Syllabus: Spring 2011

Geol 4835/5835

Applied/Exploration Geophysics: 3 credits

Time and Place:

Mondays & Wednesdays: 9:00am-9:50am (50 min. lecture) Room 318

Fridays:
Either: Lab 8:00am-9:50am (1 hour 50min).
OR 9:00-9:50am (a 50min lecture)
Room 318
or ESB1006 when there’s a computer lab.

Instructor: Dr. Mike Cheadle
Office: 221
Email: cheadle@uwyo.edu
Office Hours: Mon. Weds, Fri 10:00-11:00
Phone: 766-3206

TA: Tyler Brown
Office: 316
Email: tbrown46@uwyo.edu
Office Hours: M, T, W 1:00-2:00

Synopsis:

Discusses the fundamentals of Applied or Exploration Geophysics, encompassing lecture, laboratory classes and discussion of case histories. It covers the Seismic Refraction, Seismic Reflection, Gravity, and Magnetics methods. The course provides a solid grounding about the exploration of the Earth’s subsurface for mineral and hydrocarbon resources, and environmental issues.

Course Aims:

The aim of this course is to give you a sound knowledge of the fundamentals of Applied or Exploration Geophysics. The course will hopefully provide you with a solid grounding for a future career and/or future study and research into both how we explore the subsurface of the Earth for mineral and hydrocarbon resources and in the basic physics that we use to do this. Although the main application of exploration geophysics is in prospecting for natural resources, the methods are also used, for example, as an aid to geological surveying, as a means of learning more about the internal properties of the Earth and in environmental, engineering and archeological investigations.

The following exploration methods will be covered:
Seismic Refraction, Seismic Reflection, Gravity, Magnetics.
However, the main emphasis will be on seismics, simply because seismics is the most extensively used technique, being routinely used by the oil industry in prospecting for hydrocarbons.

In every sub-topic I will try to teach you the physical principles, the methodology, how we interpret the data and how each method is used for different applications (I will try to make it fun & relevant! And I will also try to make the material relevant to the geology of Wyoming. For example, we will read geophysical papers about the crustal structure of Wyoming.). Knowledge of calculus & trigonometry will be required. In all cases we will try to use a minimum of mathematical complexity, but we will be using math.

Course Skills/Learning Outcomes:

To learn the ability to understand how geophysical data is collected and the ability to process and interpret it and to understand the limitations and non-uniqueness of the data. Basic computing and modeling skills.

Class Format:

The class will consist of either three 50min sessions per week or two 50min lectures and a 1 hour 50 minute lab. We will do at least 5 problem classes/labs to solve both paper-based exercises and computer-based exercises (see syllabus below) during the semester. Approximately 4 homework problem sheets will be issued during weeks without a lab. The best way to study for this course is to attend the lectures and solve the problems! Each lab or homework will be worth about 6% of your final mark. You will be able to discard the homework with the lowest mark. i.e. I will count your 8 best marks.

All problem sheets and labs and will be due one week after they have been set (late papers will not be accepted, without an excellent reason) and will be returned to you one week later.

Final Project: Around Spring Break, I will expect you to get into pairs and choose one paper from the list at the end of this syllabus. The papers are chosen to be interesting case studies using geophysical techniques. They range from academic to applied, and from archeology to paleontology. Each pair of students will give a 10 minute oral presentation in the final week as though they were the geophysicists who did the survey. You will explain the problem, the methods used and the results achieved. Each student will also independently provide a 1 page extended abstract on the case study.

Additional Requirements for Geol 5835

Graduate students taking the class at the ‘5000’ level will be required to do an additional independent project as part of their studies. I will offer several possibilities, from which you can choose. Projects include:

i) Interpreting a set of supplied geophysical data and working up a ‘publishable’ interpretation.

ii) Writing a fully documented and usable computer program to process geophysical data

iii) Local fieldwork projects using available geophysical equipment (magnetometer, gravimeter)

iv) Project based on a literature review
Grading/Evaluation:

**GEOL 4835** grading will be as follows:
- Lab exercises/Problem sheets 50%
- Mid-term exam (seismics) 20%
- Final Project 10%
- Final exam (seismics, gravity and magnetics) 20%

**GEOL 5835** grading will be as follows:
- Lab exercises/Problem sheets 40%
- Mid-term exam (seismics) 20%
- Final Project 5%
- Final exam (seismics, gravity and magnetics) 20%
- Independent Project 15%

What Is Expected of You:
- Regular attendance and alert participation. This class will work best if you participate in the labs and do the problem sheets and ask questions!
- Relax and have some fun with the topics in this class. This is useful stuff! The goal is for you to gain a fundamental understanding of some of the most useful geophysics and to learn how to use that geophysics to explore the subsurface of the Earth.

What You Can Expect of Me:
- I will provide lab exercises, and supplementary lecture material (photocopies of key papers and summaries) and help stimulate discussions during class.
- I will be accessible and will always be happy to answer your questions during class, during office hours, and by appointment.
- I would very much like your feedback on how this new course is progressing. I will ask for an informal mid-term evaluation and the Department will perform a formal evaluation at the end of the semester.

If you have a physical, learning, or psychological disability and require accommodations, please let one of us know as soon as possible. You will need to register with, and provide documentation of your disability to, University Disability Support Services (UDSS) in SEO, room 330 Knight Hall, 766-6189, TTY: 766-3073.”

**A&S - Students and Teachers Working Together:**
Please refer to the following web-site for a detailed explanation of what should be expected from both the teachers and the students.

