

San José State University
College of Social Sciences, Department of Urban and Regional Planning
31204/ # 31076 GEOG165 / ENVS165 - National Parks, Summer 2023

Course and Contact Information

Instructor:	Kerry Rohrmeier, Ph.D.
Office:	WSQ113A
Telephone:	email is preferred
Email:	kerry.rohrmeier@sjsu.edu
Office Hours:	Online Zoom Meetings by Appointment
Class Days/Time:	This is an asynchronous online class, check the course Canvas webpage often.
Class:	There are no scheduled online meetings

Course Format

This course is an online asynchronous course. All course materials are provided to you on Canvas so you should review the readings and materials ahead of time. You are responsible for regularly checking with the messaging system through [MySJSU](http://my.sjsu.edu) at <http://my.sjsu.edu> to learn of any updates.

Course Description

University Catalog: An exploration of the history, philosophy, and science of park and wilderness preservation. Includes site visits to selected parks and wilderness areas. 3-units.

Course Learning Outcomes (CLO)

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. *Define and use basic geographic tools and techniques.*
Students must participate in logistics and field operations required for studying remote locales. Common field measurement tools will also be used for data collection and analysis, and students will keep a journal logging their explorations. Students will learn basic landscape photography and compile a digital archive for record.
2. *Demonstrate professional communication skills.*
Students must work to introduce interesting background content to the class at selected sights, and also individually present their key course takeaway during a concluding reflection session.
3. *Demonstrate understanding of and ability to analyze and critique human and environment interactions.*
Students will address this topic specifically in their final exam essay.

Required Texts, Readings & Materials

Textbook

During this course we will read excerpts from:

- Terry Tempest Williams (2016) *The Hour of Land: A Personal Topography of America's National Parks*
- John Muir (1912) *The Yosemite*
- Andrea Lankford (2010) *Ranger Confidential: Living Working and Dying in the National Parks*
- Yi-Fu Tuan (1974) *Topophilia: A study of Environmental Perception, Attitudes, and Values*

Readings and media will be posted or linked to the Canvas 'Files' for your convenience. You will be responsible for two low-cost rentals for Ken Burns (2009) *The National Parks: America's Best Idea* and *Free Solo* (2019).

Course Requirements and Assignments

SJSU classes are designed such that to be successful, it is expected that students will spend a minimum of forty-five hours for each unit of credit (normally three hours per unit per week), including preparing for class, participating in course activities, completing assignments, and so on.

- 1) Individual completion of **Assignments** based on the instructor's learning modules and classmate presentations are mandatory and imperative for passing this course (CLO 1).
- 2) Students will lead a park ranger style **Presentation** that includes preparation of narrated slides with key information and images about the significance of these (mostly California) places from physical geography **and** human geography perspectives (CLO 2).
- 3) Each student will keep a personal **Field Journal** logging at least two weekly observations and explorations of the natural world (CLO 1). Take advantage of being outdoors this summer. Your journal should be a collection of notes, images, sketches, poems, pertinent quotes, etc. The format allows for creative entries so long as the content is clear.
- 4) There will be one **Midterm Exam**. In a 1,000-word essay discuss how the place name 'Death Valley' exemplifies complexities of the human-environment tradition in geography (CLO 3). What does that toponym mean for Death Valley's endemic species, geology, cultural history, mining, tourism, and conservation?

Optional (in place of the midterm) The National Park Services is starting to reopen California's national parks with new regulations for social distancing. Alcatraz, Rosie the Riveter, SF Maritime, Port Chicago Naval Magazine, SF Presidio / Fort Point, John Muir House, Eugene O'Neill Home, Point Reyes, Pinnacles National Park and even Yosemite National Park are all driving distance from San Jose. Do your research about entrance requirements before you go! If you visit any U.S. national park you may submit a one-page (250-word) reflection essay discussion your experience in nature in the age of coronavirus. Include a selfie with a notable landmark. This option has the same due date as the midterm.

