



UNIVERSITY OF MISKOLC

**FACULTY OF
EARTH AND ENVIRONMENTAL
SCIENCE AND ENGINEERING**

SOIL MECHANICS

Hydrogeological engineering MSc.

2026/27 I. semester

COMMUNICATION FILE OF THE COURSE

**University of Miskolc
Faculty of Earth and Environmental Science and Engineering
Institute of Water and Environmental Management**

Contents

1. Course description, Responsible Instructor, Number of lectures and seminars, Credits
2. Topics of the subject (by hours)
3. Sample of a mid-term exam
4. Topics of the exam
5. Others

1. Course description, Responsible Instructor, Number of lectures and seminars, Credits

Course Title: Soil mechanics Instructor: Dr. Tamás KÁNTOR associate professor	Code: MFKHT710008 Responsible department/institute: Department of Hydrogeology and Engineering Geology Type of course: Compulsory
Position in curriculum (which semester): 1	Pre-requisites (if any): -
No. of contact hours per week (lecture + seminar): 2+1	Type of Assessment (examination/ practical mark / other): exam
Credits: 4	Course: full time
Course Description: The students will be familiar with the basic concepts of soil mechanics. They will learn about the determination soil parameters, soil classification. After a short review the students will study the main topics of applied soil mechanics, in the interest of being able to manage interactions between buildings/objects and subsoil, to solve, handle or expertise occurring problems (construction, building, damages). The short curriculum of the subject: Origin of the soils, Soil as a three phase, Classification of different kind of soils, Field investigation methods of soils, Compression behavior of soils, Consolidation of soils, Shear strength of soils, Stress field investigations of subsoil. Determination of earth pressure, active and passive earth pressure.	
Competencies to evolve: Knowledge: T3 – Thorough understanding of the concepts and principles of engineering geology and civil engineering and their processes. T4 – Have a working knowledge of computer-aided design and analysis T7 – Have knowledge of a wide range of problem-solving techniques for research or academic work. Ability: K7 – Prepared to identify and solve geotechnical problems. K12 – Ability to work in compliance with EU legislation, to cooperate with foreign partners to solve the tasks required by the EU Water Framework Directive K13 – The ability to independently participate in and manage research, development and expertise in the field of hydrogeology K15 – Ability to solve complex problems in a flexible way through creative problem solving, to work in a team, to think and cooperate effectively with representatives of other disciplines (e.g. environment, quality, consumer protection, human health, construction, etc.) Attitude: A2 – Open and sensitive to problems and sustainability issues related to the environment and its elements A9 – In addition to his technical and engineering background, he also has an interest in science. Autonomy and responsibility: F1 – Act independently and proactively to solve professional problems. F2 – Have a responsible attitude towards the environment. F5 – Committed to sustainable natural resource management practices. F6 – He/she is responsible claims in expert opinions, professional judgements and for the work carried out under his/her supervision.	

Assessment and grading:

To obtain the signature, you must meet the requirements for the mid-term exam and the assignment (minimum 60% performance). Students will be assessed with using the following elements.

Reports:	20 %
Mid-term exam	30 %
Exam	50 %
Total	100%

Grading scale:

% value	Grade
85 -100%	5 (excellent)
75 – 84%	4 (good)
65 - 74%	3 (satisfactory)
50 - 64%	2 (pass)
0 - 49%	1 (failed)

Compulsory or recommended literature resources:

- ② J.A. Knappett, R.F. Craig: Craig's soil mechanics, Eight edition, Spon Press, London 2012.
- ② Atkinson, J.: The Mechanics of Soils and Foundations. Taylor and Francis, London, 2007.
- ② Jonathan Knappett, R.F. Craig: Craig's Soil Mechanics, Eighth Edition, 2012.
- ② Braja M. D.: Advanced soil mechanics, Spon Press, 2008
- ② Smith G. N., Smith I. Smith G. N.: Elements of soil mechanics, Wiley-Blackwell, 1998
- ② Mitchell, J. K., Soga, K.: Fundamentals of Soil Behaviour, John Wiley, 2005

2. Topics of the subject (by hours)

Soil mechanics.
Topics of the subject (Plan of the semester)
Autumn semester
Hydrogeological engineering MSc, 1. semester

