Class Description/Objective:
Historical Geology (GOL 106) is meant to be the second half of the GOL 105/106 science series. It is highly recommended that you take Physical Geology (GOL 105) prior to taking GOL 106. However, if you have not already taken GOL 105 or an equivalent course, you may need to do some additional reading in the texts.

The course content of Historical Geology has gone through some major changes in recent years mostly due to an increased understanding of the dynamic and interconnected nature of many of the Earth systems. In fact, many colleges have replaced the traditional Historical Geology course with a course called Earth Systems History. This change came about in large part due to the large amount of research generated by global climate change. Traditional Historical Geology focused on a chronological study of the important events in Earth history, similar to how information is presented in most history courses. Earth Systems History acknowledges that many of the most important events in Earths history are not singular events, but in fact result from the complex co-evolution of separate but interconnected systems. This is true as much for the formation of the continents as it is for the dawn of the ice ages and catastrophic biologic extinctions. This class will incorporate some of the traditional aspects of Historical geology, but will also focus on understanding the processes and dynamics which caused important events, and how an understanding of the process, rather than simply the event, can help to better predict how these systems may continue to evolve in the future.

Required Textbooks:

Earth System History by Steven Stanley (4th edition) – (ESH)
Additional Textbooks *(may be referred to in class, but not required):*

- **Essentials of Geology** by Stephen Marshak (EOG, on reserve in library)
- **Fossil Guides:** *(one of the following if you are interested)*
  - Smithsonian Handbook: Fossils by Cyril Walker and David Ward
  - Simon & Schuster’s Guide to Fossils
  - A Guide to Fossils by Helmut Mayr (Princeton Science Library)
- Laboratory Manual in Physical Geology (American Geological Institute, any edition)

**Grading:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4 Lecture Tests</td>
<td>50% (12.5% each)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Lab Quizzes</td>
<td>30% (10% each)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homework/Assignments</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Field Trip Report/Smithsonian Lab</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Exam (optional)</td>
<td><em>will replace your lowest lecture exam grade</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Final grades will be based on the following distribution:

- >90 A
- 80 – 89 B
- 70 – 79 C
- 60 – 69 D
- <60 F

*(Note: All final grades are rounded to the nearest whole number)*

**Attendance/Class notes:**

Attendance is not mandatory for this class. However, attendance will be taken in both lab and lecture for strictly administrative purposes. If you do not show up to lecture for the first four classes or miss the first two labs, you likely will be withdrawn from the course. You are responsible for all material presented in lecture and lab regardless of whether you attend the lecture/lab. If you miss a lecture/lab, please make arrangements with another classmate or check with me about what was covered. I will not provide you with notes (a good reason to check in with a classmate), but will be able to give you any handouts that you may have missed.

**Lecture Exams:**

Four lecture exams will be given during the course of the semester. Exams may include short answer, fill-in-the-blanks, matching, true/false, multiple choice, and/or short essay questions. Each exam will count for 12.5 % of your final grade. The dates of the exams and quizzes are provided on the syllabus and represent “best guess” dates. These dates are subject to change and may be updated as the semester progresses. Any changes will be announced in class at least one week prior to the anticipated change. Completion of all exams and quizzes is required. If you know you will miss an exam or quiz, you must notify me at least 24 hours prior to the day of the exam/quiz to make other arrangements. E-mails and messages on my answering machine will not qualify as notification. You must speak to me in person or receive a reply from me stating I received your notification. I will only consider scheduling a make-up for documented emergency situations. I’m actually a pretty understanding person. If you have a conflict with the dates of the exams, come see me. If you are late for an exam, you will only be allowed to enter the room and take the exam until the first person finishes and leaves the room. After that time you will not be allowed to take the exam and will be considered to have missed the exam. If you miss an exam and fail to notify me ahead of time, you will receive no credit for that exam. Any make-up exams or quizzes at that point will only be offered at my own personal discretion. Make-up exams (if offered) will likely consist of 4 – 5 essay questions. If you are caught cheating on any exam or lab quiz, you will be given a zero on that exam, receive an F in the class and removed from the course. Your name will be reported to the dean of students for further disciplinary measures. Cheating is defined as the “giving, receiving, or soliciting of information and the unauthorized use of notes or other material during the examination or quiz.” *(NVCC Student Handbook)*

**Laboratory:**

This class includes a mandatory laboratory. All labs will be held in Bisdorf 391. There is no lab manual for this class. A handout will be provided for each lab outlining the objectives and required work to be completed. These are meant to be completed during the lab period. I will not collect or grade these labs but instead will provide an answer key for you to check your results. I will be available to answer questions or check your work during the lab. The handouts for each lab will be posted on my website and/or on Blackboard. It is your responsibility to print out a copy of the handout prior to arriving in
the lab. I have provided a list of supplementary lab books that may help you in lab. None of these texts are required to complete any of the labs, but they may help you if you are having trouble or if you find the material interesting and desire to learn more about the topic.

