

Hydrate-Bearing Sediments from Deepwater GOM *Physical Properties*

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Key Points

GC 955 Expedition in 2017

- International collaboration
- Test pressure core technology for material characterization

Geomechanical behavior

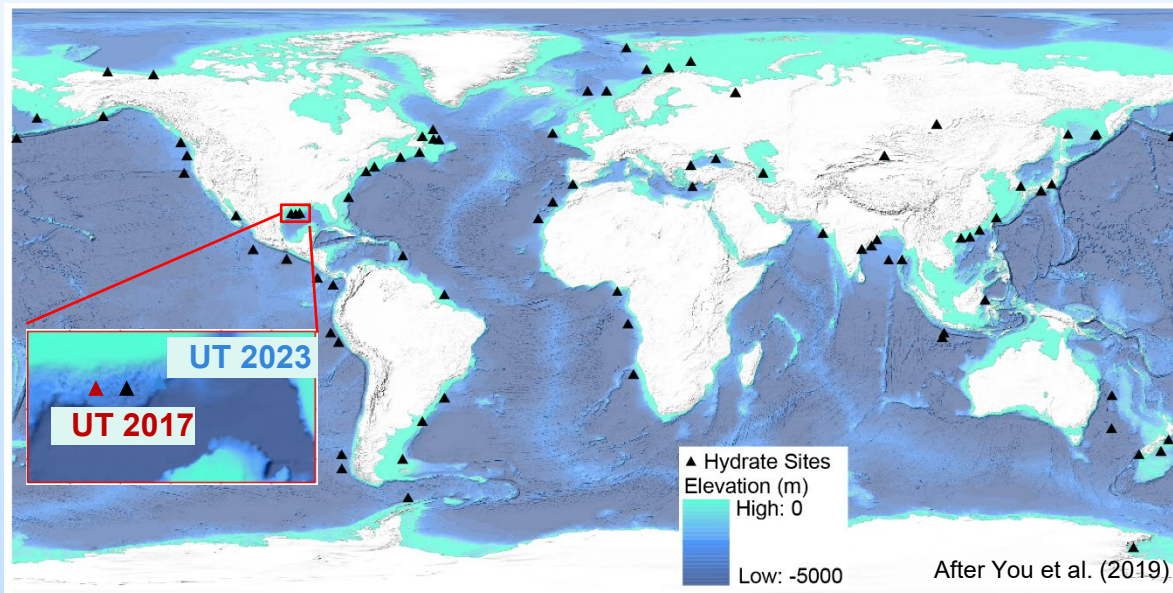
- Hydrates are visco-plastic materials
- Stress and compression are time-dependent

Water relative permeability (k_{rw})

- Pressure cores show higher k_{rw} vs. synthetic samples
- Long-term storage causes hydrate dissolution and explains k_{rw} trends

CH₄ Hydrates = ~20% of Organic Carbon

Natural hydrates - deep sea water & permafrost



Energy



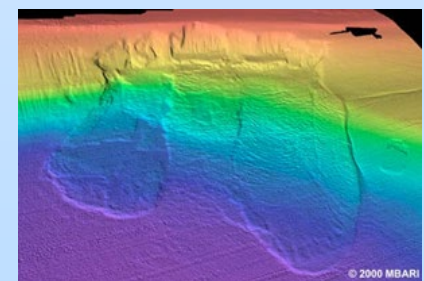
NYtimes

Global warming



USA Today

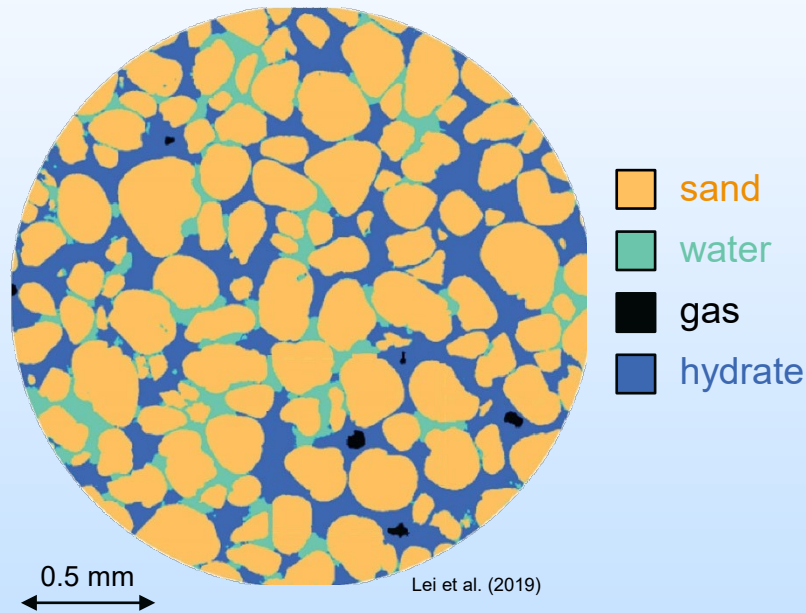
Landslides



MBARI

Hydrates – What is Special?

Composite porous media
grains + water + gas + hydrate



Pressure cores
needed for representative properties



Pressure core
in-situ sediment fabric

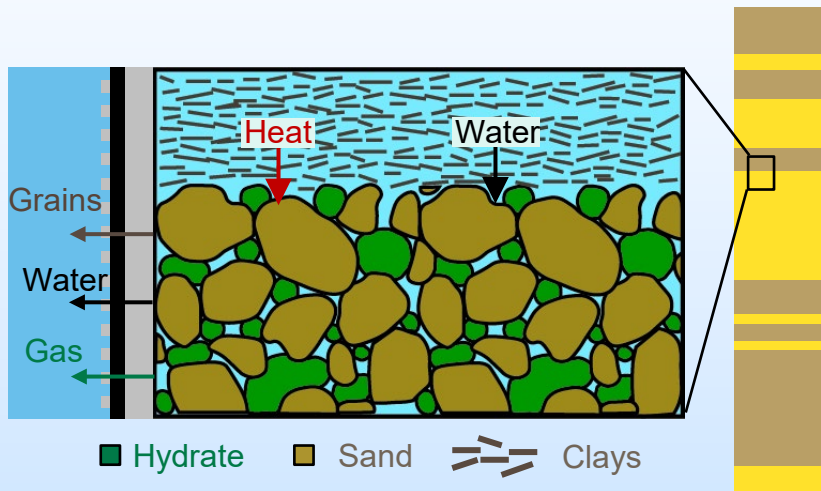


Conventional core
mousse-like texture

- **Measurements?** → challenging (high pressure & low temperature)
- **Typical models?** → not realistic for hydrates
- **Gas production?** → complex THCM processes

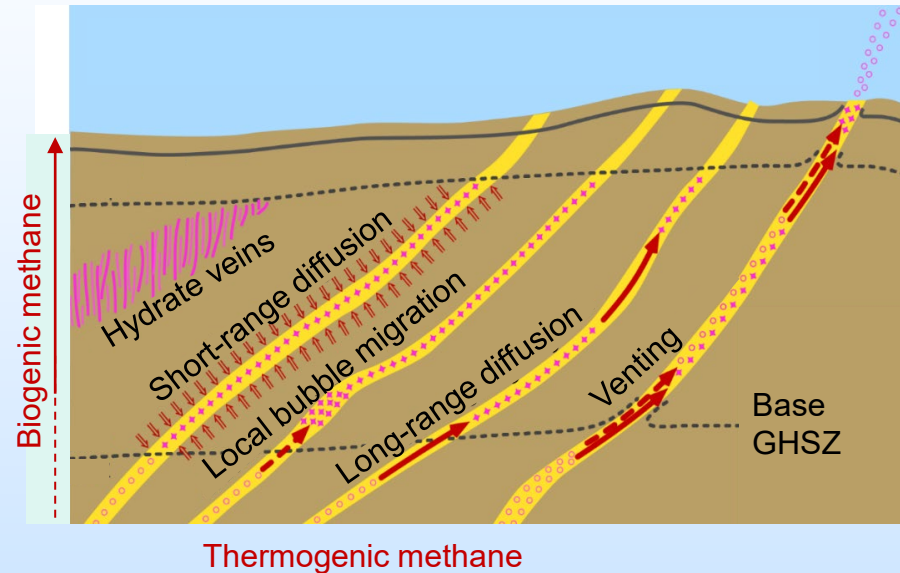
UT-GOM2: Reservoir & Carbon Cycle

Reservoir System



Production - reservoir models

Basin System

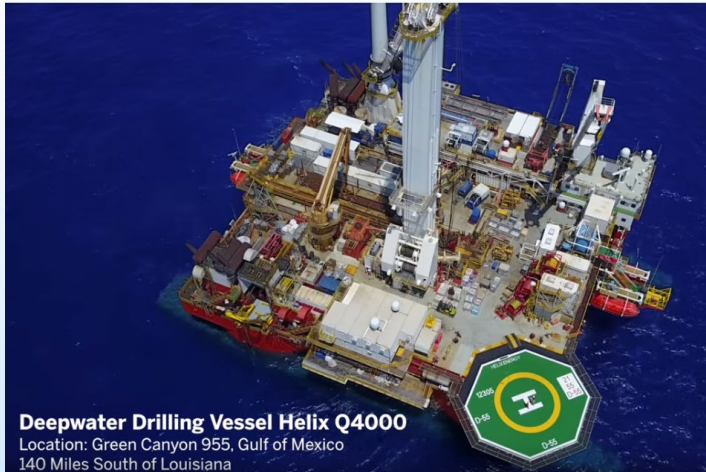


Interpretation - microbial factory & transport
- carbon cycle

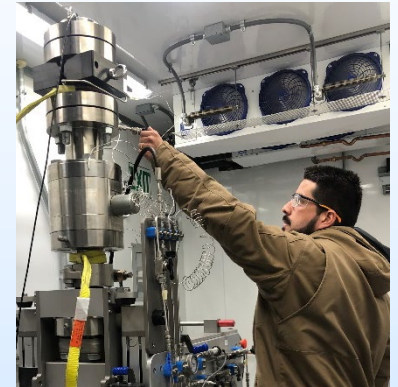
Characterization: saturation, composition, age, texture, pore chemistry
Material behavior: permeability, compression, strength

UT-GOM2-1 - 2017 Expedition

Green Canyon 955



Technology



Two GC955 AAPG volumes

International collaboration



GC 955 Science – International Effort



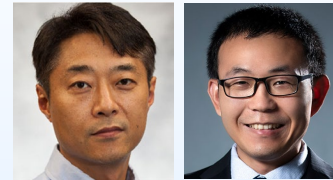
Pressure cores & depressurized samples sent to multiple institutions:
Geomechanics, Petrophysics, Sedimentology, X-ray

