

## Water in the West

### Course Syllabus

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**Course Description:** This course is a comprehensive survey of the role of water resources in the development and life in the western United States. Topics include basic hydrology, the quantity and quality of water resources, water uses and distribution, water supply management and development, water politics and laws, history, and current status of water supply problems. Arid regions in other parts of the world will be reviewed, as will proposals for the future.

**Credits & Prerequisites:** 6LD (prereqs: none) or 6UD (prereqs: successful completion of college level coursework in environmental policy and physical sciences)

#### **Required Texts:**

Riesner, Marc. 1993. *Cadillac Desert. The American West and Its Disappearing Water*. Penguin Books.  
Miller, Char (ed.). 2000. *Water in the West. A High Country News Reader*. Oregon State Univ. Press.  
Childs, Craig. 2001. *The Secret Knowledge of Water. Discovering the Essence of the American Desert*. Back Bay Books.  
*Sojourns Magazine*. Summer/Fall 2007. Water = Life. Peaks, Plateaus, and Canyons Association.

#### **Class & Field Trip Schedule:**

##### **Classes –**

- Mon thru Fri (more or less), 9:00-1:00, Classroom A, Sinagua Bldg.

##### **Field Trips –**

- January 15<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup>, Hoover Dam tour & Black Canyon/Colorado River canoe trip.
- January 19<sup>th</sup>, “Mirage of Progress” panel discussion, 4-11pm, Phoenix.
- Other local & regional day trips.

#### **Course Goals:**

1. Gain an interdisciplinary understanding of the role of fresh water in the western United States, as well as other arid regions of the world.
2. Explore the physical, biological, and cultural significance of fresh water in the arid landscapes of the western U.S.

#### **Course Objectives:**

- a. Understand how water moves through an aridland watershed, and how it affects the health of a watershed’s biological communities.
- b. Understand the ways in which water resources have influenced the settlement of the western U.S. from both an historical and contemporary perspective.
- c. Gain a basic understanding of water related policy and law in the U.S.
- d. Critically analyze current issues related to water resource conservation and development, and assess proposals for more sustainable use of water resources in the western U.S.

### **Means of Evaluation:**

- Class participation (~30%).
  - *Always come to class* prepared to share your thoughts on the assigned readings & relevant topics, with the idea that you have something valuable to teach, and learn from, your peers.
  - Absence & Late policy – more than 2 unexcused absences will negatively impact a student's grade/evaluation, and open the possibility of receiving no credit. An excused absence usually involves unforeseen, last minute personal medical/health problems, *and requires notification (via email and/or phone) with me prior to the class missed.* It is the student's responsibility to inquire about missed work and make arrangements for make-up assignments, regardless of whether the absence is excused or unexcused. If a student is late (more than 5 minutes) for class more than three times during the quarter, this will negatively affect his/her grade/evaluation.
  - Assignments turned in more than one week late will not be accepted.
- Study question essays and “open class” tests (~50%).
  - We will co-create and answer study questions based on assigned readings, guest speakers, and class discussions, and complete an open book/portfolio test.
- Portfolio/Learning Journal writings and notes (~20%).
  - These writings should augment your study question essays, & convey your personalized learning during the course.
- UD requirements:
  - Include literature citations & a “references cited” section for all essays (CBE style preferred)
  - Your essays must include *concrete application* of relevant knowledge from prior courses.
  - Prepare a 10-15 minute oral presentation on a water related topic/person, and provide written documentation of your preparation.

### **Portfolio/Learning Journal:**

#### ***What should be in your Portfolio/Learning Journal,***

- Class notes, reading notes, handouts...well organized and legible.
- Major assignments.
  - There are no “formal” tests in this course, and the study question essays serve the same purpose as a “mid-term” and a “final” exam – they are the primary way for both you and I to take stock of your comprehension of the course material and its personal relevance to you.
- Reflective writings on the assigned readings, class discussions, and course related experiences.
  - Does something you've read or experienced recently really get you thinking about a topic or issue that's not covered in the course assignments or study questions? Then write about it!

#### ***Subjective evaluation criteria of Portfolio/Learning Journal,***

- **Engagement** – demonstrate your interest and involvement in what you are learning; explore personal relevance of course topics
- **Organization** – easy for someone else to find materials and information
- **Creativity** – passion, imagination, inspiration, innovation
- **Quality** – commitment to a high standard of work
- **Critical thinking** – deep and thorough analysis of course material
- **Integration & synthesis** – demonstrate cumulative learning as the course progresses; connect course topics with prior learning, your own ideas and interests, and the world.