A short safety review will be given in lab prior to the first lab. There is also a mandatory safety form that you are required to fill out. This form will be available on Blackboard. You must complete and sign this form before you can participate in the lab portion of this course. Some safety precautions should be obvious and will be enforced. You must wear shoes that cover your entire foot. **No sandals will be allowed in the lab.** You cannot eat or drink anything in the lab. Do not throw objects, put anything in your mouth, run with scissors, etc…

Three quizzes will be given in the lab. Each quiz will count for 10% of your final grade. The quizzes will be directly related to the lab material and will be of a similar format as that outlined for the tests or may be more hands on type knowledge such as fossil identification.

**Smithsonian Lab/Field Trip:**

I am requiring one out-of-class assignment for this course worth 10% of your final grade. This can either be participation in a field trip that I will offer or completion of a self-guided lab at the Smithsonian Museum of Natural History. The field trip will occur on a Saturday probably in March or April and will be to some location(s) within a couple of hours of DC/VA/MD. There will be an assignment associated with this field trip consisting of several short answer questions and an essay or two regarding the material we visited that day. If you cannot attend the field trip (or choose not to), you can substitute a Smithsonian Lab for this field trip. The lab will require you to visit the Smithsonian Museum of Natural History on your own time and complete some questions regarding the exhibits. You will also be required to write a series of short essays regarding some of the exhibits. If you use any outside sources when writing up the field trip report or Smithsonian Lab (including web material, books, publications, etc), you must properly cite the source of the information. Failure to do so is considered plagiarism and will result in a zero on the assignment.

**Plagiarism**, as defined in the 1995 Random House Compact Unabridged Dictionary, is the "use or close imitation of the language and thoughts of another author and the representation of them as one's own original work."[1] Within academia, plagiarism by students, professors, or researchers is considered academic dishonesty or academic fraud and offenders are subject to academic censure, up to and including expulsion.[2]

**References**

2. Wikipedia, the free Encyclopedia.

All assignments (field trip report or Smithsonian Lab) will be due on **Friday April 28, 2017**.

**Homework:**

There will be a few short homework assignments during the course of the semester. These are relatively painless assignments meant to get you to look into a topic in a bit more detail outside of class and are help you understand material we are going over in lecture. All class discussions in the Blackboard Discussion Board will count towards your homework grade. Grading of reading/discussion assignments will be based on your posted responses. One-half credit (50%) will be allocated for your posted comments about the assigned reading and the remaining half-credit (50%) will be allocated for your posted response/comments on another students comment thread (see Blackboard section below for proper etiquette). Homework submitted by the assigned deadline will be given full credit. Any assignment handed in within one week after the deadline will incur a 10% penalty in the grade. Any assignment handed in more than one week after the deadline will incur a 50% penalty in the grade.

**Final Exam:**

The final exam for this class is scheduled for **Tuesday May 2, 11:30 am – 1:10 pm** in room AA438. This exam is completely optional. The grade on your final (if you choose to take it) will be used to replace your lowest lecture exam grade even if it is lower than any of your lecture exam grades. The final exam will be cumulative and may cover any material from the text, any assigned readings or material presented in lectures. The exam is closed book.
Add/Drop:
The last day to drop this course with a full tuition reimbursement is **Thursday January 26, 2017**. The last day to drop the course without a grade penalty is **Tuesday March 21, 2017**. If you need to withdraw from the class after this deadline, you will need to provide me with formal documentation explaining the circumstances for your withdrawal. This will also include a typed, dated and signed, written excuse explaining why you are requesting a withdrawal after the deadline as well as official documentation for your requested withdrawal. Any withdrawals after the deadline are subject to my approval, the approval of the dean of MSE, and the approval of the provost and are by no means guaranteed. It is **very** difficult to withdraw after the withdrawal deadline.

Extra Credit
I do not offer any extra credit in this class.

Electronic Devices
The in-class use of any electronic devices is strictly regulated. Computer use in class is welcome for note taking or class related activities. If you are found to be using a computer or electronic device during class for anything other than class related purposes you will not be allowed to use the device again during the class for the rest of the semester. All cell phones should be turned off before entering the class. If you use a blue-tooth ear attachment, please remove it during the class period. If you need to keep it on for emergency purposes, please notify me at the beginning of class. If you do receive an emergency phone call, please leave the room and complete the call elsewhere. Texting is absolutely prohibited. You are not allowed to use your cell phone’s calculator during in class exams or laboratory quizzes.

Special Needs:
Students with special needs as determined by the campus Counseling Center need to make arrangements with me regarding accommodations to any of these policies as soon as possible in the beginning of the semester (preferable), or prior to any test or exam being given. Please come see me, or a counselor, regarding any of these issues if you are unsure about anything.

