Geological Sciences and Environmental Science

Return to: College of Science (http://catalog.utep.edu/archive/2019-2020/undergrad/college-of-science/)

101-C Geology Building
915.747.5501
geology@utep.edu (mail@geo.utep.edu)

Introduction

Degrees in Geological and Environmental Sciences offer a wide variety of career paths upon completion. Careers with private industry, government and academic institutions are all possible. Furthermore, a MBA Fast Track option is offered because we encourage graduates to think about starting their own businesses. We have numerous internship opportunities available for students to supplement the coursework offered. We teach qualitative and quantitative skills highly relevant to professions in Earth and environmental science. The students will also be trained in writing, speaking and data analysis. Overall the students will obtain an integrated understanding of the concepts and methods involved in studying natural systems as well as human interactions with these systems. Our graduates have the opportunities to travel around the world as part of their educational experience and pursue global careers. Professionals in Geological and Environmental Sciences generally report high satisfaction ratings with their careers and many paths lead to some of the more lucrative professions in scientific fields.

The department of Geological Sciences offers both the Bachelor of Arts (BA) and Bachelor of Science (BS) degrees in Geological Sciences, and a BS in Environmental Science.

Department Requirements

C Rule

Students must earn a grade of C or better in all courses taken within the Department of Geological Sciences that are used to satisfy the above Geology and Geophysics degree requirements. A student receiving a grade of D in a required course must repeat the course at its earliest offering. Students receiving consecutive grades of D will not be allowed to enroll in required courses until grades of C or better have been earned in the appropriate courses. A minimum GPA of 2.0 must be achieved in required science courses taken outside the Geological Sciences department.

Departmental Research

All undergraduate students are encouraged to complete a research and/or internship experience. The preferred option is completion of a GEOL 4399 Senior's Thesis. GEOL 4166 Directed Study, Geology - GEOL 4366 or GEOP 4167 - GEOP 4367 or GEOL 4189 Research in Geological Science - GEOL 4389 or GEOL 4390 Intrnshp Geological Sciences courses also fulfill this requirement.

Programs

Bachelor of Science

- BS in Environmental Science (http://catalog.utep.edu/archive/2019-2020/undergrad/college-of-science/geological-sciences/environmental-science-bs/)
- BS in Geological Sciences (http://catalog.utep.edu/archive/2019-2020/undergrad/college-of-science/geological-sciences/geological-sciences-bs/)
- BS in Geophysics (http://catalog.utep.edu/archive/2019-2020/undergrad/college-of-science/geological-sciences/geophysics-bs/)

Minor

- Minor in Geography (http://catalog.utep.edu/archive/2019-2020/undergrad/college-of-science/geological-sciences/geography-minor/)

Fast Tracks

- BS in Geological Science to MS in Geological Science (http://catalog.utep.edu/archive/2019-2020/undergrad/college-of-science/geological-sciences/fast-track/bs-geo-sci-ms-geo-sci/)
- BS in Geological Sciences to MBA (http://catalog.utep.edu/archive/2019-2020/undergrad/college-of-science/geological-sciences/fast-track/bs-geo-sci-mba/)

CHAIR: Dr. Kubicki (https://academics.utep.edu/Default.aspx?tabid=71778/)
Contact Information: jdkubicki@utep.edu; 915-747-6552
Education: Ph D, Yale University
Research Interests: Environmental chemistry Surfaces and interfaces of materials Glass and melt science

Professor

Elizabeth Anthony (http://facultyprofile.utep.edu/default.aspx?ID=eanthony/)
Contact Information: eanthony@utep.edu; 915-747-5483
Education: BA, Carleton College; MS, University of Arizona; Ph D, University of Arizona

Diane Doser (http://facultyprofile.utep.edu/default.aspx?ID=doser/)
Contact Information: doser@utep.edu; 915-747-5851
Education: BS, Michigan Technological University; MS, University of Utah; Ph D, University of Utah
Research Interests: geophysics, seismology, environmental geophysics, geoscience education

Katherine Giles (http://facultyprofile.utep.edu/default.aspx?ID=kagiles/)
Contact Information: kagiles@utep.edu; 915-747-7075
Education: BS, University of Wisconsin; MS, University of Iowa; Ph D, University of Arizona

