Selected Topics: National Parks ESCI 4490
Department of Physical and Environmental Sciences
Summer I 2018

A. COURSE INFORMATION

Course number/section: ESCI 4490 Selected Topics: National Parks
Class meeting time: M.T.W.R., 4:00 – 5:55 PM
Class location: OCNR 222
Course Website: http://bb9.tamucc.edu

B. INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Instructor: Warren Dunegan
Office location: NRC 3504
Office hours: T&W 2:45-3:45, R 1:45-3:45
Telephone: TBA
e-mail: wdunegan@islander.tamucc.edu
Appointments: Email to make appointment

C. COURSE DESCRIPTION

Catalog Course Description
ESCI 4490 Selected Topics: National Parks

The national parks and other conserved lands of the United States provide source for environmental analysis and investigation in this selected topics course. Students will be challenged to apply scientific and critical thinking skills when navigating the complex interplay of history, nature and politics which continues to define these lands. Case studies of parks and environmental issues will be reviewed, along with current news and events; led by lecture and enhanced through active discussion.

Extended Course Description

The national parks and other conserved lands of the United States provide source for environmental analysis and investigation in this selected topics course. Numerous national parks will be highlighted, providing case studies of past natural disasters and restorations, and contemporary reflections of global scale environmental challenges. Students will be challenged to apply scientific and critical thinking skills when navigating the complex interplay of history, nature and politics which continues to define these lands.

Instructor-led lecture, discussion and reviews of current news events on environmental issues in the national parks, as well as peer group meetings, presentations and reviews will occur weekly throughout the course. Students will also have the opportunity to be guided through a course-long research and writing project, where specific interest in a state or national public land and an existing environmental science issue there will be investigated and detailed. The
project will directly enhance skills in research, organization, peer review and academic writing, while affording expertise on a contemporary environmental challenge facing a public land and the agency which administers it.

Students considering a career with a state or federal agency have the opportunity to distinguish themselves in a competitive hiring market by acquiring specific knowledge of that organization, the functions it performs and a major environmental issue it is currently managing.

D. **PREREQUISITES AND COREQUISITES**

**Prerequisites**
None

**Corequisites**
None

E. **REQUIRED TEXTBOOK(S), READINGS AND SUPPLIES**

**Required Textbook**

F. **STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES AND ASSESSMENT**

Assessment is a process used by instructors to help improve learning. Assessment is essential for effective learning because it provides feedback to both students and instructors. A critical step in this process is making clear the course’s student learning outcomes that describe what students are expected to learn to be successful in the course. The student learning outcomes for this course are listed below. By collecting data and sharing it with students on how well they are accomplishing these learning outcomes students can more efficiently and effectively focus their learning efforts. This information can also help instructors identify challenging areas for students and adjust their teaching approach to facilitate learning.

By the end of this course, students should be able to:

1. Explain the purpose and the significance of conserving and preserving national parks and other public lands
2. Identify and discuss environmental challenges facing U.S. public lands in both historical and contemporary contexts
3. Describe in detail and provide scientific evidence for a particular environmental issue currently affecting a U.S. national park or other public land
4. Plan, prepare and present an informative report of appropriate academic quality to a group and participate constructively in a peer review process
5. Apply scientific knowledge and critical thinking skills directly to news releases on environmental and related issues facing public lands to determine the relevance, accuracy and objectiveness of the published media
G. INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS AND ACTIVITIES

Instructional methods include delivering media-enhanced lectures, organizing student-led peer groups to monitor project progress and facilitate constructive review, presenting film and other media to reinforce lecture material and advance classroom dialogue, leading class-wide discussions on news events and special topics, and actively evaluating and offering feedback on daily student contributions.

