking, whether on or off campus, or need information related to immigration concerns, please contact the University's Equal Opportunity & Title IX office at 775-784-1547. Resources and interim measures are available to assist you. For more information, please visit the [Equal Opportunity and Title IX](#) page.

Statement on Campus Closures or Delays

In the event of class cancellations or delays caused by inclement weather conditions, fire/smoke conditions, or other unforeseen emergencies, the safety and well-being of students are the University's top priority. Official notifications will be disseminated through the University website and other official channels with details related to any campus delays or closures.

In the event of a campus closure, you will be informed as to whether the class will be offered remotely or if it will be canceled. If the class is cancelled, you will receive information on how to address any missed course content.

Students facing significant impacts due to these events are encouraged to communicate with their instructor for potential accommodations.