Thomas Gill (http://facultyprofile.utep.edu/default.aspx?ID=tegill/)
Contact Information: tegill@utep.edu; 915-747-5168
Education: BS, University of California- Davis; Ph D, University of California- Davis; Postdoctoral Training, USDA Agricultural Research Service
Research Interests: Aeolian processes, particularly mineral dust and the relation of dust generation to geomorphology, weather, and climate, and the detection and assessment of dust through remote sensing; the environmental geochemistry, source appointment and biogeochemistry of trace elements; the geomorphology, sedimentology, and geochemistry of saline lakes and playas; evaporite mineralogy; earth system science, especially the relationship between landforms, climate/weather, and ecosystems; mesoscale meteorology and air pollution meteorology; the application of X-ray spectrometric techniques in earth and environmental sciences; natural resource management in arid and semiarid lands; and applications of meteorology to homeland security.

Philip Goodell (http://facultyprofile.utep.edu/default.aspx?ID=goodell/)
Contact Information: goodell@utep.edu; 915-747-5593
Education: BS, Yale University; MS, Harvard University; Ph D, Harvard University
Research Interests: Statement of Research Interests 1. Economic Geology, 2.Geochemistry, Origin of Mineral Deposits. My Ph.D. topic was a geochemical study of a mineral deposit in Peru. This theme has always been maintained in my research portfolio with Mexico being the target of most of this research. I currently have 2 students doing supported research within this topic, Mike Feinstein supported by Golden Predator, Joe Lori by Quatarr Resources. 2.Economic Geology?Uranium Upon arriving to teach at UTEP in 1975, I quickly got involved in uranium deposits in Mexico, at Pena Blanca, Chihuahua. The government agency, URAMEX, eventually sponsored three of their geologists to come to UTEP for their Masters degrees, and gave us permission to study their deposits. My model of volcanogenic model was well received, and I organized 2 symposia with field trips for the American Association of Petroleum Geologists and for the International Atomic Energy Agency, and I edited resultant publications of each organization. I have visited China as a guest of the Beijing Research Institute for Uranium Geology, twice. The IAEA has called on me several times to serve as Sponsor of IAEA Fellows for their stays in the USA, and to serve as Foreign Technical Expert, most recently in Argentina and Egypt. I attended and made presentations at 3 of their meetings in 2009-2010. The IAEA is interested in publishing our book, written with 2 collaborators, Uranium Geology of the Middle East. 3.Environmental Geochemistry?Uranium With the demise of uranium deposit geochemistry in 1985, I became more interested in the geochemistry of nuclear waste. In 1987 Yucca Mountain was designated to be the repository site, and $13B of research and study began. I realized that the Nopal 1 uranium deposit at Pena Blanca, Chihuahua, could serve as a Natural Analogue to Yucca Mountain, and Pena Blanca entered the 4. Environmental Geochemistry -general By the middle 1980s, uranium exploration geology activity was zero, and mineral exploration was to suffer from a 15 year period of relatively low commodity prices. Where are our students going to get jobs? I evolved to include environmental geochemistry in my teaching and research, initiating courses in this topic on the graduate and undergraduate level, and beginning a long series of students from the Environmental Science and Engineering Program at UTEP. Funded projects included the biogeochemistry of chromium working with scientists at Texas A&M, and the spectral response of laboratory-made saline soils. My most recent ESE student was Elia Marquez, who studied arsenic in groundwater in the region. A continuing activity of mine is the use of remote sensing in both environmental and regional geological activities. My teaching of environmental geochemistry expanded into Mexico in the 1990s when I taught in the Graduate School of Universidad Autonoma de Ciudad Juarez for 7 years. In 2001 I began a series of continuing scientific interactions in the Middle East. These academic activities in Mexico and the Middle East have led to numerous environmental research projects. Earth-based geochemistry and remote sensing led me to the following. 5. Regional Geochemical Mapping Regional geochemical mapping (RGM) is a global scientific activity that consists of taking many located samples over an area, and having them analysed for many chemical constituents. The National Geochemical Survey database is vast and underused. The data is largely unprocessed although a few maps have been produced. My UTEP RGM research group has a publication on New Mexico using this data, and we have finished processing Colorado. Our approach is to proceed in greater detail and more samples on a state by state basis. A second manuscript is complete, and we are working with Cybershare, UTEP, on a proposal to expand to the entire USA. 6. Regional Geology of southwestern Chihuahua, Mexico Since arriving at UTEP in 1975, my interest in economic geology and the origins
of mineral deposits (topic 1 above) took me to the Sierra Madre of Chihuahua. This has been a constant theme in my research and teaching. I have supervised 9 students on both MS and PhD levels with topics there. Field trips there with students were made annually for a long time, but have been discontinued today for safety. I have guided, sometimes with colleagues, many professional field trips there, and co-edited 4 guidebooks on the region. The accompanying figure shows the locations of areas of study of several of my students. Studies vary from remote sensing to age dating to rock geochemistry to zircon and microprobe chemistry. Students have made many presentations at professional meetings. Funding became easier from industry since 1993 when complete foreign ownership of companies was permitted. Our profile from the stable craton, across rapidly thinning crust west into oceanic crust, documents changes of styles to extensional forces, and the location of mineral deposits at the juncture of select structural elements.

