

PRELIMINARY TRAVEL SCHEDULE

(subject to change)

- March 13: Final packing meeting prior to departure.
March 14: Flight from Albany, New York, to Reno, Nevada. Van trip to Carson City. Check into hotel. Dinner and orientation.
March 15: Observations at Palomino Valley holding facility. Visit to Lake Tahoe for ecology observation. Evening discussion at hotel.
March 16: Presentation by Bureau of Land Management staff and observations on range. Evening discussion at hotel.
March 17: Observations on range, possibly also at Palomino Valley.
March 18: Presentation by staff at Palomino Valley, observations. Evening discussion at hotel.
March 19: Drive to Wild Horse Sanctuary, Shingleton, California. Lunch and settle into cabins. Introduction, orientation, and presentations by sanctuary staff.
March 20: Observation of horses in upper pastures, and presentation on mustang adoptions. Evening discussion at sanctuary.
March 21: Observation of horses in lower feeding grounds. Lunch. Load up and drive to Reno, Nevada. Check into hotel. Dinner.
March 22: Flight from Reno, Nevada, to Albany, New York, and return to campus.



NEVADA AND CALIFORNIA

Travel Seminar

FOR MORE INFORMATION

For details about costs and travel logistics:

Lisa Hobbs
Off-Campus Study and Exchanges
Starbuck Center, room 202
518-580-5355
lhobbs@skidmore.edu

For details about course content and academic requirements:

Elaine Larsen
Biology Department
Dana Science Center, room 325
518-580-5072
elarsen@skidmore.edu

For details about available financial aid:

Financial Aid Office
Starbuck Center, room 101
518-580-5750
finaid@skidmore.edu

SKIDMORE
C O L L E G E

CREATIVE THOUGHT TRAVELS

OCSE 2014-15

TRAVEL SEMINAR

NEVADA AND CALIFORNIA



"Biology of Wild Horses"
1-credit, 100-level travel seminar (TX 100A)
to California and Nevada
March 14-22, 2015



WILD HORSE BIOLOGY in Nevada and California

WHY STUDY MUSTANGS?

“Why did this animal that had prospered so in the Colorado desert leave his amiable homeland for Siberia? There is no answer.

We know that when the horse negotiated the land bridge . . . he found on the other end an opportunity for varied development that is one of the bright aspects of animal history. He wandered into France and became the mighty Percheron, and into Arabia, where he developed into a lovely poem of a horse, and into Africa where he became the brilliant zebra, and into Scotland, where he bred selectively to form the massive Clydesdale. He would also journey into Spain, where his very name would become the designation for gentleman, a caballero, a man of the horse. There he would flourish mightily and serve the armies that would conquer much of the known world.” —James Michener

Humans and horses have been interacting for more than 5,000 years, and despite industrialization horses are still used for transportation, agricultural power, and food, as well as for recreation, companionship, and therapy. The domestication of the horse changed human culture, agriculture, warfare, and politics—but how did it change the horse?

There are no ancestral wild horse populations remaining, but the ease with which free-ranging or feral horse herds survive in many different climates argues that the fundamental biology of the domesticated horse is not so different from its wild predecessors. Studying the behavior and biology of feral horse communities such as the mustangs of the western US can give us important insights into how to manage our domestic horses' health, behavior, and reproduction.

In addition, mustang herds in the west are the focus of much debate over their role in the ecology of the area. The success of the feral herds brings increasing competition for resources in a challenging environment and fuels conflicting views about the type of management that should be implemented by humans on this wild horse population. We will view mustang behavior and ecology both in the wild and in captivity, and study the viewpoints of those charged with their management and other stakeholders.

This “Biology of Wild Horses” travel seminar (TX 100A) and its companion course “Inside Equus” (BI 152) comprise a classroom and field-based introduction to animal physiology and behavior, including adaptation to domestication. After several on-campus meetings, students will travel to Nevada and California March 14–22, 2015, to observe wild horses at liberty and in confinement. Observations will be documented and used in a formal presentation at the end of the



“There is nothing so good for the inside of a man as the outside of a horse.”
—John Lubbock

semester. The ethical, ecological, and economic aspects of wild horse management on range lands will also be discussed.

Readings for “Biology of Wild Horses” will be assigned at the beginning of the semester. The course will meet three times per week before traveling to Nevada and California, March 14–22. Several post-trip meetings are also required, in April, to prepare a final poster and presentation.

FACULTY DIRECTORS

The seminar will be led by Elaine Larsen from Skidmore College and Lynn Dunn from SUNY-Cobleskill.

Elaine has taught vertebrate physiology courses at Skidmore for over 10 years. She has over 40 years of experience with horses, including an animal science degree from Cornell University, more than 1,000 miles of competitive long-distance riding, and certification as a professional farrier. She has also worked as an outdoor educator and outfitter, coordinating trips and ensuring the safety and preparedness of participants, and is wilderness first-aid and CPR certified. Elaine conducted horse observations in 2010 in Wyoming and in 1996 on Assateague Island in Maryland.

Lynn has a doctorate in equine exercise physiology and has been teaching equine studies in the Animal Science Department at SUNY-Cobleskill for over 25 years. She worked previously on Thoroughbred breeding farms, and she currently owns an adopted mustang. She led student groups on similar observation trips to Nevada in 2012 and Utah in 2011, and to observe animal husbandry and training in the Netherlands in 2013.

REQUIREMENTS

- QR1 passed
- Concurrent enrollment in BI 152 or BI 316 during spring 2015 or completion of BI 316 in a previous semester with a grade of B-minus or better
- Sufficient physical and mental stamina for hiking, walking, and standing outdoors for prolonged periods in variable conditions.

Previous experience with horses is not required.

COSTS

The anticipated fee for the seminar is \$2,600 (subject to fluctuation). This includes Skidmore tuition, round-trip airfare between Albany and Reno airports, ground transportation for program excursions, on-site accommodations (generally double occupancy), two meals per day, entrance fees, local guides, program excursions, faculty on site, and the support of OCSE. The fee does not include personal expenses. Financial aid is available for eligible students.

APPLY

Please apply by Friday, October 24, 2014. Application forms are at www.skidmore.edu/ocse. All applicants must submit a \$250 deposit at the time of application to hold their space in the program (100% refundable for applicants not accepted to the program). This deposit will be applied to the program fee.

