

26408 - Structural Geology

Syllabus Information

Academic Year: 2019/20

Subject: 26408 - Structural Geology

Faculty / School: 100 -

Degree: 296 - Degree in Geology

588 - Degree in Geology

ECTS: 9.0

Year: 588 - Degree in Geology: 2

296 - Degree in Geology: 2

Semester: First semester

Subject Type: Compulsory

Module: ---

1.General information

1.1.Aims of the course

The expected results of the course respond to the following general aims

The general goals of the subject are brought up at three levels:

- (a) Learning of conceptual and methodological aspects through theoretical and practical classes (deductive learning)
- (b) Practical use of techniques for analytical treatment and plotting of structural data.
- (c) Development of research capabilities using empiric methodologies, from field-data collection to final interpretation.

General goals

The student should:

- 1) know the different types of tectonic structures: definitions, classifications; as well as geometric, kinematic, and dynamic characteristics at different scales.
- 2) develop observation abilities and collect field data.
- 3) learn the main techniques to represent and analyze tectonic structures.
- 4) know how to apply the concepts and models of Structural Geology to regional scale interpretations.
- 5) be able to work alone and in a group.
- 6) learn to be critical with scientific information, and be able to express clearly his/her scientific results.

1.2.Context and importance of this course in the degree

Structural Geology is a fundamental tool to decipher the geology of deformed areas and thus it should be considered an indispensable knowledge for any geologist. On the other hand, Structural Geology deals with geometrical aspects of deformation and thus it is closely related with disciplines like Geological Mapping, Geophysics and Tectonics.

1.3.Recommendations to take this course

This branch of the Geology requires the development of a 3-D visualization of the tectonic structures, as well as observation and interpretation abilities both in the lab and in the field. This course in Structural Geology values the comprehension and the reasoning capabilities as much as the rote learning.

2.Learning goals

2.1.Competences

After completing the course, the student will be competent in the following skills:

- Recognize, describe and classify the main tectonic structures.

- Interpret the genetic mechanism of the tectonic structures.
- Apply the most appropriate geometric, kinematic or dynamic method to study a specific tectonic structure or group of structures.
- Identify in the field deformational structures and their geometric elements.
- Collect structural data in the field. Be able to recognize outcrop and regional scale structures and to draw schemes and geologic cross-sections. Measure linear and planar elements in the field.
- Identify deformational structures at hand and thin-section scale.
- Have a good command of the main structural techniques related with the representation and analysis of geometric data: stereographic projection, orthographic projection, cross sections, block diagrams, contour maps.
- Reconstruct the genetic mechanisms of real structures, as well as their kinematic and dynamic evolution, and in the case of polyphasic deformations, their chronological sequence.

2.2.Learning goals

The student, in order to pass the course, will have to show her/his competence in the following skills:

- Identify the main type of tectonic structures as well as to know their geometric characteristics and genetic mechanisms.
- Construct geologic maps as well as schemes showing the geometry and relationship of the structures in the field.
- Measure the attitude of planes and lines using the geologic compass.
- Represent and read structural elements (planes and lines) by means of orthographic projection, stereographic projection and geological cross sections.
- Find and read scientific articles as well as select and understand the most relevant information.
- Work alone and in a group, as well as to defend scientific.

2.3.Importance of learning goals

Geologic structures provide part of the basis for recognizing and reconstructing the profound changes that have marked the physical evolution of the Earth's outer layers, as observed from the scale of the plates down to the scale of the microscopic. Understanding the nature and extensiveness of deformational structures in the Earth's crust has both scientific value and practical benefit. But, there is a philosophical value as well. Our perceptions of who we are and where we are in time and space are shaped by facts and interpretations regarding the historical development of the crust of the planet on which we live. Knowing fully the extent to which our planet is dynamic, not static, is a reminder of the lively and special environment we inhabit Once the conceptual framework within which structural geologists operate is grasped, the Earth begins to look different. In fact, natural physical processes and natural physical phenomena, whether geologic or not, never quite look the same again (from Davis and Reynolds, 1996).

