

Field Study

at Colorado College

VOL. 1 | 2017



On the Cover:

A duck is released after it was banded, sexed, and aged by students in the BE367 Animal Ecology class on the Monte Vista Wildlife Refuge in southern Colorado.
Photo by **Will Sardinsky '17**.

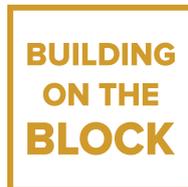


COLORADO COLLEGE

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www.coloradocollege.edu/fieldstudy



Part of the **Colorado College Plan: Building on the Block**
ADDITIONAL SUPPORT FOR THE BLOCK PLAN:
The Center for Immersive Learning and Engaged Teaching

The mission of the Office of Field Study is to enable the faculty at Colorado College to teach innovative, unique, and effective field-study courses and conduct field-based research through providing logistical and administrative support, as well as faculty training and course development. The office also exists to further the practice of field study courses and expand the definition thereof, and to offer students opportunities to study in the field outside of academic courses.

Field Study at Colorado College

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Field study is an integral part of the Colorado College experience, and creating and enhancing these opportunities is a key initiative of our “Building on the Block” strategic plan. We envision every student going on multiple field experiences throughout their time at CC. Whether it is a behind-the-scenes trip to an opera performance in New York, a multi-day trip collecting data on fish populations in a remote Colorado stream, or visiting the Sundance Film Festival in Utah, students get a wide variety and depth of experience in the field.



Rebecca Tucker is associate professor in art history, museum director of the Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center, and has also served as the director of the Crown Faculty Center. She has led many field trips in her teaching career, and is particularly interested in studying the pedagogy of field study at CC. As director of the Crown Faculty Center, she helped lead and coordinate faculty development.

course at a time, field trips can be a significant part of the educational experience. Going into the field gives students the opportunity to see the application of concepts taught in the classroom, and it can be transformative. The Block Plan opens up pedagogical opportunities that are extremely difficult, if not impossible, under a normal semester schedule.

“In the classroom, a class commonly addresses questions from polarized positions; asking questions in the field enhances nuance and breaks down expectations. Students often say, ‘I thought I was going to hear X, but it turns out my question was totally wrong; what I needed to hear was LMN. I needed to reframe my questions because I didn’t know what I was doing until I was there.’ The same thing happens to the faculty; the transformative experience is true for all of us,” says Tucker.

.....
 “Field study makes different types of learning possible; it expands the arena of engagement for students, but also for the faculty. Faculty are very much in favor of field study, as a particular type of learning opportunity, as a means of getting students to go all in,” says Tucker.

“What field study does is it takes the academic part of learning, which is incredibly intense here, and replaces it with something that is more holistic. So physically, emotionally, psychologically, you are all invested in what you are doing. For example, when students visit an artist in a studio, the whole experience is focused on the artist. You can’t get that in the classroom. It is just more alive when you are there, talking to an artist in their studio. There is a weight to it, when you are walking through the studio and tripping over lumber or smelling the kiln, there is something kinesthetic,” she says.

Field study also provides opportunities for college students to develop the qualities that employers are asking for, according to Tucker. “You can’t ever really tune your education to exactly what employers want. But they are saying they want what our students do on field trips — they want them to look carefully; they want them to be flexible; they want them to think on their feet; they want them to work in groups, adjust to different settings; they want them to engage. That’s what a field trip does,” she says.

The Block Plan at CC is what makes this type of teaching and learning possible. When students and faculty have only one

Recent graduate Joe Jannetty ’14, who is a credit development associate at CoBank, says he is unique among his friends who attended other colleges in the quality and number of field study opportunities he had at CC.

FEATURED LOCATIONS, CC FIELD STUDY, 2015-16



"Taking one course at a time affords you a lot of individual attention from your professor, and allows you to become fully immersed in the course. I was an economics major, but had the opportunity to go fossil hunting in New Mexico, study astronomy on the Baca campus, and research snow leopards in Nepal. None of my friends from home or from work had those opportunities because studying one subject at a time allows you to travel with your course without interfering with other courses," says Jannetty.

Mellon Pedagogical Researcher in Residence Heather Fedesco agrees. "The Block Plan already does something unique by immersing students and faculty in a setting with sustained focus on content, but through the extensive use of field trips, students have additional opportunities to learn in settings where their learning is being applied. By creating novel, or unique, learning moments, students are woken up to a fuller and deeper

understanding of the concepts being taught. What makes the Block Plan so special is the reinforcing effect these opportunities have on the learning that takes place here."

Faculty and students at CC can experience a block together in a profound way. Having this experience out in the field amplifies the focus, and the depth that students and faculty experience together.

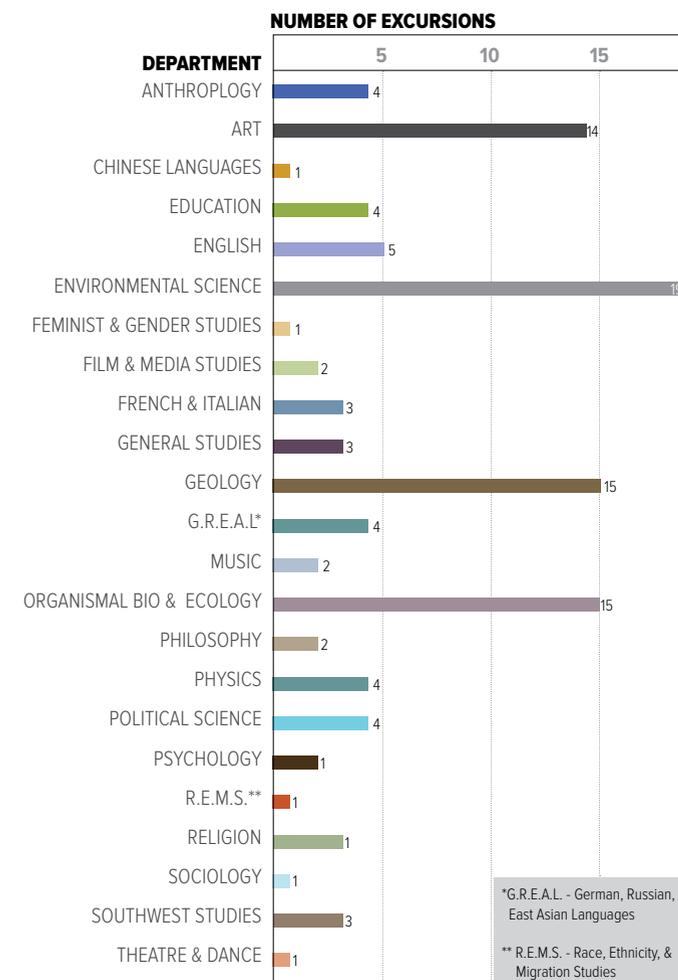
This journal chronicles some of these experiences from the last two years at CC, from the 2015-16 and 2016-17 academic years. The interviews with faculty and students shed light on the impact field study has on the Colorado College experience. We hope you enjoy reading about some of the adventures that faculty and students have shared outside of the classroom.