Date	Topic of lecture and seminar
2026.09.07.	Introduction (requirements, thematic, time schedule, Soil mechanics)
2026.09.14.	Soil as a three phase system, Basic characteristics of soils, origin of soils, structure of soils
2026.09.21.	Site investigation methods
2026.09.28.	<i>Field practice</i> : sampling, sounding, penetrometer test, light drop weight tester
2026.10.05.	Classification of inorganic soils, Granular soils, Sieve test, Hydrometer test
2026.10.12.	Classification of inorganic soils, Cohesive soils, Consistency limits
2026.10.19.	Consultation
2026.10.26.	Study break – Rectoral break
2026.11.02.	<i>Laboratory practice</i> : Consistency limits, Hydrometer
2026.11.09.	Shear strength of soils, Compaction of soils, Proctor test, field methods
2026.11.16.	<i>Laboratory practice</i> : Triaxial test, Uni-axial test, Direct shear test
2026.11.23.	Stresses in soils
2026.11.30.	Midterm exam 1 st chance
2026.12.07.	Midterm exam 2 nd chance

3) Sample of a mid-term exam

Soil mechanics
Mid-term exam
2018-12-03

1. We had a cylindrical sample from clay ($\rho_{\text{solid}} = 2,71 \text{ g/cm}^3$) with the following parameters: the diameter is 8 cm, the height is 15 cm, wet mass is 1111 g. After drying (24h, 105 °C) the mass reduces to 1011 g. Calculate the value of void ration / porosity / wet, dry and saturated densities / saturation / ration of liquids, solids and air in the system.
2. There is a cylindrical soil sample with the following parameters $D = 4,0 \text{ cm}$, $h = 6,0 \text{ cm}$. During an uniaxial measurement we measured the axial displacement (Δh) and the changes of diameter (D).

1. step: strains were linear with the stresses.

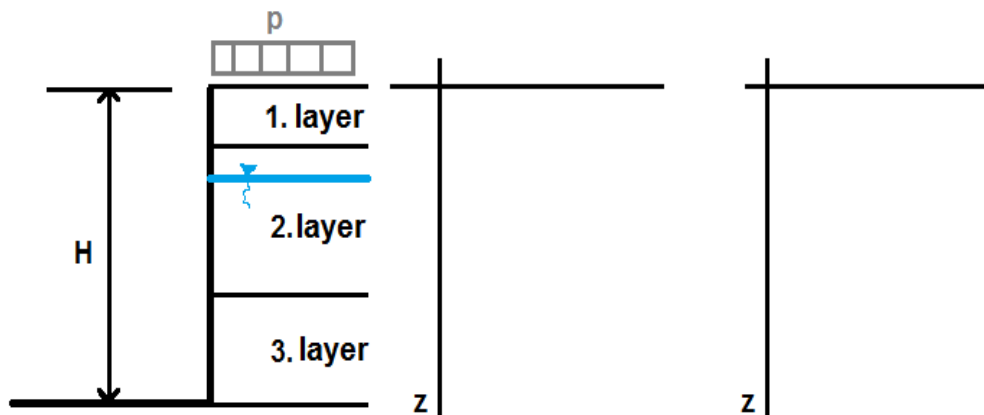
$$F_1 = 210 \text{ N}, \quad \Delta h_1 = 3,70 \text{ mm}, \quad D_1 = 41,2 \text{ mm}$$

2. step: at the end of the step the sample was broken

$$F_2 = 470 \text{ N}, \quad D_2 = 43,1 \text{ mm}, \quad \alpha = 59^\circ$$

Determine the elastic properties (Young moduli, Poisson ratio), and the shear parameters (Internal friction and cohesion) of the soil!

