



## 2021 Fall Sample Itinerary Wilderness & Conservation Section 2: The American West

**Sept. 20** Students arrive at Denver International Airport by 2 pm, drive to Leadville, CO

**Sept. 21 – 22** Program Orientation: Leadville, CO

**Sept. 23 – Oct. 6** Wilderness expedition: Sawatch Range, Colorado

The semester begins with a two-week backpacking trip deep in the Rocky Mountains. 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. Along the way, the group may do several days of service work and summit one of the 14,000-foot peaks that form the skyline of their route. Additional activities will emphasize building a strong community, discussing the value of wilderness, and reflecting on effective leadership.

**Oct. 7 – 8** Transition days: Leadville, then travel to Moab, UT

Upon arriving back at HMI's campus, students will clean and organize their group and personal gear, take showers, reconnect with friends and family, and eat some fresh food. The next few days will be spent preparing for the Utah section.

**Oct. 9<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup>** Introduction to Sport Climbing: Moab, Utah area

Here, students start to settle into the routine of base-camping, cooking on double burner stoves with food kept fresh in coolers. Days are spent traveling to different crags around the area to begin a sport-climbing progression. From learning the fundamentals of 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. Rest days from climbing are spent working with Trail Mix, a local non-profit who does trail work on the many multi-use recreational trails in the area.

**Oct. 19<sup>th</sup> – Oct. 31<sup>st</sup>** Canyons expedition: Cedar Mesa and Jacob's Chair

Students then embark on a two-week technical canyons expedition. 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.



**Nov. 1<sup>st</sup>– 5<sup>th</sup>** Transition and rest in Leadville, CO

We will return back to our basecamp in Leadville, CO for a little indoors time to have the ability to rest, re-set and reinvigorate for the second half of our adventure semester.

**Nov. 6<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup>** Sport Climbing in Lime Kiln Canyon, Nevada

Students will travel from Leadville to the stunning limestone cliffs of Lime Kiln Canyon, Nevada. The excellent rock conditions here will provide a wonderful atmosphere for students to continue to accomplish the personal rock skills goals they set in Moab, Utah. From the novice to the emerging expert—Lime Kiln has something to challenge and inspire any level of climber.

**Nov. 13<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup>** 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.

**November 19<sup>th</sup> – Dec 6<sup>th</sup>** Student Planned Expedition in the Kofa National Wildlife Refuge, Arizona

Kofa National Wildlife Refuge contains the Castle Dome and Kofa Mountains, which rise sharply from the flat lands of the Sonoran Desert. Here students will hike through Saguaro cacti—some reaching upwards of 50 feet high. 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.

**Dec. 7** Course closing and transference: Phoenix, AZ

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

**Dec. 8** Course concludes in Phoenix, AZ. HMI will provide transportation on this day to the Phoenix Sky Harbor International airport; please review additional travel information below.

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