H. MAJOR COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING

The student learning outcomes listed in Section F will be evaluated by performance in the class activities below. 60% of the student’s final grade will result from ongoing weekly activities including, lecture quizzes, current events presentations and discussions and peer group assignments and discussions. The remaining 40% of the student’s grade will result from the final project which includes a formal written report and a class presentation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTIVITY</th>
<th>POINTS</th>
<th>% of FINAL GRADE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(8) Lecture Quizzes</td>
<td>25 pts/ea. x 8 = 200 pts</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>(4) Current Events - Presentations</td>
<td>25 pts/ea. x 4 = 100 pts</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(4) Current Events – Discussions Participation</td>
<td>25 pts/ea. x 4 = 100 pts</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(4) Peer Group Assignments</td>
<td>25 pts/ea. x 4 = 100 pts</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(4) Peer Group Activity Participation</td>
<td>25 pts/ea. x 4 = 100 pts</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Project Written Report</td>
<td>200 pts</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Project Class Presentation</td>
<td>200 pts</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Grade Calculated</td>
<td>1000 pts</td>
<td>100%</td>
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I. COURSE CONTENT/SCHEDULE

Lectures, discussion and media presented in this course will feature the following topics, in the sequence outlined in the table below. The dates for activities/assignments, quizzes and the final project are firm. The dates for topics are only estimated as some lectures may run long or need to be cut short to make room for other classroom priorities. Despite any possible date changes, all topics will still be covered. Any changes made to this schedule will be announced in class by the instructor.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>TOPIC</th>
<th>ACTIVITY / ASSIGNMENT</th>
<th>QUIZ</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>T. 5/29</td>
<td>Introduction to the U.S. National Parks</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>W. 5/30</td>
<td>History and Agencies of U.S. National Parks</td>
<td>Peer Group 1 Activity / Assignment</td>
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<tr>
<td>R. 5/31</td>
<td>Geological History and Landforms</td>
<td>Current Event 1 Presentation / Discussion</td>
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<tr>
<td>M. 6/4</td>
<td>Geological History / Wildlife and Vegetation</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>T. 6/5</td>
<td>Wildlife and Vegetation</td>
<td>Peer Group 2 Activity / Assignment</td>
<td>Quiz 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W. 6/6</td>
<td>Overview of Environmental Issues</td>
<td></td>
<td>Quiz 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R. 6/7</td>
<td>Humans in Parks</td>
<td>Current Event 2 Presentation / Discussion</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>M. 6/8</td>
<td>Soil, Water and Air Pollution</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>T. 6/12</td>
<td>Mining, Logging and Other Resource Extraction</td>
<td>Peer Group 3 Activity / Assignment</td>
<td>Quiz 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W. 6/13</td>
<td>Mining, Logging… / Land Use and Development</td>
<td></td>
<td>Quiz 4</td>
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<tr>
<td>R. 6/14</td>
<td>Land Use and Development</td>
<td>Current Event 3 Presentation / Discussion</td>
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<tr>
<td>M. 6/18</td>
<td>Fresh Water Scarcity</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>T. 6/19</td>
<td>Invasive Species</td>
<td>Peer Group 4 Activity / Assignment</td>
<td>Quiz 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>W. 6/20</td>
<td>Effects of Climate and Efforts of Man</td>
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<td>Quiz 6</td>
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<tr>
<td>M. 6/25</td>
<td>Final Project Work Day</td>
<td></td>
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<td>T. 6/26</td>
<td>Final Project Class Presentations</td>
<td></td>
<td>Quiz 7</td>
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<tr>
<td>W. 6/27</td>
<td>Final Project Class Presentations</td>
<td></td>
<td>Quiz 8</td>
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<tr>
<td>R. 6/28</td>
<td>Final Project Class Presentations</td>
<td>Final Project Written Report Due</td>
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</tbody>
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Note: The assignments, quizzes and projects shown are directly related to the Student Learning
Outcomes described in Section F.

J. COURSE POLICIES

Attendance/Tardiness
There is no attendance policy, however please note that 60% of your grade comes from in-class activities.

Late Work and Make-up Exams
No late work will be accepted and there is no make-up opportunity for missed in-class activities (peer group activities & assignments, current event presentations & discussions and quizzes) if a class is missed without notice and/or without a legitimate excuse.

Extra Credit
Extra credit opportunities may be awarded during the course. When made available, they will be announced during class.

Cell Phone Use
Cell phones and other devices must be silenced before entering the classroom.

Laptop Use
Laptop/tablet use is encouraged to enhance class experience.

Food in Class
Food is permitted during class. Please be courteous and clean up after yourself.

Participation
Participation is encouraged and expected, and accounts for 20% of student’s final grade.

K. COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY POLICIES

• Academic Integrity (University)
University students are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with the highest standards of academic honesty. Academic misconduct for which a student is subject to penalty includes all forms of cheating, such as illicit possession of examinations or examination materials, falsification, forgery, complicity or plagiarism. (Plagiarism is the presentation of the work of another as one’s own work.) In this class, academic misconduct or complicity in an act of academic misconduct on an assignment or test will result in a failing grade.