Blackboard:
We will be using Blackboard in this class to post notices, documents, assignments, quizzes and discussions. Please familiarize yourself with the Blackboard site for this class and make sure you can sign onto it. I have opened a discussion forum labeled “Introductions”. Please post a short message in this forum room introducing you to the rest of the class. I will check to make sure everyone has posted an introduction and you will receive credit for a homework assignment for posting an introduction. I have also created a forum labeled “Open Forum” for general use by the class. Feel free to post questions to me or to the class in general. You can also respond to other people’s postings for clarification on class topics or general questions about dates of exams or quizzes or any other class related topic. I will periodically monitor this site and answer any questions that arise, but I also encourage you to use this discussion room as a means of posting comments or queries to your classmates.

I will also post articles on the Blackboard site and ask that you read and post your comments on the article. I will open a new Forum in the Discussion Board for each new paper assigned. For these postings you can receive one half-credit (50%) for posting a comment about an assigned paper and an additional half-credit (50%) for posting a response to someone else’s posted entry. You can only receive credit for one additional response. If you respond to more than one person’s entry, you will still only receive credit for one.

General rules for discussion section:
1) Do not use profanity in the chat room
2) Only refer to other people in the chat room by their preferred name
3) Do not criticize someone’s opinions without offering a constructive alternative opinion
4) Refrain from making *ad hominem* arguments (do not criticize the person, criticize the idea)
5) Always show respect for others beliefs

If I deem any posting to be inappropriate, I will delete the posting and e-mail you a copy highlighting the areas I thought were inappropriate and advising you how to alter it to repost it if possible.

*In case of a school emergency that prohibits us from meeting on campus, I will post instructions and messages on the Blackboard site and may conduct class from that site.*
Facebook:

You can find me on Facebook at Victor Zabielski (Professor). This is my professional page. I also have a personal page under Victor Zabielski, without the (professor) behind it. If you send a friend request to my professional page, I will accept it and you can use this platform to post interesting articles to my wall or ask questions that you and/or the class might find relevant. Similarly, I may post articles or news that might be relevant to the class. I will try to check in with this site regularly. If you misuse this site I will unfriend you. Please do not send a friend request to my personal page (I try to keep these aspects of my life at least nominally separate). This site can be used in the same manner as the Open Forum in the Blackboard Discussion Folder.

Disclaimer: Any information on this policy may be altered due to unforeseen circumstances. Any changes to these policies will be announced in lecture prior to its inception.
The Honors Option

Honors Option

I will consider requests for an honors option in this class. Generally this will require you to research a mutually agreed upon topic during the semester, write a 5 – 10 page report on that topic and present an oral presentation of the report at the end of the semester. It will also include efforts on your part to interact with the geologic community in the greater DC region and to regularly interact with others in your honors option cohort. I will also consider proposals for other projects and reports that may differ substantially from a traditional research report. The requirements are as follows:

Academics

All Honors Option Students must maintain at least a B average in the class in order to receive Honors Option Credit. If your final average is below a B, you will automatically be disqualified from the Honors Option.

Community

Those students that apply for and are eligible for the Honors Option will coordinate among themselves to find an agreed upon date and time to meet as a group. Meetings will not be every week, but as needed to discuss, comment and critique the progress of each other’s work and to review current events or new articles related to the field.

Research

Each Honors Option student will write a 5-10 page paper researching an agreed upon topic in the general field of Historical Geology. The papers content must be drawn primarily from peer-reviewed articles, but can also include books, newspaper articles and other grey literature. I will also consider substituting a short research project and subsequent report instead of a research paper. Meetings will be scheduled throughout the semester to mark the progress of this paper/research. The meetings will follow the below stated agenda:

Meeting 1: Introductions of students in the Honors Options / discussion of requirements
Meeting 2: Discussion of topics for research. Student will bring ideas on 3-5 topics that may interest them. The group will discuss the benefits and disadvantages of each of the topics. Students will leave the meeting knowing their topic
Meeting 3: Students will bring a typed paragraph briefly discussing the scope of their topic/project. This will include approximately 5 questions that they will attempt to answer in the course of their research paper.
Meeting 4: Students will bring a typed formal outline of their paper or a progress report on their research project. The form of the outline will follow standard scientific research style (abstract, introduction, topics, subtopics, conclusion, references, etc.)
Meeting 5: Students will bring a rough draft of their paper and the group will discuss the strengths and weaknesses of each of the papers. Drafts will be distributed to all the group several day prior to the meeting so everyone has a chance to read everyone else's work. Students working on a project should bring their data and present it to the group.
Meeting 6: Students will bring a final draft of their research paper/project and present a 15-20 minute oral presentation (powerpoint) of their work to the rest of the group.

Outreach

Students will reach out and participate in at least one activity related to Historical Geology that is independent of the regularly scheduled activities of the class. This can include a local talk, a professionally led field excursion, or other agreed upon activity.