GC 955 Science – International Effort

UT Austin



NETL



Lamont



USGS



OSU



UW



JAIST



GaTech



Ohio

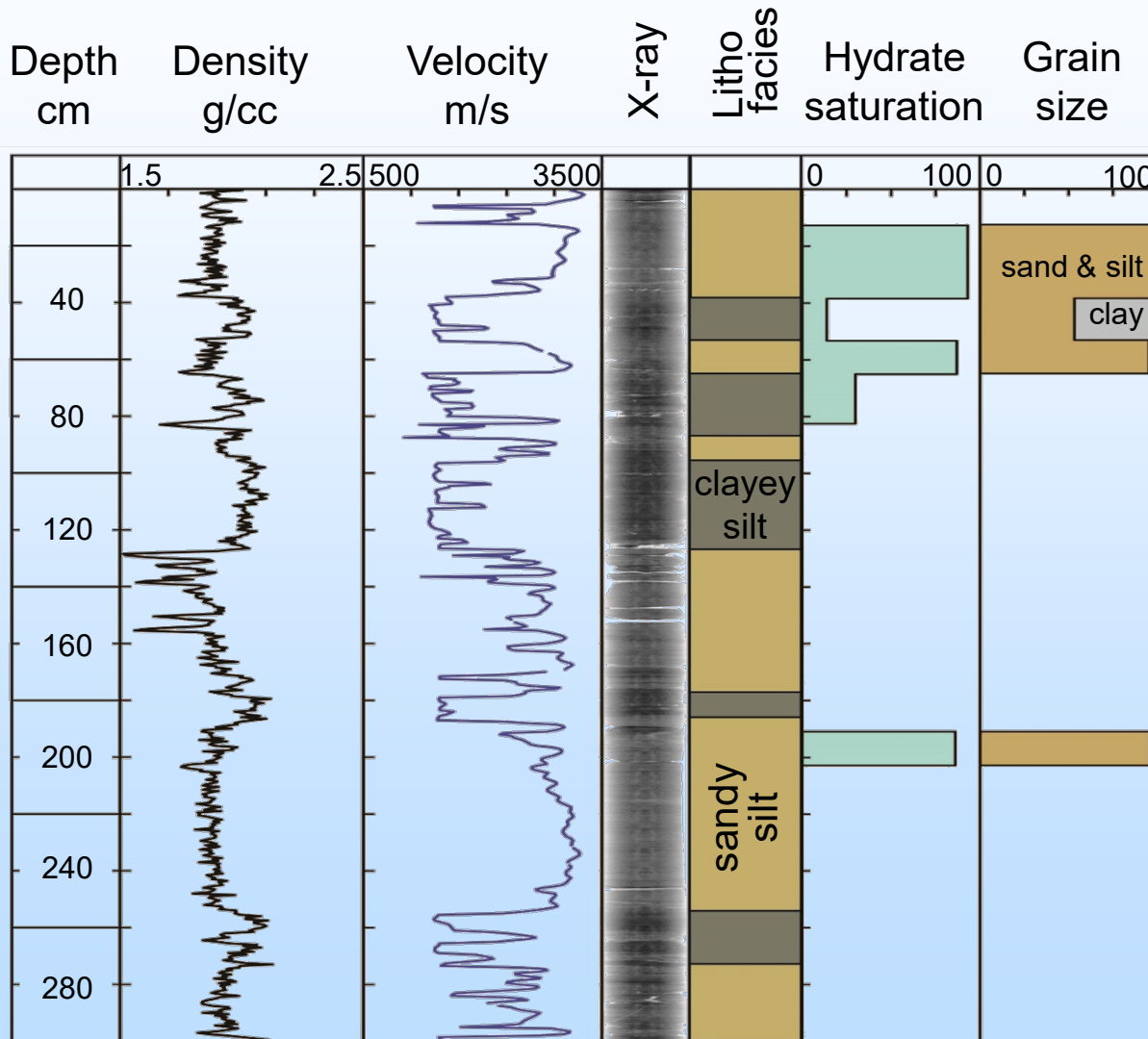


UNH



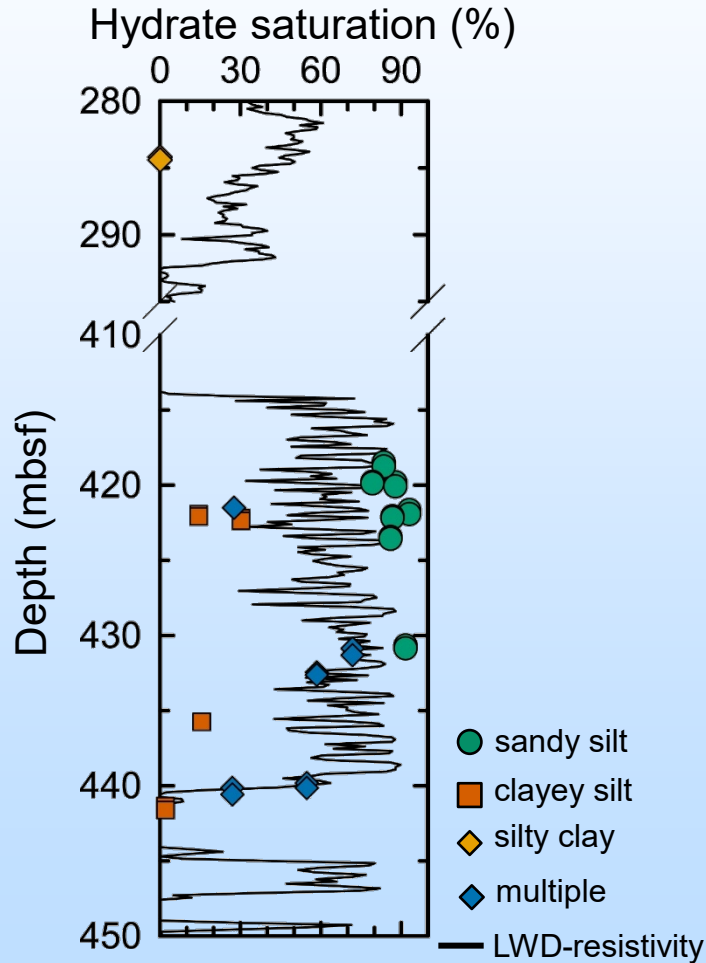
+90 scientists have been co-authors of GOM2-1 publications

Hydrate Reservoir at GC 955

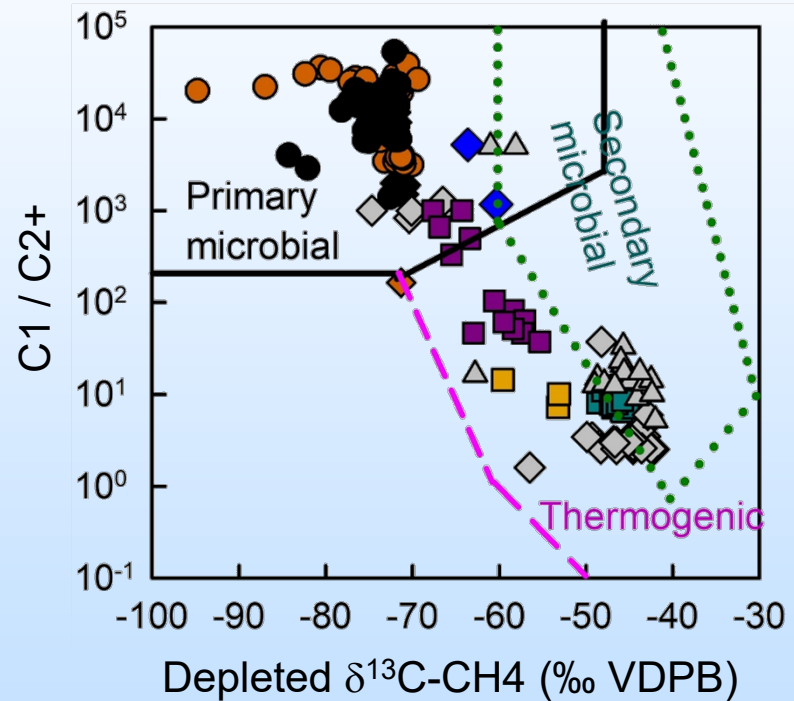


Gas Concentration & Composition at GC 955

Gas Concentration



Gas Composition



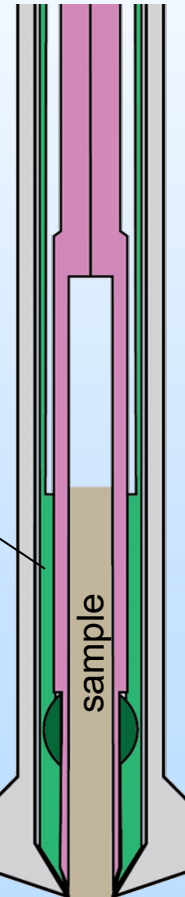
- ◆ UT-GOM2-1 GC 955
- JIP I
- Gas reservoirs and seeps
- ▲ Gas reservoirs and seeps

Pressure Cores: Coring → Preparation → Lab

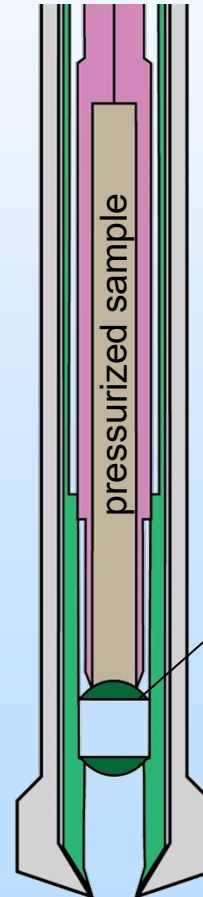
High pressure and low temperature – from sampling to testing



Coring



Sealing



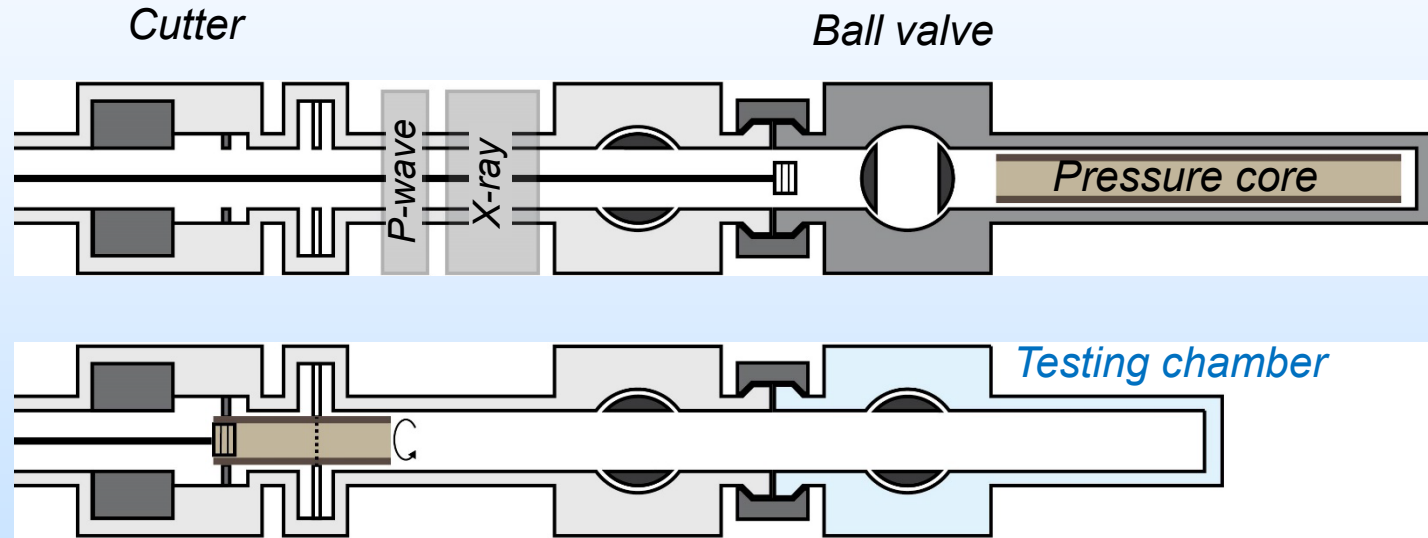
sealing mechanism



Playback speed = 8x slower

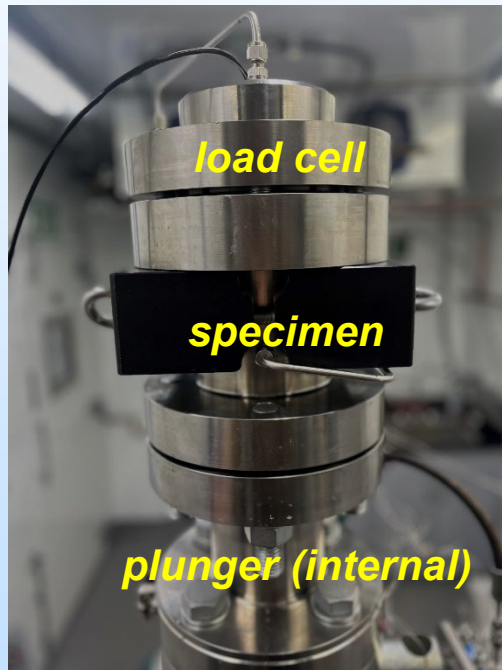
Pressure Cores: Coring → Preparation → Lab

