COURSE DESCRIPTION HONS-H 241 (N&M; 3 cr) Processes that operate and have operated on, in and around the Earth, Mercury, Venus, the Moon, and Mars contributing to their evolution through approximately 4.56 billion years; evaluate the evidence using principles of geology, chemistry, physics, astronomy, biology, geography and mathematics. Critical approach course for non-science majors.

OTHER INFORMATION, INSTRUCTIONS and EXPECTATIONS

INSTRUCTOR: Abhijit BASU  
Office GY 521 Ph. 855-6654/5582 (Email: basu@indiana.edu)  
(Office Hours: MTR 10:15-11:15 a.m. and by appointment)  
Associate Instructor: TBA  
(Office: GY TBA; Office Hours: TBA)

ON THE FIRST DAY OF CLASS:
1. Fill out address slips
2. Form study groups
3. See Basu if you have serious problems with quiz dates.

ATTENDANCE is your responsibility; we discuss contemporary topics and discoveries in solar system exploration that are NOT in the reading assignment.

REQUIRED:
Clipboard binder to keep all handouts that you print from Oncourse Resources. Bring all handouts and notes to every class meeting. STUDY (≠ read) notes and assignments in advance of class time; we will combine the traditional lecture-format with a discussion-format.

NOTE TAKING:
You will have lecture outlines and some facts for every class through ONCOURSE. Please print the day’s lecture outlines (or save in a laptop) and bring to class to take notes. Put the hardcopies in a three-ring binder in sequential order for review before real and practice examinations. You may use a laptop or a similar e-device to take and retain notes, but NOT for communication through the internet, e-mail, text-messaging etc. Printed handouts will NOT be distributed from after this first day.

Take good notes: You must write down whatever is written or drawn on the chalkboard; use the handouts to take notes in the class; rewrite notes as soon as possible after class. See me during office hours to check the ‘goodness’ of your notes.
GRADING

Grading will be on an "A-F" scale; "P-F" will not be permitted and an "I" will be allowed only for medical reasons and extremely extenuating circumstances.

ASSESSMENT

Mid-term examination 15%
Final examination 25%
Laboratory and field exercises 30%
(dispersed throughout the semester)
Five of seven biweekly papers 30%
(see below)

We will ask for bi-weekly papers. Each will be 250-1000 word summaries of one topical science news that we will assign (for example, http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-11534216). One may add illustrations. We will also require each student to research, find and report (in about 100 words) on a recent science-news relevant to the paper. Upload electronic versions through Assignment in Oncourse where you will receive feedback from us. More detailed instructions will be posted for each paper in Assignment and Resources. The 5 best scores on these papers – about 7 assigned in the semester – will constitute 30% of the total course grade.

Marginal upward adjustment, e.g., B to B+, may be made – no guarantee - depending on the quality of class discussion.

NOTE on writing: Try to practice writing precisely without repetition; flowery expressions with metaphors confuse science. Expressions such as “in other words” should have no place in science writing. Try to learn writing without emotion. A rational opinion or inference drawn from ‘facts’, should be argued with data. At least for this course, leave it to the reader to be angry or be happy, and to pontificate if they please. Try writing without adjectives or adverbs for the sake of emphasis. For example, “very carefully” in “Analyses were conducted very carefully” is not only unnecessary but is also self-aggrandizing. We will provide feedback on your writing throughout the course such that your future writing in the sciences, law, business, corporate reports, etc. is precise and effective.

KINDLY OBEY THE CODE ON STUDENT ETHICS. WE DO NOT LIKE TO POLICE: WE LEAVE IT TO YOUR OWN PERSONAL CODE OF ETHICS TO EXERCISE SELF-CONTROL.

UNFORTunate INFRACTIONS, IF ANY (HOPE NOT), WILL RESULT IN SEVERE ACTION THAT MAY RESULT IN A GRADE OF “F” FOR THE COURSE.