

EES200, Sec 002

Mt. St. Helens South Field Studies

CRN 10921 (1 credit), Fall 2026

Location: Pre-trip 10/9 13:30-14:35 CH269;

Field Trip 10/10 8:00-18:00;

Canvas learning platform;

Instructor: Dr. Alex Ruzicka

CH 46/S7, 503-725-3372

email: ruzickaa@pdx.edu

Teaching Assistant: Ashleigh Lucas-Roy

Please use Canvas mail for
contacting the instructors.



Entrance to Ape Cave, September 2026. [Image: A. Ruzicka]

Class website: [EES200-002](#)

This website will include a copy of this syllabus and any major announcements.

Canvas: Some course materials will be made available through the Canvas learning management system (canvas.pdx.edu) following PSU login. **This includes a copy of the Workbook that you should print and bring on the field trip.**

Course description: The eruption of Mt. St. Helens in May 1980 literally blew off the top of this volcano. Previously known as America's Mount Fuji for its symmetric, pointy shape, it is anything but that now. It was established as a National Volcanic Monument in 1982. The eruption offers a unique opportunity for scientists to study geology and ecology, as shaped by recent and active volcanism. With the introductory class and field trip, students will learn about the geology of Mt. St. Helens and how it has evolved and is evolving over time. This class is suitable for a wide variety of students: those who want to learn more about how our landscape was shaped, those currently enrolled in an introductory geology class, or those who have taken such a course in the past.

Course outcomes/learning objectives: After participating in this course, students will be able to correctly identify selected geological features and processes and historical events that occurred in the Mt. St. Helens area.

Course pre-requisites: None.

Rest rooms during the field trip: The bus has a bathroom. Restrooms (bathrooms or pit toilets) are available at 3 of our 5 geological stops (Trail-of-Two-Forests, Ape Cave, Lava Canyon) and for the designated rest stop at Cougar.

Required materials: Proper field trip items including: a) a copy of the Workbook and writing implements to fill it out; b) warm clothing in case it is cool (likely), with layers you can take off (in case it is warm); c) good walking shoes or hiking boots; d) food and drink for the field trip (there will be limited or no opportunity to obtain this on the field trip); e) hat and sunglasses in case it is sunny; f) raingear in case it rains; g) a flashlight for Ape Cave; h) a camera and notepad if you wish. Notes: (1) We will be walking for a short distance at: Trail-of-Two-Forests (0.3 mi total, barrier-free); part way through Ape Cave (the lower cave is 1.5 mi round trip but we will go only a short distance); at Lahar Viewpoint (roughly 1.2 mi total); and at Lava Canyon (about 1.5 mile round trip, partly accessible). Although these walks are not long, some are on uneven surfaces, so having good footwear would be a good idea. (2) Ape Cave remains at a constant 42F (you'll need

a warm jacket or sweater) and has no artificial illumination. Every student should bring a jacket and a light source.

Graded items: There are four graded items: (1) attendance for the pre-trip meeting, which will serve as confirmation of class attendance as required by PSU (sign the attendance sheet); (2) attendance on the field trip, required for this course (sign the attendance sheet); (3) completed answers in the Workbook (answers for the geology stops will be provided by the instructor on the trip); and (4) completed answers in the Workbook on the introductory Powerpoint given in the pre-trip meeting. Students are encouraged to complete all course activities on the day of the field trip by turning in the Workbook at the end of the trip. Other possibilities for handing in the workbooks: mailboxes for the instructor or TA in CH17; electronic scans sent to the instructor or TA via Canvas email.

Grading criteria: Pass / No pass only, 71% required to pass

Attendance (pre-trip meeting): 10%

Attendance (field trip): 15%-- **required**.

Workbook covering field stops: 60%

Workbook covering introductory Powerpoint: 15%

Note the workbook overall covers 75% of the grade for this course.

Course attendance & make-up policies: Field trip attendance is required. If you cannot attend the field trip, you should withdraw from the class as this will lead to an automatic fail. There will be no “make-up assignments” offered for this course.

Communication: email should be the primary means of contacting the Instructor or TA. This can be done with Canvas. As with all communication, it is important to keep messages respectful.

Course flexibility statement: The instructor reserves the right to make changes based on unexpected events. Any changes to the course beyond what is stated in the Syllabus will be announced on the course homepage in Canvas and website.

Recording technology notice: Any technology used for virtual meetings and recordings in this course is governed by FERPA, the [Acceptable Use Policy](#) and PSU’s [Student Code of Conduct](#). A record of all meetings and recordings is kept and stored by PSU. The instructor will not share recordings of your class activities outside of course participants, which include your fellow students, TAs/GAs/Mentors, and any guest faculty or community-based learning partners that we may engage with. You may not share recordings outside this course. Doing so may result in disciplinary action.

Other policies: (a) If you feel you have a disability and need an accommodation, contact the Disability Resource Center (drc@pdx.edu, 503-725-4150). (b) Each student is responsible for all content, whether they participate in the class or not. (c) A culture of professionalism and mutual respect is expected. Any incident of discrimination or discriminatory harassment, including sexual harassment, can be reported to the Office of Equity and Compliance, or the Office of the Dean of Student Life. For resources, see <http://www.pdx.edu/sexual-assault/get-help> (d) Students are expected to follow PSU policies for academic integrity, which means not engaging in academic misconduct; see <https://www.pdx.edu/dos/academic-misconduct>. Examples of misconduct include copying someone else’s work, or submitting for credit work done by someone else. (e) A.I. should not be used for any submitted assignment. Workbooks will be graded on criteria established by the instructor, not an A.I. (f) Students should be cognizant of deadlines, because assignments will not be re-opened for individuals, and late work will not be accepted. The policy for this course: There is no way to “make up” attendance of the pre-trip meeting and field trip. Not attending will count as

zeroes, and not attending the field trip will count as an automatic fail. It is the student's responsibility to assure that the workbook is turned in on time. Note that my mailbox is not available to students on weekends. (g) "Extra credit" will not be considered for this course.

Video and photo previews: The Mt. St. Helens Institute (Mt. St. Helens Science and Learning Center) has made a video introduction for some of our stops, see: <https://www.mshinstitute.org/visit#southside>. This group also shows photographs of lahars at Lahar Viewpoint and elsewhere that show how the landscape has changed over time, see: <https://www.mshslc.org/gallery/lahars/>.

Schedule

Event	Date
Start of course (Canvas becomes available)	September 28, 12:01 AM
Pre-trip class meeting	October 9, 13:30-14:35, CH269
Field trip	October 10, 8:00-18:00. Meet on Broadway outside Cramer Hall by 8:00 AM. Be on time; the bus will not wait for you!
Workbook due	No later than 2 weeks after field trip, which is Saturday, October 24, 18:00. Note university mailboxes are unavailable to students on weekends.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF SYLLABUS RECEIPT

I have received a copy of the course syllabus for this class, and the instructor has discussed its contents.

NAME (please print)

Last First MI

Signature _____

Date _____

Please list your major:

Please list your previous geology courses (if any):