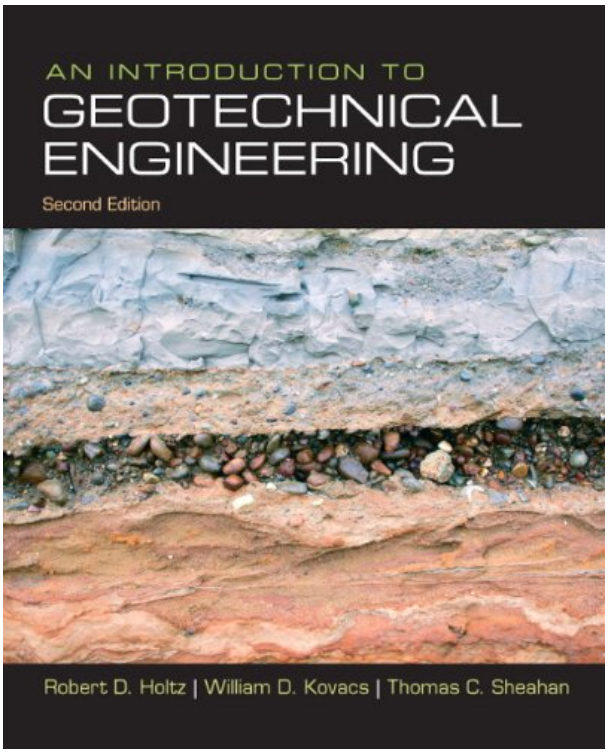
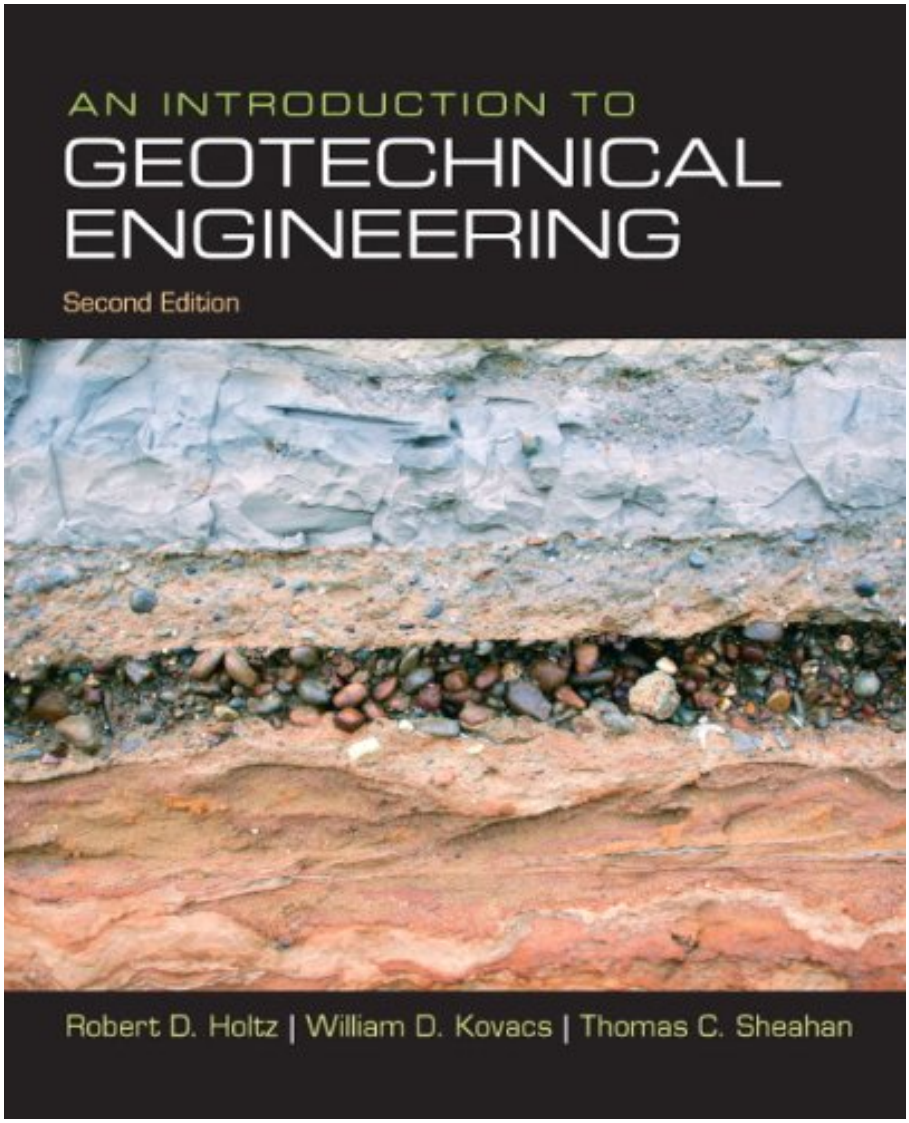
AN INTRODUCTION TO GEOTECHNICAL ENGINEERING (2ND EDITION) BY ROBERT D. HOLTZ, WILLIAM D. KOVACS, THOMAS C. SHEAHAN





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An Introduction to Geotechnical Engineering offers a descriptive, elementary introduction to geotechnical engineering with applications to civil engineering practice.

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Most helpful customer reviews

20 of 22 people found the following review helpful.
Best introductory book on geotechnical engineering I've seen
By A Customer
I used this book in my first soils course in college. Thirteen years after graduating I still use on a regular basis. The book starts from the basics and covers many topics which are quite advanced for an introductory book. The writing is concise and easily understood. I highly recommend the book.

