This course supports the assessment for Earth: Inside and Out and covers 5 competencies.

**Introduction**

**Overview**

Earth: Inside and Out explores the ways in which our dynamic planet evolved and the processes and systems that continue to shape it. Though the geologic record is incredibly ancient, it has only been studied intensely since the end of the nineteenth century. Since then, research in fields such as geologic time, plate tectonics, climate change, exploration of the deep sea floor, and the inner earth have vastly increased our understanding of geological processes.

There are no prerequisites for this course.

**Getting Started**

Welcome to Earth: Inside and Out! This six-week course, with an additional week for assignment completion, is offered through the American Museum of Natural History (AMNH). **Students must adhere to the established weekly due dates.**

Online seminars offered by the American Museum of Natural History (AMNH) use multimedia and discussions to connect teachers and future teachers from around the world to cutting-edge research, classroom resources, and each other. Weekly activities for Earth: Inside and Out involve mapping, observing, recording, and reflecting on local geologic features. Computer interactives, image galleries, and videos will help learners visualize and master the content. Weekly online discussions encourage reflection on course content, support and model the inquiry process, and sustain interaction between the offering scientists, seminar instructors, and course members.

The discussions, assignments, and course project serve as the assessment for this course. A grade of “Meets Requirements” in the seminar is required to pass the course.

**Important things to note:**

- **Special requirement:** This course requires that you obtain a geologic map of your local area. This map is used for an assignment at the beginning of the course. You should work on obtaining this map as soon as you know you will be registering for the course.
- **You must complete this six-week AMNH seminar within the specific time allotted.** Plan to spend about eight hours per week of your time on this course.
- **Sessions are offered several times a year and begin and end on specific dates.** Review the [AMNH Calendar](#) to determine when the seminar is offered and consult your program mentor to coordinate this seminar with your schedule.

**Competencies**
This course provides guidance to help you demonstrate the following competencies:

- **Competency 2029.6.1: Reading Rocks**
  The graduate evaluates how past and current science is applied to the study and dating of rocks to observe and describe geologic features.

- **Competency 2029.6.2: Earth’s Evolution**
  The graduate evaluates what rocks tell us about the composition of the early atmosphere to explain the interconnectedness of Earth's systems.

- **Competency 2029.6.3: Climate Change**
  The graduate evaluates the interaction of the atmosphere, ocean, and other Earth systems to discuss the effect of human activities on climate.

- **Competency 2029.6.4: Ocean Basins, Mountains, and Continents**
  The graduate examines how computer modeling is used to describe and study mantle convection in order to evaluate convection models.

- **Competency 2029.6.5: Habitable Earth**
  The graduate hypothesizes how discoveries of life supported by energy from the earth will influence scientific exploration in order to predict future directions of scientific research.

**Teaching Dispositions Statement**

Please review the [Statement of Teaching Dispositions](#).

**AMNH Seminar: Earth: Inside and Out**

The information in this section is provided to detail the resources available for you to use as you complete this course.

**Enrolling in the Course**

Sessions are offered several times a year and begin and end on specific dates. Review the [AMNH Calendar](#) to determine when the seminar is offered and consult your program mentor to coordinate this seminar with your schedule.

To enroll in this learning resource, navigate to the "Learning Resources" tab, click the "Sections" button, and click the "Enroll Now" button for the seminar. Once your program mentor approves your enrollment, you will receive an email with further access instructions. Contact your mentor if you have questions.

*Note:* You will receive log in information by email directly from AMNH at least two days before the scheduled start for the seminar. Contact your program mentor if you have not received this information on time.

Participate in your course through the [AMNH seminar website](#). You will be assigned multiple readings, videos, discussions, and activities within the seminar.

**Retake Fee**
Review the [Assessment Retake Fee](#) section of the Student Handbook: if you do require a third or subsequent retake of this seminar, you will be charged the cost, $400.00 (as of April 2015; subject to change).

**Textbooks**

The required textbook for this course is available as an e-text in the WGU library:


**Recommended Textbooks**

The following textbooks are recommended as general references on earth science but are not required.


**Pacing Guide**

Follow the schedule and expectations presented in your seminar. You are expected to engage and participate actively in the conversations and activities. You may work ahead, but you must adhere to the due dates established by the American Museum of Natural History and the course instructors. Begin work on your final project early in the course, and continue working throughout so that you can finish it within six weeks.

The following schedule includes the weekly topics. Required readings and assignments are linked directly from within the course.

- **Week 1**: Our Dynamic Planet
- **Week 2**: How Do We Read the Rocks?
- **Week 3**: How Has Earth Evolved?
- **Week 4**: What Causes Climate Change?
- **Week 5**: Why are there Ocean Basins, Mountains, and Continents?
- **Week 6**: Why is the Earth Habitable?

**Checklist**

AMNH provides a [weekly checklist](#) for you to follow for a quick outline of all the course materials, activities, and assignments. This checklist does not replace the course materials, but does provide you a document to check off items as you complete them. You are expected to use the course readings and videos to aid in your discussion participation and completing your assignments and final project.