• Classroom/Professional Behavior
Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi, as an academic community, requires that each individual respect the needs of others to study and learn in a peaceful atmosphere. Under Article III of the Student Code of Conduct, classroom behavior that interferes with either
(a) the instructor’s ability to conduct the class or (b) the ability of other students to profit from the instructional program may be considered a breach of the peace and is subject to disciplinary sanction outlined in article VII of the Student Code of Conduct. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior may be instructed to leave the classroom. This prohibition applies to all instructional forums, including classrooms, electronic classrooms, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc.

- **Statement of Civility**
  Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi has a diverse student population that represents the population of the state. Our goal is to provide you with a high quality educational experience that is free from repression. You are responsible for following the rules of the University, city, state and federal government. We expect that you will behave in a manner that is dignified, respectful and courteous to all people, regardless of sex, ethnic/racial origin, religious background, sexual orientation or disability. Behaviors that infringe on the rights of another individual will not be tolerated.

- **Deadline for Dropping a Course with a Grade of W (University)**
  I hope that you never find it necessary to drop this or any other class. However, events can sometimes occur that make dropping a course necessary or wise. **Please consult with your academic advisor, the Financial Aid Office, and me, before you decide to drop this course.** Should dropping the course be the best course of action, you must initiate the process to drop the course by going to the Student Services Center and filling out a course drop form. Just stopping attendance and participation WILL NOT automatically result in your being dropped from the class. Please consult the Academic Calendar ([http://www.tamucc.edu/academics/calendar/](http://www.tamucc.edu/academics/calendar/)) for the last day to drop a course.

- **Grade Appeals (College of Science and Engineering)**
  As stated in University Procedure 13.02.99.C2.01, Student Grade Appeal Procedures, a student who believes that he or she has not been held to appropriate academic standards as outlined in the class syllabus, equitable evaluation procedures, or appropriate grading, may appeal the final grade given in the course. The burden of proof is upon the student to demonstrate the appropriateness of the appeal. A student with a complaint about a grade is encouraged to first discuss the matter with the instructor. For complete details, including the responsibilities of the parties involved in the process and the number of days allowed for completing the steps in the process, see University Procedure 13.02.99.C2.01, Student Grade Appeal Procedures. These documents are accessible through the University Rules website at [http://www.tamucc.edu/provost/university_rules/index.html](http://www.tamucc.edu/provost/university_rules/index.html), and the College of Science and Engineering Grade Appeals webpage at [http://sci.tamucc.edu/students/GradeAppeal.html](http://sci.tamucc.edu/students/GradeAppeal.html). For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the chair or director of the appropriate department or school, the Office of the College of Science and Engineering Dean, or the Office of the Provost.
• **Disability Services**  
The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please call (361) 825-5816 or visit Disability Services in Corpus Christi Hall 116.

If you are a returning veteran and are experiencing cognitive and/or physical access issues in the classroom or on campus, please contact the Disability Services office for assistance at (361) 825-5816.

http://disabilityservices.tamucc.edu/

• **Statement of Academic Continuity**  
In the event of an unforeseen adverse event, such as a major hurricane and classes could not be held on the campus of Texas A&M University–Corpus Christi; this course would continue through the use of Blackboard and/or email. In addition, the syllabus and class activities may be modified to allow continuation of the course. Ideally, University facilities (i.e., emails, web sites, and Blackboard) will be operational within two days of the closing of the physical campus. However, students need to make certain that the course instructor has a primary and a secondary means of contacting each student.

L. **OTHER INFORMATION**

• **Academic Advising**  
The College of Science & Engineering requires that students meet with an Academic Advisor as soon as they are ready to declare a major. The Academic Advisor will set up a degree plan, which must be signed by the student, a faculty mentor, and the department chair. Meetings are by appointment only; advisors do not take walk-ins. Please call or stop by the Advising Center to check availability and schedule an appointment. The College’s Academic Advising Center is located in Center for Instruction 350 or can be reached at (361) 825-3928.

**GENERAL DISCLAIMER**

I reserve the right to modify the information, schedule, assignments, deadlines, and course policies in this syllabus if and when necessary. I will announce such changes in a timely manner during regularly scheduled lecture periods.