High pressure and low temperature – from sampling to testing



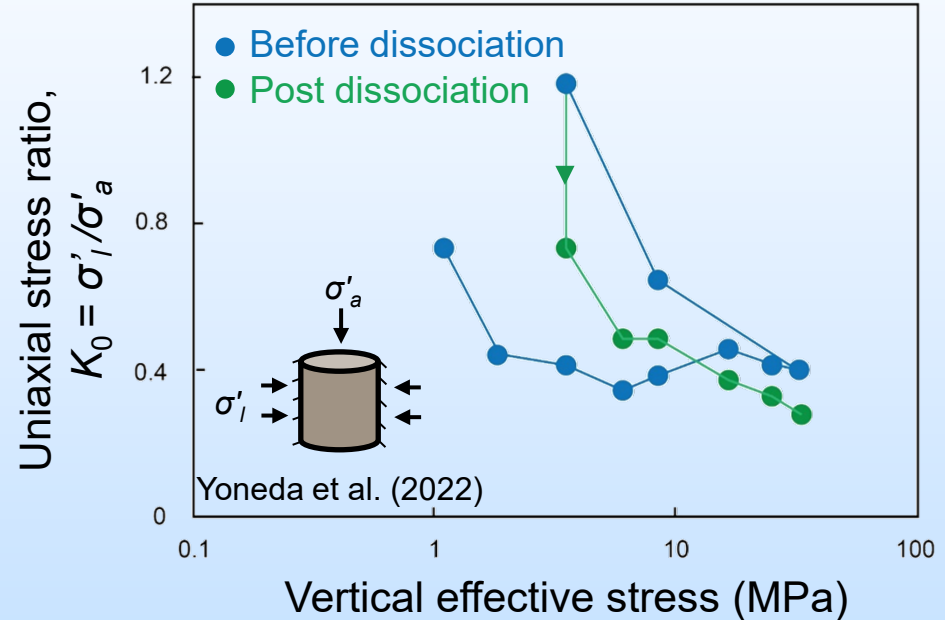
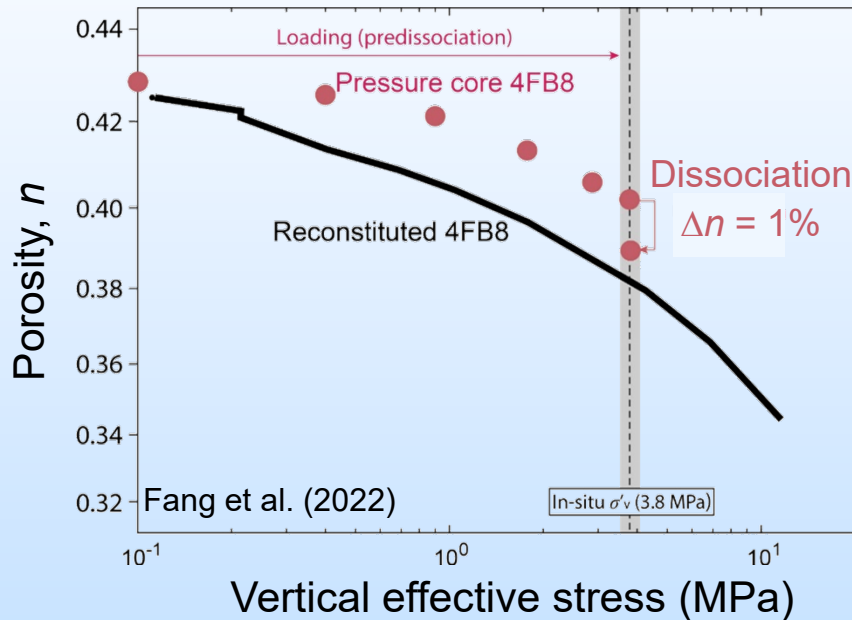
Pressure Cores: Coring → Preparation → Lab

High pressure and low temperature – from sampling to testing



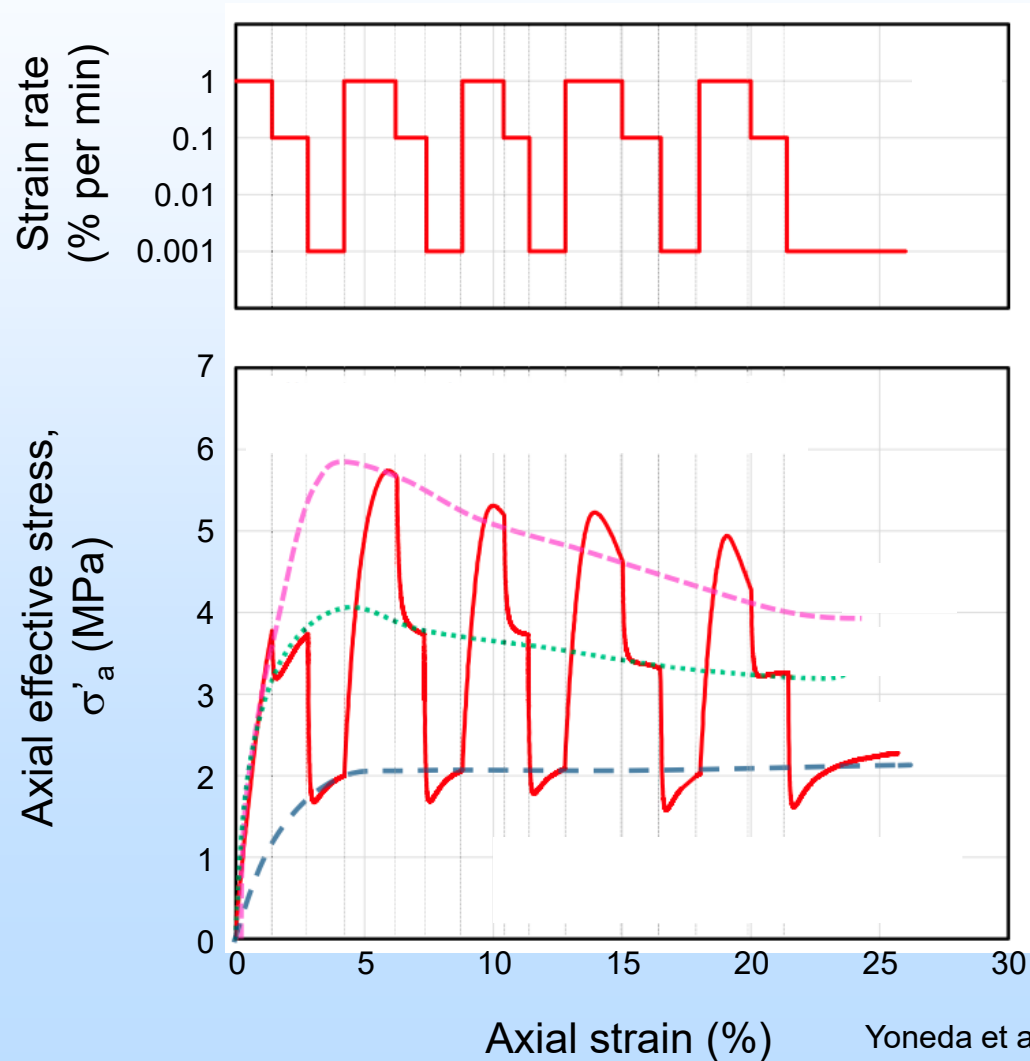
Testing chamber → Petrophysical & Geomechanical Properties

Hydrates: Geomechanical Behavior



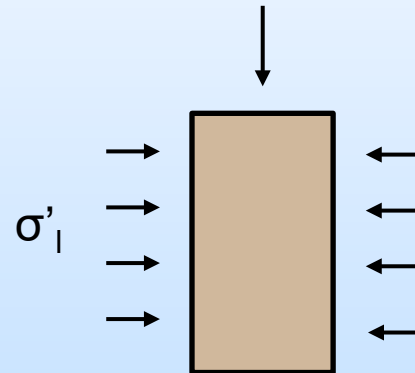
- Hydrate-bearing sediments are stiffer than hydrate-free counterparts
- Sediments compress during dissociation at constant stress
- The uniaxial stress ratio (K_0) is higher in hydrate sediments

Hydrates Sediments: Visco-Plastic Behavior



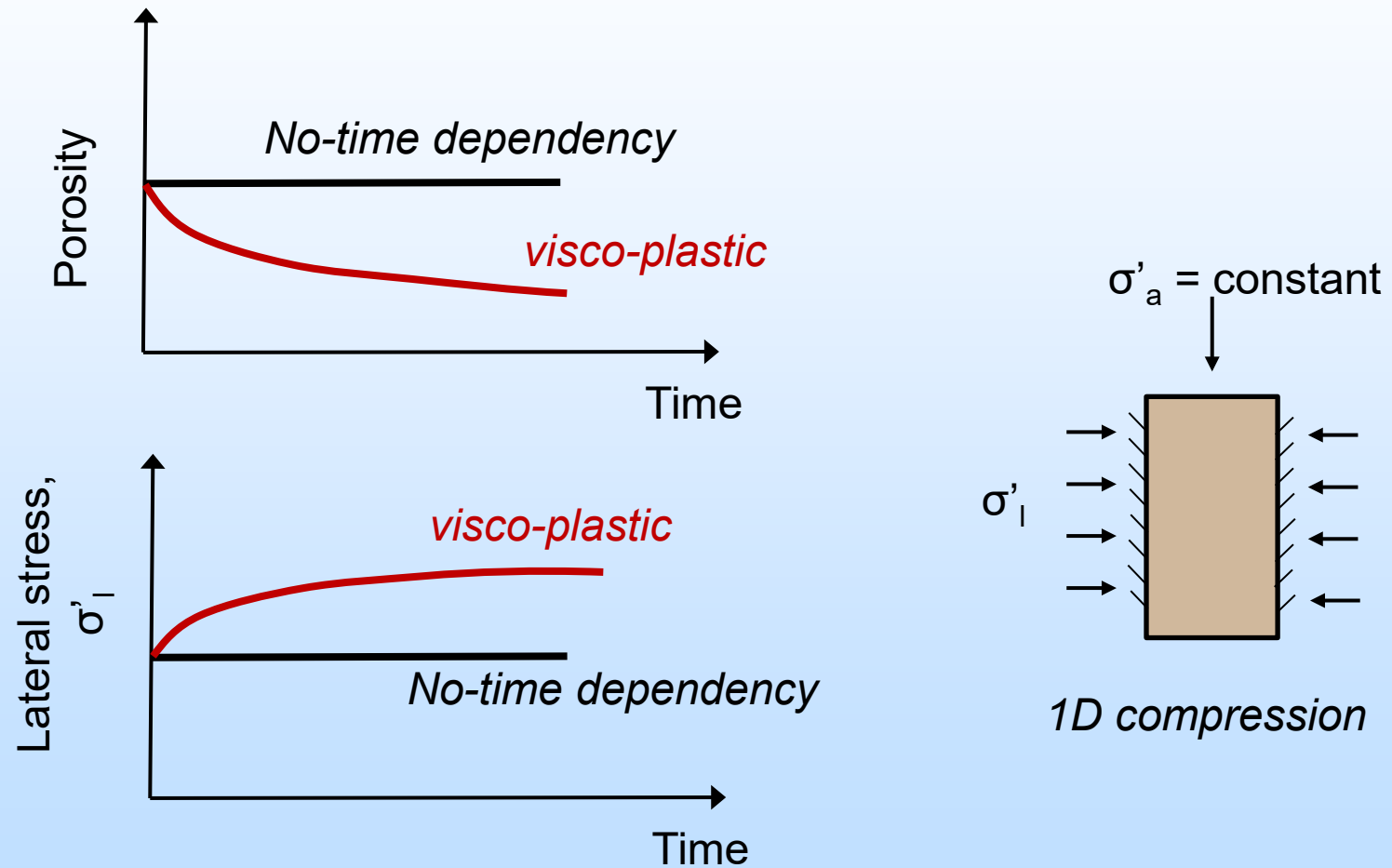
Yoneda et al. (2022)