7. Sulfosalt Crystal Chemistry Sulfosalts are a family of minerals found in sulfide mineral deposits. They also contain crystal structures and physical properties which are unique. Two recent doctoral students of mine, Guy Crawford and Steve Sellepach, from the Material Science Program at UTEP, synthesised exotic element sulfosalts and determined crystal structures by Ab Initio techniques.

Jose Hurtado (http://facultyprofile.utep.edu/default.aspx?ID=jhurtado/)
Contact Information: jhurtado@utep.edu (mtcortez@utep.edu); 915-747-5669
Education: MS, California Institute of Technology; BS, California Institute of Technology; Ph D, Massachusetts Institute of Technology

James Kubicki (http://facultyprofile.utep.edu/default.aspx?ID=jkubicki/)
Contact Information: jkubicki@utep.edu (mtcortez@utep.edu); 915-747-6552
Education: Ph D, Yale University
Research Interests: Environmental chemistry Surfaces and interfaces of materials Glass and melt science

Richard Langford (http://facultyprofile.utep.edu/default.aspx?ID=langford/)
Contact Information: langford@utep.edu (mtcortez@utep.edu); 915-747-5968
Education: BA, Colorado College; MA, Indiana University; Ph D, The University of Utah

Terry Pavlis (http://facultyprofile.utep.edu/default.aspx?ID=tpavlis/)
Contact Information: tpavlis@utep.edu (mtcortez@utep.edu); 915-747-5570
Education: BS, University of South Dakota; MS, University of Utah; Ph D, University of Utah
Research Interests: Tectonics, Computer Applications in Field Geology, Structural Analysis of Metamorphic terranes

Nicholas Pingitore (http://facultyprofile.utep.edu/default.aspx?ID=npingitore/)
Contact Information: npingitore@utep.edu (mtcortez@utep.edu); 915-747-5754
Education: BA, Columbia College; MS, Brown University; Ph D, Brown University
Research Interests: exploration geophysics, geothermal,tectonics, education, diversity, technology

Laura Serpa (http://facultyprofile.utep.edu/default.aspx?ID=lsarpa/)
Contact Information: lserpa@utep.edu (mtcortez@utep.edu); 915-747-6085
Education: BS, University of Utah; MS, University of Utah; Ph D, Cornell University
Research Interests: exploration geophysics, geothermal,tectonics, education, diversity, technology

Terry Pavlis (http://facultyprofile.utep.edu/default.aspx?ID=tpavlis/)
Contact Information: tpavlis@utep.edu (mtcortez@utep.edu); 915-747-5570
Education: BS, University of South Dakota; MS, University of Utah; Ph D, University of Utah
Research Interests: Tectonics, Computer Applications in Field Geology, Structural Analysis of Metamorphic terranes

Nicholas Pingitore (http://facultyprofile.utep.edu/default.aspx?ID=npingitore/)
Contact Information: npingitore@utep.edu (mtcortez@utep.edu); 915-747-5754
Education: BA, Columbia College; MS, Brown University; Ph D, Brown University
Research Interests: exploration geophysics, geothermal,tectonics, education, diversity, technology

Aaron Velasco (http://facultyprofile.utep.edu/default.aspx?ID=aavelasco/)
Contact Information: aavelasco@utep.edu (mtcortez@utep.edu); 915-747-5101
Education: BS, University of California; Ph D, University of California
Research Interests: My current projects include: determining 3-D Earth structure from analysis of US Array data and other data in the southern Rio Grande Rift; exploring techniques for joint inversion; studying aftershocks of large earthquakes in Nepal and Mexico; studying volcanic structure in the East African Rift System in Kenya; studying local earthquakes in the El Paso, TX region; and understanding the link between earthquakes, in particular, the mechanisms for dynamic triggering. I also have projects that focus on educational aspects of science; in particular, we fund early geoscience undergraduates as part of the Academic Year - Pathways Research Experience Program (AY-PREP), and National Science Foundation grant.

