

GEOLOGY/GEOGRAPHY



Geology is the study of the Earth's structure, materials, processes, and history. This science explores how the planet has changed over time and how those changes impact the world today. Students pursuing a degree in Geology will build a strong foundation in the field through the study of Earth materials, geologic processes, and the scientific method. They will develop analytical skills that integrate basic chemistry and mathematics, learn to identify common minerals, rocks, and landforms, and explore the dynamic systems that shape our planet. Additionally, students will examine the evidence for major events in Earth's history, from mountain formation to mass extinctions.

Courses in Geography and Earth Science complement the study of Geology and are available to fulfill General Education or transfer requirements. While no degrees are currently offered in these subjects, they provide valuable scientific perspectives on Earth's systems and human-environment interactions.

- Earth Science is an interdisciplinary field that investigates the Earth's crust, atmosphere, and oceans, emphasizing their interactions and long-term evolution.
- Geography is a broad discipline that bridges the physical and social sciences. Physical Geography examines Earth's natural landscapes, climate, ecosystems, and natural hazards, analyzing how these systems interact and change over time using tools such as remote sensing, GIS, and spatial analysis. Human Geography explores how people shape and are shaped by their environments, studying topics such as population distribution, urbanization, cultural landscapes, and geopolitical relationships. Together, these perspectives provide a comprehensive understanding of the connections between people, places, and the planet.

A bachelor's degree in Geology can open doors to careers in environmental consulting, natural resource management, geological surveying, and industries such as mining, petroleum, and renewable energy. Graduates may also find opportunities in government agencies, including the Department of Natural Resources, Geological Surveys, and National Parks.

For students planning to transfer to a four-year university, specific Geology transfer requirements are available through the Counseling Department. Consulting with a counselor is recommended to ensure a smooth transition.

Contact Information

Science Division Chair

Joshua Dillard | (559) 730-3852 | joshuad@cos.edu
John Muir: 140 | Visalia Campus

Dean of Science, Mathematics, and Engineering

Francisco Banuelos | (559) 730-3942 | franciscob@cos.edu
John Muir: 133 | Visalia Campus

Associate Degree

- Associate in Science in Geology for Transfer (AS-T) (<https://catalog.cos.edu/areas-study/geology/associate-science-geology-transfer-as-t/>)

For a complete list of courses and descriptions visit: COURSES (<https://catalog.cos.edu/course-descriptions/>)

ESCI 001 Introduction to Earth Science

4unit(s)

Hours: 3 Lecture/Discussion Hours:
3 Lab

This course provides students with the scientific background to teach earth science at kindergarten through 8th grade levels. It emphasizes the application of the scientific method to the study of Earth systems. Topics include: geology (minerals, rocks, earthquakes, volcanoes, rivers, glaciers, the fossil record), oceanography (ocean composition, currents, tides, coastlines), meteorology (atmospheric composition, weather, storms), and astronomy (phases of the moon, eclipses, the solar system).

ESCI 055 Introduction to Geographic Information Systems

3unit(s)

Hours: 2 Lecture/Discussion Hours:
3 Lab

This course provides an introduction to the fundamentals of Geographic Information Systems (GIS), including the history of automated mapping. The course includes a brief introduction to basic cartographic principles, including map scales, coordinate systems and map projections. GIS hardware and software are explored, as are various applications of GIS technology used in environmental science, business and government.

GEOG 001 Physical Geography

3unit(s)

Hours: 3 Lecture/Discussion

An investigation of weather, climate, landforms, and maps. An emphasis is placed on using the methodologies of scientific inquiry to explain the distribution of physical phenomena on the surface of the earth and on examining the relationship between man and the natural environment.

Advisory on Recommended Preparation: ENGL 261 or equivalent college course with a minimum grade of C or eligibility for ENGL 001 as determined by COS Placement Procedures (<https://catalog.cos.edu/placement-procedures/>). (C-ID GEOG110)

GEOG 001L Physical Geography Lab

1unit(s)

Hours: 3 Lab

Observations, computer projects, experiments, and a field trip are designed to familiarize students with techniques used in physical geography.