3. Describe the geostatic earth pressure in the following geological structure with given external stress (p)! Calculate the total, effective and neutral stresses and describe these on the graphs.



	soil	$h_i \text{ (m)}$	$\rho_i \text{ (g/cm}^3\text{)}$
1. layer	gravel	0,7	1,860
2. layer	dry sand	0,3	1,950
	wet sand	1,0	2,050
3. layer	silt	0,8	2,100
p =	30 kN/m ²		

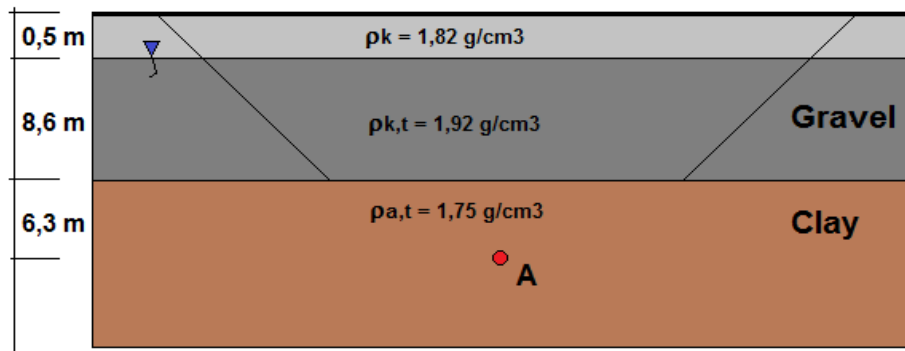
4. After a Proctor test we can describe the results with the following equation. Calculate the optimal water content and the maximum dry density.

$$y = -0,0112x^2 + 0,1471x + 1,0010$$

5. Calculate the points of grain size distribution curve of mixture of A and B soil if the mixing ratio is 2/5!

d (mm)	S%		
	Soils		
	A	B	Mixture
0032	100		
16	93		
8	79	100	
4	51	98	
2	33	91	
1	17	83	
0,5	11	74	
0,25	7	55	
0,125	3	36	
0,063	1	19	
0,05	0	11	
0,02		5	
0,01		1	
0,002		0	

6. Determine the stress (vertical and horizontal) situations in the A point before and after of mining out the gravel layer. (total, effective and neutral stresses). Internal friction on clay is 21° .



Key of mid-term exam

1.

void ration	$e =$	1,021 -
porosity	$n =$	0,505 -
wet density	$\rho_w =$	1,474 g/cm ³
dry density	$\rho_d =$	1,341 g/cm ³
saturated density	$\rho_{sr} =$	1,846 g/cm ³
saturation	$S_r =$	0,263 -
ration of liquids	$l\% =$	0,133 -
ration of solids	$s\% =$	0,495 -
ration of air	$a\% =$	0,373 -

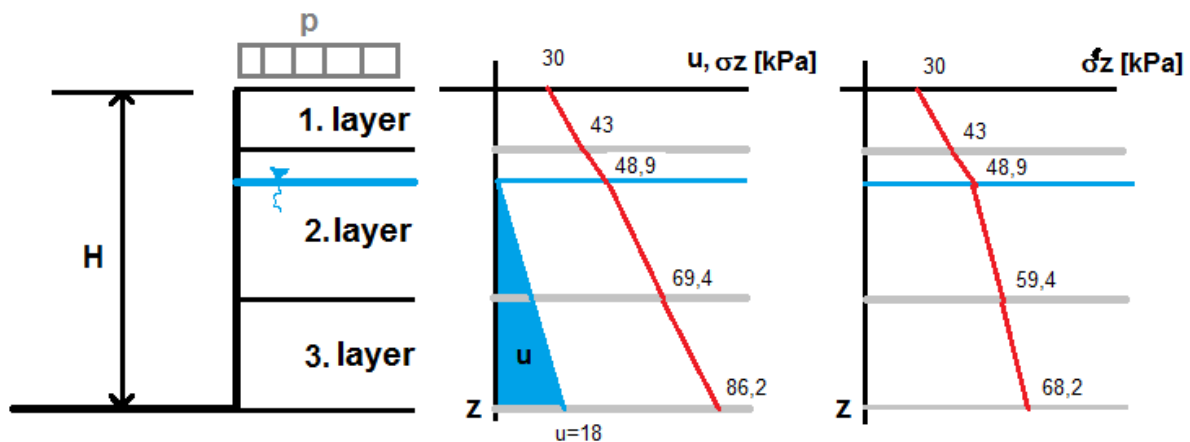
2.

$$\begin{aligned}\sigma_{z1} &= 157,5 \text{ kN/m}^2 & \varepsilon_{z1} &= 6,2 \% \\ \sigma_{z2} &= 322,1 \text{ kN/m}^2 & \varepsilon_{z1} &= -3,0 \%\end{aligned}$$

$$\begin{aligned}\text{internal friction} & \Phi = 28^\circ \\ \text{cohesion} & c = 96,8 \text{ kN/m}^2\end{aligned}$$

$$\begin{aligned}\text{Young modulie} & E = 2554,4 \text{ kN/m}^2 \\ \text{Poisson number} & \mu = 0,486 -\end{aligned}$$

3.