3.Assessment (1st and 2nd call)

3.1.Assessment tasks (description of tasks, marking system and assessment criteria)

The student will prove that he/she has achieved the expected learning results by means of the following assessment tasks:

(a) Continuous assessment (assessment of students that attend class regularly)

To track the improvement and knowledge of the students, the assessment will be carried out during the learning process, according the following evaluation activities:

a.1) *Laboratory-Practice exercises*. Several practical exercises carried out in the lab will be corrected and evaluated (evaluation of skills 1, 2, 4, 6, and 7).

a.2) *Field work*. The attendance to the field trips is compulsory. The personal work, expressed in the student's note-book, the attitude of the student in the field, and a specific work on one of the field trips will be evaluated (evaluation of skills 1, 2, 3, 4, 6 and 7).

a.3) *Development and oral presentation of a subject*. The students, by pairs, will choose one of the proposed subjects. They will write up a small work (minimum 4 pages) with the contents and the figures necessary to facilitate the understanding of the subject by the rest of the students, and the bibliography correctly referenced. It will be given in electronic version (formats .doc or .pdf), will have a presentation in power point or similar (maximum 15 minutes) and defending it before in front of the rest of students and the professor in a seminary session (evaluation of skills 5, 6 and 7).

a.4) *Partial written tests*. During the course two written tests will be realised (2.30 h each one) that will consist of two parts: (a) brief questions theoretical-practices, related to the basic aspects of a part of the course program, including a test and/or a set of shortquestions, and some questions that, in most cases, may be answered by means of drawings, and (b) a practical exercise that will be closely related with the practical sessions of the course. Evaluation of skills 1, 4, and 5.

The student who has not surpassed the subject during the continuous evaluation (general case) will have, at least, to be examined in the period of final evaluation to the non-surpassed parts of the partial written tests (activity of evaluation a.4) and, where appropriate, to realise/to give the documents that talk about to the activities a.1, a.2 and a.3.

(b) Global assessment (assessment of students that do not attend class regularly)

Those students that have not attended the course regularly, as well as those who wish to, may take a global exam (duration of 5-6 hours) that will consist of:

- b.1) a *written test*, similar to the indicated one in the previous section (a.4) but on the assembly of the subject, and
- b.2) on *additional test*, in which the student will have to solve several practical exercises, similar to the realised ones in the actual development of the subject. In this case, the students will have to indicate this selection to the professor with a minimum advance of one week before the development of the test in the final period of evaluation of the subject.

Assesment criteria

(a) Continuous Assessment

As a general rule, to pass the course it will be necessary to:

- 1.- Participate in the laboratory and seminar activities and attend the field trips.
- 2.- Obtain a grade higher than 5 in the theoretical-practical exam of the partial written tests.
- 3.- Obtain a grade higher than 5 in the practical exam of the partial written tests.
- 4.- To give, to present and to defend the developed subject and to give the asked practical exercises.

Evaluation of skills:

- Activity a.1 (lab work): 20 %
- Activity a.2 (field work): 5 %
- Activity a.3 (subject development and defense): 15 %
- Activity a.4 (partial written tests): 60 %

(b) Global assessment

- Activity b.1 (written test): 50 %
- Activity b.2 (additional test): 50 %

Considering the high number of tests and activities that are evaluation object, the numerical qualification obtained by the students which they have surpassed the subject could be corrected to the rise. This correction will not be arbitrary and will suppose a linear increase of the obtained note.

4.Methodology, learning tasks, syllabus and resources

4.1.Methodological overview

The methodology followed in this course is oriented towards the achievement of the learning objectives. A wide range of teaching and learning tasks are implemented, such as lectures, laboratory sessions, fieldwork and tutorials.

