GLY 4930 / GLY 6932 – Special Topics in Coastal Geomorphology, Fall 2025

Meeting Time: Wednesdays, 10:40–11:30 AM
Location: Williamson Hall 0210
Instructors:
Dr. Jorge Lorenzo-Trueba. Office: Williamson 359 — Office Hours: Tuesdays, 2:00–4:00 PM
Dr. Peter Adams. Office: Williamson 379 — Office Hours: Thursdays, 2:00–3:00 PM

Course Overview

This graduate seminar explores the diverse processes that shape coastal environments, with an emphasis on the feedbacks between fluid motion and sediment transport. We will take a process-based approach to coastal evolution, examining changes across spatial and temporal scales—from ripples to barrier systems, and from storm events to millennia of landscape development.

Through peer-reviewed literature, we will also consider the interactions between coastal geomorphology and related disciplines, including coastal engineering, anthropogenic impacts, human development, sedimentology, stratigraphy, and biological processes. These perspectives will allow us to explore how physical, human, and ecological factors combine to influence the formation and transformation of coasts.

Each student will select a coastal system or process of interest, lead a discussion on a selected paper, contribute weekly written responses, and deliver a refined final presentation that incorporates feedback from peers and instructors.

Course Format & Expectations

Early in the semester, each student will identify a coastal system or process of interest and, on the second day of class, give a brief two-slide presentation introducing their chosen system and two to three relevant peer-reviewed publications they are considering for class discussion. This exercise will help establish shared research themes and allow students to learn from one another's perspectives. The slides will serve as a starting point for the final presentation, which will offer a more detailed overview of the selected system and a refined research question.

Over the course of the semester, students will lead at least one discussion based on their assigned paper(s), prepare weekly summaries and discussion questions when not presenting, and deliver a refined final presentation in the closing weeks. Throughout the process, the instructors will be available to help identify suitable manuscripts and provide guidance on selecting papers that are relevant, accessible, and impactful.

Weekly Assignments

Non-Presenters (every week except your own):
Due Monday before class — upload one document to Canvas and share with the presenter:

1. One-paragraph summary of the assigned paper
2. Three questions about the reading, each with your best-guess answer

For the Presenter (week of your presentation):

1. Introduce the selected coastal system with clear, accessible background information.

2. Present the key points and findings of the paper (figures and visuals strongly encouraged).
3. Collect, organize, and synthesize classmates' submitted questions into themes for discussion.
4. Facilitate the class discussion using the synthesized questions as a guide. While the discussion will be a group effort and you are not expected to have all the answers, you are responsible for steering the conversation and offering informed perspectives. As the discussion leader, you should aim to address questions thoughtfully—especially since this is the coastal system on which you are developing subject-matter expertise.

Final Presentations

In the final weeks of the course, each student will deliver a revised, comprehensive presentation on their chosen coastal system. This presentation should build on the content explored throughout the semester and integrate feedback received during earlier discussions.

Your final presentation should cover the following components:

- **Introduction & Motivation**: Explain why this coastal system or process is significant and why it is an important area of study.
- **Background**: Provide a detailed overview of existing research and foundational concepts related to your system.
- **Knowledge Gaps**: Identify the areas where further research is needed or where current understanding is limited.
- **Research Question**: Propose an interesting, feasible research question that could address one of these knowledge gaps.

The goal is to synthesize what you have learned from the course into a cohesive presentation that highlights both the complexity of the coastal system you've studied and the broader implications for coastal geomorphology. Your final presentation should be structured clearly and logically, aimed at engaging an audience with varying levels of expertise, from your peers in the class to potential researchers or professionals in the field.

For undergraduate students, this presentation serves as an opportunity to practice presenting and discussing complex topics in a clear, professional manner. For graduate students, this is an opportunity to refine what will ultimately become part of your research proposals and thesis defenses.

This presentation should be developed with the intention of refining it further for your future work, whether it be for conference presentations, thesis defenses, or other professional opportunities.

Attendance Policy

Attendance and active participation are required. Notify the instructors ASAP if you have a known conflict.

Grading & Evaluation

- Weekly Assignments & Participation: 50%
- Paper Presentation & Final Presentation: 50%

UF Grading Scale

%	Letter	GPA
≥93.0	A	4.0
90.0–92.9	A-	3.67
87.0–89.9	B+	3.33
83.0–86.9	B	3.0
80.0–82.9	B-	2.67
77.0–79.9	C+	2.33
73.0–76.9	C	2.0
70.0–72.9	C-	1.67
67.0–69.9	D+	1.33
64.0–66.9	D	1.0
60.0–63.9	D-	0.67
<60.0	E	0

University policies & resources
This course complies with all University of Florida academic policies. For information on attendance and make-up policies, the Disability Resource Center, grading, GatorEvals, the Student Honor Code, in-class recording, and academic/wellness resources, please visit:
UF Syllabus Policy – Required Links & Resources