

# Geoscience Senior Seminar



Congratulations on making it to your Senior Year! At this point, you have taken a number of classes in geology and other sciences and have accumulated a wealth of knowledge about our physical world. Regardless of the specific curriculum that you followed, the very fact that you are enrolled in this course proves that you have mastered the fundamentals of geology and the scientific method. But, in spite of your great accomplishments to date, there is still a great deal of information that you do not know.

This class is about figuring out that information. It is not about the information itself, but the process of accumulating it. As you go on in your professional and personal lives, you will encounter time and time again situations that call for independent investigation. In this class we will stick to modes of geological investigation, but the same general skills can be applied to any discipline or circumstance. In order to focus ourselves, we will choose one major theme and then perform literature searches, read papers, and analyze and present information regarding subtopics of interest surrounding that major theme.

In addition to finding the answers to questions you do not know, this class is about sharing this information. Because this is an S-class, we will focus on oral communication skills. Alumni who come back to visit DePauw *always* comment that good speaking and listening skills are critical for success. Good oral communication involves more than just talking. It means that you speak clearly but naturally, that you have good posture and use body language well, that you speak at the appropriate level for your audience, and, above all, that you are competent and know your subject well.

Professional geologists communicate in many ways. Although the most obvious is the Scientific Talk, which is usually a 15–20 minute speech on a research topic, this is not the only method. Scientists read professional papers, have discussions with their peers, present posters, and give seminars. Throughout the semester, you will have the chance to engage in all of these activities.

In many ways, this is a much different class than you have taken previously in this department. As indicated above, the goals are not so much about acquiring new facts but rather learning about *how* you obtain information and best communicate that information with others. However, please understand it is expected that you will thoroughly research all topics and provide well-developed, detailed comments for your presentations and discussions. The high standards of the department that you have come to know and love are still very much in place! The difference is that in this class we will focus more on the profession of geology than on its principles.



Your grade will be based on your performance on each of the following:

- Two 15-minute talks: 15% each
- A scientific poster presentation: 25%
- A seminar-style talk: 25%
- Research and questions for a discussion paper: 10%
- Attendance and class participation: 10%

The standard scale will be used to assign all grades.

## Geoscience Senior Seminar Tentative Schedule

<u>Date</u>	<u>Topic</u>
Aug. 25	Introduction, logistics, schedule
Sept. 1	Literature searches, how to read literature
Sept. 8	Scientific presentations, resume writing
Sept. 15	Discussion (article 1)
Sept. 22	Short presentation 1
Sept. 29	Discussion (article 2)
Oct. 6	Discussion (article 3)
Oct. 13	Short presentation 2, information on constructing posters
Oct. 20	Fall break - no class
Oct. 27	Discussion (article 4)
Nov. 3	Discussion (article 5)
Nov. 10	GSA - no class (use this time to work on posters!)
Nov. 17	Poster Session
Nov. 24	Thanksgiving - no class
Dec. 1	Seminar Talk (first 2)
Dec. 8	Seminar Talk (next 2)
Finals week	Seminar Talk (last one)