**Geography of the National Parks**

Syllabus

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**Meeting Location and Schedule**:

Robinson 302

Thu 18:30 – 21:15

**Office Hours**:

Wed 10:45 – 11:45 and by appointment

**Required Text**: None required.

**Introduction:**

America’s National Park is system is a treasure that inspires millions of visitors annually from around the world. It is the pinnacle of a national system of protected places and has given millions of people from the U.S. and all over the world an unforgettable chance to view America’s diverse natural beauty.

The National Park system represents a truly great American idea that has also been adopted and adapted by countries around the world. In this course we will explore a selection of parks, learn about their history, geology and regional setting, and discuss the issues around them today

**Evaluation**:

Exams 40%

Project 20%

Assignments (in-class & homework) 20%

Quizzes 20%

**Attendance**:

You are required to attend all scheduled classes. Roll will be taken at the beginning of each class. If you must arrive late, please enter quietly and see me at the end of that class. If you leave early without explanation it will count as an absence. If you must miss a class, you are responsible for the material. Perfect attendance will count favorably in your final grade.

**Exams & Quizzes**:

Exams and quizzes may be a combination of multiple choice, matching, fill in the blank and/or short answer. Questions will come from reading materials (digital and handouts), lectures, videos and other assignments.

Assignments:

1) Questions relating to homework which may be discussed in class.

2) In-class assignments from handouts, videos and online readings. In some cases, you may be assigned to work in small groups.

3) Late assignments: Certain in-class assignments may not be made up, but other assignments and homework submitted late will be subject to a minimum one grade penalty.

**Class Participation:**

Keep abreast of current events and be prepared to share your thoughts with the class. This is a class where your personal experience and/or observations of events and places can enliven discussion and enhance the learning process (and help your grade!).

You are encouraged to ask questions about anything you do not understand or which you think requires clarification. As such, your reading and thinking about each topic/ prior to class can be a solid asset in helping your final grade, it’s up to you.

**National Park Project:**

Your project will involve creating an original 10-minute ESRI Story Map that explores your assigned National Park. ESRI’s Story Map is free and available without subscription.

***https://storymaps.arcgis.com/***

**Required Components:**

1. Social media: You will need to visit your park’s official social media sites (twitter, facebook, instagram…) and make note of important events, stories and other happenings. Also explore the wider media with reference to your parks such as travel and outdoor magazines and blogs and see what writers and visitors are saying.

You are strongly encouraged to reach out to your own personal network of family, friends, classmates and coworkers for additional information. You may be surprised how willing people are to share their experiences – especially if you let them know you working on a project. You might want to consider asking what they like best about this place and why they chose to visit/work there and where they are from.

1. Reference map: This is a map that shows your park in its geographic context. Where is it? How big is it? What are its neighbors? What is it like there? What resources are there? How is it connected to other places.
2. Area population: What are the nearest towns and cities? How many people live near the park (and in some cases, inside the park) How is the nearby population changing?
3. Economy: What services are available at the park? What about nearby? Are there any mineral resources in the area and how are they being managed?
4. Features: What is the park’s geology? What’s the best time to visit? What are some key features to see? What else you would do in the surrounding area if this were an actual trip. If you have been there already (or have plans to go) please let us know!
5. History: Who promoted this area to be a park and why? What president signed off on it?
6. Summary: Your challenge is to present this information without making it read like a checklist of facts. Seek out a theme that attracts attention and helps organize your presentation.

**Please note:**

* Each presentation must provide the required components, and have quality, high resolution pictures/graphics.
* Your final slide must include you references with hyperlinks and must be submitted prior to your presentation.
* Avoid reading text from a PowerPoint page! Know your park, provide context, analogies and fun facts.
* You are also encouraged to include a meme or GIF that you find or create related to the park, the area it is in or that is related to National Parks and / or traveling in general. The idea is to make this presentation informative, fun, unique and make your project a visually engaging and interesting story!

**Scoring**: A rubric has been posted to Blackboard

**\*\*\*Tentative Schedule\*\*\* (All dates subject to change)**

**Week: Topics**

Sep 5 Introduction to America’s National Parks, Ken Burns “America’s Best Idea” Building the National Commons, Yellowstone, Microcosm of the National Parks

Sep 12 Volcanic features and volcanic activity in our National Parks. Where are our parks located? Disposing the Public Domain: From Commons to Commodity, Grand Teton and Jackson Hole, Basics of plate tectonics

Sep 19 Quiz, A public Land System Emerges, Hawaii Volcanoes, Haleakala. Earth’s largest Mountains, Subduction zones

Sep 26 Landscapes in areas of complex mountains. National Forests, Lassen, Rocky Mountain, Petrified Forest. Assembling North America, Plate tectonics and natural resources

Oct 3 National Wildlife Refuges, Project progress evaluations, Yosemite, Sequoia and Kings Canyon. Earth’s heat, conduction, convection and radiation

Oct 10 Exam I, Landscapes shaped by Continental or Alpine Glaciation. Glacier National Park

Oct 17 Projects due

Oct 24 Bureau of Land Management Lands, Streams shaping the land, Kobuk Valley, Glacier Bay, Theodore Roosevelt, Badlands and Katmai.

Oct 31 Quiz, Caves and reefs: Mammoth Cave, Everglades, Biscayne, Wind Cave and Guadalupe Mountains

Nov 7 National Wilderness Preservation System: Wild and Scenic Rivers and National Scenic Trails, Mass wasting

Nov 14 Contrasting extremes: Death Valley, Denali, Gates of the Arctic

Nov 21 Quiz. Erosion weathering and land removal. Zion and Bryce Canyon, Grand Canyon and Capitol Reef.

Nov 28 Thanksgiving break

Dec 5 Exam II, Acadia, Dry Tortugas, Voyageurs

Dec 12 TBA