"Taking one course at a time affords you a lot of individual attention from your professor, and allows you to become fully immersed in the course. I was an economics major, but had the opportunity to go fossil hunting in New Mexico, study astronomy on the Baca campus, and research snow leopards in Nepal. None of my friends from home or from work had those opportunities because studying one subject at a time allows you to travel with your course without interfering with other courses."

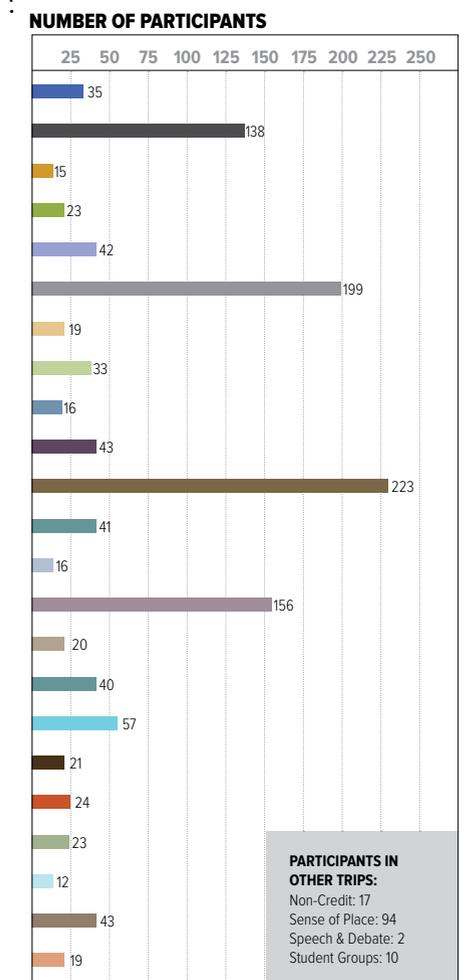
— Joe Jannetty '14

113 field study courses over 8 blocks

2015-16 Academic Year*



1,086 unique participants



*G.R.E.A.L. - German, Russian, & East Asian Languages

** R.E.M.S. - Race, Ethnicity, & Migration Studies

PARTICIPANTS IN OTHER TRIPS:
Non-Credit: 17
Sense of Place: 94
Speech & Debate: 2
Student Groups: 10

*This data represents academic field trips that left El Paso County, as reported to the Office of Field Study.

Stroganoff, Borscht, and Learning Russian in the Colorado Wilderness

Learning a new language and culture becomes a richer (and tastier) experience when you divide class time between the CC campus, the Baca Campus, and the CC Cabin.

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Russian Language, Literature, and Film, First-year Experience

co-taught with **Alexei Pavlenko**, associate professor, Russian and Eurasian studies; **Natalia Khan**, visiting lecturer; **Eyner Roman '19**, **Izabel Wills '19**, first-year students

“This was a two-block FYE course. We study the Russian language, but also the history, culture, and film of Russia. The course was split between on-campus and off-campus time. We did two field trips, one to the Baca Campus in the beginning of the first block, one to the CC Cabin at the end of the second block. In our three-day trip to Baca, it's the students' first block as freshmen, and we want them to get to know each other because there are so many distractions on campus. At Baca, there is nothing to do but to hang out with your classmates, so it brings us together. We also wanted to show them the nature of Colorado, because most have never been here before. Also, it lets students learn about themselves. The second block, at the CC Cabin, we stayed overnight, cooked a Russian dinner together, and stayed in the same house. Everyone was participating, so we became even closer.”

— **Natalia Khan**

“The Baca was definitely where we got really close, and also at the cabin because it was one room and we were all together. It was really nice in the second block at the cabin — that was one of the best nights I've had at college so far — cooking dinner together, improv dance parties ... I think I had the best meal I've had at college when we were at the cabin: Stroganoff and borscht. We bonded because of the workload. We were all there, and everybody was studying together. I think some people were more likely to speak up because it didn't feel as structured as classroom time, more like a discussion between friends, because we all knew each other and our professors really well at that point.”

— **Izabel Wills**



“The field trips in the class were very important to helping us bond as a group and to helping us learn. The field trips allowed us to get to know our classmates better and be more comfortable interacting with each other, therefore we didn't feel ashamed or restrained to practice the language with our classmates.”

We learned songs, learned about the food in Russia, and I feel like that was the best context to learn about it. Also, it's fun to see how you can focus at Baca; we had to study together.”

— **Eyner Roman**

Making Intangible Scientific Concepts Tangible

On the Colorado sand dunes, in an area burned by wildfire, and above treeline on Pikes Peak, students and faculty become a research team, gathering, analyzing, and applying the data they collect in the field.

