

**GRADING SYSTEM**  
**for**  
**ASTRONOMY 100, ASTRONOMY/GEOLOGY 120**  
**&**  
**GEOLOGY 100**  
(Revised Spring 2012)

PROFESSOR J. PESAVENTO

**THE STUDENT IS RESPONSIBLE FOR EVERYTHING IN THIS DOCUMENT.**

**PLEASE BE AWARE THAT WHEN YOU REGISTERED FOR THIS CLASS, YOU MADE A LEGAL AGREEMENT. IF YOU DO NOT WANT TO FOLLOW THE SYLLABUS OUTLINED BELOW; OFFICIALLY DROP THE COURSE TO DISSOLVE THE AGREEMENT, OTHERWISE IT REMAINS IN EFFECT AND YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR ALL THAT IT STATES.**

**A. CLASS ATTENDANCE AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

You are expected to attend every class meeting and be in the classroom on time. The grade you receive in this course will be influenced by your attendance and tardiness. It is well documented that if you miss the material given in class, you will earn a low grade. Students that attend class regularly learn more. Therefore, they obtain a better grade than those students who miss a few classes. Most of the learning takes place in the classroom. Unless you are an extremely gifted student of science, you will not do well by just reading the textbook or looking at the lecture Notes. Most science courses require a large amount of critical and logical thinking skills with only a small amount of memorization. Therefore, to do well in this class you must think. Much of this thinking takes place in the classroom. Also, since I mostly test you from what we discuss in class, it is important to be there.

You are completely responsible for any written or graphic material that is made available during our class time or material you are required to purchase (textbook, lecture notes, etc.), any announcements that are made during our class time or any type of information given during class. You are also unconditionally responsible for any information that appears in my website. Access to a computer, at home or on campus, is required in this class. Failure to take these responsibilities may cause you to earn a low grade.

**B. CLASSROOM BEHAVIOR**

It is paramount to your learning that we maintain an environment that is free from all distractions. You must focus your attention on what we are discussing in class. It is hard enough to keep your mind from wondering on other things in your life, especially since you are seemingly inactive sitting in class. The point is to keep your mind acute and your senses active as you critically think about the world and universe that you inhabit, how it all works and how it affects you. (As you will learn, everything in the universe somehow affects all of us. Remember the premise of the “Butterfly Syndrome”.)

To maintain an optimal environment, we (myself as your teacher and you as my student) will not

tolerate any distractions including the following:

1. All electronic visual or audio devices: Electronic devices are to be turned off or switched to a standby mode so they will not produce an audio or visual distraction. The devices have to be placed where they are not visible to you or anyone else. If this is not done, you will be told to leave the classroom. The only exceptions are computers or audio recording devices for note taking, after I have given you permission to use it. If the problem continues, more serious consequences will be implemented.
2. Any unnecessary walking in the classroom when class has started. Class starts the moment I begin speaking with the entire class. If you must leave early, inform me before class begins. I realize that unexpected problems come up to make you late for class; however, please slip in quietly as possible. If you are habitually late I will stop class and ask you to leave. Obviously, if you are feeling ill please quietly leave the classroom. All anticipated physical needs have to be taken care of before class starts, not during. NOTE: If you have a chronic illness, like serious allergies, that can affect you suddenly; let me know about it privately and what medication, like an epi-pen, you use. I cannot give anything to you; but when help arrives, they will know what to do based on the information that you initially provided. Also, if you have a disability that requires some accommodation, please speak with me and provide documentation within the first two week of class. Reasonable accommodation will be made.
3. Any unnecessary talking: If I have to stop the classroom discussion because you are distracting other students, you will be told to leave. If the problem continue to occur, more serious consequences will be implemented.

My goal is that you learn without interruptions. However, I sometimes have to stop our discussions for various reasons. I have to do this because I need to correct the distraction from happening again.