4.2.Learning tasks

This 9 ECTS course is organized as follows:

- **Theory - practice sessions** (3 ECTS: 30 hours). Three weekly hours. The syllabus is just the framework that should guide the active learning of the students. The students will have class-notes given by the professor as the basis for their learning, but they must extend the information given in class using by means of technical books and scientific journals. The practical learning will prevail over the theoretical one.
- **Seminars** (0.5 ECTS: 5 hours) for oral presentations and discussions.
- **Laboratory sessions** (2,5 ECTS: 25 hours). 2.5 hours per week, 10 sessions in total. The laboratory sessions will be mainly devoted to the analysis of the most common tectonic structures.
- **Fieldwork** (3 ECTS: 30 hours). 4.5 journeys. How to work in the field. The fieldwork will focus on the recognition of the studied structures, the determination of their geometries, structural relationships, ages, etc, and the obtained data will be represented on the student's note-book by means of tectonic schemes, cross-sections, etc, and by simple geological maps.
- **Tutorials**. The tutorials will be considered another academic activity where the student will be free to ask any doubt related with the course.

4.3.Syllabus

This course will address the following topics:

I. Theory sessions

Section 1: Introduction

- **Topic 1. Introduction to the course.** Structural Geology, Tectonics and Global Tectonics: history, goals and methods. Geometry, kinematics and dynamics in Structural Geology.
- **Topic 2. Representation systems of geological structures.** Geological maps, geological cross-sections and block diagrams. Lines and planes in Structural Geology. Orientation of lines and planes. True and apparent dips. Field notes (conventional symbols). Analysis of the orientation of lines and planes. The Stereographic projection.
- **Topic 3. Stress, strain and rheology.** Stress: definition of force and stress and units. Strain: definition and components. Stress-strain relationships: rheology and mechanical behavior of rocks. Definition. Strain rate. Laboratory deformational experiments (compressional and extensional tests). Duration of deformational experiments (long and short term deformational experiments). Short duration lab experiments: elastic and plastic behavior, yield stress/strength, rupture strength); strain/work hardening, strain softening, ultimate strength. Long duration lab experiments: creep (primary, secondary, tertiary). Rheological relationships (linear and non-linear rheologies): Elastic behavior, viscous (viscoelastic, elastico-viscous, general behavior), ideal plastic behavior and elastic-plastic. Factors that influence the mechanical behavior of rocks: lithology, temperature, confining pressure, time, the magnitude of stress, strain rate, pore fluid pressure (effective stress). Classification of rocks according to their rheological behavior (brittle and ductile, competent and incompetent). Rheological behavior and depth: structural levels.