σ'_a at various strain rates

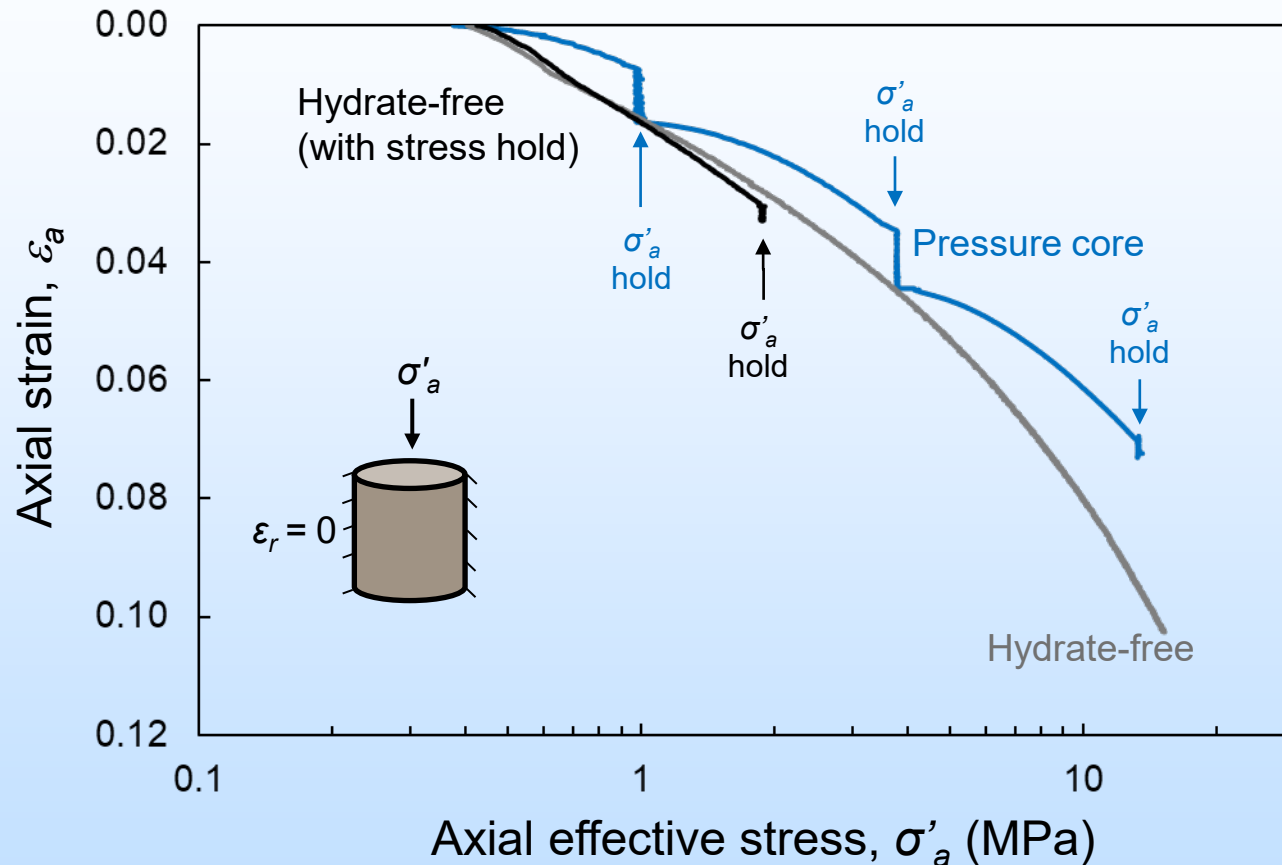


Triaxial compression

Hydrates Sediments: Visco-Plastic Behavior



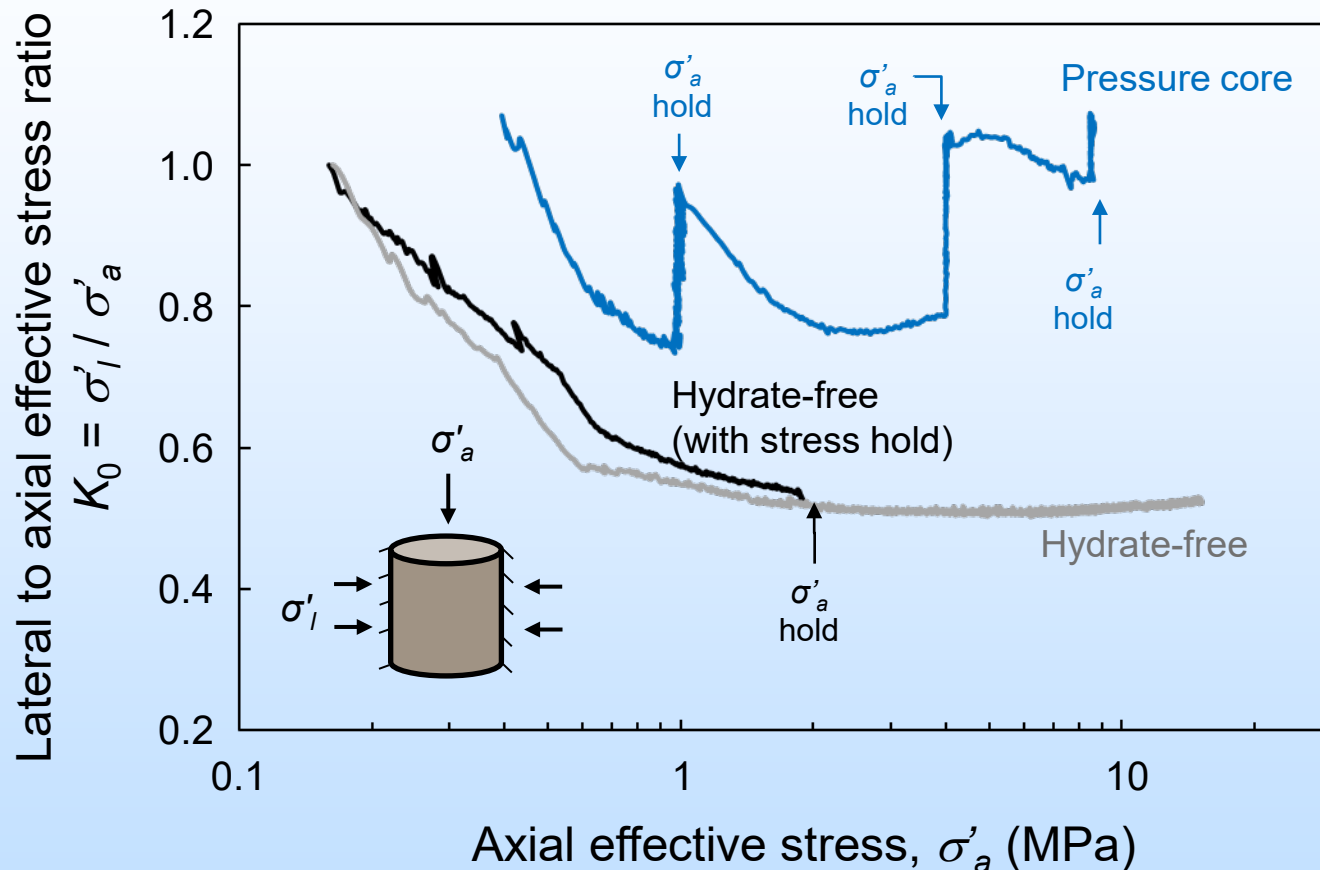
Hydrates Sediments: Visco-Plastic Behavior



The hydrate-bearing sediment (pressure core) behaves visco-plastically:

- The pressure core compresses significantly during the stress holds.

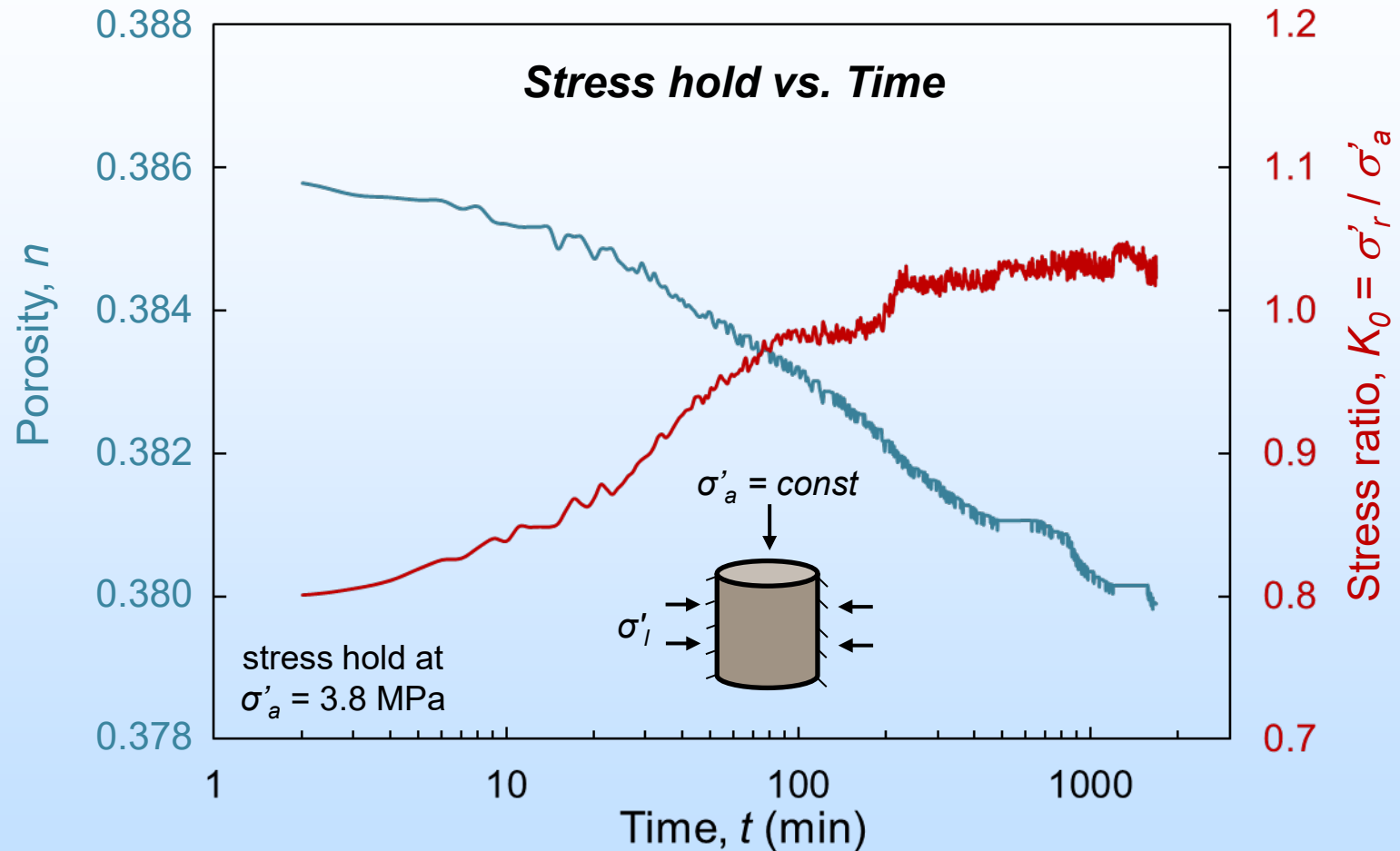
Hydrates Sediments: Visco-Plastic Behavior



The hydrate-bearing sediment (pressure core) behaves visco-plastically:

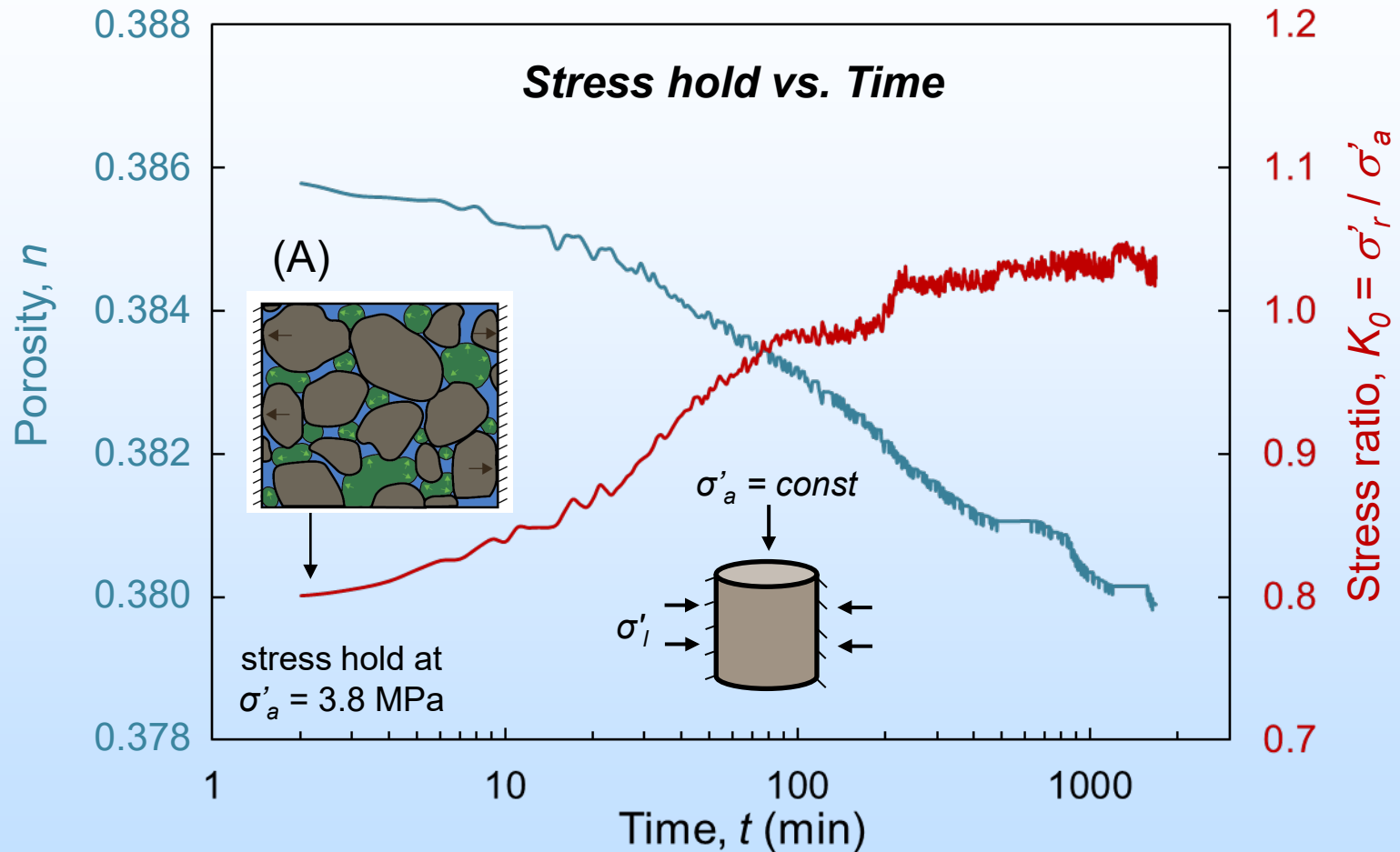
- The pressure core compresses significantly during the stress holds.
- The stress ratio K_0 increases during stress holds.