### C. TESTING PROCEDURES

You will only be tested on the material discussed in class and any specific reading or computer assignments. To pass this course you must take at least three of the quizzes/homework and all of the exams. If this is not accomplished; you will be giving an "F", which will not be changed. It is your responsibility to make sure that these requirements are completed. If you cheat on any quiz, exam, homework or paper, you will be given "zero points" for that quiz, exam or homework; and you will be reported to the Director of Student Affairs. Your total grade is based on 500 points. The following is what you will need to do to obtain the points.

1. QUIZZES/HOMEWORK - During the semester I will give a total of six quizzes and homework assignments which will be up to 30 points each for a total of 150 points. I will automatically remove one 30 point quiz/homework (your lowest) so there will be a total of 150 points. The quizzes may be unannounced and may be just answering a simple question. The written quizzes are designed to make you keep up with the material and will only cover the material since the last quiz. Quizzes/homework will be corrected and returned to you. Unless I have personally given you expressed permission to turn it in late, I will not accept late homework assignments and essays for any reason once I have started correcting them. I will not accept E-mailed homework assignments. **If you miss three quizzes, you fail the course and**

**cannot take the Mid-Term and Final Exams.**

2. SIGN-IN SHEETS - 50 points will be given for attendance. Every class meeting or randomly through the semester a Sign-In Sheet will be made available. It will be either placed on a table or passed around class. The Sign-In Sheet has a list of initials of those students that are officially registered in the class. The Sign-In sheets require your official signature (initial or printed name are not acceptable) since it is a legal document. Any deviation from your signature on the sheets may mean that none of your signatures will be accepted. Please sign by your initials. If you do not find your initials and you are registered in this class, please sign in at the end of the list and let me know. If you are late to class, regardless of how late, you may not sign in for that particular class meeting. Class starts when I am addressing the entire class. At the end of the semester, five Sign-In Sheets will be randomly selected. Each one will be worth 10 points if your signature is on them.

3. ATTENDANCE - I will allow two separate incidents of missing class where you will be excused from signing in. I must be notified (in advance if possible) by phone or E-Mail. If your absence is more than one class period, I will need proof that you missed some classes for a particular reason, e.g., illness, injury, jury duty, etc. (not for a vacation). You will not be excused for being late to class.

4. EXAMS - You will be given one 150 point mid-term exam. The exam will consist of multiple choice questions, true/false, matching and a take-home essay. The essay question will cover some aspect of the material covered for the exam. The questions are designed to make you think about something and write down your thoughts in a clear logical manner. Points will be taken off for spelling and grammatical errors. The essay, in printed form, will be turned in when you take the exam. I will not accept your e-mailed essay nor will I accept late essays when I started to correct them. The midterm exam will cover the material from the beginning of the course. After you take the mid-term exam, we will go over it in class, but it must be returned to me to obtain credit. If the exam is not returned to me; not only will you fail the class, but also you are subject to the rules of not returning College property. The Mid-Term Exam must be completed before the week of final exams to pass the course. The make-up Mid-Term Exam can be taken only when I am in my office. The Final Exam will be 150 points and similar in form to the midterm exam. However, it will cover the material after the Mid-Term Exam. Final Exams are given according to the schedule in the "Class Schedule" for that semester. If you did not take the Mid-term Exam or three quizzes, you cannot take the Final Exam. If you miss the Final Exam, I must be notified the same day that you were suppose to take the Final Exam; otherwise, you fail the course.

MIDTERM EXAM	150 points
FINAL EXAM	150 points
QUIZZES/HOMEWORK	150 points
ATTENDANCE	<u>50 points</u>
 TOTAL	 500 points

### C. ASSIGNING LETTER GRADES

Since your grade is based on the number of points you receive, I do not like to give letter grades except when mandatory at the end of the semester. I will give ranges of letter grades for the midterm exam, but this will only be an approximation of your true grade. However, each class is different. I think it is only fair to give you a letter grade when I have all your work. I do grade on a modified "curve" for the exams and your course grade.