Section 2: Brittle structures

- **Topic 4. Stress.** Definition of force and stress and units (review). Simple calculation of stress. Lithostatic stress. Stress due to contact forces. Components of stress. State of stress in a point. Tensor and stress ellipsoid. Types of state of stress. Resolving the state of stress on a plane. Mohr stress diagram. Mean stress, deviatoric and differential stress. Stress field and stress trajectories.
- **Topic 5. Rock mechanics/rock fracturing.** The fundamental fracture modes (modes I, II, and III). Introduction to rock mechanics (tensile and compressive strength tests); Mohr diagram and envelope of failure. Constructing an envelope of failure: tensile strength tests, tensile and compressive strength tests transitional tensile behavior, parabolic failure envelopes). Griffith's law of fracture criterion. Compressive strength tests-Coulomb's fracture criterion. Application of the Murrell and Coulomb fracture equations. Compressive tests raising confining pressure; von Mises' fracture criterion. Grand failure envelope. Effective stress: the influence of pore fluid pressure. Testing prefractured rocks (Failure envelope for frictional sliding, coefficient of sliding friction, ..., Byerlee's law). Classification of fractures and physical discontinuities. Brittle fractures and the Mohr circle.
- **Topic 6. Joints and hybrid fractures.** Definition. Geometry: form of the joint surface. Classification of joints considering: a) general characteristics (joint set, joint system); b) angular relationship between joints (Hancock, 1985); c) characteristics of the opening. Joint-face ornamentation: plumose markings (origin, hackles, ribs, fringes, ...). Joint spacing; spacing/bed thickness. Some criteria to determine the relative chronology. Recording joint data. Dynamic interpretation of joints and
- shear (hybrid) fractures: joints, shear fractures and the Mohr circle.
- **Topic 7. Stylolites surfaces and extension veins.** Definition of stylolitic surface and stylolite. Geometry of stylolites and stylolitic surfaces; normal and oblique stylolites; bedding and transverse stylolites. Slickolites. Genesis of stylolitic surfaces: pressure solution mechanism. Stylolitic surfaces/stylolites and the stress tensor. Definition and characteristics of extension veins. Criteria to determine the extension direction (tension vein texture; syntaxial and antitaxial crystal fiber veins). Tension gashes and shearing; tension gashes and folding. Extension veins and the stress tensor. Relationship between stylolites and extension veins: dynamic implications.
- **Topic 8. Faults.** Definition of fault, fault zone and ductile shear zone. Classification based on: a) the fault surface geometry-attitude; b) hangingwall movement (rotational, non-rotational). Geometric elements of faults (tip point-line; blind fault, exposed fault, fault scarp, cut-off point/line,...). The slip of a fault and fault separation. Net slip: components (heave, throw). Classification of faults considering the slip components (dip-slip, strike-slip, oblique-slip, scissor-like or rotational). Naming oblique-slip faults. Criteria to identify the direction and sense of displacement of a fault (from the fault surface: striations, slickolites, grooves, crystal fiber lineations,...; cartographic criteria: orthographic and stereographic projections; structures related to the fault kinematics: drag folds,...). Extensional and contractional faults. Fault systems (branch point/line). Horsts and duplexes. Conjugate faults; synthetic and antithetic faults. Kinematics of crossing conjugate fault sets. Anderson's theory of faulting: relation between conjugate faults and the principal stress axes. Fault reactivation and inversion tectonics. Fault rocks: brittle (breccias, cataclases, pseudotachylites) and "ductile" (mylonitic) fault rocks.
- **Topic 9. Thrusts and reverse faults.** Definition and general characteristics. Geometric elements and types of thrusts (thrust-sheet, backthrust, nappes,...). Thin and thick-skinned tectonics. Map view (klippe, tectonic window, breached window). Geometric characteristics of staircase-like thrusts. Types of ramps (frontal, oblique, lateral).

Associated folding: fault-bend folds; fault-propagation folds, trishear folding; detachment folds; break-thrust folds). Thrust systems; terminology (foreland, hinterland, duplex roof-floor, antiformal stack, imbricates fans,...). Relay zones and transfer faults. Thrust kinematics: criteria to determine the transport direction and the age of the structure. Syntectonic or growth deposits/synsedimentary or growth structures. Geometry of syntectonic deposits (onlap, offlap, thinning-thickening, syntectonic unconformity, progressive unconformity; Riba, 1976). Thrust sequence (break-back, forward-breaking, out of sequence). Palinspastic restoration and shortening calculation. Tectonic environment for thrust faulting.

- **Topic 10. Normal faults.** Definition and general characteristics. Geometric elements. Meso-macro-scale structures associated to normal faults: roll-over anticlines, fault-bend folds, drag folds, extensional duplexes, release faults, transfer faults,... Regional-scale normal-fault systems (graben, horst, half-graben, detachment fault, synthetic/antithetic faults,...); pseudo-rollover/compensation graben, imbricate listric fan. Basic kinematic models of normal faults. Normal fault sequences. Determining stretching caused by normal faults. Tectonic environment.
- **Topic 11. Strike-slip faults and brittle-ductile shear zones.** Definition and general characteristics. Strike-slip shear zones and associated structures (e.g. Riedel shears, P and R' shears among others). Bends and step-overs in strike-slip fault zones; geometry and terminology. Pull-apart basins and pop-ups. Strike-slip duplexes (flower structures). Tectonic environment for strike-slip faulting (tear faults, transform faults, escape tectonics, ...). Modelling of shear zones (Tchalenko, 1970).

