



University at Buffalo
The State University of New York

Department of Geology

**Physical and Safety Requirements for UB
Geology Field Camp
(GLY 407/507: Geological Field Methods)**

Catalog Description: *Applied field methods in geology.*

The course is a sometimes physically intensive, month-long program of immersion in the methods of practicing geologists in the field. While students will be based out of UB's campus for part of the course students sleep in their own tents overnight. Some days, participants are in the field all day (9 AM to 4PM) and are engaged in strenuous physical activity during the whole of that time.

Weather: Weather in the Buffalo region during June is usually comfortably in the mid-to-high 70s, but with occasional rapid shifts in either direction. While camping in eastern New York/New England temperatures may be cooler depending on the altitude and proximity to local highlands. Rainstorms are fairly common during this time of year so students should come prepared with waterproofed materials, ponchos, or other appropriate wear.

Terrain: Participants will visit some sites which are underdeveloped or along creek beds. Participants must be able to hike over steep, rocky slopes, along stream beds, and brushy hillsides. The terrain is uneven (with loose rocks, brush, and mud), and is locally steep. The creek exposures we will visit require wading through shallow water at some points so participants should find footwear they're either willing to get wet or which is for water use specifically.

Health & Safety: Field geology necessarily entails some unavoidable risks. Nevertheless, UB Geology has a more than fifty-year history of safely conducting camp without serious injuries. The rugged character of some of the sites poses physical hazards (e.g., tripping and falling). While temperatures are not usually extreme the prolonged physical activity coupled with possibility of little available shade at some sites pose serious risks of dehydration. Substantial water consumption is necessary to avoid dehydration and heat exhaustion.

All these hazards can be avoided or minimized with caution and informed good judgment. Camp staff provide training in hazard avoidance to all camp participants. Additionally, several members of the camp staff are trained in first aid and can provide assistance with minor medical issues such as sun burn, cuts and abrasions, minor sprains, etc. For needs beyond these, we seek medical assistance at a local clinic or hospital.

Therefore:

- *Participants must be able to bear exposure to heat, cold, and sun like that described above.*
- *Participants must be sufficiently physically fit and in sufficiently good health to maintain strenuous physical activity like that described above and must not be at high risk for sudden onset of life-threatening medical conditions. Our experience is that strenuous exercise and elevation can aggravate preexisting but otherwise minor or hidden conditions and pose a serious health risk. All participants must ascertain that they are medically fit to attend field camp by consultation with a licensed physician.*
- *Students must be able to walk, without assistance, 5 - 10 miles per day over terrain like that described above while carrying a backpack that weighs at least 25 pounds (including lunch, 3 to 4 liters of water, emergency supplies, rain gear, and mapping equipment).*



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- *Students must possess vision sufficiently keen (unaided or with correction) to be able to spot the physical hazards present in the mapping sites. They also must be able to see well enough to comprehend geological features at physical scales ranging from hand specimens (examined with a hand lens) and local outcrops observed at a distance of meters, to mountainside exposures viewed from miles away.*