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Terrestrial Ecosystem Ecology

Miro Kummel, associate professor,
Environmental Program

Kyra Wolf '16, student

“The original concept of the course was to teach atmosphere and biosphere interactions through hands-on learning. So all of the concepts we developed through measurements and interpretation of the data. Colorado is wonderful for microclimatology because there is just so much going on in terms of the vegetation zone, how wind interacts with vegetation. It’s like being a kid in a candy store!

We started the course by trying to understand energy balance without vegetation surfaces, and what better place to go than Great Sand Dunes National Park? So we headed to the sand dunes. While at the sand dunes, we also took advantage of the San Luis Lake and studied micrometeorology of desert oases. The second week, we went deeper into concepts of how vegetated surfaces interact with energy balance, so we went to the Hayman Fire burn area to look at

both burned and unburned landscapes and understand how canopies work. Then we headed up Pikes Peak to check out how treeline islands and north- and south-facing slopes interact. Finally, the whole third week we spent on an orchard on the Western Slope, applying the concepts that we had learned to practical issues such as farmers faced with microclimate issues.

It’s a lot of data gathering. On campus, we put together a micro-meteorological tower with six layers of instruments, and spent two days digging through the data and then developing a concept. Then we had extensive data gathering on the sand dunes, where there were some very big surprises. Where we thought we would just be getting surface energy balance without the influence of water, we had a huge signature of the creek, which was very unexpected. We spent almost a full day just trying to figure out what the data were up to.

Collecting data makes a huge difference for students. It provides students with a significant amount of ownership over the project and their learning when they get to decide where to put the towers to make the measurements — their thought went into it. If they don’t calibrate the instrument properly, the data are off. The students know what happens with the data if they collect it, and it makes sense to them.

Overall in society, we place a lot of emphasis on success, but success is not where most learning happens. A lot of learning happens when things don’t go according to plan.

For us, this was actually part of our design — to allow for things to go wrong in a safe way. If people make mistakes, those mistakes are great learning opportunities.”

— **Miro Kummel**

“You can talk about theories, but they are invisible, intangible. Especially with something like microclimate, the variables that you are measuring are so specific, that when you go out and measure those things, it’s a real thing in the real world. You don’t get that in a lot of classes. And that’s why a lot of people don’t like science or math.”

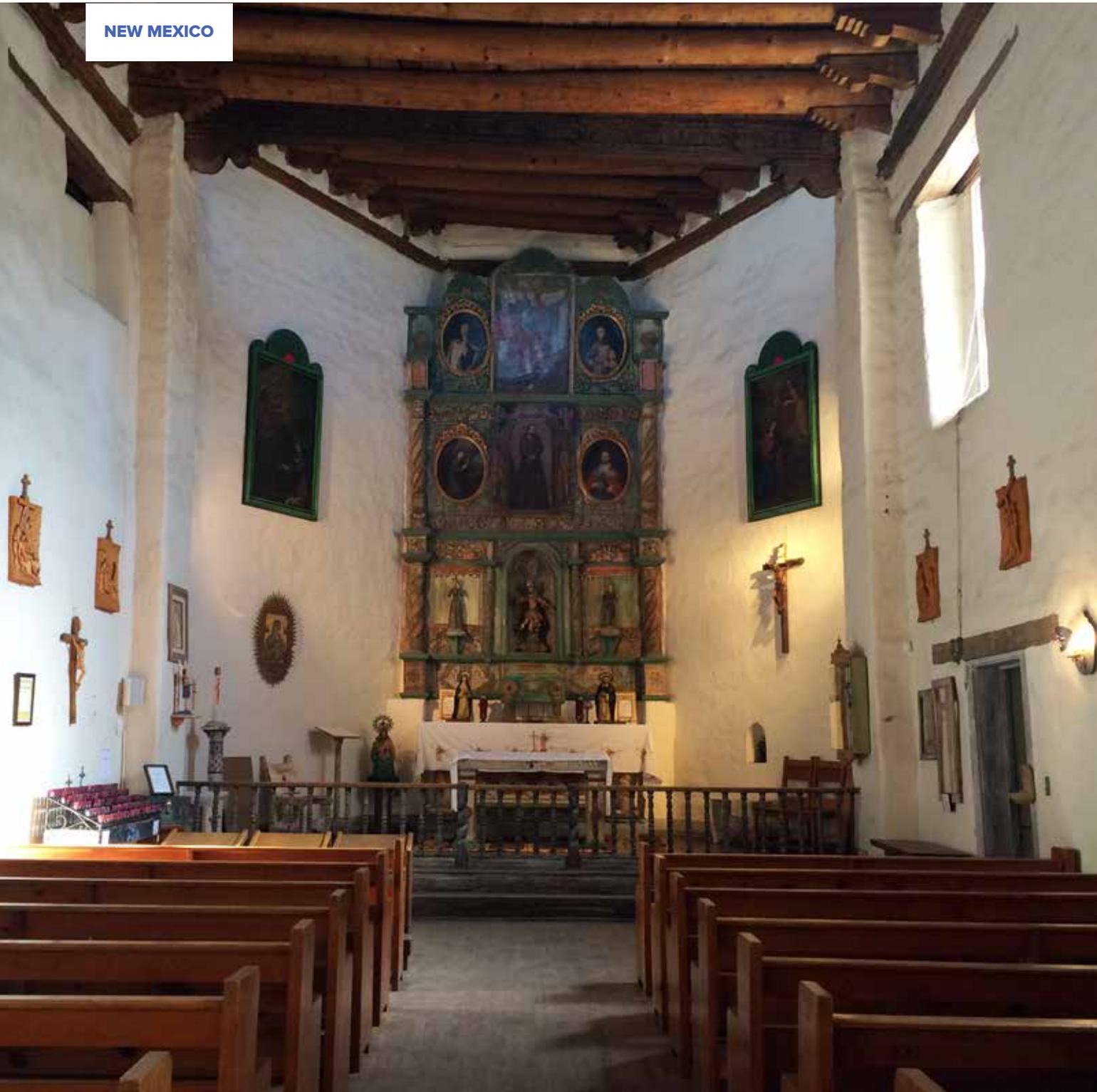
— **Kyra Wolf**



Field Work Gives Deep Understanding of Colonialism and Native Traditions

Students travel to Santa Fe, New Mexico, to participate in the feast days at the San Ildefonso Pueblo. They conduct a “mini-ethnography” to understand the relationship between colonialism and the religious traditions of the Pueblo people, in combination with visits to museums and a CC alumna who is a Pueblo tribal member.

