



2021 Sample Itinerary

Wilderness & Conservation in the American West: Spring 2021 Section 1

February 23 Students arrive at Phoenix International Airport by 2 pm

February 23-25 Program Orientation: Phoenix, AZ

February 26-March 10 Wilderness Expedition in the Kofa National Wildlife Refuge, Arizona

The semester begins with a two-week backpacking trip deep in the Kofa National Wildlife Refuge, which contains the Castle Dome and Kofa Mountains, rising sharply from the flat lands of the Sonoran Desert. Here students will hike through Saguaro cacti—some reaching upwards of 50 feet high. While travelling over rugged terrain, the group builds a base of wilderness travel skills. Learning backcountry cooking techniques, map-reading and off-trail navigation, and managing the risks inherent in mountain environments, students develop the foundational skills they will use for the rest of the semester. Additional activities will emphasize building a strong community, discussing the value of wilderness, and reflecting on effective leadership.

March 11-19 Backpacking in Paria Canyon Wilderness

The Paria Canyon-Vermillion Cliffs Wilderness spans across the Utah and Arizona border. Students will spend 5 days hiking through one of the southwest's best canyon-backpacking destinations—sought after for being one of the longest, continuous, and most dramatic slot canyons in the world. The canyon ends at the Lee's Ferry, at the bottom of the Marble Canyon section of the Grand Canyon. We will have the opportunity here to study the history of the Grand Canyon's impact on conservation and recreation on all public lands within the United States.

March 20-25 Rafting the “Diamond Down” Section of the Grand Canyon

Taking a break from carrying all our gear on our backs, students will float down one of the most iconic stretches of river in the world: The Grand Canyon of the Colorado. Traveling through the Hualapai Tribal Lands grants the chance to explore the tensions between federal lands and native rights. The group will launch at Diamond Creek and take 5 days to travel down this final section of the Grand Canyon before exiting at Lake Mead.

March 26-April 10 Backcountry Ski Expedition near Leadville, CO

The group will then travel to HMI's campus in Leadville, Colorado. They'll base out of a hostel to spend a few days learning and practicing telemark skiing at Ski Cooper, a small local ski resort outside of town. Here, they'll gain the foundational movement skills and an introduction to backcountry winter travel. They'll then embark on a 10-day backcountry ski expedition, pulling



all of their gear by sled, building quinzee snow shelters to sleep and cook in, and perhaps laying over at one of the classic 10th Mountain huts in the area.

April 11-April 26 Moab Base Camp

The group will establish their base-camp for two weeks just outside the town of Moab, a hub of outdoor adventure in the West. Here, they start to settle into the routine of base-camping, cooking on double burner stoves with food kept fresh in coolers. Days are spent working with Trail Mix, a local non-profit who does trail work on the many multi-use recreational trails in the area. In addition, students will spend several days climbing to learn the technical skills needed for their upcoming canyons expedition.

April 27-May 11 Student Planned Canyons Expedition in Bears Ears National Monument

Students then embark on a two-week technical canyons student planned expedition in the White Canyon and Dark Canyon complex. Here, they will explore the labyrinth of deep slot canyons and wide open mesas that form this otherworldly landscape. Set within the boundaries of Bears Ears National Monument, this area is also home to amazingly rich cultural history. Students will have ample time to explore remnants of an ancient time and discuss the national controversy surrounding management of Bears Ears. Students will also spend a few days working with the Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance on a backcountry service project. The “Student Planned Expedition” draws on all of the skills practiced and refined through the semester. Students will be given specific parameters and resources to plan the trip, as well as designate specific roles within the group to share leadership and responsibility. While here students will also complete a 24-36 hour solo and write their Full Circle, a reflection of what this semester has meant for them.

May 12 Course closing and transference: Leadville, CO

This final day is spent celebrating the community and providing closure for the course.

May 13 Course concludes in Denver, CO. HMI will provide transportation on this day to the Denver International airport.

Please note that this is a sample itinerary. The dates and locations are subject to change.