Hydrates Sediments: Visco-Plastic Behavior



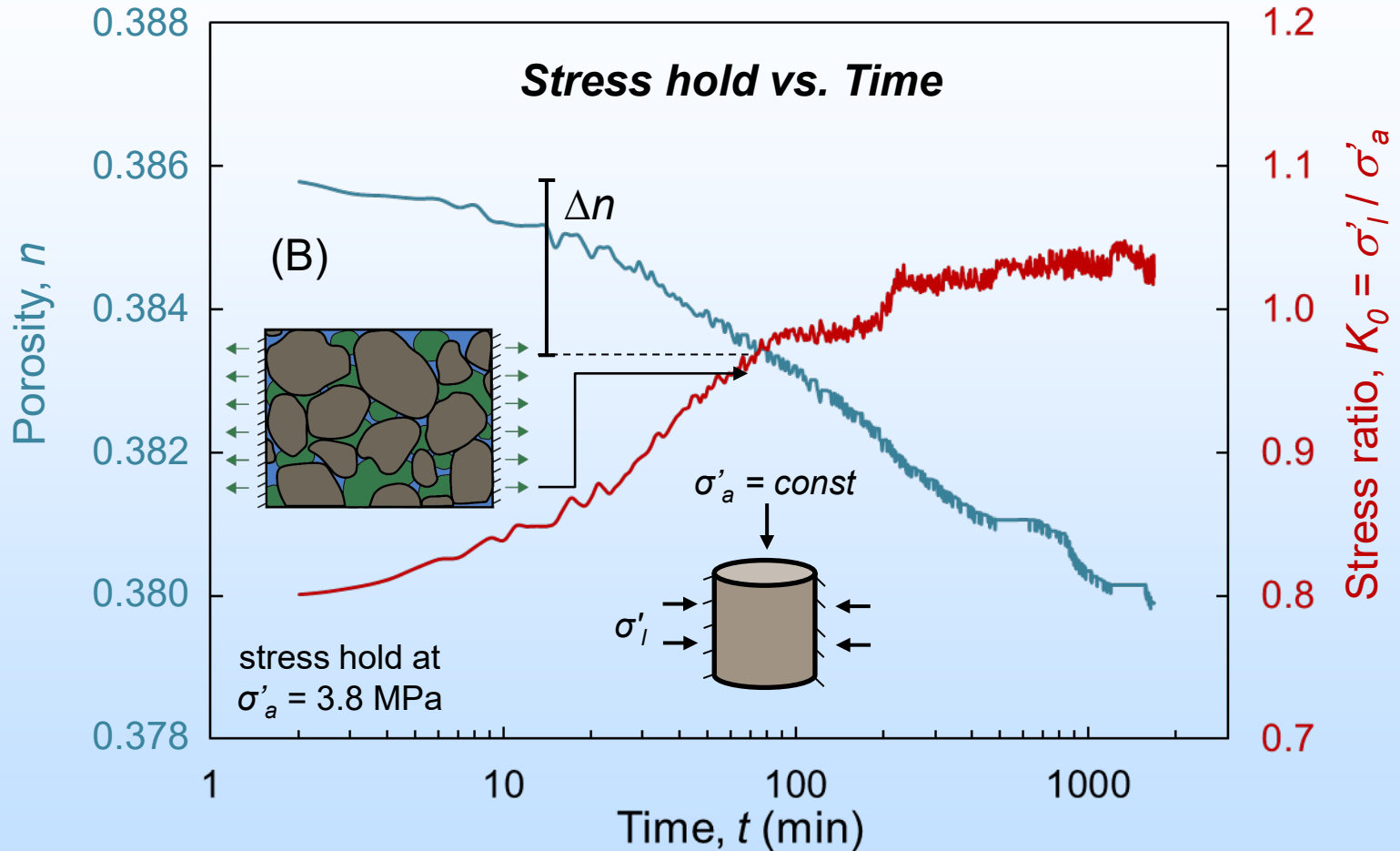
The hydrate-bearing sediment is a viscoplastic medium:

Hydrates Sediments: Visco-Plastic Behavior



The hydrate-bearing sediment is a viscoplastic medium:
(A) The hydrate is load bearing

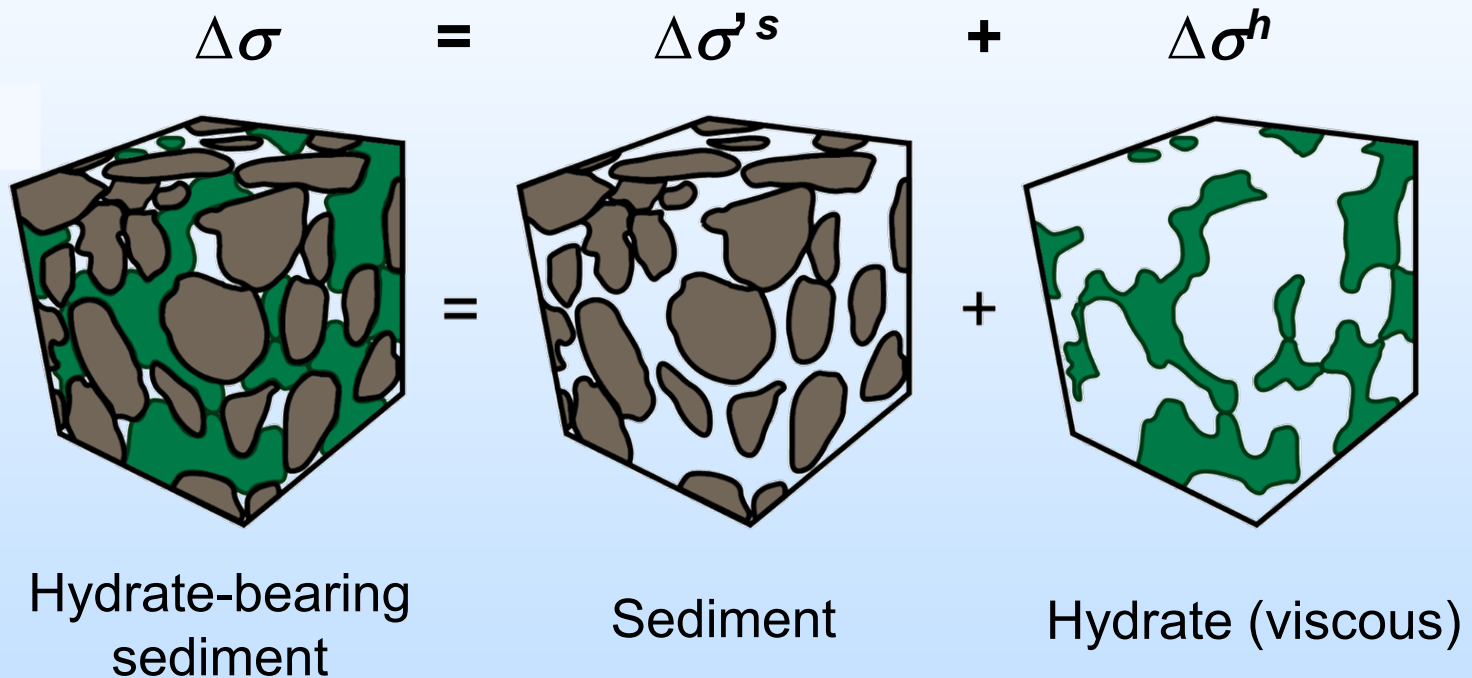
Hydrates Sediments: Visco-Plastic Behavior



The hydrate-bearing sediment is a viscoplastic medium:
 (B) Hydrate “flows” and re-distributes the load

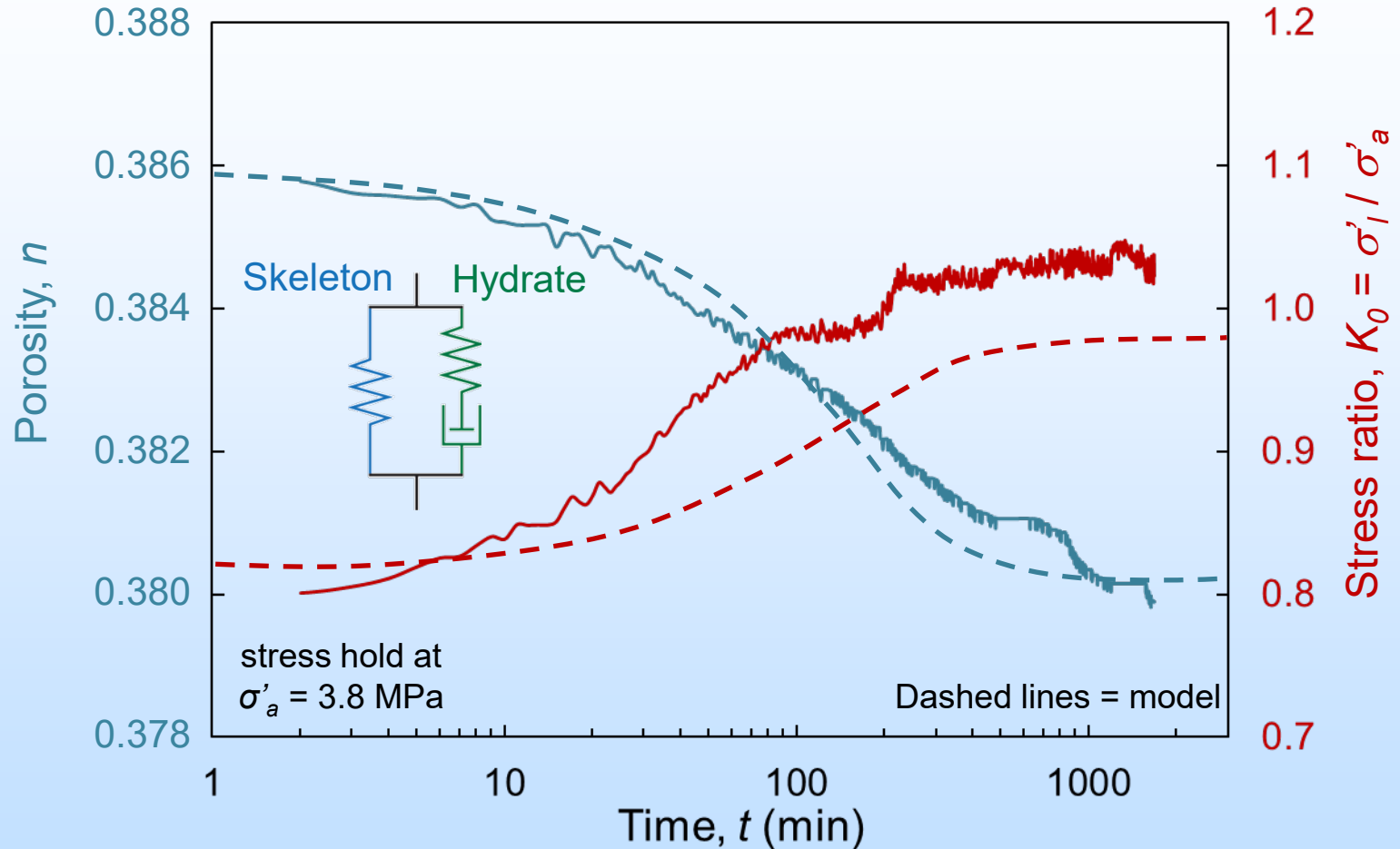
Hydrates Sediments: Visco-Plastic Behavior

Modeling Visco-Plastic Behavior



Hydrate and sediment share any applied external load

Hydrates Sediments: Visco-Plastic Behavior

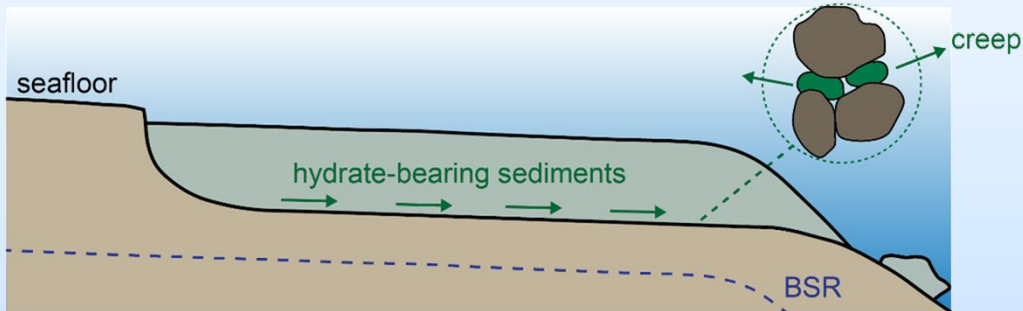


Linear solid model (spring-dashpot) to predict compression and K_0 trends with time