4.

$$\begin{aligned}w_{opt} &= 6,57 \% \\ \rho_{D \max} &= 1,484 \text{ g/cm}^3\end{aligned}$$

5.

d (mm)	S%		
	Soils		
	A	B	Mixture
0032	100		100
16	93		98
8	79	100	94
4	51	98	84,6
2	33	91	74,4
1	17	83	64,1
0,5	11	74	56
0,25	7	55	41,3
0,125	3	36	26,6
0,063	1	19	13,9
0,05	0	11	7,9
0,02		5	3,6
0,01		1	0,7
0,002		0	0

6.

Before mining

$\sigma_{\text{vert. A}} = 284,5 \text{ kPa}$

$u_A = 149 \text{ kPa}$

$\sigma'_{\text{vert. A}} = 135,5 \text{ kPa}$

$\sigma'_{\text{horiz. A}} = 86,9 \text{ kPa}$

$\sigma_{\text{horiz. A}} = 235,9 \text{ kPa}$

After mining

$\sigma_{\text{vert. A}} = 196,3 \text{ kPa}$

$u_A = 149 \text{ kPa}$

$\sigma'_{\text{vert. A}} = 47,3 \text{ kPa}$

$\sigma'_{\text{horiz. A}} = 51,3 \text{ kPa}$

$\sigma_{\text{horiz. A}} = 200,3 \text{ kPa}$

4) Sample of an exam

MISKOLCI EGYETEM
Környezetgazdálkodási Intézet
Hidrogeológiai-Mérnökgeológiai
Intézeti Tanszék



UNIVERSITY OF MISKOLC
Institute of Environmental Management
Department of Hydrogeology and
Engineering Geology

SOIL MECHANICS Exam 2018-01-09

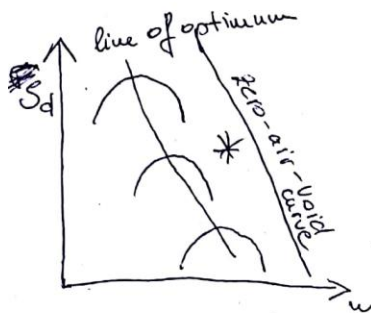
5

Answer shortly (10-15 sentences) the following questions! If possible, draw a diagram, or a curve for demonstration!

1. Describe the compaction of soils! What is the Proctor test? Show the parts of a Proctor curve! What is the use of the Proctor curve on the construction site?
2. How do you perform a triaxial test? What type of triaxial tests could we define? Which parameters are measured, which parameters are given? Draw the result of a triaxial test!
3. Describe the soil as a 3-phase system! What kind of parameters could we calculate from the ratios of phases? Define and describe minimum 6 of them!
4. How do you define the vertical stresses in soils? What are the total, effective and neutral stresses?
5. What are the basics of classification of granular soils? Describe the measuring methods and results!

- 5, granular soil:
- there is no or minimal cohesion btw. the particles
 - the surface forces are dominant. (loose sediment)
 - until 0,063 mm grain size diameter → sieve analysis
 - or the silt content is > 10%.
 - if the general grain size diameter is lower than 0,063, need to use hydrometraction test.
 - in case of sieve analysis, the nominal grain size is the hole diameter of the sieve
 - in case of hydrometraction test, the falling/settling particle diameter is the diameter of a settling sphere (with same settling velocity), where Stokes' law is valid:
- $$v = \frac{g \cdot (S_s - S_f) \cdot d^2}{18\eta}$$
- d = diameter (mm) of grain
 η = dyn. viscosity
 g = grav. standard $\frac{m}{s^2}$ (9.81)
 S_s = solid particles density (g/cc)
 S_f = fluid density (g/cc)