The grades are defined as follows. A's are 85% and above, B's and C's are between 84.9% and 58% depending on the curve. For example, if the average of the class is 65%, the C's may be between 70% and 60%; but if the average is 57%, those that are between 57% and 50% will receive a D. F's are less than 50%. In borderline cases, a 50 point attendance score may bring you up to the next "letter grade". Please do not hesitate to see me to determine how you are doing in the class. Your grades in quizzes/homework, exams, etc. will be posted on the secured website of your class. You will need to be given the "password" to access the site.

### D. REMOVAL OF BAD EXAM SCORES

If you do poorly on the midterm exam or on all of your quizzes/homework, you may do a paper to improve that poor grade. This is not considered "extra credit". I do not give "extra credit". There are limitations in taking advantage of this, for example, if you have received less than 50% on your midterm exam and are doing less than 50% on your quizzes/homework or you did not write an essay with your exams, you may not take advantage of this. If you are doing a paper, it is worth 150 points. The details of the requirements for the work are given in "Guidelines for Papers" which is posted in the class website. The grade you receive in this work will replace the grade you received on the exam or all of your quizzes/homework. You must still take the exam and four of the quizzes/homework. To obtain credit, the work must be checked with me and you must sign a sheet indicating your topic. If this procedure is not followed, your work may not be accepted. You may not sign up for a paper if it is due in two weeks or less. The due date for papers are one week before your final exam.

### E. MAKE-UP EXAMS

A make-up exam is given in special circumstances only. The exam is all essay; and, therefore, is harder than the regular exam. It is comprised of a list of questions that are to be answered with a written statement. The midterm exam must be completed before final exam week. If you know beforehand that you cannot be in class on the day that the exam is given, then you may take the regular exam before it is given to the rest of the class. A written excuse may be required for this. **No make-up quizzes/homework will be given.** You may take the quiz early (if it is ready), but never later than the rest of the class. If you cannot take the final exam due to unforeseen circumstances, notify me as soon as possible. I will make arrangements for you to take the exam at a future date. **However, if you miss the Final Exam, I must be notified on that same day. If I do not hear from you, I will have to report your course grade as an "F" instead of an "I". Once your grade has been officially posted, it will not be changed.**

### F. WORK EXPECTED AND COMMUNICATION

**This is not an easy class.** If you expect to obtain a decent grade, you must attend all class meetings and study the appropriate support material. You are expected to spend 2 to 3 hours studying for each hour in class. Students that do not spend at least this much time obtain a grade of "C" or less, proportional to the time studying. Also, the grade that you earn depends on your

class attendance. This data is based on research acquired from classes that I have taught and is confirmed by national research. If you miss classes and spend little time studying, do not expect to pass this class.

The "Study Guide" may have pages from our textbook listed for each topic. If you have the textbook, please read that section before we cover it in class. Although I test mostly from my lectures, reading is important in filling all the gaps in our discussions or clarifying things in your own mind. You can do web searches for topics that you would like more information.

My website is at <http://faculty.palomar.edu/jpesavento/> (I do not use Blackboard). It is my intention to continually develop the website. I include any announcements of upcoming events, e.g., quizzes, due dates, and material covered for exams. Under "Text Links" are documents of the Grading System, Study Guides, homework assignments, Guidelines for Papers, etc. To see your grades you have to enter the logon page. The grades that are posted on the website must be checked within two weeks of their posting for changes to be made.

I am on campus Monday through Thursday from about 7:15am to the end of my last class. My class schedule and my "Office Hours" are posted on the door to my office, NS-110K. My "Office Hours" are also posted on the first page of my website. I check my phone and e-mail for messages about twice a day. If you have not received an e-mail response from me within about two days, I did not receive your e-mail. If you send me an E-mail make sure that the following is included.

In the "subject" state, STUDENT - ASTRO 100 or ASTRO 120 or GEOL 100  
(i.e., what class you are attending)

Identify yourself using your full name and at what time and day your class meets,  
e.g., 8:00 MW.

