

Senior Seminar  
GEL 380  
Syllabus Spring, 2010

Professor: Jacob O. Sewall  
Office: Boehm Bldg. 422  
Office hours: M: 10 – 11 T: 10 –11  
W: 10 – 11; 1 – 2 TH: 11 - 12

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**Class Meetings:** Wednesday, 5:00 – 7:00 PM, Boehm Bldg. 123

**Course Objectives:** Senior Seminar is intended as the penultimate class of your major and has a two-pronged goal. 1) To allow you to take the training wheels off and take all your hard won knowledge out for a spin in a discussion-based forum where the responsibility for intellectual content and synthesis rests on you. 2) Help make sure you have some of the basic tools to put all your knowledge to work in a gainful manner, not just academic discussions.

**Course requirements:** While there are no official prerequisites for this course, as it is a “Senior” seminar, it is expected that you have a good, working knowledge of most branches of Geology and the Physical and Life Sciences in general as well as well developed writing and research skills.

**Textbook:** There is one required “text” for this course: *dirt: The Erosion of Civilizations* by David R. Montgomery. *dirt* is a science-based text written for a lay audience and will serve as our jumping off point for the semester.

**Attendance/late policy:** The seminar is discussion-based, you can’t discuss if you are not present so attendance is mandatory and graded. Assignments will be accepted late **only** by prior (e.g. before the day they are due!) arrangement.

**E-mail policy:** E-mail is becoming the primary mode of communication in many arenas today, e-mail correspondence, like all writing in this course, should be professional, clear, and grammatically correct. E-mail subject lines **must** contain the course number (**GEL 380**). The body of the e-mail should contain a greeting, a concise, clearly written description of the question, problem, or topic, and a closing. E-mail messages *that conform to this standard* will generally be answered within one business day.

**Honor code and Special Needs:** Strict accordance with the University policies concerning plagiarism, cheating, etc. is expected. Science is, however, a collaborative endeavor. You are encouraged to discuss assignments with each other – just as active scientists do. You are, however, also (again, just like active scientists) expected to be responsible for your own answers or, if appropriate, give clear credit to the work of others. Any student with special needs or circumstances is encouraged to meet with the

instructor to discuss them.

### **Grading/Feedback:**

There will be no curving of grades in this course. Assignments and their associated keys will set a standard and your grade will reflect how you measured against that standard, not your fellow classmates. It is, therefore, possible for everyone in the class to achieve and “A”. Your final grade will be determined based on your total points: A = 90-100 **and** 100% attendance, B = 80-89, C = 70-79, D = 60-69, F = 0-59.

### **Tentative Grading Breakdown**

<b><u>Assignment</u></b>	<b><u>#</u></b>	<b><u>points each</u></b>	<b><u>total points</u></b>	<b><u>% of grade</u></b>
Discussion	14	33	462	46.2%
Reading Synopses	12	33	396	39.6%
Resume 1	1	25	25	2.5%
Cover Letter 1	1	25	25	2.5%
Resume 2	1	33	33	3.3%
Cover Letter 2	1	33	33	3.3%
Introductions	1	25	25	2.5%
Total			1000	100%

**H1N1 Flu Protocol:** Because H1N1 is very contagious, public health officials are emphasizing mitigation to reduce the risk of contracting the disease and its spread. The most effective ways to mitigate the virus is to promote and practice thorough hand washing, cough and cold etiquette, and other non-pharmacological interventions (NPIs). The most important of the NPIs recommended is **the exclusion of ill individuals from public, school, and group activities**. In compliance with CDC and the PA DOH recommendations, Kutztown University strongly urges students with H1N1 to follow CDC self-isolation guidelines. Students should NOT attend class or any public gatherings while ill. Symptomatic students residing in University housing will be instructed to leave campus and return home to recover. The CDC recommends isolation until at least 24 hours after any fever has resolved without the use of fever-reducing medications. Return to campus should be delayed until a student has been fever-free for 24 hours. Student Services & Campus Life will work directly with any students who have special circumstances that prevent their departure from campus if they should fall ill. The illness and self-isolation period will usually be about a week. It is very important that individuals avoid spreading the flu to others.

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Topics and Assignments Spring, 2010

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**Course Deliverables:** Over the course of the semester this class will have **15** participation deliverables and **16** written deliverables. The participation deliverables are:

- 1) Discussion Participation. Each class member is expected to be present, with reading complete for each discussion meeting and participate fully in class activities (e.g. peer editing). In addition to the assigned chapter reading from *dirt*, each class member is required to find, read, and be prepared to include in the discussion an additional, supplemental reading relevant to the topic of the day. This reading should be from a reliable, peer reviewed or edited, source.
- 2) Formal Introductions. One of the most important interview/job skills is the ability to succinctly and clearly introduce yourself to people (particularly important people like a potential boss or graduate advisor). We will spend part of one class period practicing formal introductions.

The written deliverables are:

- 1) Written synopses of supplemental readings. For each supplemental reading that you identify, you will need to submit a written synopsis detailing the main points of the reading and its relevance to the discussion topic/chapter from *dirt*. The synopsis should be written in the style of an abstract and should not exceed 250 words. You will also need to turn in a copy of the supplemental reading itself.
- 2) Your Resume. Your resume will be turned in twice this semester for grading.
- 3) Your job/graduate school application cover letter. Your cover letter will be turned in twice this semester for grading.

### Topic Schedule and Assignment Due Dates

Course Week	Activities and Due Dates
1	Course Introduction
	Free Write on expected course outcome
	Chapter 1 Discussion (no supplemental reading or synopsis necessary)
2	Chapter 2 Discussion (supplemental reading and synopsis required hereafter)
	Bring Resume to Class for Peer Editing
3	Chapter 3 Discussion
	Resume Due (1) – Feb. 3
4	Chapter 4 (p. 49 – 65) Discussion
	Bring Cover Letter to Class for Peer Editing
5	Chapter 4 (p. 65 – 81) Discussion
	Formal Introductions
	Cover Letter Due (1) – Feb. 17
6	Chapter 5 Discussion
7	Chapter 6 (p. 115 – 130) Discussion
	Bring Revised Resume to Class for Peer Editing
8	Chapter 6 (p. 130 -145) Discussion
	Bring Revised Cover Letter to Class for Peer Editing
	Resume Due (2) – March 17
9	Chapter 7 Discussion
	Cover Letter Due (2) – March 24
10	Chapter 8 (p. 179 – 197) Discussion
11	Chapter 8 (p. 197 – 217) Discussion
12	Chapter 9 Discussion
13	Chapter 10 Discussion
14	Catch Up and Wrap Up