Dear student,

Welcome to Earth Sciences (GEOL 109) Online with John Makevich at College of the Canyons!

This is a 100% online class. You will be doing the entirety of this course from your computer and, perhaps, some field experience outside that you can do near your home. As such, you will need to be computer-literate and have a basic knowledge of how to operate your own computer, doing research on the Internet, and communicating using e-mail and other forms of online communication.

The College provides limited support for technical concerns. I cannot teach you how to use these types of tools within the course because, simply, there is no time! If you are concerned about your computer literacy or readiness for taking courses online, you may consider taking COUNS 070 (Distance Learning and Strategies for Success) or CIT 101 (Introduction to Computers).

Online courses require more time and effort than traditional, on-ground offerings. You are expected to be self-motivated and to be able to handle a tremendous workload over a short period of time. Because this class is a short-term class (essentially a 15-week course compressed to 5 weeks), it has the load of THREE (3) CLASSES at one time! You should plan on this course taking about 15-20 hours each week of your time. There will be a considerable amount of reading and working with interactive activities online.

Please be sure to explore my website (http://www.canyons.edu/faculty/makevich) to find any additional resources that will help you to succeed in this course. There, you will find links to the Distance Learning website, some Blackboard Tutorial Videos, and more. There is also some Blackboard support available at the College of the Canyons TLC (The Learning Center), or by calling them at 661-362-3344.

Below, there are a few things you’ll need to do...

- **BEFORE the second day of class**
  - **Read the syllabus.**
    The syllabus is available on my website and in Blackboard. It is your contract with me.
  - **Login to Blackboard.**
    The course will be available by the first official day of class. To get into Blackboard, you’ll need to go to http://bb9.canyons.edu (see text above for information on how to get Blackboard support).
  - **Check out the START HERE content.**
    Once you log into the Blackboard course, click on START HERE in the main menu to begin your introductory activities.
  - **Explore the course and take the quiz.**
    I will have an orientation quiz posted in the course, DUE BY THE SECOND DAY OF THE COURSE AT 11:59 PM. If you don’t complete this quiz on time, YOU MAY BE DROPPED FROM THE COURSE.

- **EACH week**
  - **Review all learning content for the week.**
    For each week, there will be a combination of reading material, online resources, and interactive media. You are responsible for the study and review of all this content.
  - **Interaction.**
    Also, there will be several activities in the course. You will be expected to participate in discussion boards and live online communication. Instructions will be clearly stated within the course.
  - **Assessment.**
    There will several quizzes each week. In addition, there will be exams and a final given in the course as well. You are responsible for taking each quiz and exam by its due date.
  - **Review of calendar.**
    Because there will be occasional additional activities (blogs, midterm, final, other assignments, etc.), you are responsible for the due dates as stated in the calendar. You will always be given at least two (2) days notice for upcoming due dates of assignments.
Now, of course, this letter may sound daunting and scary, but I really DO want you to have a great time with this course experience! I just want you to be clearly aware of the obvious challenges with completing a full-semester course fully-online.

You can always contact me via e-mail at John.Makevich@canyons.edu if you have any questions. During the extent of our course, I will be responding to e-mail within 24 hours. If you DO NOT receive a reply from me for any reason, please send a follow-up e-mail with the word “URGENT!” in the subject line. I receive many e-mails and it's quite easy for one to get lost in the dust. It is your responsibility to follow up with me if you do not receive a reply in a satisfactory period of time.

Thanks for reading, and welcome aboard!

John Makevich
Instructor for Earth Sciences and Meteorology
College of the Canyons
John.Makevich@canyons.edu
661-362-3102 (best to contact me via e-mail, however)