Section 3: Ductile structures

- **Topic 12. Strain.** Definition and types of deformation. Classification of internal deformation: continuous/discontinuous, fragile/ductile, and homogeneous/inhomogeneous. Vector, trajectory and displacement field. Finite, infinitesimal and progressive deformation. Measuring and representing deformation: rigid body deformation (translation, rotation) and non-rigid-body deformation (longitudinal strain, shear strain and dilation). The strain ellipsoid: types of strain ellipsoids. Flinn's diagram. Special terms in strain (coaxial, non-coaxial; rotational, non-rotational; pure and simple shear). Progressive deformation and the length of deformed lines. Zonation of the finite strain ellipse.
- **Topic 13. Ductile deformation processes.** Ductile deformation. Cataclasis/Cataclastic flow. Crystal plasticity (dislocation migration, mechanical twinning). Diffusional mass transfer (volume-diffusion creep, grain boundary diffusion creep, superplastic creep; pressure solution. Deformation microstructures (recovery, dynamic and static recrystallization), neomineralization. Deformation mechanisms and physical conditions during deformation (deformation maps).
- **Topic 14. Rock fabrics.** Introduction: concept of fabric. Classification of fabrics (primary, secondary; isotropic, anisotropic; mesoscopic, microscopic; crystallographic; penetrative, non-penetrative; dimensional. Types of dimensional fabrics planar, linear, double fabric). Tectonites (L, S, S-L, S-C). Cleavage. Types of cleavage: disjunctive (space, stylolitic, rough cleavage, crenulation cleavage); continuous cleavage (slaty, phyllitic cleavage, and schistosity); gneissic structure. Genetic mechanism of cleavage. Tectonic meaning of cleavage (cleavage fans, axial plane cleavage, cleavage refraction). Lineations. Most common lineations: intersection, crenulation, stretching and mineral lineations. Some linear structures: mullions and boudinage.
- **Topic 15. Folds: geometry.** Definition and tectonic environment. Scientific and economic interest. Geometrical and physical elements (parts of a fold: hinge point, line, zone; flanks, core, inflection points-lines, curvature, axial surface, etc). Elements of a folded surface (crest point/line, trough point/line, culminations and depressions, etc). Size of an isolated fold/train of folds (wave length-amplitude). Fold description: shape, tightness, size and attitude. Fold classifications according to: a) relative age of the rocks, b) direction of the concavity/convexity, c) fold shape (Hudleston, 1973), d) form of the fold, geometry of the axial surface, e) symmetry (vergence), f) fold attitude (Fleuty diagram), g) fold tightness, h) changes of wave length and/or amplitude. Ramsay's classification; Ramsay's diagram. Fold termination. Large scale folding (anticlinorium, synclinorium, fold belts, ...). Superposed folding. Fold interference pattern. Folding style.
- **Topic 16. Folding mechanisms and kinematic models.** Active and passive folding. Three mechanisms and five kinematic models of folding at meso-macroscopic scale: Flexure (flexural-slip, flexural flow and volume-loss folding); fold shape modification by superimposed homogeneous strain; flow (simple shear transverse to bedding; shear folding. 1) Flexural-mechanism: bending and buckling. Internal strain in flexural folding: Longitudinal strain in the hinge zone and shear strain in the flanks. Flexural flow folds. Volume loss folds. 2) Flattening-mechanism: homogeneous and inhomogeneous. Cleavage associated to flattening. Combination of flexure and flattening. 3) Flowage-mechanism. Types of deformation by flow. Shear folding. Tectonic environment and folding. Donath and Parker (1964): genetic classification. Some special types of folding: kink folds and drag folds.
- **Topic 17. Ductile shear zones.** The nature of shear zones and types of shear zones: general features. Passive markers and shear folding. Internal fabrics in ductile shear zones (foliation, S-C fabrics,...). Shear markers. Conjugate shear zones.