14 of 15 people found the following review helpful.

2nd Edition Surpasses 1st Edition
By K. Suter
This review is for the 2nd edition of the outstanding geotechnical engineering text "An Introduction to Geotechnical Engineering". Other reviews I've seen appear (based on their dates) to be for the 1st edition. My focus in this review will be to point out additions to the 2nd edition that make it of interest while trying to mention the general contents of the book. While a bit lengthy, this review is not exhaustive (it would take a book), so if your favorite topic isn't emphasized, it may well be included, but not a current hot button for me.

In summary, the 2nd edition retains all of the features that made the 1st edition such an outstanding text, while adding key elements that make the book come closer to living up to its broad title of being an introduction to geotechnical engineering. As noted by one reviewer, the 1st edition was, more than anything, an excellent soil mechanics text. It still retains much of that character, so if you want a foundation design text, look elsewhere. However, as a geotechnical engineer, I must point out that an understanding the concepts expressed in this book is critical to performing foundation design, slope stability, or retaining structure analyses that are of any value. As with the 1st edition, there are topics treated that take this book well beyond an introductory text.

As noted by reviewers of the 1st edition, the clear, insightful, discussions of shear strength, pore pressure parameters, and stress paths alone set this book apart and make it worthy of purchase. To that I would add the discussion of consolidation testing as well as estimation of magnitude and time rate of consolidation settlement. I sat in Prof. Holtz classroom at Purdue in 1982, and consequently have my bias. I've also been a practicing geotechnical engineer continuously since that time and have worn out the cover of my 1st edition.

Many of the chapters, as you would expect, follow the 1st edition. However, there has been some thoughtful reorganization and the addition of new topics. The key additions, from my perspective, are a chapter on Geology, Landforms, and Origins of Materials and the general treatment throughout the text of rock and intermediate geomaterials which was lacking in the 1st edition.

Chapter 3: Geology, Landforms, and the Origin of Geomaterials is an excellent primer on a variety of topics including important descriptions and discussions of geomorphology. The topics covered include development of karst, other residual soil profiles, gravity processes (landslides), surface water and erosional processes, coastal processes, glacial processes, eolian (wind) processes, as well as volcanic, tectonic, and plutonic processes.

The 1st edition chapter on Clay Minerals and Soil Structure has been expanded to include rock and transitional materials (intermediate geomaterials) and rock mass classification systems, as well as touching on some "special soil deposits" such as organics, marine soils, and waste soils. While these "special" materials are not addressed in depth, references are provided to key literature for additional study. This is a feature that is present throughout the book and is invaluable in terms of directing the reader to essential literature without having to personally develop a list of the best sources of information.

The chapters on soil classification, compaction, hydrostatic water in soil and rock, and fluid flow in soil and rock have all been retained. I've not examined them to see what changes have been made, but the key elements all appear to be included.

The consolidation settlement chapter has been re-labeled compressibility of soil and rock. Thankfully it still contains the in-depth treatment of consolidation. It also adds a discussion of the Janbu Tangent Modulus Method to expand the settlement discussion beyond consolidation. The excellent chapter on time rate of

consolidation has also been retained.

Stress distribution and settlement was included in the consolidation settlement chapter in the 1st edition. It has been moved to its own chapter in the 2nd edition and has been expanded with a broader discussion of elastic settlement. Once again a good listing of select references for more thorough treatment of this topic is provided.

The first edition chapter 10 which addressed the Mohr Circle, failure theories, and stress paths now addresses both soil and rock as well as a discussion of field and lab tests for soil and rock strength and modulus determination. The discussion of stress paths has been moved to a new Chapter 13 to be discussed, below.

The unsurpassed shear strength chapter which rightly has received much attention is still included.

It is followed by a new Chapter 13 entitled Advanced Topics in Shear Strength of Soils and Rocks. This is where the thorough discussion of stress paths can be found. This chapter also contains a section on Critical State Soil Mechanics which is new to the 2nd edition. There are also discussions of soil moduli, constitutive modeling, and a wide ranging series of other topics related to shear strength. Some that caught my eye include: strain rate effects, unsaturated soil strength and matric suction including the soil-water characteristic curve, dynamic properties of soils in terms of modulus and strength, as well as failure theories for rock - with emphasis on Hoek-Brown. As you might expect, with the wide range of topics,the key references cited for additional study are very helpful. Still, an excellent introduction (and often more) is provided.

The appendices which include derivation of 1) Laplace's Equation, 2) Terzaghi's One Dimensional Consolidation Equation, and 3) Pore Pressure Parameters (both Skempton and Henkel) are retained from the 1st edition. Lastly, the "Method of Fragments" for quick, approximate evaluation of confined groundwater flow which was in the seepage chapter of the 1st edition is now in a new appendix where it is very accessible.

If you've read this far, you care enough about the subject matter that I highly recommend this book to you.

6 of 6 people found the following review helpful.
Still the best book available for theoretical soil mechanics
By Roger W. Meier
I was first introduced to this book as a grad student in the early 80s and I still use it to teach my graduate soil mechanics course today. It is as comprehensive as any soil mechanics text out there. Their treatment of shear strength is magnificent and worth the price of the book alone. There is a tremendous amount of information crammed into this book, but it remains very readable throughout.

Some of the other reviews miss the essential point that Holtz and Kovacs is a pure theoretical soil mechanics text, not an applied soils text. You won't get much use out of it on the PE exam, but I guarantee it will help you to better understand soil behavior.

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