NEW MEXICO



Religion and Colonialism

Devaka Premawardhana, assistant professor of religion
Shanchuan Yin '16, Sam Stansel '18, students

“We have in our department a desire among students to engage with communities of practitioners of the traditions we are studying, so that we can engage and learn through firsthand encounters and to let our subject matter come alive. The colonial encounter has always been an imposition of a certain agenda; this is what we talked about quite a bit with respect to Christian missionaries whose encounters we were studying; so the big motivation was to decolonize our ways of relating to people. The idea for the field trips was to be able to hear from the descendants of these colonial encounters and those who are living with the legacy of the colonial encounter and feel the impact of these structural inequalities that go back to the earliest encounters with Europeans and euro Americans.

“Sharing a table and a meal with people — that is what is so important at the feast days. We are eating from the same plates, it is a collective meal about welcoming people. Our learning happened in such settings. We were having a multi-sensory engagement with our material, learning through taste, sight, smell. There is something of value in learning not just abstract rules and concepts, but in learning how to eat with people, how to express thanks, how to express sorrow with people, how this type of human, everyday life is of value, even if it is not set down through systematic knowledge.

“The biggest challenge is to make sure we are not imposing ourselves or agendas, and that we are always sure that we are there by invitation of the people who live there. It’s important that we are bringing students in a way that we are welcome.”

— **Devaka Premawardhana**



“In the social sciences in general, it’s easy to get disconnected from the subjects you study, and these field trips bring you back.

At the end of the day you remember that these are people like you and me, and that’s really, really important. If you were just to watch a film or read a book, it doesn’t capture the ‘human-ness’ that is so important.”

— **Sam Stansel**

“We visited several families, during a traditional festival called feast days, we were part of the whole process of the feast day from late night to first light. The classroom is not the same as in the field. It’s a way to care more about the world, by really doing something, to touch, to feel, to talk.”

— **Shanchuan Yin**

Grounding Environmental Policy in Practice

On field trips to environmental nonprofits, a wastewater treatment plant, a coal-fired power plant, and a hiking/trail maintenance work day, students in Environmental Politics and Policy get to see theory put into practice.

COLORADO



Environmental Politics and Policy, First Year Experience

Corina McKendry, assistant professor of political science
Noah Hirshorn '20, Max Kronstadt '20, students

“The first week, we did a hike in Red Rock Canyon. We hiked for a little bit, then we sat down in the dirt and talked about the readings for that day. The motivation for that is partly just to get out of the classroom while we are thinking about different ideas about nature. And then the trip to Denver was to actually meet people who are doing environmental politics on the ground. So we met with a member of the House of Representatives who is a CC grad. We met with another CC grad who was a student of mine who does budget and policy analysis on natural resource issues for the governor. So we got a little slice of the spectrum of the ways in which people are enacting environmental policy. In Colorado Springs, we go to the wastewater treatment plant and Martin Drake Power Plant. These trips were both to get an idea of the urban metabolism of Colorado Springs, but also to connect something that seems abstract, like the Clean Water Act, to how that plays out in practice. Both expose students to the environment of Colorado Springs and let them see how the laws we are talking about play out in practice. The best thing about field trips is that they ground the course materials in the actual practice of things we read about, both policies and broader politics. And just getting students out into Colorado Springs and getting to know the city a little bit is valuable because it’s very easy to not leave campus.”

— **Corina McKendry**



“The field trips brought a lot of practicality into the course in the sense that we’re reading a lot about the subject of environmental politics and policy, but we got to see what happens after that. Being able to actually go and take part while the material is fresh in your mind really helped me personally to formulate an opinion about it and understand it a lot better. But ultimately, field trips are fun. They’re a good change of pace. They help ground what we’re learning. And they make us all motivated to keep learning.”

— **Noah Hirshorn**

“I have a much easier time learning something when I can see its implications in terms of my life or the health of the planet or the whole community. And so I’m much more motivated to do the academic side of the work if I also have that experience of going on the field trip. One of the reasons that I chose CC was that the Block Plan allows for field study and the fact that I got to go on a field trip my first week made me realize I’m at the right school for me.

— **Max Kronstadt**

Diving Headlong into the Messiness of the ‘Real World’

Students embed with various schools in the Denver Public School system — from charter schools, to traditional schools, to innovation schools. Combined with visits with leaders from all aspects of the education system, students see how school choice and innovations impact neighborhoods and at times, perpetuate segregation.



Critical Perspectives in Public School Innovations

Tina Valtierra, assistant professor of education
Eliza Stein '18, student

“I expected to be busy; the part that was unexpected was the emotion, it was really tough! We were tired, we got to our schools at like 7:20 each morning, and ended our day after 6 p.m. It was a long day — we had homework, we had to write our blogs and read other people’s blogs, and it was tiring!”

It was necessary because they were viewpoints that we needed, but I wasn’t anticipating being that emotionally and physically drained.”

— **Eliza Stein**

“The goal of the class was to get firsthand experience in education policy from a social justice perspective. Denver Public Schools is a choice-based school system, which perpetuates, in many ways, segregation. At the same time, there is a lot of really interesting, cool stuff happening, so I wanted students to experience innovation, and at the same time experience it from a lens of equity. Students had a choice between three different schools that had some sort of innovation status, and students were able to pick one of those three to spend two weeks with. We spent time meeting with educators, community members, activists, state officials, and students. This whole soup of stakeholders in the system of education provided a dichotomy of viewpoints, and that was important to me. Another lifelong learning goal was to learn how you disagree respectfully with stakeholders. So with varied viewpoints, how do you authentically listen to their point of view and engage in dialogue that creates shared understanding or at least respect? Often these types of politically charged issues result in anger and not thinking very critically. So to me that was a life lesson I wanted to work on. Part of the goal was how do you become comfortable with ambiguity, because life is ambiguous, and so how do you grapple with that messiness? The social sciences are not linear. How do you make sense of the messiness?”