Section 4. Other structures (it will be developed for the students within their assignments)

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- **Topic 18.** Salt structures. Diapirs.
 - **Topic 19.** Gravitational structures.
 - **Topic 20.** Impact structures. Meteorites.
 - **Topic 21.** Superposed structures (folding and fracturing) and polyphased deformation.
 - **Topic 22.** Tectonic inversion structures.
 - **Topic 23.** Tectonic structures in plutons.
 - **Topic 24.** Non tectonic structures in Structural Geology.

II. Seminars

- **Topic 1.** Drawing geological sketches from outcrop photographs.
- **Topic 2.** Measuring lines and planes with a compass.
- **Topic 3.** Exercises on stress and stress components.
- **Topic 4.** Stress analysis using Mohr circle in 2D.
- **Topic 5.** Representing (and reading) line and plane data on (from) map and stereographic projection.

III. Laboratory sessions

- **Topic 1.** Geologic cross sections (I) constructed from geologic maps with folds, normal faults and unconformities.
- **Topic 2.** Geologic cross sections (II) constructed from geologic maps with folds, thrust faults and angular unconformities.
- **Topic 3.** 3D methods (I). Contour maps. Geologic history of different geologic cross-sections.
- **Topic 4.** Geologic cross sections (III). Recumbent fold and/or geological cross section from a MAGNA map.
- **Topic 5.** The Riedel experiment: shear zones in semibrittle rocks.
- **Topic 6.** Stereographic projection (I). Lines and planes. Poles to planes. True and apparent dips. Pitch of a line. Intersection between planes.
- **Topic 7.** Stereographic projection (II). Angles between lines and planes. Projection of lines onto planes. Fitting lines and planes to small and large circles. Tilting and rotations.
- **Topic 8.** A) Tectonic fabrics: Identifying linear and planar elements. Relationship with the strain ellipsoid. B) Orthographic projection: True and apparent dips. Three points problem.
- **Topic 9.** Stereographic projection (III). Density diagrams. Using a density diagram to calculate a fold axis. Computer programs: using computer programs to plot lines and planes as well as to determine their geometric
- **Topic 10.** Stereographic projection (IV). Determining the paleo-orientation of a fold with axial plane foliation situated below an angular unconformity. Calculating orientation of principal stress axes from stylolite, tensional veins and conjugate fault systems.

IV. Fieldwork

- **Field Trip 1**
 - Locality: Vadiello (Huesca); Mesozoic and Cenozoic.
 - Activities: Collecting field data along a structural traverse in the External Sierras. Study of brittle tectonic structures. Tecto-sedimentary relationships. Construction of a geological cross section.
- **Field Trip 2**
 - Locality: Isuela - Pico del Águila (Huesca); Mesozoic - Cenozoic.
 - Activities: Construction of a regional scale cross-section. Study of brittle tectonic structures. Synsedimentary structures.
- **Field trip 3**
 - Locality: Aliaga (Teruel); Cretaceous and Tertiary.
 - Activities: Study of polyphasic deformation. Geometric and kinematic reconstruction of superposed folding. Tecto-sedimentary relationships.
- **Field trip 4**
 - Locality: Montalbán-Molinos (Teruel); Mesozoic and Cenozoic.
 - Activities: Construction of a regional cross section of a thrust system and associated folds. Study of brittle structures (faults, stylolites, extension veins): Field schemes, measuring of linear and planar elements, timing of deformation.
- **Field trip 5**
 - Locality: Cerveruela-Puerto de Paniza (Zaragoza); Paleozoic.

- Activities: Study of ductile and brittle tectonic structures.

4.4.Course planning and calendar

The 9 ECTS of this course correspond to 90 hours of face-to-face teaching, which will be arranged in the following way.

Further information concerning the timetable, classroom, office hours, assessment dates and other details regarding this course will be provided on the first day of class or please refer to the Faculty of Sciences and Earth Sciences Department websites (<https://ciencias.unizar.es>, <https://cienciatierra.unizar.es>) and Moodle.

4.5.Bibliography and recommended resources

http://biblos.unizar.es/br/br_citas.php?codigo=26408&year=2019