**Academic Dishonesty**
University Regulation 802, Revision 2, defines academic dishonesty as “an act attempted or performed which misrepresents one’s involvement in an academic task in
any way, or permits another student to misrepresent the latter’s involvement in an academic task by assisting the misrepresentation”. In other words, no cheating! It will be hard to carry out in this class, but is an important aspect of scientific ethics.

Course Texts

I will supply you with many handouts during the course of this class to supplement the class lectures. Consequently, you should only buy the course text if you want to. However, I do recommend the following texts as resource texts. I have not placed them both on reserve in the Brinkerhoff Library for 24-hour loan, but will do so if that’s best for the class as a whole.


*Note The Brinkeroff Library also has both the 1st and the 2nd edition by just Keary & Brooks (same title: Call number: TN 269.K37).*


**Other Useful Texts:**

Basic Exploration Geophysics
E. Robinson & C. Coruh
Wiley, 1988. (Call number TN269.R54)

Introduction to Applied Geophysics
## Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 1 (10 Jan)</th>
<th><strong>Introduction to Course &amp; Seismic Waves</strong> (topics: types of seismic waves, velocities of rocks and fluids)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week 2 (17 Jan)</td>
<td>No class on MLK Day. <strong>Seismic Waves</strong> (topics: attenuation, amplitudes, reflection, diffraction and refraction). (Seismic waves Homework)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 3 (24 Jan)</td>
<td><strong>Seismic refraction</strong> (review: 2 and 3 layered case, reduced travel time plots, hidden and blind layers) (Seismic Refraction Lab 1: Slope-Intercept interpretations of crustal refraction data in 318)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 4 (31 Jan)</td>
<td><strong>Seismic refraction</strong> (Faulted interfaces, dipping and irregular layers). (Seismic Refraction Lab 2: Computer Modeling: Raytracing and Amplitude Modeling. In computer lab.) Students registered for GEOL 5835 to decide projects</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 5 (7 Feb)</td>
<td><strong>Seismic refraction</strong> (Amplitude modeling, lateral velocity gradients and worldwide results). (Seismic Refraction Lab 3: Modeling 2-D structures: computer lab)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 6 (14 Feb)</td>
<td><strong>Seismic reflection</strong> (Review, geometry of ray paths, NMO, dipping reflectors, velocities and layer thicknesses).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 7 (21 Feb)</td>
<td><strong>Seismic reflection</strong> (CDP gathers, stacking, velocity analysis) (seismic reflection homework I)</td>
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<td>Week 8 (28 Feb)</td>
<td><strong>Seismic Reflection</strong>: migration (Seismic reflection Lab 1:Migration in 318) <em>Mid-term exam on seismics; Monday or Wednesday (28th Feb or 2nd March).</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 9 (7 Mar)</td>
<td><strong>Seismic Reflection</strong> (Seismic Interpretation: Pitfalls) (Seismic Reflection Lab 2: Seismic Interpretation of sedimentary basins in 318)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 10 (14 Mar)</td>
<td>Spring Break. Choose a paper from the list at the end of this syllabus for your presentation in the final week. <strong>Let me/Tyler know on the 21st March</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 11 (21 Mar)</td>
<td><strong>Seismic Reflection</strong> (Resolution. The Processing Sequence Sequence Stratigraphy). (Seismic Reflection Homework II: various questions) <strong>Mike Might be away this week. Tyler to take over.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 12 (28 Mar)</td>
<td><strong>Gravity</strong>. (Elementary theory and the Geiod)</td>
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Friday April 2nd Easter Break: No class.

Week 13 (4 Apr)  **Gravity** (Instruments and techniques. Interpretation Methods (Gravity Lab 1: Indirect interpretation: Modeling of Gravity Anomalies, in the computer Lab)

Week 14 (11 Apr)  **Magnetics** (Elementary theory and instruments Susceptibility, remanence. (Gravity & Magnetics Homework: various questions).

Week 15 (18 Apr)  **Magnetics** (shapes of magnetic anomalies, interpreting magnetic data).

Week 16 (25 Apr)  **Course project week.** You will be expected to present the exploration geophysics paper you have chosen to read. You will give a 10 minute oral presentation as though you were the geophysicist who carried out the experiment. (You will also produce a 1 page executive summary). What was your objective? What techniques did you use? What results did you get? Should we hire you for future contracts?

Independent projects due for GEOL 5835

Finals Week (May 2nd)  **Final exam on all material after the mid-term (seismics, gravity and magnetics).**

1 page executive summary due

The schedule above is subject to a certain amount of flexibility. The course and lecture content may vary to meet your needs and vary depending on how fast we progress, but the exams will not be moved from the above times.
General Geophysics: Case Studies

1. Seismic Refraction

Assessing the integrity of a landfill site *

Refraction studies of a Roman temple

Crustal structure beneath Wyoming *

2. Seismic Reflection

Detecting gas in a laterally variable Formation.

Diffraction Tomography to locate buried dinosaur bones *

Geotechnical assessment of a shale diapir

Surveying a proposed hazardous waste facility

Seismic Investigations in the Vicinity of the Great Sphinx of Giza, Egypt

3. Gravity

Finding cavities in the great Pyramid
Locating Caves

Groundwater and Bedrock

Magnetics
Mineral Exploration

Archeology: (must do both papers)

4. Multi-disciplinary
Chicxulub Impact Crater (Reflection and Gravity)

Determining the source of water for a national landmark (Gravity and Refraction)

Relating seismic damage to geological structure (Gravity and Refraction)