- Sieve analysis:
- sieve column/series with decreasing hole diameter
 - shaking table
 - falling through and remained % of the initial mass of sample



zero air-void curve: the pores are fulfilled with water (can't reach)
line of optimum: the connection of the $S_{d,max}$ values, close to parallel with the zero-air-void curve

Proctor - test:

2 types of test $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} d_{max} < 5 \text{ mm} \text{ Proctor test no. of parts} = 3 \\ d_{max} > 5 \text{ mm CBR-test no of parts} = 5 \end{array} \right.$

Original proctor test (when the construction equipment were smaller)

$$m_{\text{hammer}} = 2,45 \text{ kg}$$

drop height = 0,3 m

no. of blows: 25 or 55

no of layers: 3

Modified Proctor test (after the 2nd WW)

$$m_{\text{hammer}} = 4,54 \text{ kg} \quad \text{no of layers} = 5$$

drop height = 0,4 m

no of blows = 25 / 55

In course of Proctor test, need to know:

- mass of hammer
- no. of layers
- drop height
- drop no.

Coeff of consolidation:

$$C_u = \frac{2 \cdot E_{oed}}{\gamma \cdot v} \quad (\text{m}^2/\text{s})$$

Compressional index:

$$C_c = \frac{\Delta e}{\log\left(\frac{e_1}{e_2}\right)}$$

Swelling index:

$$C_s = \frac{-\Delta e}{\log\left(\frac{e_1}{e_2}\right)}$$

Relative compr.:

$$RC = \frac{S_d}{S_{d,max}}$$

$$\text{Relative density: } I_d = \frac{e_{max} - e}{e_{max} - e_{min}}$$

Proctor-test:
hammer
fulfill with sample



3/6 parts pot



Compaction at construction:

- permeability & porosity / void ratio decreasing
- increasing shear strength, increasing bearing capacity

* 1-peak curve - med / high plast. clay

$$w_L 30-70\%$$

1,5-peak curve - low plast. clay

$$w_L < 30\% + \text{gran.}$$

2-peak curve - low / extr. high plast. clay

$$w_L < 30 \quad w_L > 70\%$$

"No" curve (characteristic) - extr. high plast. clay

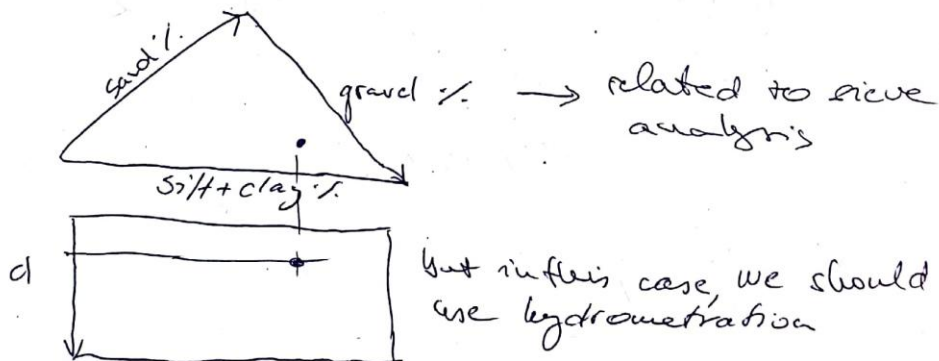
$$w_L > 70\%$$

Hydrometry test:

- aerometer
- 50 g sample is mixed with water, where coagulant ~~is~~ is applied
- by the Stokes's law, the larger particles are settling down faster
- reading the ~~aerometer~~ (density) at given time intervals

Results:

- the results are plotted in a grain-size distribution (GSD) plot
- X-axis: grain-size (log)
- Y-axis: % of remained ^{weight} percent
- curvature, inclination, are important in course of interpretation
- more parameters and the sample name can be given or calculated, like
- unproportionality coeff. $= \frac{d_{60}}{d_{10}} = C_u$
- curvature coeff. $= \frac{d_{30}}{d_{60} \cdot d_{10}} = C_c$
- Mean grain size $= d_{50} = d_m$
- effective grain size $= d_{10} = d_{eff}$
- naming by ternary diagram, and European Standards