2021 Sample Itinerary

Wilderness & Conservation in the American West: Spring 2021 Section 2

February 23 Students arrive at Phoenix International Airport by 2 pm

February 23-25 Program Orientation: Phoenix, AZ

February 26-March 9 Wilderness Expedition in the Kofa National Wildlife Refuge, Arizona

The semester begins with a two-week backpacking trip deep in the Kofa National Wildlife Refuge, which contains the Castle Dome and Kofa Mountains, rising sharply from the flat lands of the Sonoran Desert. Here students will hike through Saguaro cacti—some reaching upwards of 50 feet high. While travelling over rugged terrain, the group builds a base of wilderness travel skills. Learning backcountry cooking techniques, map-reading and off-trail navigation, and managing the risks inherent in mountain environments, students develop the foundational skills they will use for the rest of the semester. Additional activities will emphasize building a strong community, discussing the value of wilderness, and reflecting on effective leadership.

March 10-22 Introduction to Climbing: St. George, Utah

Among the beautiful red-rock formations of Southern Utah, students start to settle into the routine of base-camping, cooking on double burner stoves with food kept fresh in coolers. Students will begin learning and practicing the fundamentals of rock climbing by splitting their time between two outstanding climbing locations--Snow Canyon State Park and Lime Kiln Canyon. From learning about basic climbing movement, lead climbing, building anchors, and rappelling, students develop a strong climbing foundation. Whether you're a newcomer to the sport or have some experience—students will work with their instructors to set personal goals within the challenging and rewarding technical rope skills necessary to be a smart climber. In addition to exploring the dramatic geological features of the area, students will also learn about its diverse and complex cultural landscape as home to the Ancestral Puebloans and Paiute peoples.

March 23-27 Rafting the “Diamond Down” Section of the Grand Canyon

Students will then travel north to float down the most iconic stretches of river in the world: The Grand Canyon of the Colorado. Traveling through the Hualapai Tribal Lands grants the chance to explore the tensions between federal lands and native rights. The group will launch at Diamond Creek and take 5 days to travel down this final section of the Grand Canyon before exiting at Lake Mead.



March 28-April 15 Backcountry Ski Expedition near Leadville, CO

The group will then travel to HMI's campus in Leadville, Colorado. They'll base out of a hostel to spend a few days learning and practicing telemark skiing at Ski Cooper, a small local ski resort outside of town. Here, they'll gain the foundational movement skills and an introduction to backcountry winter travel. They'll then embark on a 10-day backcountry ski expedition, pulling all of their gear by sled, building quinzee snow shelters to sleep and cook in, and finding nearby slopes to practice their new telemark skiing skills.

April 16-April 30 Moab Base Camp

The group will establish their base-camp for two weeks just outside the town of Moab, a hub of outdoor adventure in the West. The varied rock climbing opportunities in the area will provide a wonderful atmosphere for students to continue to accomplish the personal rock skills goals they set in St.. From the novice to the emerging expert, Moab has something to challenge and inspire any level of climber. In addition, students will work with Trail Mix, a local non-profit who does trail work on the many multi-use recreational trails in the area.

May 1-May 9 Student Planned Canyons Expedition in Bears Ears National Monument

Students then embark on a student planned technical canyons expedition in the White Canyon and Dark Canyon complex. Here, they will explore the labyrinth of deep slot canyons and wide open mesas that form this otherworldly landscape. Set within the boundaries of Bears Ears National Monument, this area is also home to amazingly rich cultural history. Students will have ample time to explore remnants of an ancient time and discuss the national controversy surrounding management of Bears Ears. Students will also spend a few days working with the Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance on a backcountry service project. The "Student Planned Expedition" draws on all of the skills practiced and refined through the semester. Students will be given specific parameters and resources to plan the trip, as well as designate specific roles within the group to share leadership and responsibility. While here students will also complete a 24-36 hour solo and write their Full Circle, a reflection of what this semester has meant for them.

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