

PRELIMINARY TRAVEL SCHEDULE

(subject to change)

- March 10: Final packing meeting prior to departure.
- March 11: Flight from Albany, N.Y., to Reno, Nev., and van trip to Carson City, Nev. Hotel check-in. Dinner and orientation.
- March 12: Observations at Palomino Valley holding facility. Visit to Lake Tahoe for ecology observation. Evening discussion at hotel.
- March 13: Presentation by Bureau of Land Management staff. Range observations at Pine Nut Herd Management Area. Evening discussion at hotel.
- March 14: Morning tour at Palomino Valley holding facility. Afternoon observations at Pine Nut HMA.
- March 15: Morning tour of Northern Nevada Correctional Center's mustang training program. Afternoon observations at Pine Nut HMA.
- March 16: Drive to eastern California. Settle into cabins. Visit Fort Sage or Twin Peaks HMA or Mt. Lassen National Park (depending on range conditions and weather).
- March 17: Introductions and tour of the Shingletown, Calif., Wild Horse Sanctuary. Observations of its horse herds. Discussion of wild horse adoptions.
- March 18: Morning observation of herds. Lunch. Load up and drive to Reno, Nev. Check into hotel. Dinner.
- March 19: Flight from Reno to Albany and return to campus.



NEVADA AND CALIFORNIA Travel Seminar

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

For details about costs
and travel logistics:
Off-Campus Study and Exchanges
Starbuck Center, room 202
518-580-5355
ocse@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
COLLEGE

CREATIVE THOUGHT TRAVELS

OCSE 2016-17

TRAVEL SEMINAR

NEVADA AND CALIFORNIA



"Mustangs and the American West"
1-credit, 100-level travel seminar (TX 100A)
to California and Nevada
March 11-19, 2017



TRAVEL SEMINAR

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 “Mustangs and the American West” travel seminar (TX 100A) and its companion course “Inside Equus” (BI 195) 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 11–19, 2017, to observe wild horses at liberty and in confinement. Observations will be documented and used in a formal presentation



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

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

Readings for “Mustangs and the American West” will be assigned at the beginning of the semester. The course will meet three times before traveling to Nevada and California. Several post-trip meetings are also required to prepare a final poster and presentation.

FACULTY DIRECTOR

The seminar will be led by Elaine Larsen from Skidmore College.

Elaine has taught vertebrate physiology courses at Skidmore for more than 10 years. She has more than 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; she is certified in wilderness first aid and CPR.

Elaine conducted horse observations in 1996, 2010, and 2016 on Assateague Island and in Wyoming, and she led a similar Skidmore travel seminar in 2015.

REQUIREMENTS

- QR1 passed
- Concurrent enrollment in BI 195 or BI 316 during spring 2017, or completion of BI 152 or BI 316 in a previous semester with a grade of B-minus or better, or equivalent coursework or experience.
- 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 21, 2016. Application forms are at 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.