— **Tina Valtierra**

Immersing in the World of Faulkner

The Major Authors class (EN 381) is a chance for students to read and study William Faulkner’s work in the very setting in which it was conceived. Students travel to Oxford, Mississippi, and have class in Faulkner’s home, Rowan Oak. They also explore the real inspiration for Faulkner’s fictional works.

Major Authors – Faulkner
Barry Sarchett, professor of English
Tim Jenkins '16, student



“We took a class every day in Faulkner’s house.

We had access that many Ole Miss students don’t have. The reason you would travel for Faulkner is that he wrote about a fictional county, but it was a real county in Mississippi, with Oxford as the county seat.

For other authors it might not be so important, but for Faulkner you want to go see where he set every one of his novels — in that location.

He [Faulkner] is a regional author, he wrote books set in Jefferson County, so if you want to study him well, you have to go.”

And with the connections of Dean Mike Edmonds, we were so incredibly well connected there. Every day, we were staying at the Inn at Ole Miss, and we would walk to Faulkner’s house, and we could go sit in his parlor and talk about the books we were reading. It was unbelievable.

Reading Faulkner is incredibly challenging, but I was grateful that we were there, because when you are on campus here, there are so many other things you can think about. In Oxford, it would be like go to class, go read, etc. When I’m here, I’m a student athlete, I have to think about lacrosse, and it’s hard for me to fully be just a student, and when I was there it was just great, I’m dealing with these really difficult texts, but there is nothing else I need to do.

Now, I feel as though I am known by the English Department and I know the English Department. My relationships with these professors is not just in the classroom. I don’t think that would have happened if I hadn’t had the intimate off-campus experience, for a week. So feeling like, these classes offer a way in, not just for an author, but to the people who are guiding you, the professors who are leading these trips.

You can read better and have a richer reading if you go and if you see more and experience the place. Place is a character in and of itself.”

— **Tim Jenkins**

Reading and Writing by the Sea

In a remote coastal town in Oregon, students develop an intimate relationship with place as they dive deeply into the literature of the sea and the writing life.

OREGON



Creative Writing Workshop

Dave Mason, professor of English

“The idea is to take literature out of the classroom and relate it to the physical world that we are living in. The whole point is to be influenced by this place — to study literature, to study writing — but to do it in a way that we are influenced by place.”



“I think the chief advantage of the Block Plan is our ability to get off campus, and be off campus for periods of time. So the Oregon class, Reading and Writing by the Sea, is fundamentally a successful idea for a couple of reasons. Newport is a remote but easily negotiable town halfway down the coast of Oregon; it’s a knowable town, it’s not so big that you get lost in it, and it’s not so small that it isn’t offering a variety of things.

It is a regular literature class in that students are reading a lot, from Homer to the present day, essays, poems, etc. We read Rachel Carson’s ‘The Sea Around Us,’ we read David Foster Wallace’s ‘Consider the Lobster’; we think about our whole relationship with oceans, even down to how we process and eat the seafood. There is a seafood processing industry right there in town. A lot of the fishermen are crab fishermen.

So everything we are talking about in terms of the reading is relatable to conversation with people in the world. And we have class discussion of the assigned readings, but we also have a lot of activities, which is one reason this particular town is so handy — almost every day could turn into a field trip. There’s a great aquarium just across the bridge; we had the students up to our house, they took a long tide pool walk there. We met a marine biologist on the banks of the river, and he guided us through tide-pooling. He had the students eating barnacles and seaweed and finding dozens of species under one rock. We had a fisherman talking about the life of being a fisherman, and a marine biologist talking about his research, and his teaching. We witnessed a dissection of a shark. The idea is to take literature out of the classroom and relate it to the physical world that we are living in. The whole point is to be influenced by this place — to study

literature, to study writing — but to do it in a way that we are influenced by place. We also do a lot of writing. I tell the students ‘You can write anything you want for this class, you just have to write a substantial amount of stuff.’ One student wrote a play; a bunch of them did very professional journalism, interviewing fishermen for their stories; people wrote poetry; people wrote fiction. What I fundamentally believe is that this is a great way to learn about literature and life and writing, and understand that these things are connected to a world much bigger than the classroom and much bigger than the CC campus.

I actually think what I have seen and learned in the field has made me a better classroom teacher. It is the greatest teaching I do and the most important part of the lives of the students.”

— Dave Mason

Moving Past Romanticized Images

Students travel to New Mexico to learn about representations of native peoples and to interact with communities in the contemporary Southwest.

NEW MEXICO



Native Peoples of the Southwest, First Year Experience

Christina Leza, assistant professor of anthropology



“I did a version of this trip last year for the FYE seminar and there are at least a couple of motivations for the trip. First is the art focus: We do a lot with visual and material artistic representations, as well as linguistic art representations of native cultures, so I wanted to have students visit different museums in the Southwest so they can get a sense of how native art is represented.

Another motivation is to give students some firsthand experience with native peoples in the Southwest, in the sense of being able to talk to native peoples in the Southwest context. I sometimes bring in speakers, whether those are scholars or community leaders. I often have them come into the classroom, but I know that students (because of their exposure to native peoples and the Southwest) may have very romanticized ideas about native

peoples and also about the Southwest and what that is like. I want students to have some firsthand experience being in the Southwest, seeing what contemporary Southwest communities look like, including contemporary native communities.