Final

The final is meant to be an enjoyable end to this course. Create a 5-minute video or narrated slideshow logging a one-night campout. Maybe this entails sleeping under the stars in your backyard, or car camping somewhere safe with your shelter-in-place mates, or perhaps backpacking somewhere truly isolated. You choose the destination or staycation location and narrate your preparations and the highlights from your adventure.

Grading Information

	Points Possible
16 Assignments	480 (30 pts each)
Ranger Style Presentation	120
Midterm Exam or National Park Visit Reflection Essay	100
Field Journal	200
Final	100
TOTAL	1,000

SCALE:

A+ = ≥98%

A = 94-97%

A- = 90-93%

B+ = 87-89%

B = 84-86%

B- = 80-83%

C+ = 77-79%

C = 74-76%

C- = 70-73%

D+ = 67-69%

D = 60-66%

D- = 51-59%

F = ≤50%

All students have the right, within a reasonable time, to know their academic scores, to review their grade-dependent work, and to be provided with explanations for the determination of their course grades. In keeping with this policy, and to making grading responsive. All assignments are due as stated on the Course Schedule and Canvas. **Late work is not accepted.** If you have questions about your final grade, please make an appointment to see me on Zoom.

University Policies

Per University Policy S16-9, university-wide policy information relevant to all courses, such as academic integrity, accommodations, etc. will be available on Office of Graduate and Undergraduate Programs' [Syllabus Information web page](#).

GEOG165 /ENVS165 - National Parks, Summer 2023 Course Schedule

This schedule is subject to change with fair notice so please check Canvas for the latest course information. Assignments will be described in detail on Canvas.

Date	Itineraries, Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines
6/5-6/7	Review the syllabus, access Canvas Assignment 1: Introduction
6/8-6/10	A geographical approach to National Parks Assignment 2: settlements in Sequoia and Death Valley
6/12-6/14	Presidents, Parks, and the Grand View: Assignment 3: Ken Burns <i>America's Best Idea</i> Questions
6/15-6/17	Ranger Talk on Yosemite National Park by Omar Alvarez & Sal Sotelo Assignment 4: Yosemite Discussion Forum
6/19-6/21	Military Memorials Assignment 5: Gettysburg National Military Park to Pearl Harbor
6/22-6/24	Ranger Talk – Manzanar by Jamie Barboza Assignment 6: Manzanar Discussion Forum
6/26-6/28	Shorelines and the Submerged Assignment 7: Acadia, Channel Islands, and the US Virgin Islands
6/29-7/1	Ranger Talk – Point Reyes by Amanda Ichikawa Assignment 8: Point Reyes National Seashore Discussion Forum
7/3-7/5	Midterm Exam or National Park Visit Reflection Essay
7/6-7/8	Trails and Trolleys (Old Spanish Trail, SF Cable Cars) Assignment 9: What about Route 66?
7/10-7/12	Ranger Talk – Pony Express by Jayme Sinson Assignment 10: Pony Express Discussion Forum
7/13-7/15	Disputed lands: Native American lands of the SW and protecting the US border protection Assignment 11: on Big Bend National Park, Texas
7/17-7/19	Ranger Talk - Alcatraz Island by Vaibhav Gopalakrishnan Assignment 12: Alcatraz Discussion Forum
7/20-7/22	When Parks and Politics Compete: Shrinking Bears Ears and Grand Staircase-Escalante Assignment 13: Join the fight to conserve and preserve American treasures
7/24-7/26	Ranger Talk – John Muir Home by Jordan McNeal Assignment 14: John Muir Home Discussion Forum
7/27-7/29	Today's Monuments are Tomorrow's Parks Ranger Talk - Cesar E. Chavez National Monument by Kaiya Johnson Assignment 15: Cesar E. Chavez Discussion Forum
7/31-8/2	This Land is Your Land Assignment 16: Celebrate the public lands. Watch <i>Free Solo</i>
8/5	Field Journal Due
8/9	Final Due