#### G. STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES (SLOs)

Official Palomar College Statement:

"Student learning outcomes are general skills, knowledge, or masteries which students are expected to have after completing a course or program of study. The faculty responsible for a course or program get together and decide what overall qualities or abilities a successful student should have after completing a course or program; those become the student learning outcomes. Faculty do assess their outcomes; that is, they find a way to determine if their students are achieving those desired outcomes. However, these assessments are not necessarily part of the students' grades in the courses."

My Official Statement about SLOs:

"This vehicle is mandated by the California educational system to attempt to measure how much students learn in their classes. It is extremely limited in what it can measure to a point of meaningless work for everyone involved. For a scientist, it is like studying a cubic meter of sea water; and, therefore, stated that we understand all the aspects and interactions of the physics, chemistry, life, etc. of all the oceans in the world. That is total nonsense. SLOs ignore the prime directive of education, i.e., to give the students the means to think properly on their own."

If you wish to read more about SLOs, go to <http://www2.palomar.edu/slo/default.html>.

I am mandated to list the SLOs for the classes that I teach.

### Astronomy 100

1. Explain why the Earth experiences seasons.
2. Given any two of three variables (time of day, phases of Moon, position of the Moon) predict the missing variable.
3. Interpret the measurable physical characteristics of a star (temperature, radius, luminosity, absolute magnitude, etc.) based on its position on the H-R Diagram and determine where the Sun is located on the diagram.

### Astronomy/Geology 120

1. Given any two of three given variables, predict by previous observation, deductive reasoning and cognitive processes one of the following: the position of the Moon in the sky, phase of the Moon or local time.
2. Identify crater surfaces features and relative surface age on any object in the Solar System that has a solid crust. These features include simple and complex craters, ejecta blanket regions, rays and the type of crater erosion.

### Geology 100

1. 70% of students will explain several different types of geologic structures and the general forces that created them with an accuracy of 70%.
2. 70% of students will be able to explain the different origins of igneous, sedimentary and metamorphic rocks.
3. 70% of students will be able to identify 70% of plutonic body types visually from a drawing or photograph.
4. 70% of students will describe the surficial geomorphic processes that operate on earth and the kinds of landforms they produce with an accuracy of at least 70%.
5. 70% of students will explain the origin of the different types of mountains, volcanoes and faults in terms of plate tectonics with an accuracy of at least 70%.
6. 70% of students will explain what is happening during an earthquake in terms of motion and cause of damage with an accuracy of 70%.

## H. ADDING OR DROPPING THE COURSE

You must “ADD” this course within two weeks of the start of the semester.

“Only students who are officially registered may participate in this class. If you are given a permission code to add this class, you must officially add the class prior to the next class meeting. If you have difficulty using the college’s computerized enrollment system, please

notify the instructor immediately. The deadline for adding any class or using a permission code to add is the end of the second week of classes. Under no circumstance will students be allowed to add this class after the add deadline.” To be allowed to add a closed class with a permission code, students must attend the first class. Sometimes, by a software mistake, students can enroll on line in a class that was closed. If there are students on the “Wait List” and attend class waiting to be enrolled; I will give them a permission code to add if there is room, and drop the student that enrolled without a permission code to make room. Until further notice no one may audit Astronomy 100, Astronomy/Geology 120 and Geology 100.

If you are registered in this class and do not agree to this syllabus, please drop the course by follow the instructions in the Class Schedule which is attached to this “GRADING SYSTEM”. Do not just stop coming. If you can no longer attend the class for whatever reason, let me know. You must then officially drop the class before the drop deadline. I will drop students who do not attend (do not sign-in) two classes within the first two weeks of the semester. Also, if you do not come to class regularly (do not sign-in) without contacting me that you have missed, I will announce your name in class and drop you if you are not present. After the drop date I must give you the grade that you earned. This grade cannot be removed without taking the course over again or using an official petition. Please refer to the policy on the next page.

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