**Regarding Topics Covered and Text Resources:**
This course is an introduction to Earth Science. Rather than attempting an ‘all-inclusive’ survey of earth science topics, we will cover selected topics to explore connections between physical processes of the earth system and our own observations and experience; we will highlight key aspects of those topics to better understand the “structure,” the “plumbing,” and the “climate control” of our home: planet Earth. We will also explore classroom methods to enhance learning, especially of earth science.

**Textbook Policy:** There is no specific, required textbook for this course. Many texts are available on the subject of introductory earth science; older editions in particular are available through on-line sources at substantially lower cost, and you may select any text that works for you. I recommend that you have a suitable text available as a reference for this course. Some recommended texts (and in the bookstore) have been updated regularly, and therefore a large number of older editions are widely available. Additional information regarding other appropriate texts is posted in D2L. Whatever your choice, you are responsible for supplementing this class with resources on material in order to appropriately participate in this class. If obtaining a textbook presents a hardship, the instructor has a limited number of texts available for loan. See me for more information.

**About the Class Sessions:**  [refer also to page titled “Tips to Succeed in this Course”]
Students are expected to attend all scheduled classes. As a natural science laboratory, this class requires hands-on participation. Lab activities are a critical part of the course; information from lab work is integral to and integrated with discussions (i.e., not separate sessions), so regular attendance is vital to your success. Not all topics covered in class are similarly covered in textbooks; you are responsible for all material covered, and all information given, in class. You should also note relevant policies regarding late work.

Learning is enhanced by an interactive and collaborative environment. This course incorporates working in small groups. Productive group dynamics depend on a positive attitude & acceptance of diversity: each group member will have different opinions, experience, and work styles. The ability to work well with others is an important skill necessary in virtually all careers– especially teaching! – as well as in daily life. In this class we will build, practice, and enhance these skills while exploring earth science.

Your questions in class are welcome at any time, and are also a key component of the course. Questions relevant to the topic are not ‘interruptions’: they are important contributions. If something is unclear, asking a question can help all of us. Questions are also the impetus to explore other interesting aspects of a topic. So, speak up – in class, before class, after class – to share your thoughts.

Class activities may emphasize specific aspects of a topic, while requiring individual responsibility for other material. A general guideline for any college course is that you should invest time outside of class at a ratio of at least 2:1, relative to contact hours. For this course (4 contact hrs), that means 8 hours per week outside of class (reading, homework, and review) should be your expected commitment for success. This course fulfills a General Education Natural Science laboratory requirement. As a GenEd-level class, topics are covered at an introductory level; but it still is a college-level course, and you are expected to treat it as such.

**What to bring to class:**
Each class period, you should have all of the following available and ready at the scheduled start time for each class session: a notebook or binder with loose leaf paper for notes; a folder for handouts, labs, assignments, etc.; any print-outs that you were required to bring; writing utensils (always include pencil & eraser for a lab class! colored pencils/ pens/ markers are also useful); don’t forget a good attitude and readiness to participate; and an open mind!

For designated days (as announced), we may work outside, off sidewalks (on possibly muddy ground!): make sure to dress appropriately for the weather.

**Web resources and e-contact:**
Details of written assignments, important announcements, and other information for this class will be posted on the course web page and/or in D2L; you are expected to check these resources frequently, so that you are aware of course updates, deadlines, and requirements. Watch your (NEIU) email for D2L alerts. Assignments are listed on the due date; note the course policy regarding late assignments.
You are expected to maintain e-mail contact throughout the semester, by regularly checking your NEIU email account, the primary way that your professors and the university can and will contact you.

As future professionals, now is a great time to practice appropriate, professional ways to communicate with your teachers... and future business colleagues. The familiar format used in texting is not appropriate for these contacts; the following is a reminder of a proper format for business communications.

**How to E-Mail your Professors... an example to follow:**

Subject: gives a clear idea of the message (e.g.: ESCI 121 question OR Request for appointment)

(Dear/Hi/Hello/Aloha) (Professor Hemzacek/ Prof. Jean/ Prof. H),
I capitalize the first letter of all my sentences and I end my all my sentences with a punctuation mark. Although I should use my NEIU email account for university communication, sometimes using that account is not convenient for me, so I might use another email account. However, I always make sure that I’m not sending you messages from an address like 2nastee4U@email.com No matter which email account I use (and even if my name is part of the email address), I always sign my name at the end of the message and identify myself as a member of this class. This format—with salutation, body, and signature—is how I will always initiate contact with you. In a back-and-forth conversation following an initial email, I may drop this formal format, but I will continue to capitalize and punctuate where appropriate so that you can clearly understand my communication.

(Thank you/All the best/Cheers/Sincerely/Aloha/etc),
Your first and last name, course & section number

**A NOTE ABOUT ACADEMIC INTEGRITY, HONESTY AND RESPONSIBILITY**

You are paying for an education, not just for a grade. (By the way, you’re not really paying for a grade, either, but for the opportunity to earn a grade.) Education is gained through honest, diligent work. **Cheating will not be tolerated.** Academic dishonesty includes looking at someone else’s paper during an exam, utilizing resources in unauthorized ways, copying the work of others in class or for assignments, having someone else do your work, or otherwise intentionally misrepresenting work as your own honest effort. You should note that simply changing a few words, or the order of some words, from a resource is still plagiarism! Even when working with a group, your individual paper must clearly show evidence of individual thought and effort (and words).

By enrolling in this course, you are bound by the NEIU Student Conduct Code whether or not you have read it (available at: http://www.neiu.edu/university-life/student-rights-and-responsibilities/student-code-conduct). Incidents of dishonesty will earn a zero on that assignment/exam, and possibly an F for the course. NEIU policy also outlines more severe sanctions, including academic dismissal, if warranted. Please see me before handing in work if you have any questions on what constitutes cheating or plagiarism; our course webpage has resources that will help to clarify this topic for you.

**ADA Statement:** NEIU complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) in making reasonable accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. To request accommodations, students with special needs should contact the Student Disability Services (SDS) office, room D104; contact SDS via (773) 442-4595 or http://www.neiu.edu/university-life/student-disability-services .

**Campus Safety:** A safe university environment is a shared responsibility of faculty, staff, and students, all of whom are expected to familiarize themselves with and cooperate with emergency procedures. Emergency Procedures and Safety Information can be found on NEIUport on the MyNEIU tab or as follows: http://homepages.neiu.edu/~neiutemp/Emergency_Procedures/MainCampus/. This “flip chart” is also posted at many locations on campus, including in our classroom. Additional safety information is available on the NEIU Public Safety website: http://www.neiu.edu/~police/emergency_management.html.