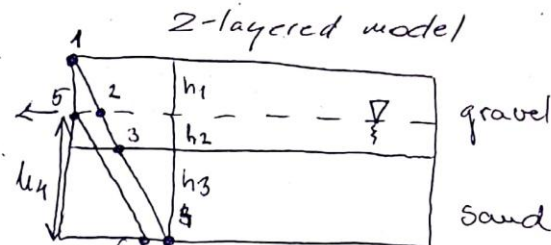


4. $S \cdot g \cdot h = \sigma_{\text{total}}$
total stress
for model

h = height of soil or model (m)
 g = grav. standard (9.81 m/s^2)
 S = density of soil (g/cc)

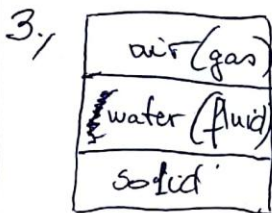
$S \cdot g \cdot h = u$
~~total~~ neutral stress
for water (fully sat.)
 $\sigma_{\text{eff}} = \sigma_{\text{total}} - u$

they are
affect to each other
in reverse way



σ_b {
1 = 0
2 = $S \cdot g \cdot h_1$
3 = $S \cdot g \cdot h_1 + S \cdot g \cdot h_2$
4 = $S \cdot g \cdot h_1 + S \cdot g \cdot h_2 + S \cdot g \cdot h_3$

u {
5 = 0
6 = $S \cdot g \cdot h_4$
($h_2 + h_3$)



$V_{\text{air}} + V_{\text{water}} + V_{\text{solid}} = 1$

in case of 3-phase system

saturation: $\frac{V_{\text{water}}}{V_{\text{pores}}} = S$ (%) $\cdot 100\%$
the pore is not full-saturated
space. $S < 1$ or $< 100\%$

porosity: $\frac{V_{\text{void}}}{V_{\text{full}}} = n$ (%) $\cdot 100\%$

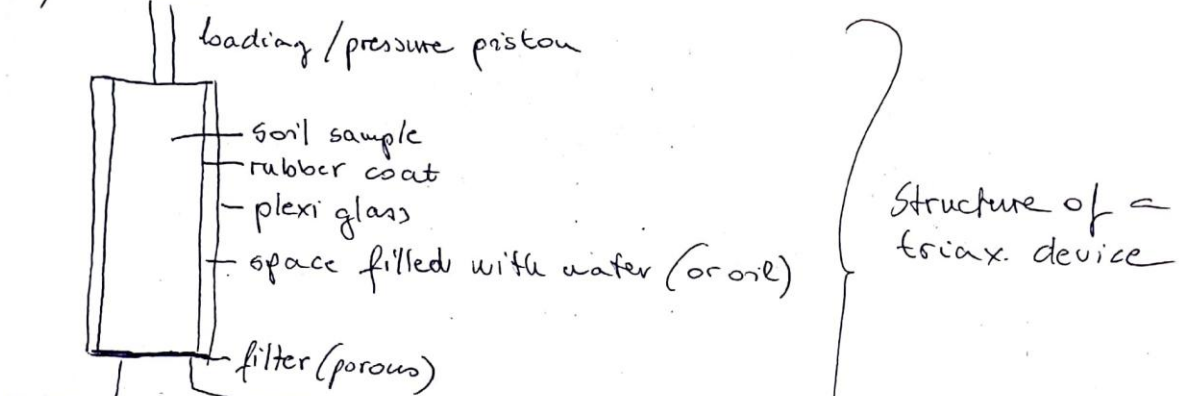
V = volume (L^3)
 m = mass (g or kg)

Void ratio = $\frac{V_{\text{void}}}{V_{\text{solid}}} = e$ (-)

moisture content: $\frac{m_{\text{water}}}{m_{\text{solid}}} = w$ (-)

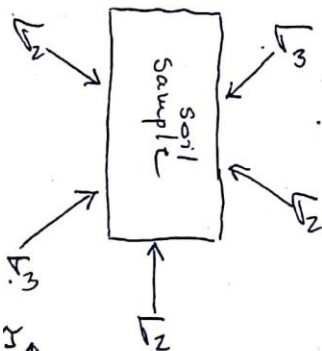
ratio of phases' volume $\frac{V_{\text{air}}}{V_{\text{total}}} + \frac{V_{\text{water}}}{V_{\text{total}}} + \frac{V_{\text{solid}}}{V_{\text{total}}} = 1$ (-)