Corequisites: GEOG 001 must be taken concurrently. (C-ID GEOG111)

GEOG 002 World Regional Geography**3unit(s)**

Hours: 3 Lecture/Discussion

Aspects of physical and cultural geography such as landforms, climate, vegetation, natural resources, demography, cultural diversity, and political and economic organization are applied to various world regions. An emphasis is placed on examining man-land relationships, multicultural issues, and understanding world problems from a geographic perspective. (C-ID GEOG125)

GEOG 005 Introduction to Weather and Climate**3unit(s)**

Hours: 3 Lecture/Discussion

Equivalent Course: MET 001

An introductory course designed to provide insights into physical processes and laws that underlie the phenomena of weather and climate including seasonal changes, temperature, precipitation, weather forecasting, climate, and climate change. An emphasis is placed on understanding the methodologies of scientific inquiry and understanding current meteorological-environmental problems. (C-ID: GEOG130)

GEOG 001 Physical Geology**4unit(s)**

Hours: 3 Lecture/Discussion Hours:

3 Lab

An introductory exploration of the structure, composition and dynamic processes that comprise the Earth system, with emphasis on plate tectonics and its consequences and the external processes that sculpt Earth's surface. Laboratory exercises include the identification of mineral and rock specimens and the examination of topographic and geologic maps. (C-ID GEOL101)

GEOG 005 Earth History**4unit(s)**

Hours: 3 Lecture/Discussion Hours:

3 Lab

This course examines the geologic evidence for the major events in Earth's history, including: the formation of the crust, atmosphere, and oceans; the tectonic history of the continents; and mass extinctions and the record of life on Earth. Course topics are reinforced by the analysis of rock specimens, fossils, and geologic maps during laboratory sessions. (C-ID GEOL111)

GEOG 012 Environmental Geology**3unit(s)**

Hours: 3 Lecture/Discussion

Geologic hazards, natural resources, and pollution constitute the core themes of this study of man's interactions with earth systems. The consequences of human modification of natural systems and the geological underpinnings of modern society are emphasized. Topics include flooding, earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, plate tectonics, energy resources, water resources, mineral resources, climate change, the greenhouse effect, waste disposal, water pollution, and the carbon, nitrogen, and water cycles. Scientific and sociopolitical approaches to environmental issues are explored. (C-ID GEOL 130)

GEOG 151 Geology of the Mojave Desert**1unit(s)**

Hours: 1 Lecture/Discussion Hours:

0.5 Lab

This field trip course introduces the geology and natural resources of the Mojave Desert. Major themes include tectonics and structure, mineral resources and mining, and energy resources. Some geologic features will be discussed en route, while extended stops, that include some hiking, allow closer examination of phenomena such as faults, volcanoes, mines, and solar power plants.

GEOL 152 Geology of the Central Coast**1unit(s)**

Hours: 1 Lecture/Discussion Hours:

0.5 Lab

This field trip course introduces the geology of the Central Coast. Major themes include tectonics, geologic hazards, energy and water resources, pollution, and coastline and surficial processes. Some features will be discussed en route. Extended stops that include some hiking allow closer examination of phenomena (e.g., the San Andreas Fault and Morro Rock).

GEOL 153 Granite, Glaciers, and Gold**1unit(s)**

Hours: 1 Lecture/Discussion Hours:

0.5 Lab

This field trip course explores the geology of the central Sierra Nevada. Primary topics include: the formation and evolution of Yosemite Valley, the Mother Lode gold deposits, and the central Sierra foothills (the Western Metamorphic Belt).

GEOL 154 Volcanoes of Northern California**2unit(s)**

Hours: 1.5 Lecture/Discussion Hours:

1.5 Lab

This extended field trip explores northern California's sleeping volcanoes: Mt Shasta, Medicine Lake Volcano and Mt Lassen. Volcanic features, landforms, processes, and hazards constitute the major themes of this class.

Geology/Geography

Bjerke, Jennifer

B.S., California Polytechnic University, Pomona

M.S., Rutgers University

Hetherington, Eric, Ph.D.

B.A., Franklin And Marshall College

Ph.D., University Of Minnesota, Minneapolis

Krause, Christopher, Ph.D.

B.S., Emporia State University, Kansas

M.A., University of Missouri

Ph.D., University of South Carolina