Visco-Plastic Behavior: Implications

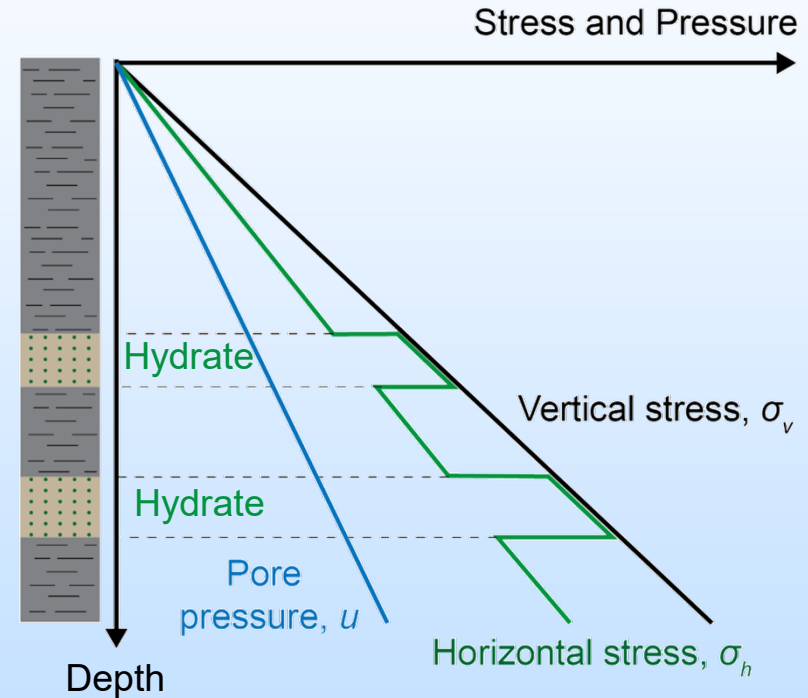
Submarine landslides

Hydrate glacier



After Mountjoy et al. (2014)

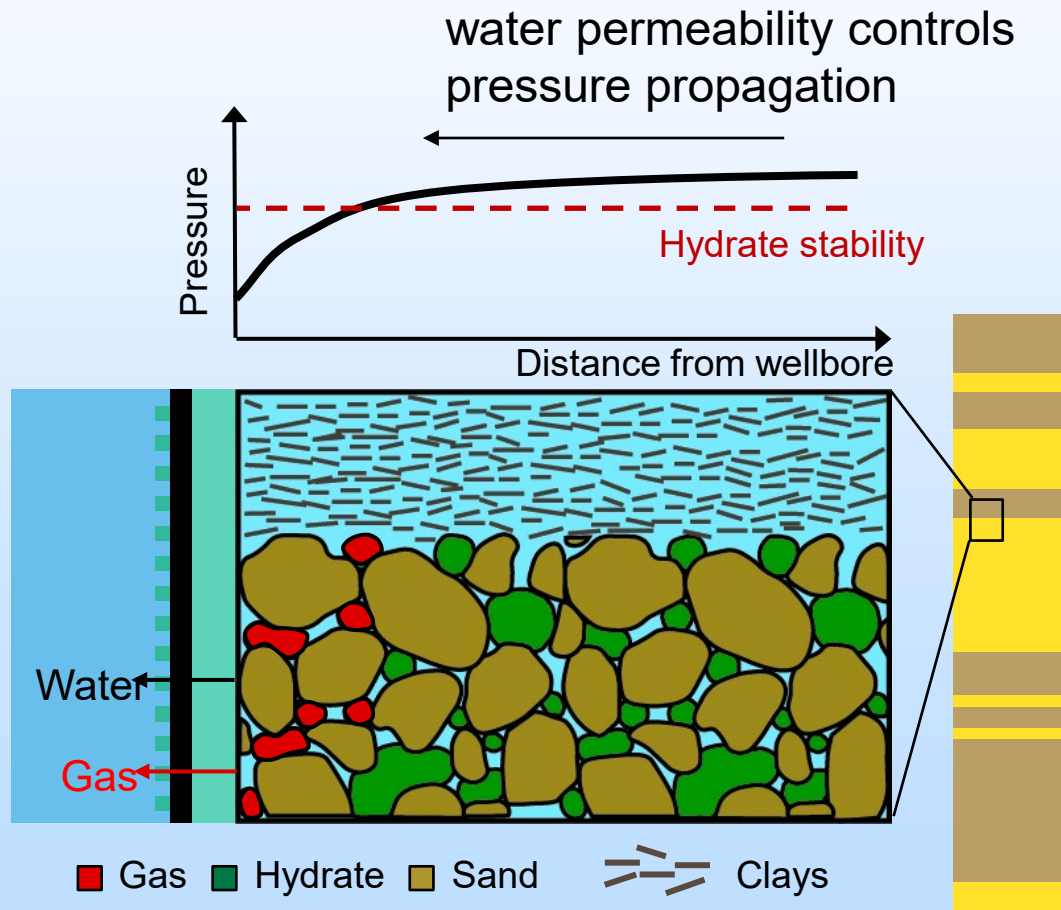
High in-situ stresses



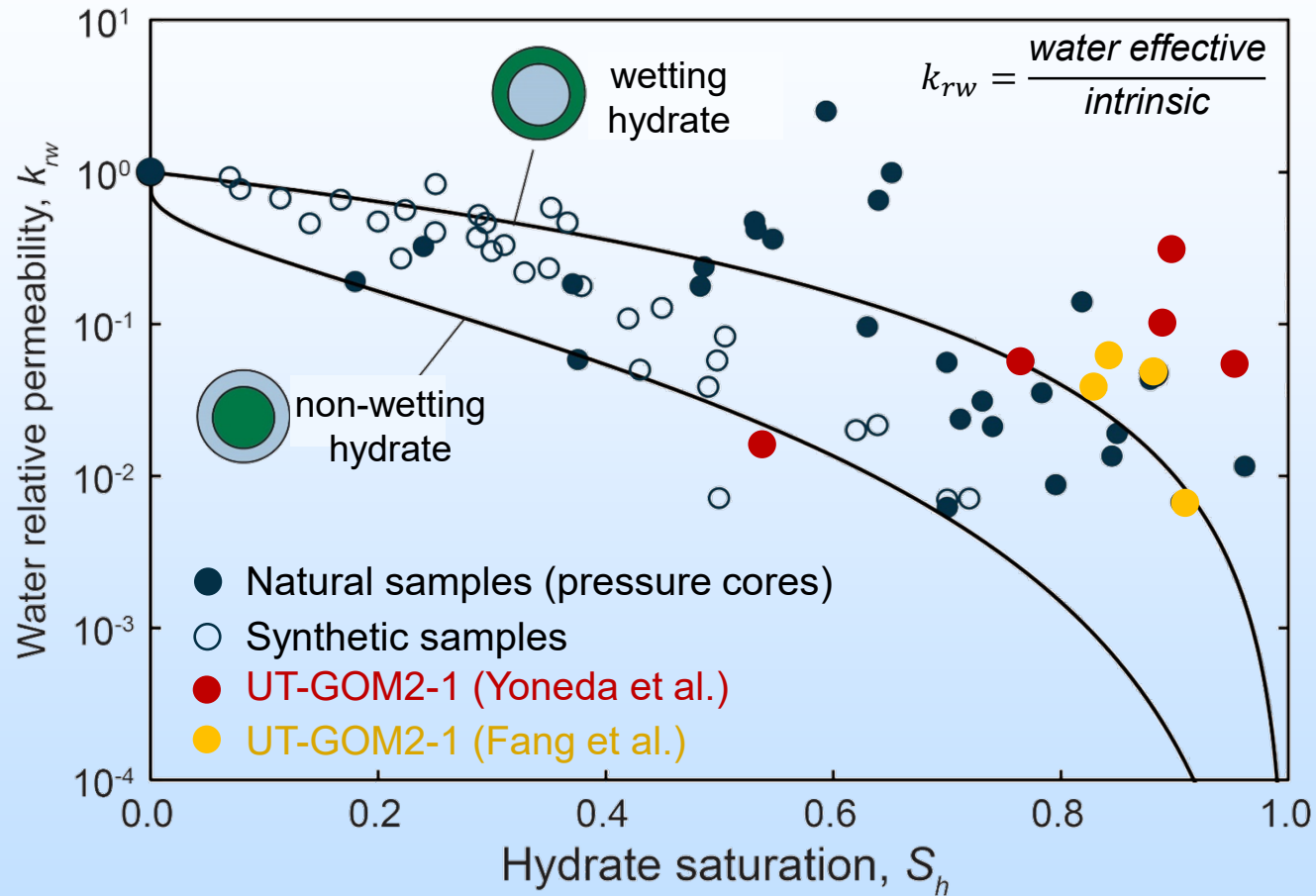
- Landslides can happen as a slow process (without hydrate dissociation)
 - In-situ stresses in hydrate layers are isotropic