2. Triaxial test



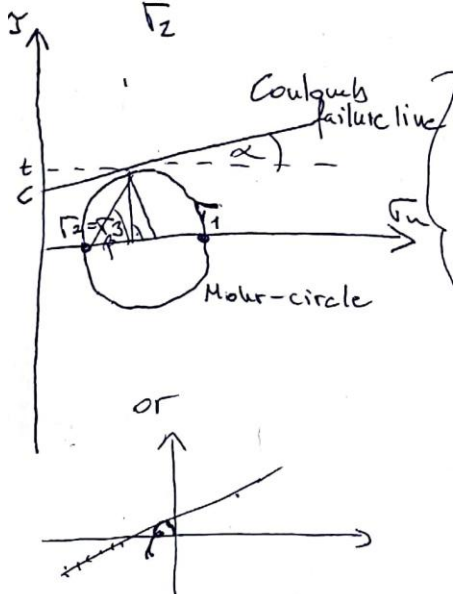
drain pipe for porewater → methods: - uncons. undrained (quick) UU
- cons. undrained (quick) CU
- cons. drained (slow) CD

drain pipe for cell water



stress field for triax. test

where $\sigma_2 = \sigma_3$ and $\sigma_1 > \sigma_2 = \sigma_3$



plot for the measured results

σ_n = normal stress (kPa)

τ = shear stress (kPa)

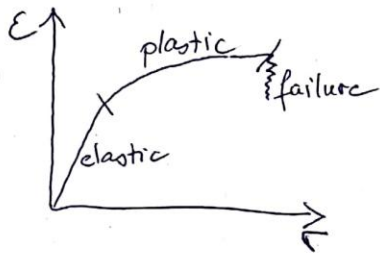
c = cohesion (kPa)

ϕ = internal friction angle ($^\circ$) or θ

β = angle of failure plane ($^\circ$) or θ

Steps of measurement:

- fill the sample into the sample holder in triax. device (dry, wet, compacted, uncomp.)
- close the system, apply one of them: UU, CU, CD
- give the expected τ (N) values, which will be stresses after $\tau = \frac{F}{A}$ where A is the surface of sample
- the sample will be pressed until a given τ values or until failure
- the Coulumb failure curve is valid:



elastic: the sample can get back the initial shape, no remained deformation

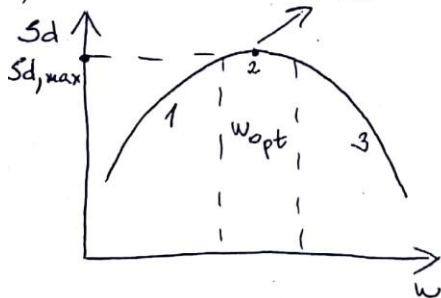
plastic: the deformation is remained

- if we are in the elastic zone, the triax - measurement is repeated more times with different τ_1, τ_2, τ_3 values because of the rubber coat which get back/help to receive the initial ~~shape~~ and shape

If the sample is failed



1. Proctor - test we are want to reach the $S_d, \max$ and the related w_{opt}



S_d = dry density

w = moisture content

at construction site:

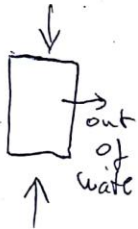
max. compressibility of soil at a given moisture content

- 1: the increasing moisture content can help by lubricating the particles ordering to a denser state
- 2: denser state, at a given moisture content
- 3: the increasing moisture content is decreasing the density by water replacing the solid particles ($\sim$ liquid phase)

Types of settlement

1. Immediate compression
 - no volume change
2. Primary compression / consolidation
 - squeezing of water
 - dissipation of pore water pressure
 - development of eff. stress
3. Secondary compression
 -
4. Failure

Terzaghi: - vertically compression and vertically volume change only



- fully saturated
- Darcy is valid
- incompressible the water and the solid
- homogeneous sample

5. Others

During the exams using of mobile phone, smart devices, notes or copies of books are not acceptable. Violation of the examination order entails the suspension and completion of the writing of the exam.