Part of the sense of place focus was to try and communicate a sense of different ways of thinking about place within different cultures. We read a lot and talked a lot in the class about the ways in which many native cultures have a very different sense of place connected to their oral traditions, but we also talked about what you see focused on in native cultures in regards to place and a sense of rootedness in the place that you come from. It is also kind of a broader human experience that is de-emphasized in other cultures. For example, telling stories about a place no longer becomes important, if it ever was,

in some particular non-native culture. Some students begin to understand that the differences in the ways that some native cultures understand place is very different from the ways in which *they* have ever understood place. But then they learn that the native perspective is a way that they could understand place and become more connected to place. So I see that as an opportunity for students, especially in this region which has ways for students to connect to all of the outdoors, but also connecting to different histories while they are here.

Having that firsthand experience is always valuable, and there is always knowledge in the field in community members who have things to share, like museum educators. There are people who know things that I don't know, and this is an opportunity for students to engage with them.”

— Christina Leza



“A motivation is to give students some firsthand experience with native peoples in the Southwest, in the sense of being able to talk to native peoples in the Southwest context.”

Here is Real Biology at Work

CC students become field researchers, trapping and sampling fish populations and examining how they have changed over time, on the last free-flowing major tributary of the Colorado River system.

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Animal Ecology

Brian Linkhart, associate professor of organismal biology and ecology

“Quite a number of students decide after a field study course that ‘this is what I want to do for the rest of my life.’”

“The course is rooted in field experiences in animal ecology, and I use the class as an opportunity for students to learn more about particular case studies of animals in the wild and, more holistically, the management of those species and the conservation strategies it entails through the process of learning about their biology and ecology.

The Yampa River in northwest Colorado is the focal point of the class. We sample native and non-native fish populations. We are building a long-term data set, and working on publishing it. It is an amazing opportunity to teach students about the processes of sampling animal populations, the dilemma of invasive species. Also, the Yampa has the notoriety of being the last free-flowing major tributary to the Colorado River system. So it is pretty cool to look at this as ‘pristine’ and yet see

all of the changes and stresses that it’s undergone. As a culminating event for the class, I have students write a research proposal and include the sampling that they do on the Yampa, to propose a study, to garner, for example, National Science Foundation funding.

Students are working with primary data sources — they’re taking and gathering real data. That’s of paramount importance. It builds realism into what they are doing — they see that it’s relevant. There is a sense of ‘here is real biology at work’ and the importance of the techniques and methodologies that we employ, and trying to be as objective and careful with the data collection as we can.

Students become very skilled in the techniques of field researchers, perhaps comparable to a second-year grad school

student. My students in the ornithology course will apply for jobs that come up, and the fact that they have mist-netted and done point counts on birds can mean they have the advantage.

Quite a number of students decide after a field study course that ‘this is what I want to do for the rest of my life.’ For a lot of students, the experiences grab them, and it’s a way for them to feel like this is something they have been searching for.

The Block Plan is central to our ability to do this. Being able to immerse, whether just north of the Mexico border or in equally remote places on the Yampa, or wherever, those experiences take on a life of their own that can’t be duplicated.”

— **Brian Linkhart**



Learning Through Embodying

In the Baca Grande area of Colorado, a class uses experiential and community-based learning to understand religion and ritual.

COLORADO



“We’re doing ethnography here. We’re not ‘taking a field trip.’”

Religion and Ritual

Sarah Hautzinger, professor of anthropology

“This course presents anthropological perspectives on religion and ritual; the purpose is to make students think about human beings symbolizing and ritualizing and creating meaning. We spend a week at the Baca Campus. The Baca is a tremendous field opportunity to complicate what that means. Students brought many of their perennial concerns about authenticity, cultural appropriation, white privilege, neocolonial relations, gender, etc. It’s one of the ways that grounds so many dimensions of the class in real complexity.

Part of the class is that we’re not intellectualizing, but rather embodying. The class is practicing ritual; religious or spiritual practice. We are getting up to go to Crestone Mountain Zen Center before 4:30 a.m. to practice with them. There are days when students are sitting on

prayer cushions at three different spiritual communities. This isn’t a chill time. If I am going to take you away from campus, it’s worth it: very intensive, very physical. One group invited us to their moon dinner; we do a gift exchange, share a meal, blow on a prayer flag, chant alongside them. It’s about having an embodied experience with it.

A whole other dimension of the class is: How do you do responsible community-based learning as part of fieldwork, and specifically ethnography? This is about trying to understand people from different settings, or reframing settings that are yours. Our whole community-based partnership with Crestone Spiritual Alliance is based on that. How do you do something that is not turning the community into a laboratory, but actually is collaborative

and reciprocal? We always think about what the end product is in experimental ethnography. And what if the end product, rather than a published text or webpage, is the interaction itself, the exchange? Ethnographers are helping a community by coming in and recirculating knowledge that it has about itself, witnessing, reflecting back. So it’s very minimal, you’re not trying to help them or anything. You’re not so much ‘doing’ as ‘accompanying.’

