

Response to Summer Reading

Blog Posts on the *The Big Necessity*

CENG340—Introduction to Environmental Engineering

Fall 2013

Learning Objectives

1. Develop an appreciation of the impact of civil and environmental engineering on society and the environment.
2. Engage in an intellectual discussion with your peers about the topics raised by the author.

Rationale

In her book *The Big Necessity—the World of Human Waste and Why It’s Important*, Rose George covers a wide range of topics, all related to one of the central themes of this course: what to do with human waste. She describes the miles of underground sewers in London, open defecation in the slums of Mumbai, and the “most expensive toilet in the world,” which was constructed for the U.S. Space Station. I chose this book, because almost all of the chapters (except, perhaps, the one about the fancy Japanese toilets) remind me how civil and environmental engineers have improved our lives, and, on the other hand, the problems that existing engineering designs don’t address. My hope is that our discussions of *The Big Necessity*— on a blog and in class—will remind you of the real world applications of environmental engineering.

Due Dates

1. First blog post is due on Friday 9/6 by midnight.
2. Second blog post is due on Friday 10/4 by midnight.
3. Third blog post is due on Friday 10/25 by midnight.
4. First response to one of your classmates’ blog posts (on a chapter you did not write about) is due on Friday 9/20 by midnight.
5. Second response to one of your classmates’ blog posts (or a response to a response) is due on Friday 11/8 by midnight.

Assignment

1. Write three blog posts (**300–500 words each**) on three chapters of your choice from the *The Big Necessity*. In each case, you should address at least one of the following prompts, but feel free to comment on other issues raised by the author:
 - How did the environmental engineering technology described in this chapter change peoples live?
 - How did the engineering technology described in this chapter protect the environment?
 - Imagine the world without the technology described in this chapter?
 - What can civil and environmental engineers do to alleviate the problems raised in this chapter?
2. Write two responses (**150–300 words each**) to one of your classmates blog posts. You are welcome to agree or disagree with the piece you are responding to, but make sure you draw on the text (i.e., *The Big Necessity*) in your response.