Hydrates Sediments: Water Permeability

Production by pressure drawdown

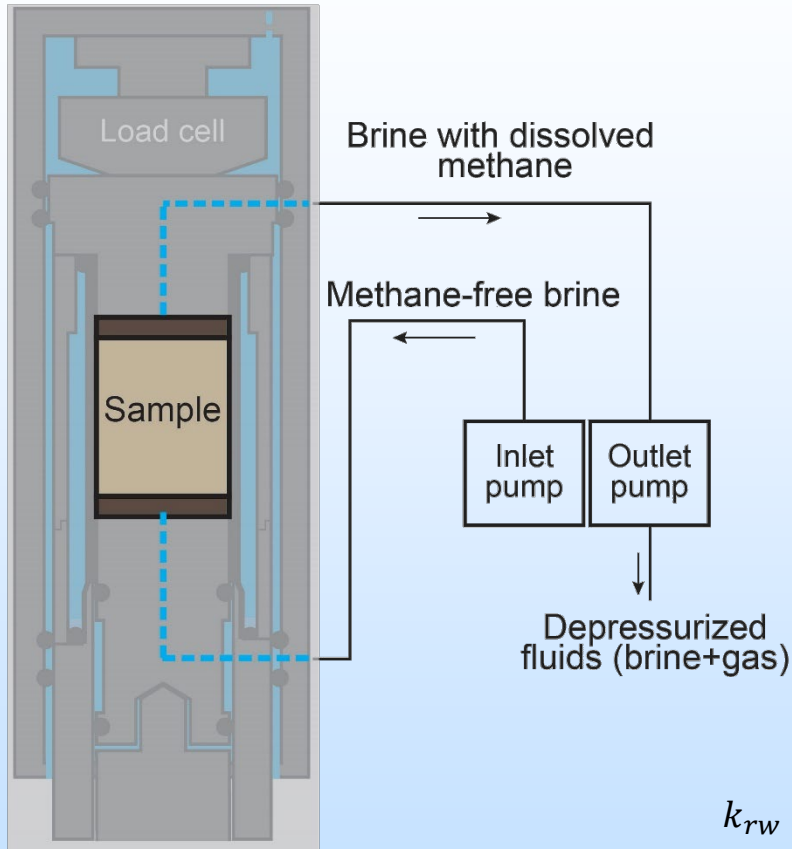


Hydrates Sediments: Water Permeability



Relative permeability in pressure cores \gg measured on synthetic samples

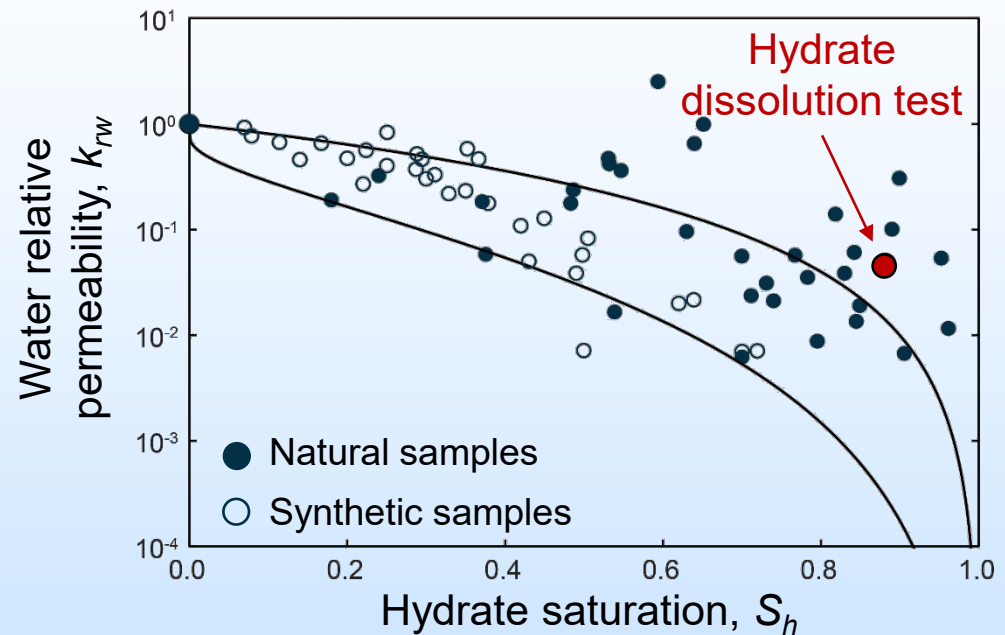
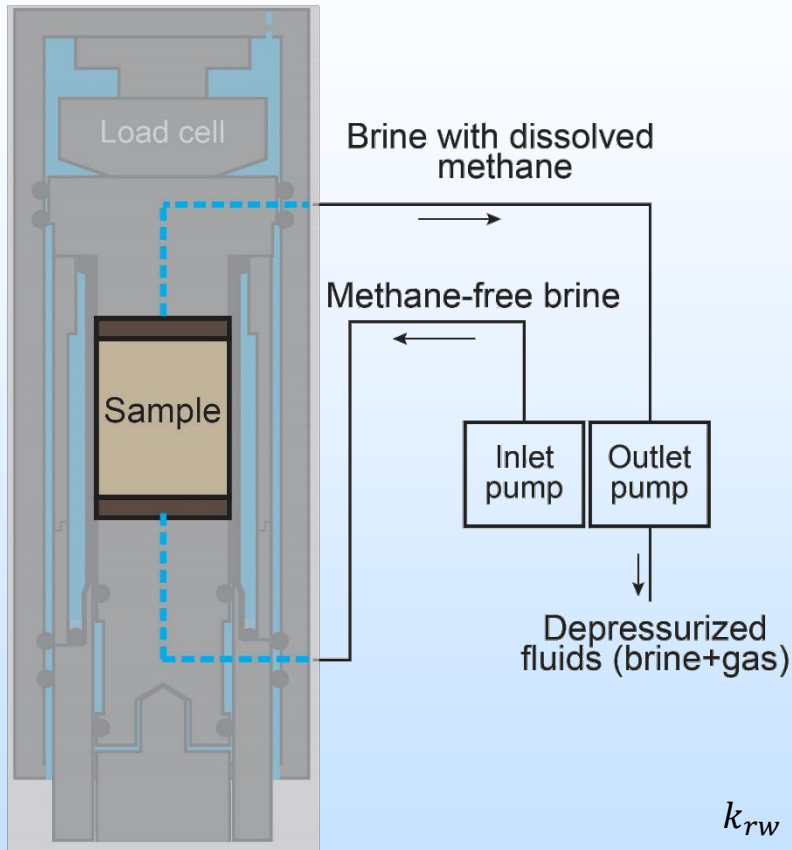
Hydrate Dissolution to Avoid Fines Migration



$$k_{rw} = \frac{\text{water effective}}{\downarrow \text{intrinsic}}$$

- Hydrate dissolution experiment removes the hydrate **without free gas**. This avoids fines migration and provides closer estimates of the intrinsic permeability (k_{int})

Hydrate Dissolution to Avoid Fines Migration

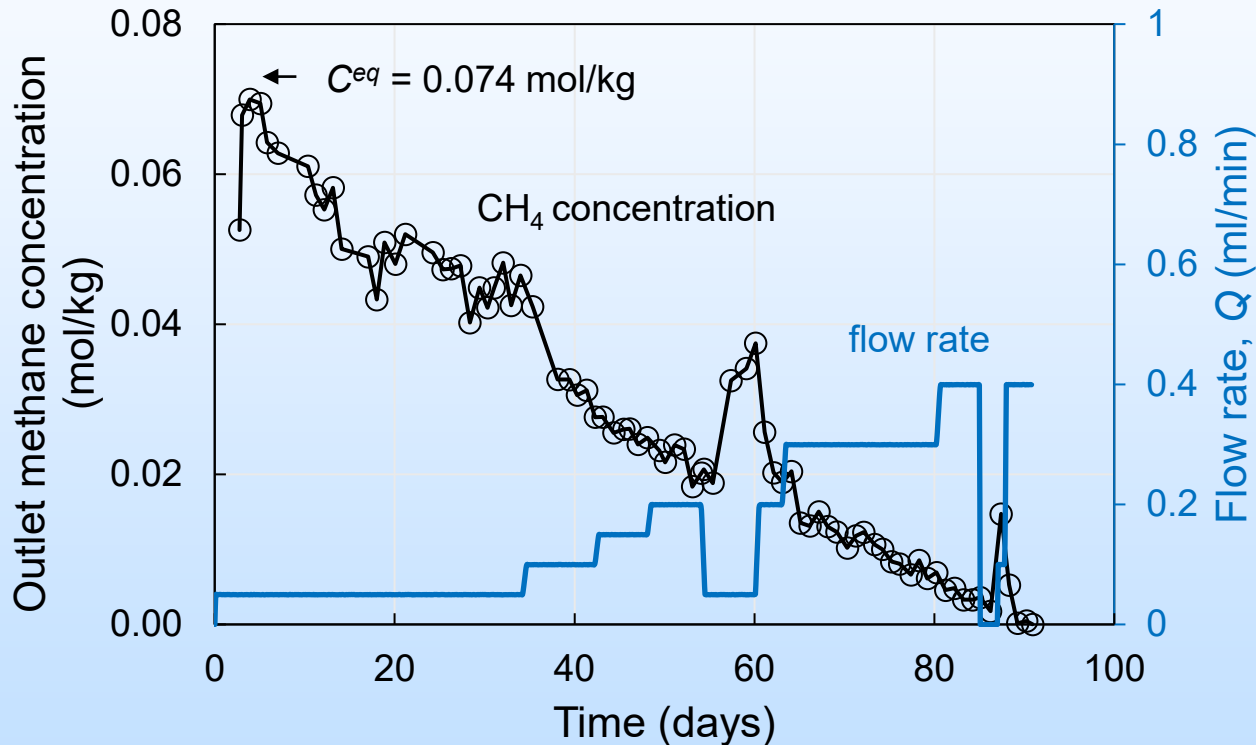


$$k_{rw} = \frac{\text{water effective}}{\downarrow \text{intrinsic}}$$

- Hydrate dissolution experiment removes the hydrate **without free gas**. This avoids fines migration and provides closer estimates of the intrinsic permeability (k_{int})
- After dissolution, the water relative permeability is still high.

Hydrate Dissolution & Flow Channeling

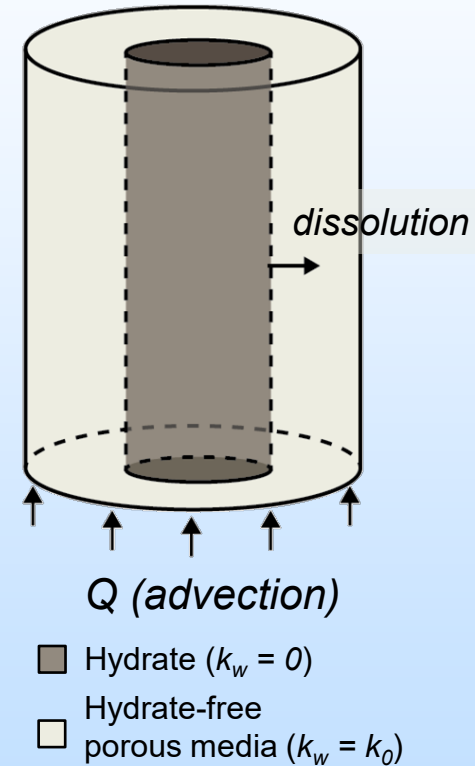
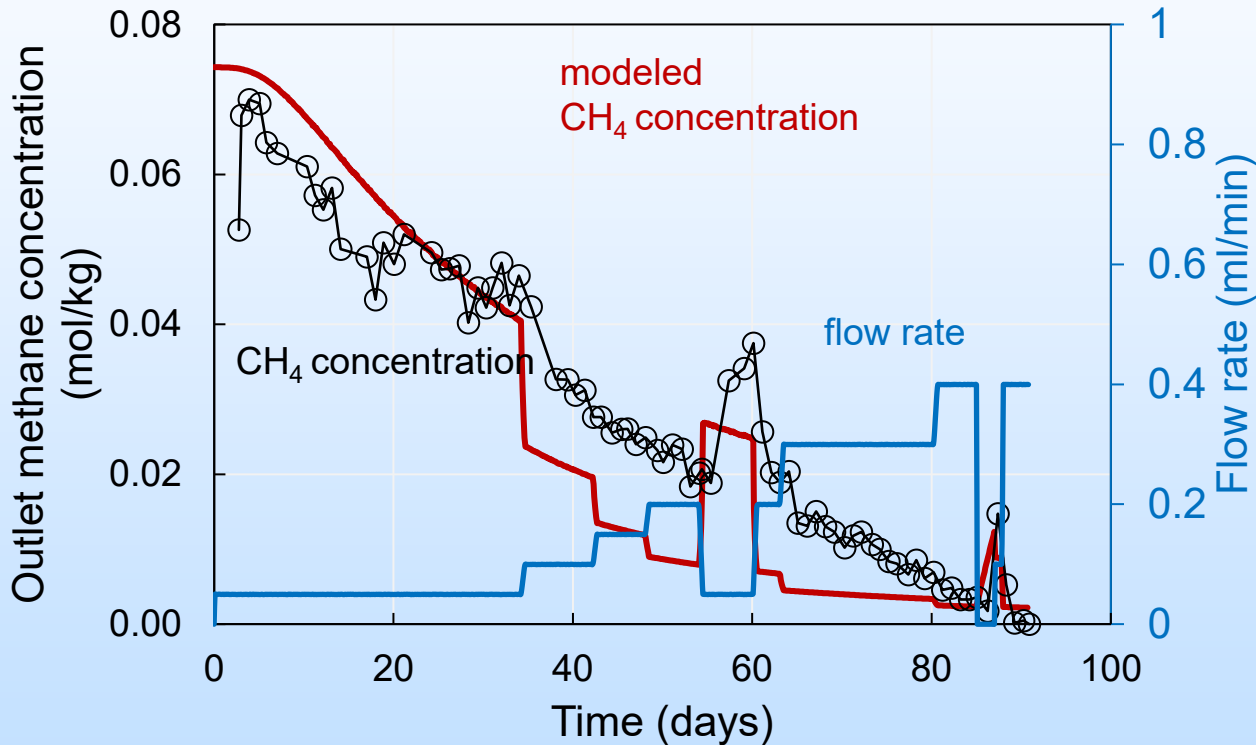
Hydrate Dissolution → Flow Channeling



- Hydrate dissolution test revealed that the injection of methane-free water channelizes flow.
- This is evidenced by the CH_4 concentration vs. flow rate trends.

Hydrate Dissolution & Flow Channeling

Hydrate Dissolution → Flow Channeling

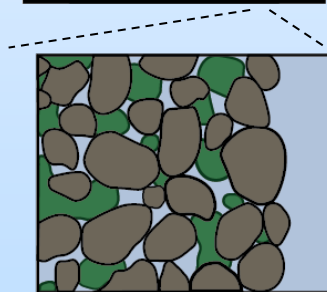
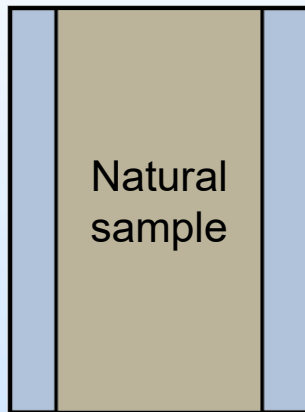


- We modeled this process with an advection-diffusion model.