**Tips For Success**
The keys for success in these seminars are attendance and participation.

1. **How AMNH assessment works**
   You are assessed based on your participation in discussions, assignments, and the final project. Refer to the [rubric](#) for the course assignments and final project for more information about what is expected. It is important to note that your discussion assessment is based on both the content of your posts and your level of participation. (Quality is more important than quantity, but 35 posts spread over the entire course that expand on the discussion would be an appropriate level of participation.) Your assessment grades can be viewed in your gradebook as soon as they are posted, but it sometimes takes a week or two to get all the grades posted.

   Your final project is due the week after the seminar ends. If you follow the weekly milestones for the project, it should be a rewarding exercise that will be useful in your teaching practice. Your final assessment is emailed to you as a PDF approximately two weeks after its submission due date. That is where you will find the instructors' notes on your final project. Final scores will be submitted directly by AMNH to WGU. If you need your score posted more quickly, once you receive your final score from AMNH you may forward the final assessment report to scores@wgu.edu along with the [Score Report Cover Sheet](#).

2. **Get into the seminar early and often**
   AMNH online seminars are not self-paced, but are asynchronous by week—this is different from the WGU structure to which you are accustomed. There are no required log-in times, but each week has assignments and/or discussions in which you are required to participate. The seminars are not overwhelming if you do not fall behind. It is important to pace yourself through the weeks (especially if you are taking more than one course at a time). For example, a good weekly schedule would be:
   - **Monday and Tuesday**—Read assigned essays and selections from the text.
   - **Wednesday**—Post a response to your readings in the weekly discussion thread, and read over what others have written, making comments as you see fit.
   - **Thursday**—Start working on your assignment for the week, if there is one. Be sure to follow the instructions and [rubric](#), to which your goal is to meet or exceed expectations.
   - **Friday—Sunday**—Go back to the discussion, read follow-up posts, and continue conversations that have developed over the week. Make sure you pay particular attention to questions the instructional team has posted to your comments. You will need to respond to these questions whether or not another student has already done so. Also, finish up your assignment. It is due at 10 am ET Monday following the week it is assigned, so it is recommended that you submit Sunday evening.

   It is a good practice to visit your AMNH seminar and participate at least twice each week. It is not necessary to respond to every thread, but you should keep up with the flow of discussion and meet the requirements of the seminar.
If you have to miss some time, you can always read ahead in the seminar. If you let your instructors know, they can help you come up with a schedule to keep you on top of the material.

3. **Participate in the icebreaker**
   The first week has an "icebreaker" discussion thread that asks you to introduce yourself to your classmates. Please participate in this thread as early as possible—it lets the instructors know your background so they can tailor the experience to you. Reading through this discussion lets you know who else will be in your seminar and helps to familiarize you with the seminar's discussion format.

4. **Email your instructors and/or mentors any time with questions and concerns**
   The instructional team for AMNH seminars is aware that people are coming to the seminar with varying levels of science content knowledge and classroom experience. They are very willing to give you a guiding hand if you feel out of your depth on a particular topic, or if you are confused by an assignment. Your WGU mentor has a good grasp of how the seminars work, and can give you advice on how best to tie your seminar into developing the competency required by WGU.

   Your AMNH instructor will contact your WGU mentor with a progress report if you are struggling. Your WGU mentor can explore ways to fit this seminar into your life. WGU mentors can help—but they cannot help if they do not know there is a problem.

5. **Great learning happens in the discussion forums**
   The readings, videos, and interactives used in AMNH seminars are content rich, but a good deal of learning happens in the discussion forums. This is where you actually have a chance to interact with a PhD scientist who is active in the field, and where you can learn what your classmates think about that week's topic. It is a handy place to pick up extra links that will help you with the material and to work out any problems you may be having. Discussion forums are essential, so don't brush them off! Another important thing to note is that the discussions are 40% of your grade; participation is essential to pass!

6. **IMPORTANT NOTE: AMNH will submit your assignments and final project to TurnItIn (TII) to verify originality.** After completing this course, you may decide to reuse parts of your AMNH assignments in other WGU courses. Because these materials will have been previously submitted to TII, they will be flagged in subsequent TII originality reports as copied content. To make it easier for WGU staff to verify the originality of your work in future TII reports and to avoid authenticity concerns, you **must** include your full name, as it appears in your WGU account, within all of your AMNH assignments as well as any future WGU submissions that include your AMNH work. The upper left corner of your project and assignments or the line directly under the title would be good places to put your full WGU name so it will be easy for WGU staff to find.

**Final Project**
The final project for this course is three lesson plans that you will create, incorporating the information that you learned throughout the course. It is essential that you feel comfortable creating lesson plans prior to enrolling in this course. If you are unsure how to create a lesson plan, you may want to discuss with your program mentor about enrolling in a course that covers lesson plan preparation prior to enrolling in this AMNH seminar.