

GEOLOGY AND GEOPHYSICS, B.A.

The interdisciplinary department of Geoscience offers an undergraduate degree in geology and geophysics, with graduate degrees offered in both disciplines.

The Geology and Geophysics major offers unusual opportunities to integrate knowledge and technology from chemistry, biology, physics, engineering, space science, and other disciplines to understand processes that have shaped the Earth, its environments, and the life that it has sustained over billions of years. Geoscientists provide insight on surface and ground water resources and how to protect and preserve them. They probe the causes and potential risks associated with natural hazards including earthquakes, volcanoes, floods, hurricanes, landslides, climate change, and sea level rise. Sustainable exploration and extraction of key mineral resources needed to build and power a resilient and green society depends on well-trained geoscientists. To explore Earth history, develop materials and energy resources, and to take the pulse of a dynamic planet, geoscientists use an extraordinary array of tools including satellites to measure changes of Earth's surface, sensitive instruments to detect seismic waves for exploring resources underground, cutting-edge instrumentation to measure the composition of minerals and rocks at microscopic scales, and computational approaches to assemble and interrogate enormous sets of data acquired from rocks and fossils across the globe.

Geology students have a strong interest in the natural environment as it is today and as it has developed over the past 4.5 billion years. The department of Geoscience challenges students to develop skills in sequential thought, inductive reasoning, and three-dimensional perception. Moreover, students who concentrate in geophysics learn basic physical laws and processes involving gravity, magnetism, heat flow, and seismic wave propagation within Earth. Opportunities also include learning how satellite-based measurements, and computational approaches, are used to measure and monitor geothermal resources, volcanic activity, earthquakes, and groundwater movement.

Geology and Geophysics students prepare for careers in hydrogeology, energy, mining, engineering, and education. Students are exceptionally well-prepared for graduate studies in a broad array of geoscience fields.