



Urban Dirt

(SW 231) Spring Quarter 2009

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Akilah Martin is a visiting assistant professor at SNL and earned her Ph.D. in Agricultural and Biological Engineering from Purdue University. Her teaching and research interests include enhancing soil and water quality through education and promotion of its awareness locally, nationally, and globally.

Class Meeting Room and Time: See SNL Registration

Course Description: Urban Dirt is a course designed for the student who desires to know the difference, complexity, and the diversity between soil and dirt. The benefit of learning about soils is multi-fold: understanding the Earth, understanding how and where your food grows, gardening, impact on water quality, and most of all understanding your role in improving overall environmental quality and sustainability. In addition, this class will offer introductory knowledge of soils and its dynamism. Although learning soils can be

very scientific, there are several social and artistic views of soils. If you ever wanted to know why soils are various colors, various fertility, uses, mapping, home to various organisms, then this is the course to take. Understanding the complexities of soil, will aid in understanding Earth's and its intricacy.

Competences Offered and Learning Goals:

H2X – Can understand how institutions/agencies research, manage, conserve, and enhance soil quality.

1. Understand how and why these institutions/agencies developed, their mission, and whom they serve.
2. Understand the community's impact of urban land use on the morphological, physical and chemical properties of soils

SIX - Can describe the scientific principles of soil formation, classification, and mapping.

1. Understand how various soils are classified and mapped around the world.
2. Understand Remote Sensing, Geographic Information Systems and Global Positioning Systems use for mapping soils.

S2X – Can apply scientific principles of the soil physical environment to describe, categorize, and explain soil composition.

1. Understand soil composition and the impact on the physical environment as well as the ecosystem and landscape as a whole.

S4 - Can describe and explain connections among the chemical, physical, and biological aspects of soil.

1. Explains how parts of the soil system are interconnected.
2. Demonstrates how such connections are found elsewhere in nature.

Students will learn the diversity of soils and its components, as well as the connection, interaction and the chemical, biological, and physical processes of soils.

Learning Experience and Evidence for Competence:

Students will be introduced to the field of soil science, through readings, field trips, lab assignments, discussions, and resources on-line. Students will learn the complexities of soil and their role in soil quality. Topics include: soil formation, soil survey and mapping, soil physical and chemical processes, soil biology, and human interactions with soil. Students will be expected to either complete a project or paper as an end result of the class. This project or paper is independent and should be discussed with the instructor very early on in the quarter.

Field Trips:

1. Army Corps of Engineers Restoration Site located in Hammond, IN that is strongly recommended that students attend.
2. Green Festival Field Trip May 16-17, 2009

Laboratory Assignments:

1. Understanding the Soil Profile
2. Determining Soil Texture, Color, and Structure
3. Soil Survey Reports

Required Text:**Grading, Assessment, and Class Attendance:**

Students will be assessed on the following criteria:

Class Project	(30%)
Class Participation	(20%)
Homework	(30%)
Field trips	(20%)

Tentative Class Schedule

I reserve the right to change and/or add ASSIGNMENTS/TOPICS (for enrichment)!

<i>Date</i>	<i>Topic</i>	<i>Readings</i>	<i>Homework Due</i>
3/31/09	Soil Formation		
	Cont'd		
4/14/09	Soil Components		
	Cont'd		
4/28/09	Soil Physical, Biological, and Chemical Processes		
	Cont'd		
5/12/09	Soil Survey, Classification and Evaluation		
	Cont'd		
5/26/09	Soil and Society/Environmental Degradation		
6/9/09	Class Project/Paper		

Note: Students must arrive at each class promptly and remain for the entire period. Please disable all cell phones, text-messaging devices, and beepers, and provide a written excuse for any class meeting you miss. *Missing two (2) class meetings will make it difficult to pass the course. SNL policy allows the grade of "F" to be submitted for any student missing three (3) or more class meetings.*

DePaul University Academic Integrity Policy

DePaul University is a learning community that fosters the pursuit of knowledge and the transmission of ideas within a context that emphasizes a sense of responsibility for oneself, for others and for society at large. Violations of academic integrity, in any of their forms, are, therefore, detrimental to the values of DePaul, to the students' own development as responsible members of society, and to the pursuit of knowledge and the transmission of ideas. Violations include but are not limited to the following categories: cheating; plagiarism; fabrication; falsification or sabotage of research data; destruction or misuse of the university's academic resources; alteration or falsification of academic records; and academic misconduct. Conduct that is punishable under the Academic Integrity Policy could result in additional disciplinary actions by other university officials and possible civil or criminal prosecution. Please refer to your Student Handbook or visit

FYI: "Please be aware that any written work submitted in this course may be verified using *Turn-It-In* technology in order to ensure that the work is the student's own creation and not in violation of the University's Academic Integrity Policy. Submission of work in this course constitutes a pledge that the work is original and consent to have the work submitted to verify that fact."

DePaul University Incomplete Policy

Undergraduate and graduate students have two quarters to complete an incomplete. At the end of the second quarter (excluding summer) following the term in which the incomplete grade was assigned, remaining incompletes will automatically convert to "F" grades. In the case of the Law School incompletes must be completed by the end of the semester following the one in which the incomplete was assigned. Ordinarily no incomplete grade may be completed after the grace period has expired. Instructors may not change incomplete grades after the end of the grace period without the permission of a college-based Exceptions Committee. This policy applies to undergraduate, graduate and professional programs. NOTE: In the case of a student who has applied for graduation and who has been approved for an Incomplete in his or her final term, the incomplete must be resolved within the four week grace period before final degree certification.

n.b. The SNL student who wishes to receive the grade of IN must formally request in writing that the instructor issue this grade. This request must be made before the end of the quarter in which the student is enrolled in a course.