

BIG BEND NATURAL HISTORY

FIELD LEARNING IN WEST TEXAS' WILDERNESS TREASURE

I am currently recruiting both undergraduate and graduate students for a 9 day field experience in Big Bend National Park 13-21 August 2016. This time period falls between the end of the summer session and the beginning of the fall semester. There will also be a pre-departure meetings a few days before the beginning of the courses to help students better prepare for the field.

Big Bend National Park is part of the Trans-Pecos ecoregion, and is considered a semi-arid desert. August is part of the rainy season, which triggers many species of plants and animals to become active, and can result in a time of great biological activity. In addition, Big Bend is an exceptionally diverse region geologically, featuring an extinct volcanic caldera, tectonic features that reflect the assembly of the North American continent, and fossil deposits ranging from ancient marine reefs to river deposits containing dinosaur remains.

Students can take the course for geology or biology credit. Graduate students may also be eligible for graduate credit (contact course instructor for details). Students may also attend the course for no academic credit on a space available basis, but this is very limited as the course only has room for 12 students. The majority of travel expenses are covered through a grant from the university, greatly reducing individual student expenses. The primary learning outcome is for students to experience how geology, landscape, flora, and fauna are inter-related in the ecosystem of the Chihuahan Desert. Students will be expected to keep a daily journal of the various learning events experienced and submit a final document at the end of the course.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions concerning the course.

COURSE INSTRUCTOR:

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