



UNIVERSITÀ  
DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO-BICOCCA

## COURSE SYLLABUS

### Sedimentary Petrology

2324-1-F7401Q028

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#### Aims

The Sedimentary Petrography course is dedicated to MSc and PhD students, interested in provenance studies of loose sediments and sedimentary rocks and in particular in the quantitative analysis and identification of heavy minerals. The classical techniques of polarizing microscope optics and the most modern and advanced recognition methods in Raman spectroscopy will be presented. Students will be educated and empowered on how to approach and solve problems related to the identification of detrital minerals in different depositional environments and geodynamic settings. After a detailed analysis of principal heavy mineral groups and rock fragments, we will illustrate a wide range of examples from real cases. The course aims to train course participants to make them capable of extrapolating information from sediments and collecting mineralogical data that can be used in research and industry. We will explain how to deal with the problems associated with sampling in the field and sample preparation in the laboratory. We will study hydraulic sorting, weathering and diagenesis as factors modifying the original assemblages of detrital minerals. Finally, we will illustrate how Raman spectroscopy has revolutionized provenance studies and opened up new research possibilities and perspectives in correctly identifying any mineral in grain mounts or thin sections. Using this innovative technique, it will also be possible to evaluate the chemical variability within each group of heavy minerals and compare their geochemical fingerprints with the different source rocks. It will be explained how to apply sedimentary petrography in the study of large "Source to Sink" systems and in geoarchaeology. The participants in the course will be trained in the needs of the industry for the good management of georesources, in collaboration and connection with the world of work.

#### Contents

Introduction to Sedimentary Petrography

Sampling in the field

Laboratory for heavy mineral separation

Petrography of siliciclastic detritus

Heavy-mineral studies

Physical processes

Chemical processes

How to count in provenance studies and data processing

Geochronology of detritus

Applications to georesources

## **Detailed program**

### **Introduction:**

Sedimentary Petrography. Tectonic and sedimentation. Connection between the geological settings and the geology of source rocks and mineralogy of sediments. First cycle and polycyclic sediments.

### **Sampling in the field:**

Strategies for collecting sediments in the field for provenance studies.

### **Laboratory:**

Sampling criteria, preparation and separation of sediments and sedimentary rocks in the laboratory of provenance studies and geochronology.

### **HM in the laboratory:**

HM separation in sand and silt fraction. How to identify transparent and opaque heavy minerals in grain mounts. Polarizing microscope. Raman Spectroscopy. The choice of the counting method. Case histories.

### **Petrography of siliciclastic detritus:**

Principal components. Textures. Classification of sandstones. Classification of rock fragments. Accessories minerals. Models of provenance.

### **Heavy-mineral studies:**

Historical overview. HM in provenance studies. Source rocks of different HM. HM and Plate tectonic.

### **Physical processes:**

Mechanical abrasion. Selection of the minerals to size and density. Selective entrainment. Hydraulic sorting and placer formation. Mineralogical and textural changes during the long-distance transport. Economic implications for strategical elements exploration.

### **Chemical processes:**

Alteration and dissolution in soils. Diagenesis and intrastratal dissolution. Implications for the analysis of origin of clastic rocks. Geochemical and isotopic tracers in provenance studies. Analysis of different grain size: clay, silt and sand. Geochemical and isotopic analyses of sediment in bulk rock versus single mineral approach. Indices of weathering. How to solve the problem of recycling. Case histories and applications.

### **How to count in provenance studies and data processing:**

Single grain versus bulk methods. The choice of the counting method. Big data in provenance studies. Bi-plot. Ternary Plot. MIRAGEM. Raman counting.

**Geochronology of detritus:**

Fission track of apatite and zircon. U-Pb dating of zircon. Case histories and applications.

**Applications to Georesources:**

Case histories of interest for oil exploration and to the study of placers containing minerals enriched in REE and essential elements for industry and technology.

**Prerequisites**

A basic knowledge of mineralogy and petrography is required. It is suggested to combine this course with the contents of the Sedimentary Basins course in order to better understand the links of sedimentary mineralogy and petrography with plate tectonics and regional geology. A strong curiosity and interest in laboratory work and the use of classical and innovative tools in the Earth sciences are helpful in tackling this highly multidisciplinary course. Students interested in georesources and sustainable exploitation of the planet are strongly encouraged to attend this course.

**Teaching form**

Lessons will take place face to face as lectures in the classroom and in the laboratory. The contents of the lessons, in the form of slides for each lesson, together with further bibliographic material to support the course, will be made available to students through the e-learning platform of the course. Lessons will not be recorded during this academic year.

In the lectures the theory underlying a series of real case studies of sediments will be explained. During the practical lessons, the laboratory for the separation of heavy minerals will be shown and lessons will be given on the use of the polarizing microscope and the Raman spectrometer for the identification of minerals.

**Textbook and teaching resource**

Pdf of the frontal lessons and references dealing on different topics will be uploaded in e-learning every week.

Free downloadable textbook for the heavy minerals part:

[https://www.mdpi.com/journal/minerals/special\\_issues/heavy\\_minerals](https://www.mdpi.com/journal/minerals/special_issues/heavy_minerals)

Standard grain mount of single minerals will be available for each student to learn how to identify heavy minerals by polarizing microscope and Raman spectroscopy.

**Semester**

The course of Sedimentary Petrography is in the first semester of the 1st year of the Master Thesis program.

The course will start on October, 2023 and will end on January, 2024 and will be conducted in English.

## **Assessment method**

The final exam will be divided into a practical part for the recognition under the polarizing microscope of heavy minerals in grain mounts where two slides of heavy minerals will be given to describe and recognize among 12, and an oral exam on the topics of the entire course.

## **Office hours**

The lecturers of the course will be available to students throughout the academic year, upon appointment and request via e-mail:

The names and emails of the course teachers are listed below:

Sergio Andò: sergio.ando@unimib.it

Eduardo Garzanti: eduardo.garzanti@unimib.it

Alberto Resentini: alberto.resentini@unimib.it

## **Sustainable Development Goals**

QUALITY EDUCATION | GENDER EQUALITY | AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY | INDUSTRY,  
INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE | RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION | CLIMATE  
ACTION

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