

Learning to Read the Earth: Wyoming Field Studies in Ecology and Paleontology

Six credits :: June 24 to Aug 6, 2017

www.honorscollege.pitt.edu/wyoming-field-studies



A team of core faculty from geology, ecology, and anthropology will deliver a unique hands-on course experience by integrating content and field methods instruction. Centered on the Allen L. Cook Spring Creek Preserve in Wyoming at a modest cost of approximately \$5700 including tuition, room, board, and equipment, this program is open to all majors and focuses on the rich resources of the Preserve and its surrounding areas. The semi-arid climate and natural resources of Wyoming throw the human dependence on the environment into sharp relief. The Preserve holds pristine beds of dinosaur fossils, Native American artifacts dating back 9,000 years, and an intact, mixed-grass prairie ecology featuring animals and plants that co-evolved over the ages. We will **explore** prairie basins and the ecosystems leading up to the snowfields of the Medicine Bow Mountains; **study** mammals, birds, insects, and stream ecosystems using binoculars, live trapping, and remote cameras; **excavate** dinosaurs and Native American hearths; **reconstruct** ancient environments revealed by rock outcrops and their fossils; **discuss** water rights, cattle grazing, and economic development; and **experience** a spectacular array of natural wonders on trips into other areas of Wyoming including Yellowstone and the Tetons. Insights gleaned from the course will form a foundation for students from any major to recognize and understand the local and regional impacts of human activities on the planet's values, no matter where life's journey takes them.

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