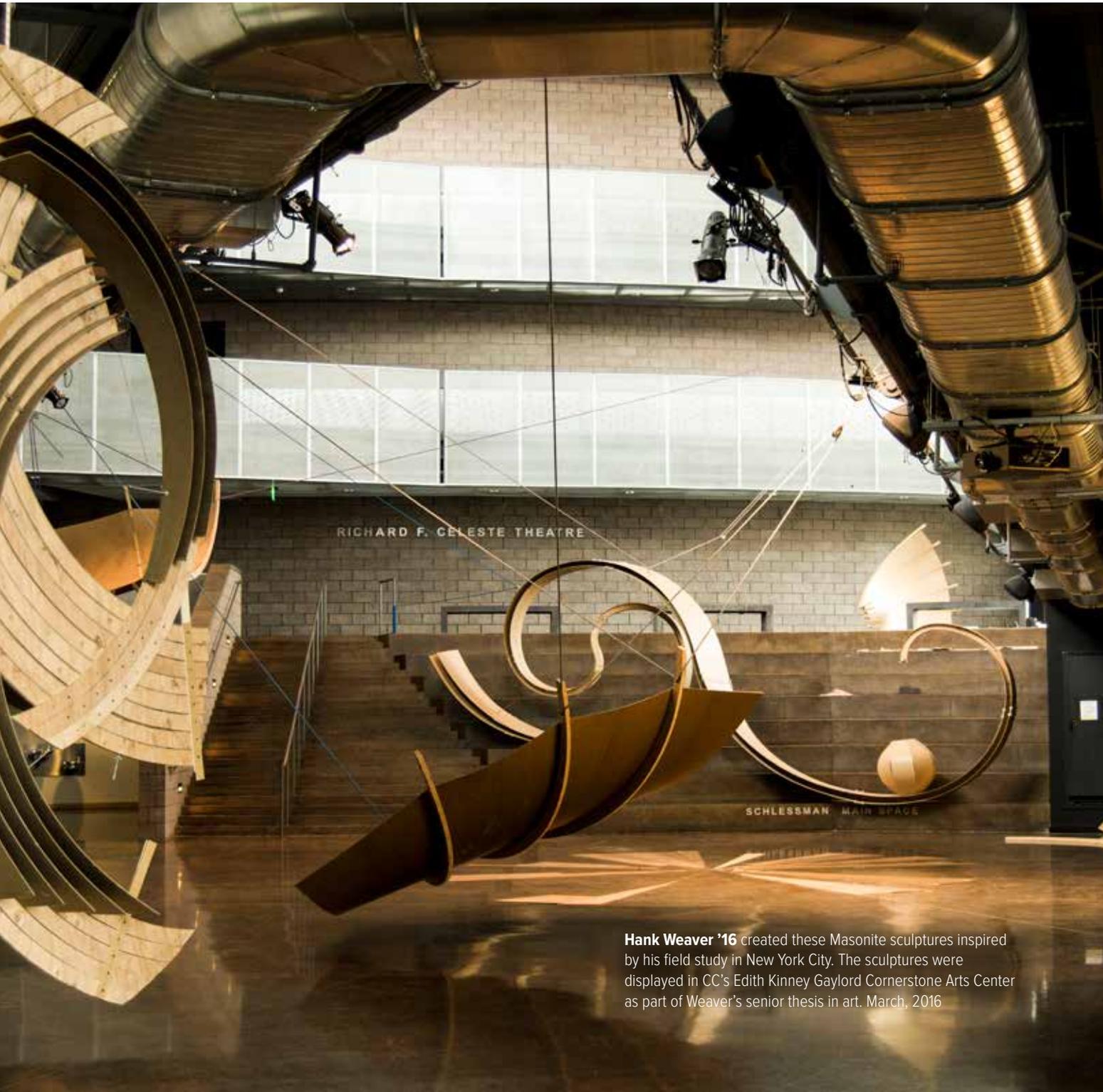
We’re doing ethnography here. We’re not ‘taking a field trip.’ The theme we explored this time was ‘What is sacred space?’ I really want students to feel like we’re joining a story. There’s the story about how all these spiritual communities came to be around Crestone in the first place, all the prophecies, and then their own story. We do a lot of journaling.”

— Sarah Hautzinger



Inspiration and Career Direction in the City

Senior Art History and Studio Art majors take a weeklong field trip to New York City with art faculty to engage with the art world, major artists, and museums in the city; chat with CC alumni working in the art world; and take inspiration for their senior thesis projects.



Hank Weaver '16 created these Masonite sculptures inspired by his field study in New York City. The sculptures were displayed in CC's Edith Kinney Gaylord Cornerstone Arts Center as part of Weaver's senior thesis in art. March, 2016

“My thesis started with wanting to make concrete structures, and that started with the New York trip — seeing all the infrastructure that was going on. I was making these wooden forms that the concrete went into, but once I stood back and looked at the forms, I realized it was sculptural in its own right.”

Senior Seminar in Art: Art in the City Hank Weaver '16, student

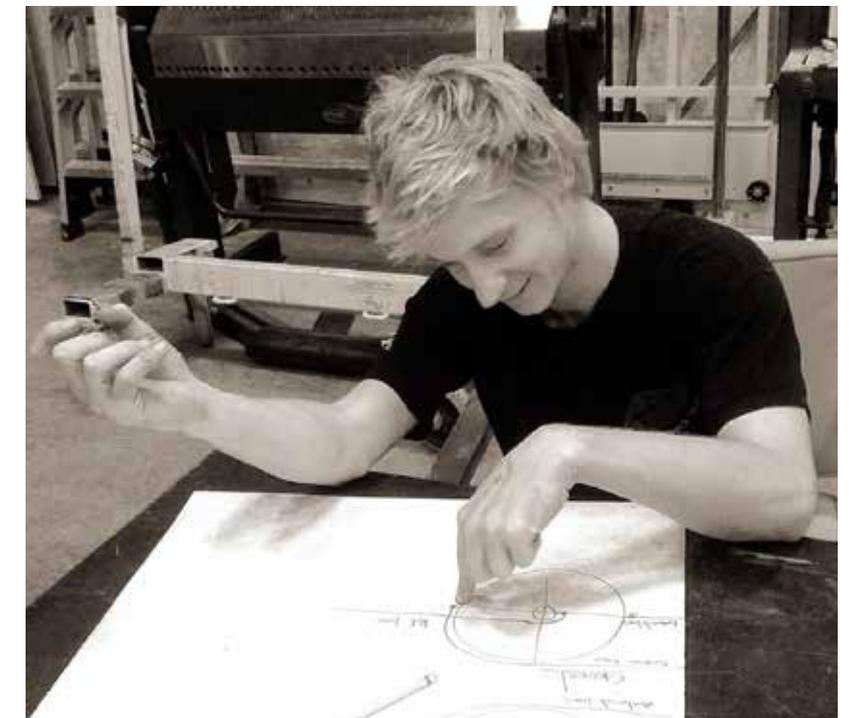
NEW YORK

“Seeing specific work like that of Martin Puryear, with large-scale installations, was pretty inspiring, seeing what going through a whole project can be like. For this project, it charged my drive and made me want to produce. Seeing the contemporary art world made me realize that it's something I'm not so set on; it answered the question of 'Is going to art school something I want to do, is it viable?'”

