

NRSM 374 - Yellowstone Studies Spring 2016

Instructor

Dr. Natalie Dawson

Course Description

Yellowstone Studies is an intensive four-day field course that explores ecological and social issues in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem (GYE) and Yellowstone National Park. The course includes meetings with scientists, managers, private landowners, NGO's and field researchers, evening discussions, and field study. Course topics include conservation history, bear management, wolf reintroduction and ecology, winter recreation, geology, area ranching, and an examination of current land use in the GYE. The course also includes a one hour pre-field trip meeting on campus in which we will discuss structure of course, and logistics for the field trip.

Course Objectives

This course will introduce students to ecological issues and natural resource conservation in Yellowstone. Particular emphasis will be placed on:

- The Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem and connectivity across political, social, and ecological boundaries
- The influence of natural and anthropogenic disturbances on the ecological function and diversity of this region
- Interactions between predators and prey and their habitats
- How decisions regarding the park and the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem are made in the context of science, politics, and differing perceptions and priorities for the region
- A clearer understanding of the causes of ecological and social patterns in the West through reflection on the divergent ideas presented in this course by speakers and authors
- Advancing synthesis by challenging students to think about potential solutions to conservation problems that include an integration of social and ecological realities

Course Requirements

Travels in the Greater Yellowstone by Jack Turner (required reading prior to field trip)

Field Study (January 28-February 1)

Final Project

Course Evaluation

Participation during the field component (60%)

Final project (40%)

Participation

Participation includes engaging in class discussions, reading and referencing course readings, asking questions, and being on time and prepared for each component of the course. Each of you is responsible for both participating and providing support and stimulation for others to participate.

Final Project

Details will be provided in first class session on campus. All students are required to complete a project based on one of the topics addressed in this course, or a topic of interest that relates to Yellowstone National Park or the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem. Projects must address a major controversy in conservation or ecology, which pertains to Yellowstone. In the project, students will integrate information from readings, lectures and discussions on that topic during the field course and recent scholarly literature to achieve a deeper understanding on at least one topic of interest.

It is critical that students select a topic and clear it with Natalie no later than the first day of the field class so that they can make sure they have good notes from speakers that address elements of this issue and also so they make sure they ask questions to get more information from speakers and instructors on their topic during the field course. Past projects have been videos, summary papers, artwork, etc. If you choose a summary paper, it must be 5 pages, double-spaced, 1-

inch margins, with 12point font. You must include a list of references used in the paper. For other projects, a typed list of references must be handed in with the final project.

Final project deadline will be announced at the pre-trip meeting on 1/27.

All students must practice academic honesty. Academic misconduct is subject to an academic penalty by the course instructor and/or a disciplinary sanction by the University.

All students need to be familiar with the Student Conduct Code. The Code is available for review online at [Student Conduct Code](http://www.umt.edu/vpsa/policies/student_conduct.php) (http://www.umt.edu/vpsa/policies/student_conduct.php)

If you have questions contact:

Dr. Natalie Dawson in Main Hall 308,

Phone: (406) 243-6956 or Email: Natalie.dawson@umontana.edu

Sample Yellowstone Studies Schedule from Previous Years

(subject to change depending on speak availability, etc)

Instructor: Dr. Natalie Dawson

Thursday, January 28

8:00 am Meet at at the Motor Pool across from the stadium to leave
11:00 Meet with Carolyn Byrd, Director, Greater Yellowstone Coalition
2:00 Matt Metz, Wolf Biologist, YNP-YCR
3:00 Kerry Gunther, Bear Biologist, YNP-YCR
4:00 Todd Koel, Fisheries Biologist, YNP-YCR

Friday, January 29

6:00am Leave for Lamar Valley to look for wolves
10-12pm Ski/snowshoe to Tower Falls
1:00 Wade Vagias, Winter Use and Wilderness In Yellowstone, Superintendent's Conference Room
2:30 Ski/snowshoe with Dr. Cheryl Jaworowski, Yellowstone NP Geologist on Upper Terraces
5:00 Down time! Go stretch your legs!
7:00 Evening discussion, movie, "In the Valley of the Wolves"

Saturday, January 30

6:00 am Leave for Lamar Valley with Rick McIntyre to look for wolves
11:00 Lunch, stories with Dan Hartman, wildlife photographer in Silver Gate, MT
4:00 Boiling River Hot Springs
6:00 Dinner in Gardiner

Sunday, January 31

8:00 am Check out of YCC Camp-everything clean!
10:00 am Meet with ranchers in the Paradise Valley to discuss local land use and park issues
6:00 Approximate return time to Missoula