Associate Professor

Lixin Jin (http://facultyprofile.utep.edu/default.aspx?ID=lijin2/)
Contact Information: lijin2@utep.edu (mtcortez@utep.edu); 915-747-5559
Education: BS, the University of Science and Technology of China; Ph D, The University of Michigan
Research Interests: Environmental science, water quality, critical zones, shale weathering, soil sustainability

Lin Ma (http://facultyprofile.utep.edu/default.aspx?ID=lama/)
Contact Information: lma@utep.edu (mtcortez@utep.edu); 915-747-5218
Education: BS, University of Science & Technology of China; Ph D, University of Michigan

Deana Pennington (http://facultyprofile.utep.edu/default.aspx?ID=ddpennington/)
Contact Information: ddpennington@utep.edu (mtcortez@utep.edu); 915-747-5867
Education: BS, Ohio State University; MS, Ohio State University; Ph D, Oregon State University; Graduate Certificate, University of New Mexico
Research Interests: Socio-environmental systems, scenario analysis, geospatial modeling and analysis, climate and land change impacts on wildfire/drought/biodiversity/water, earth/ecologic and environmental informatics, data and knowledge integration & synthesis, collaboration and collaborative environments, interdisciplinary teamwork
Assistant Professor

Benjamin Brunner (http://facultyprofile.utep.edu/default.aspx?ID=bbrunner/)
Contact Information: bbrunner@utep.edu (mtcortez@utep.edu); 915-747-5507
Education: MS, Swiss Federal Institute of Technology; Ph D, Swiss Federal Institute of Technology
Research Interests: light stable isotopes, sulfur, nitrogen, phosphorous and carbon cycle, authigenic minerals, geobiology, life at the energy limit

Julien Chaput (http://facultyprofile.utep.edu/default.aspx?ID=jachaput/)
Contact Information: jachaput@utep.edu (mtcortez@utep.edu);
Education: Ph D, New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology

Julien Chaput (http://facultyprofile.utep.edu/default.aspx?ID=jachaput/)
Contact Information: jachaput@utep.edu (mtcortez@utep.edu);
Education: Ph D, New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology
Research Interests: Hydrology and ecohydrology of arid and semi-arid areas, hydrology of coastal and karstic aquifers, ecohydrology of tropical environments, development of scalable methods for the quantification and partition of water, energy and carbon fluxes in natural environments.

Marianne Karplus (http://facultyprofile.utep.edu/default.aspx?ID=mkarplus/)
Contact Information: mkarplus@utep.edu (mtcortez@utep.edu); 915-747-5413
Education: BA, Dartmouth College; Ph D, Stanford University

Jason Ricketts (http://facultyprofile.utep.edu/default.aspx?ID=jricketts/)
Contact Information: jricketts@utep.edu (mtcortez@utep.edu); 915-747-5599
Education: BS, San Diego State University; MS, San Diego State University; Ph D, University of New Mexico
Research Interests: Structural geology, tectonics, and low-temperature thermochronology, Evolution of the Rio Grande rift in Colorado and New Mexico, Geologic mapping

Jie Xu (http://facultyprofile.utep.edu/default.aspx?ID=jxu2/)
Contact Information: jxu2@utep.edu (mtcortez@utep.edu); 915-747-7556
Education: BS, Shanghai Jiao Tong University; MS, Nanyang Technological University & Stanford University; Ph D, University of Wisconsin - Madison
Research Interests: Nanogeoscience, geomicrobiology, biomineralization, environmental mineralogy, biogeochemical cycling of sulfur and heavy metals, advanced interfacial instrumentation in earth science studies, resource recovery and bio-inspired energy research

Research Assistant Professor

Gail Arnold (http://facultyprofile.utep.edu/default.aspx?ID=glarnold/)
Contact Information: glarnold@utep.edu (mtcortez@utep.edu); 915-747-8373
Education: BS, SUNY Oswego; Post-graduate Diploma, University of the South Pacific, School of Agriculture; MS, University of Rochester; Ph D, University of Rochester
Research Interests: stable isotope geochemistry, biogeochemistry, early earth environment, microbial interactions