Hydrate Dissolution: Implications for Permeability

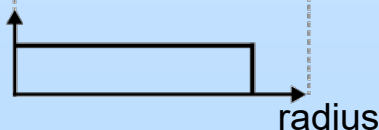
Long-term storage → Hydrate Dissolution → Flow Path → High permeability

Immediately after coring

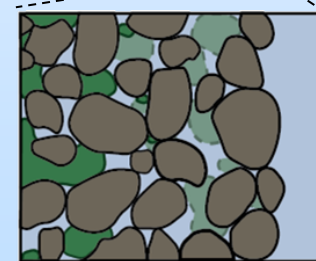
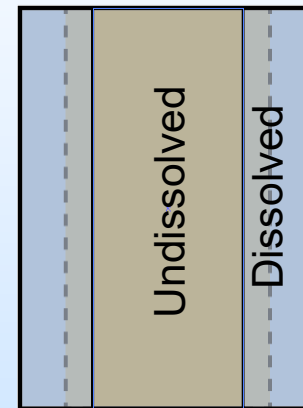


■ Grains
■ Hydrate

Hydrate saturation

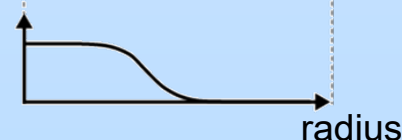


After long-term storage



■ Grains
■ Dissolved hydrate
■ Hydrate

Hydrate saturation

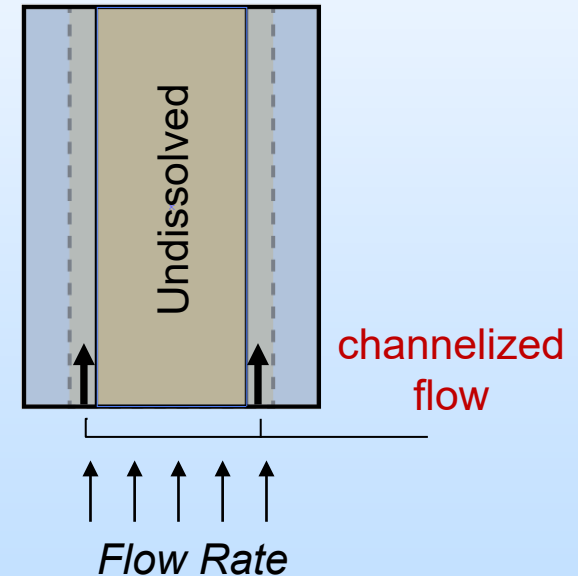
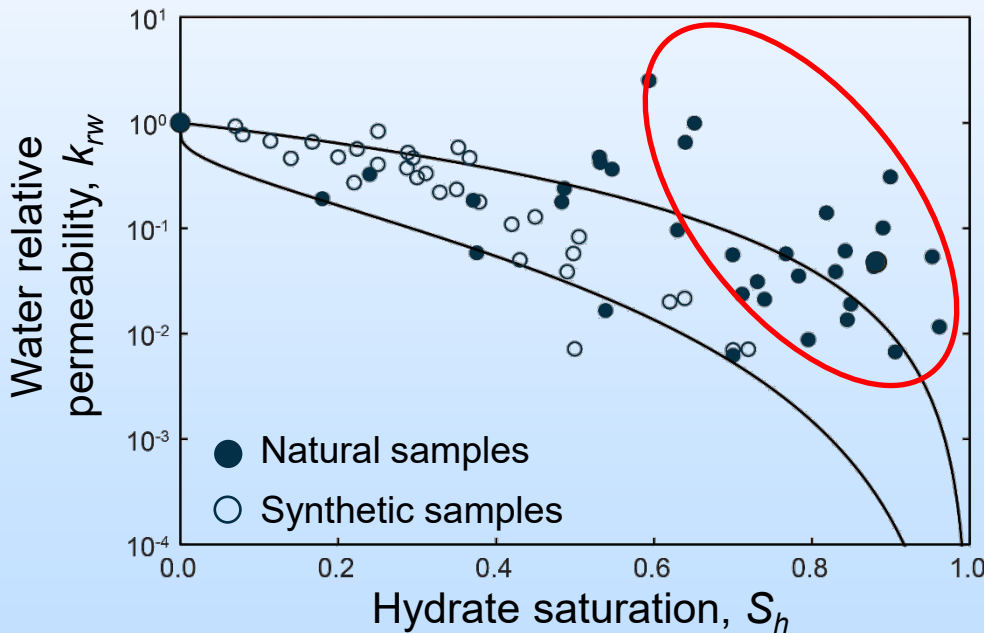


Hydrate Dissolution: Implications for Permeability

Long-term storage → Hydrate Dissolution → Flow Path → High permeability

Affected by hydrate dissolution

After long-term storage



$$k_{rw} = \frac{\uparrow \text{water effective}}{\text{intrinsic}}$$

Key Points

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- Test pressure core technology for material characterization

Geomechanical behavior

- Hydrates are visco-plastic materials
- Stress and compression are time-dependent

Water relative permeability (k_{rw})

- Pressure cores show higher k_{rw} vs. synthetic samples
- Long-term storage causes hydrate dissolution and explains k_{rw} trends

Appendix

GOM2 Publications

- Bhandari, A.R., Cardona, A., Flemings, P.B., Germaine, J. T. (In Review). Geomechanical behavior of sandy silt from Green Canyon 955 hydrate reservoir - Deepwater Gulf of Mexico for gas hydrate dissociation, *Marine and Petroleum Geology*
- Boswell, R., Collet, T.C., Cook, A.E., Flemings, P.B., 2020, Introduction to Special Issue: Gas Hydrates in Green Canyon Block 955, deep-water Gulf of Mexico: Part I: AAPG Bulletin, v. 104, no. 9, p. 1844-1846, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1306/bltnintro062320>.
- Cardona A., Bhandari A., and Heidari M. and Flemings P.B. (2023). The viscoplastic behavior of natural hydrate bearing sediments under uniaxial strain compression (K0 loading), *Journal of Geophysical Research: Solid Earth*, v. 128, e2023JB026976, doi:10.1029/2023JB026976
- Chen, X., and Espinoza, D. N., 2018a, Ostwald ripening changes the pore habit and spatial variability of clathrate hydrate: *Fuel*, v. 214, p. 614-622. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.fuel.2017.11.065>
- Chen, X., Verma, R., Espinoza, D. N., and Prodanović, M., 2018, Pore-Scale Determination of Gas Relative Permeability in Hydrate-Bearing Sediments Using X-Ray Computed Micro-Tomography and Lattice Boltzmann Method: *Water Resources Research*, v. 54, no. 1, p. 600-608. <https://doi.org/10.1002/2017wr021851>
- Chen, X. Y., and Espinoza, D. N., 2018b, Surface area controls gas hydrate dissociation kinetics in porous media: *Fuel*, v. 234, p. 358-363. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.fuel.2018.07.030>
- Chen, X.Y., Espinoza, D. N., Tisato, N., Flemings, P. B., in press, Gas Permeability, Pore Habit and Salinity Evolution during Methane Hydrate Dissociation in Sandy Sediments: *Energy & Fuels*, Manuscript ID: ef-2022-017204.R2
- Cook, A. E., and Portnov, A., 2019, Gas hydrates in coarse-grained reservoirs interpreted from velocity pull up: Mississippi Fan, Gulf of Mexico: *COMMENT: Geology*, v. 47, no. 3, p. e457-e457. <https://doi.org/10.1130/g45609c.1>
- Cook, A. E., and Sawyer, D. E., 2015, The mud-sand crossover on marine seismic data: *Geophysics*, v. 80, no. 6, p. A109-A114. <https://doi.org/10.1190/geo2015-0291.1>
- Cook, A. E., and Waite, W. F., 2018, Archie's Saturation Exponent for Natural Gas Hydrate in Coarse-Grained Reservoirs, v. 123, no. 3, p. 2069-2089. <https://doi.org/10.1002/2017jb015138>

Appendix

- Daigle, H., Fang, Y., Phillips, S.C., Flemings, P.B., 2022, Pore structure of sediments from Green Canyon 955 determined by mercury intrusion: AAPG Bulletin, v. 106, no. 5, p. 1051-1069. <https://doi.org/10.1306/02262120123>
- Darnell, K. N., and Flemings, P. B., 2015, Transient seafloor venting on continental slopes from warming-induced methane hydrate dissociation: Geophysical Research Letters, p. n/a-n/a. <https://doi.org/10.1002/2015GL067012>
- Darnell, K. N., Flemings, P. B., and DiCarlo, D., 2019, Nitrogen-Driven Chromatographic Separation During Gas Injection Into Hydrate-Bearing Sediments: Water Resources Research. <https://doi.org/10.1029/2018wr023414>
- Ewton, E., 2019, The effects of X-ray CT scanning on microbial communities in sediment cores [Honors]: Oregon State University, 21 p.
- Fang, Y., Flemings, P. B., Daigle, H., Phillips, S. C., Meazell, P. K., and You, K., 2020, Petrophysical properties of the Green Canyon block 955 hydrate reservoir inferred from reconstituted sediments: Implications for hydrate formation and production: AAPG Bulletin, v. 104, no. 9, p. 1997–2028, <https://doi.org/10.1306/01062019165>
- Fang, Y., Flemings, P.B., Daigle, H., Phillips, S.C., O’Connell, J., 2022, Permeability of methane hydrate-bearing sandy silts in the deepwater Gulf of Mexico (Green Canyon block 955): AAPG Bulletin, v. 106, no. 5, p. 1071-1100. <https://doi.org/10.1306/08102121001>
- Fang, Y., Flemings, P.B., Germaine, J.T., Daigle, H., Phillips, S.C., 2022, Compression behavior of hydrate-bearing sediments: AAPG Bulletin, v. 106, no. 5, p. 1101-1126. <https://doi.org/10.1306/01132221002>
- Flemings, P. B., Phillips, S. C., Boswell, R., Collett, T. S., Cook, A. E., Dong, T., Frye, M., Guerin, G., Goldberg, D. S., Holland, M. E., Jang, J., Meazell, K., Morrison, J., O’Connell, J., Pettigrew, T., Petrou, E., Polito, P. J., Portnov, A., Santra, M., Schultheiss, P. J., Seol, Y., Shedd, W., Solomon, E. A., Thomas, C., Waite, W. F., and You, K., 2020, Pressure coring a Gulf of Mexico Deepwater Turbidite Gas Hydrate Reservoir: Initial results from the UT-GOM2-1 hydrate pressure coring expedition: AAPG Bulletin, v. 104, no. 9, p. 1847-1876. <https://doi.org/10.1306/05212019052>
- Flemings, P. B., Phillips, S. C., Collett, T., Cook, A., Boswell, R., and Scientists, U.-G.-E., 2018, UT-GOM2-1 Hydrate Pressure Coring Expedition Summary, *in* Flemings, P. B., Phillips, S. C., Collett, T., Cook, A., Boswell, R., and Scientists, U.-G.-E., eds., UT-GOM2-1 Hydrate Pressure Coring Expedition Report: Austin, TX, University of Texas Institute for Geophysics.
- Flemings, P.B., Cook, A.E., Collett, T., Boswell, R., 2022 Gas hydrates in Green Canyon Block 955, deep-water Gulf of Mexico: Part 1: Insights and future challenges: AAPG Bulletin, v. 106, no. 5, p. 937-947. <https://doi.org/10.1306/bltnintro030922>

Appendix

- Hillman, J. I. T., Cook, A. E., Daigle, H., Nole, M., Malinverno, A., Meazell, K., and Flemings, P. B., 2017a, Gas hydrate reservoirs and gas migration mechanisms in the Terrebonne Basin, Gulf of Mexico: *Marine and Petroleum Geology*, v. 86, no. Supplement C, p. 1357-1373. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.marpetgeo.2017.07.029>
- Hillman, J. I. T., Cook, A. E., Sawyer, D. E., Küçük, H. M., and Goldberg, D. S., 2017b, The character and amplitude of ‘discontinuous’ bottom-simulating reflections in marine seismic data: *Earth and Planetary Science Letters*, v. 459, p. 157-169. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.epsl.2016.10.058>
- [Johnson, J.E., MacLeod, D.R., Phillips, S.C., Purkey Phillips, M., Divins, D.L., 2022. Primary deposition and early diagenetic effects on the high saturation accumulation of gas hydrate in a silt dominated reservoir in the Gulf of Mexico. *Marine Geology, Volume 444, 2022, 106718, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.margeo.2021.106718.*](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.marpetgeo.2021.106718)
- MacLeod, D.R., 2020. Characterization of a silty methane-hydrate reservoir in the Gulf of Mexico: Analysis of full sediment grain size distributions. M.S. Thesis, pp. 165, University of New Hampshire, Durham NH, U.S.A.
- Majumdar, U., and Cook, A. E., 2018, The Volume of Gas Hydrate-Bound Gas in the Northern Gulf of Mexico: *Geochemistry, Geophysics, Geosystems*, v. 19, no. 11, p. 4313-4328. <https://doi.org/10.1029/2018gc007865>
- Majumdar, U., Cook, A. E., Shedd, W., and Frye, M., 2016, The connection between natural gas hydrate and bottom-simulating reflectors: *Geophysical Research Letters*. <https://doi.org/10.1002/2016GL069443>
- Meazell, K., Flemings, P., Santra, M., and Johnson, J. E., 2020, Sedimentology and stratigraphy of a deepwater gas hydrate reservoir in the northern Gulf of Mexico: *AAPG Bulletin*, v. 104, no. 9, p. 1945–1969, <https://doi.org/10.1306/05212019027>
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