In art history classes you are seeing a lot of people who have made it. Seeing art in a gallery setting has a totally different vibe than seeing something in the Met [Metropolitan Museum of Art] or in an art history PowerPoint — it's alive, it feels like it's more subjective to people, it's not already in the canon of art that has made it. It's part of the living scene.

At the alumni dinner, more than anything, it was valuable being able to see recent graduates who were in my shoes in the last two to three years trying to make it. And not even in one specific path; it was totally valuable to see that there is not one answer on how to do it; you have to do what charges you, it works for some people and not for others.

My thesis started with wanting to make concrete structures, and that started with the New York trip — seeing all the infrastructure that was going on. I was making these wooden forms that the concrete went into, but once I stood



back and looked at the forms, I realized it was sculptural in its own right. The next leap was using Masonite (what they make half pipes out of) and since I love skateboarding, I wanted to build on the idea of momentum, and the materials that give you momentum, and then the mentality of momentum to keep working through problems. I definitely got inspired by the concrete in New York, which led to this project.

I was able to visit some high school friends who were living in New York, and see their

life. It was invaluable. I was exposed to some of the realities of life in New York beyond just art, social life, etc. The alumni dinner was great because I was able to make some direct connections.

One of the most valuable experiences was having free time to walk around the Met, with all these periods of art and styles that I had no idea about, and it totally exposes you to a different direction.”

— **Hank Weaver**

Changing our Relationship with the World by Slowing Down to Geologic Time

Students in Physical Geology set out into the Pikes Peak region to understand the scope and scale of geologic time and the transformations that have come to shape our environment. And according to Professor Christine Siddoway, this understanding is of utmost importance in a time when human activity is rapidly changing our environment.

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Physical Geology

Christine Siddoway, professor of geology

“The opportunity that we have with the Block Plan is for field trips that allow us to be surrounded by the physical material of the planet at a study site.”

“It’s critical to be in the field to understand changes in our planet, especially with rapid global change that has not affected humans at any other time. Since we lack written human records, we can study rocks, where there are abundant records of the history of the planet and the planet’s life and ecosystem.

The opportunity that we have with the Block Plan is for field trips that allow us to be surrounded by the physical material of the planet at a study site. It is an objective to leave the campus and immerse ourselves in the 3-D relationships that exist in the Rocky Mountains.

In the field, we separate students from their phones. This has grown more important in the last three to four years. We can find anything we want on our phones, but that puts an intermediary between us and what is there in front

of us, and we don’t question and reason out in our minds. A foremost objective is to leave the tech behind and give students the chance to see elements of nature, focus in on physical parts of geology, and learn firsthand to observe and interpret what they find.

Another motivation of taking students to the field is to study and learn together, by working in teams. Multiple perspectives are brought up by the students. The rich teamwork and conversation can be especially impactful in the field, because no one has any preparation or background on the problem. Everything is new to everyone. Progress can be made together as a collective.

I go to a new study site every time I teach the [Physical Geology] course. It’s energizing! It makes the experience real to students. On a course in Tuscany,

we did exercises in locations I didn’t know at all personally—only from scientific literature. That course had an amazing energy. The setting was beautiful of course, but I think a big part of its effectiveness, especially for non-majors, was with the tangible sense of exploration and discovery. It changed the way they traveled. Students after the course posted photos to show things that they had discovered with their geological eyes. They acquired some tools that are translatable and useful.

The overall impetus to offer field experiences, and work really hard to make them effective, is to help students perceive their environment more deeply, including the wonder and power of the processes in effect on the planet, that have been at work for four billion years.”

— Christine Siddoway

Working Together and Understanding Climate Change

At the Baca Campus, students worked together intensively on carbon budgets and had late-night discussions about the politics and science of climate change, and they saw firsthand how the paleoclimate in Colorado changed over time.

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It is Getting Hot in Here: The Politics and Science of Climate Change

Rebecca Barnes, associate professor,
Environmental Program;
Elizabeth Coggins, assistant professor
of political science
Roo Smith '20, Julia Shepard '20, students

“We wanted to provide students a retreat toward the end of their first block, away from the intensity of campus. In addition, we used the solar array at Baca as a touchpoint to discuss campus sustainability and personal sustainability. Ian Johnson [director of sustainability] came down and discussed institutional sustainability with the class and the students calculated their own carbon footprints (they collected detailed data about their daily activities for the three days prior to the trip). We also used the extra together time to watch movies related to how the media plays a role in politics and how politics and science interact. In addition, Florissant Fossil Beds are one of the best ways to see that the climate has changed dramatically over the history of the planet. We went there at the start of Block 2, while the class was focused on paleoclimate.”

— **Rebecca Barnes**

“The trip to Florissant Fossil Beds was a clicking moment for me. I was able to see tangible effects of climate change. There were these huge petrified redwood trees and we were like, ‘Wow, the climate here used to be like that of San Francisco, these trees were all over!’ I definitely learn when something is tangible to me. Throughout the class, and with climate change in general, lots of people don’t think it affects them personally and can’t really see the effects, but I found that that experience really hit home.”

— **Julia Shepard**



“It was cool to learn away from CC at the Baca Campus. We did a lot of computer assignments; it was a carbon budget, calculating our carbon footprint. I will always associate the people in my class with that subject. When you are always around your classmates, you are always learning something; it was a cool way to fully envelop yourself in the subject. A lot of the class was hands-on learning, being able to pick up the fossil; this is how this fossil formed, and burying the redwood trees. Being able to visually imagine everything in a tangible sense was really good.”

You can learn in a classroom what the climate looked like millions of years ago, but it’s hard to picture. But to go and see that this used to be here and the climate was like this, I was geeking out the whole time. It was awesome!

I was walking around asking our professors so many questions!”

— **Roo Smith**



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