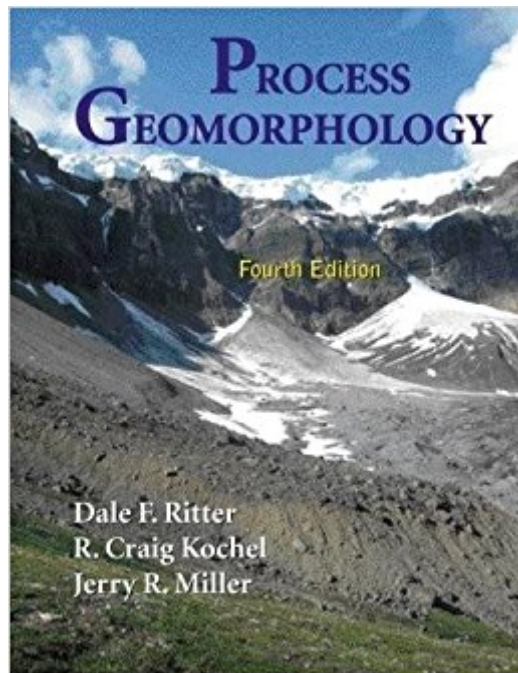




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Process Geomorphology (Reissued 4th, Fourth Edition) - By D.F. Ritter, R.C. Kochel, & J.R. Miller [2006]



Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This text was for a geomorphology class I took recently. While I find geomorphology quite interesting, this text is DENSE at times. It took me quite a bit of time to get through some of the material (especially slope stability and fluvial processes). I recommend ordering another geomorphology text to accompany this one. You can get main ideas from the easier to understand text and look at this one for specific details. I found myself often referencing back to my intro. geography book. Also, the authors' writing leaves some things very open ended and the professor didn't like that the book left out information on geologic time scale.

This book is extremely detailed and in depth . . . but good grief is it a snore to read. This is clearly 'college - level" reading as in it makes a great reference book, but not something you would want to just pick up and read as a refresher. On the more cheerful side: I bought this on for about \$65 which was way cheaper than the \$110 the college book store wanted, so that lessens the sting. I considered selling it back, but I have heard (unconfirmed) that a replacement is on its way next year so I would have got about \$10. Instead I will keep it as reference as it is a good source for such things and it does not eat much.

This was a required book for my Earth Surface Process course. I didn't like it because there was just sooooo much text and no images, which are normally thrown in to better describe content and what not. It was very dense and better for individuals with advance knowledge in the topic.

Great condition for price. A little highlighting but a steal of a deal. Thanks! I'm a new grad student in geology, doing a little summer refreshing.

Very informative for the archaeologist, also.

Exactly the book I needed for a process geomorphology class. Its an older edition but did the job.

I am currently teaching a university level geomorphology course using this text and find myself constantly wishing I had chosen another. I have five primary complaints about the book.1) Some of the tools required to make a book like this one truly useful are simply missing or inadequate. Geomorphology is a terminology-laden science, and the lack of a glossary is a very significant shortcoming of the book. A good glossary - one including page references to detailed explanations/descriptions in the text would greatly increase the value of the book. The index is also deficient. In preparation for the course I began by creating several exercises that I definitely wanted to use, and in more than one case couldn't find an index reference to an important concept or term. However, in scanning the appropriate chapter the item is not only included but given considerable treatment. One example may help to make the point. The Hjulstrom diagram is the most accessible tool for students to relate current velocity to transported particle size despite the date of Hjulstrom's original work (1939). Hjulstrom is not included in the index though his 1939 paper is included in the list of references, and the diagram is included in the text.2) Overall the book (fourth edition) has the appearance of a rough draft comprised of diagrams and pieces of text hurriedly cobbled together with emphasis on completeness rather than continuity, leaving need for a careful editing. As a result the text does not flow and explanations are sometimes so sketchy that someone not already familiar with the material will probably find it to be essentially unreadable. In part this results from what I assume is the absence of an editor and in part from an attempt to include more in a single text than can reasonably be included. The result, however, is likely to be unsatisfactory for the reader attempting to understand the complexities of the subject and frustrating to the instructor who has to spend class time explaining material that should be easily understandable from the text.3) Another reviewer has mentioned the short shrift given to the geology that underlies - and in many instances controls - the morphology. Although the emphasis of the book is on the processes of geomorphology, this omission is rather severe when using the text with a class of geology students. I find it particularly difficult to understand this omission with two of the three authors being geologists. I'm supplementing the text in this area with copies of Dake and Brown "Interpretation of Topographic and Geologic Maps" (1925, reprinted 1953) that are readily available as discards from libraries where it is not understood that there is no more recent substitute.4) Many concepts are

explained so briefly that I find it difficult to believe they will be understood by the students for whom the book is written. An example of this is the description of stream numbering systems. This topic covers the work of Horton which brought the basic concepts to the awareness of geomorphologists in 1945 and refinements by Strahler and Shreve. It is entirely appropriate to describe all three of these systems as they all appear in the literature and the student should be forewarned of the multiplicity of numbering systems as well as the shortcomings of early efforts. However, in Figure 5.17 which attempts to illustrate the three, it is impossible to distinguish for example between order 1 and 2 streams of Horton because the same line pattern is used for both. Simply redrafting these figures using different symbols would make the distinction clear, something accomplished by neither Figure 5.17 nor the accompanying text.5) Many of the photographs are difficult to interpret. Having begun my exploration of this topic in the days of few photos and many skillfully constructed line drawings I would reduce the number of photos and produce a line drawing to accompany and explain each. Just as cartoonists convey complex images with only a few lines, the same abstraction of the essence of the image would add significantly to many of the photos, making the message more accessible. I have complained about the book, but there are some especially strong points that should be pointed out.1) This text has by far the most extensive bibliography I have ever seen in a textbook at this level. The ability to follow a topic directly from text to primary source would be most important in a graduate course rather than an introductory one for which this book is intended, but I find it to be a particular strength of the book.2) Having first studied geomorphology half a century ago I find the inclusion of many examples from planets other than the earth to be useful. For example in discussion of headward extension of tributary valleys the authors use examples both Martian and terrestrial to illustrate the concept of groundwater sapping. Showing similarities such as this helps to emphasize the concept rather than the specific locality or example. In this particular instance I would like to have seen an explanation that the springs MUST BE localized at the head of the tributary because the aquifer has already been drained downslope from the head; raising the question of whether the spring is the chicken or perhaps only the egg. All in all I find the deficiencies to outweigh the positive attributes as an undergraduate text or for self-study.

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