

Political Science 224 and Campus Honors Program
“Politics of National Parks: West Texas”
Professor Robert Pahre
Fall 2018 and Spring 2019

This honors course uses the national parks of West Texas and adjacent parts of New Mexico and Coahuila to explore general questions of politics and policy in US national parks. The major focus is Big Bend National Park, a large park that illustrates central challenges in US park management. We will travel to the region in January 2019 before the spring semester begins.

In addition to Big Bend, we will experience five other national park units to round out our understanding of the national park system. Congress created Guadalupe National Park during the wilderness phase of US national parks. It illustrates issues around park development and wilderness protection. Carlsbad Caverns exemplifies decisions associated with tourism development that the National Park Service has addressed differently at various times in its hundred-year history. This raises questions about the history of American attitudes toward the environment. Fort Davis reflects challenges concerning NPS management of its historic and archaeological sites, which make up more than half of the national park system. We will touch Rio Grande Wild and Scenic River on the southern border of Big Bend, giving us the opportunity to talk about recreational units and “long, skinny” units such as national trails, lakeshores, and shorelines. Time permitting, Chamizal illustrates different kinds of issues around NPS historic sites, especially the politics of interpretation.

The course counts as two credit hours in the second half of Fall 2018 and two credit hours in the first half of Spring 2019. It also counts toward General Education credit in the Social and Behavioral Sciences. You will receive your grade in Spring 2019.

The course is limited to students in the Campus Honors Program (CHP), which will make all admission decisions. There is a program fee of \$1,200 that covers your travels to West Texas over winter break.

We will have a mandatory orientation session in November to discuss the requirements of the field experience. This course requires light to moderate hiking at modest elevations of 4000-5000 feet. Interested students can join me on an optional scramble to the summit of Emory Peak (7,825 feet).

Professor Pahre actively seeks to accommodate disabilities in all his field courses, though we cannot accommodate all of them. Please speak to him and the staff of the Campus Honors Program before deciding to take this course.

You will need a passport to cross into Mexico with us. Students without a passport, and those who choose not to enter Mexico, can optionally explore the US side of the Rio Grande River near Boquillas while the main group crosses to Mexico. ***Please be advised that it's highly likely that we will have multiple encounters with Customs and Border Patrol while in Big Bend National Park, as their jurisdiction extends 90 miles behind the border. Encounters outside El Paso are also very likely.***

Learning objectives

Many of our experiences and conversations will be organized around learning objectives.

LO1 - Humans and Nature. Students will be able to explain the connections between humans and the environment, both past and present, in Big Bend, Carlsbad Caverns, and Guadalupe Mountains national parks.

LO2 - Interpretation. Students will develop an ability to read national park visitor centers, signs, and documents critically, and to draw inferences about park goals and the political landscape around those goals.

LO3 - Landscapes. Students will improve their ability to read a landscape critically, and to discuss with one another the natural processes and human interactions they observe in that landscape.

LO4 - Tourist Impact. Students will be able to assess tourist impact on national park units, and to discuss the advantages and disadvantages of specific development decisions such as roads and development centers.

LO5 - Wilderness. Students will be able to explain the dualist view of wilderness and identify two criticisms of it. Students will use their critical readings of "wilderness" landscapes in Big Bend, Carlsbad Caverns, and Guadalupe Mountains national parks to revise their understanding of wilderness theory.

LO6 – Indigenous peoples. Students will be able to identify the Indigenous peoples of the region, and summarize their historic and contemporary relationships with the parks and the park landscapes.

LO7 - Lightscares and Soundscapes. Students will be able to identify the characteristics and values associated with natural lightscares and soundscapes, and describe some threats to them in the national parks.

LO8 - External Threats. Students will be able to describe three factors external to parks that affect NPS management of parks.

LO9 - Transboundary Cooperation. Students will be able to describe features of US-Mexican relations that shape Big Bend and Chamizal, and critically evaluate the role of cooperation in addressing those issues.

LO10 - Place. Students will be able to explain the importance of place in West Texas.

Course team

Academic staff participating in this program are:

Professor Pahre, Political Science, Lead Instructor, pahre@illinois.edu, 217-714-3486.

Teaching Assistants, Bernie Brennan (bbrenna2@illinois.edu) and Luzmarina Garcia (lgarcia8@illinois.edu), Political Science

Anne Price, Assistant Director, CHP, aeprice@illinois.edu

Requirements

The following books and reports are required:

Keiter, Robert B. 2013. *To Conserve Unimpaired: The Evolution of the National Park Idea*. Washington, DC: Island Press.

For discussion and reaction papers in the pre-departure class sessions.

National Parks Conservation Association. 2003. *Resource Assessment: Big Bend National Park*. Washington DC: NPCA.

For discussion in the field. Available for free online.

National Parks Conservation Association. 2017. *Out of Balance: National Parks and the Threat of Oil and Gas Development*. Washington DC: NPCA.

For discussion in the field. We will be traveling around the Permian Basin, and staying in Carlsbad, which is currently an oil and gas boomtown.

Available for free online.

We'll provide copies of the other material listed below.

Optional

You may want to read one or more of them optionally.

Jameson, John. 1996. *The Story of Big Bend National Park*. Austin: University of Texas Press.

Nash, Roderick Frazier. 1967/2001. *Wilderness and the American Mind*, 4th ed. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Runte, Alfred. 2010. *National Parks: The American Experience*, 4th edition. Lanham, MD: Taylor Trade Publishing.

Discussion and participation

Active participation is central to the course design. While in the field, we will be guided by the EORS framework:

Experience. Experience the national park units in our region.

Observe. Make observations about your experiences, and organize them.

Reflect. Reflect on the meaning of your observations for course themes.

Share. Share your observations and reflections with peers to improve understanding.

You will complete a number of worksheets as you experience these parks in the field. As you observe things, we will discuss them and their meaning. The worksheets help you organize your reflections, and connect the academic material (readings and pre-departure work) to your experiences. Many of them help you think about your values, and how they are similar to, or different from, the values of park stakeholders. This helps structure your analysis of policy alternatives and the political challenges of changing policies.

In the field and in class sessions over meals you will share your reflections with one another.

We encourage you to complete worksheets in small groups, but the final written work product must be your own.

Assignments and grading

Assignments are due as noted in the plan of the course below. Professor Pahre may occasionally extend a due date as a result of conditions in the field.

Points

6	Class participation in Fall 2018 (three sessions)
8	Two two-page papers
20	Class participation in the field (eight days, multiple sessions)
6	Class participation in Spring 2019 (three sessions)
40	Eight worksheets due in the field, five points each
5	Presenting your draft capstone paper
5	Capstone paper draft, due at your presentation
10	Capstone paper final, due 26 February

100%

Academic policies

The course does not have scheduled meeting times in the field. Please see the Plan of the Course below for details. Orientation and other pre-departure meetings on campus are required.

In Fall 2018 and Spring 2019, Pahre holds office hours on Wednesday 10:00-12:00 in David Kinley Hall 328A. There are no scheduled office hours in the field because you will be with Professor Pahre, the teaching assistants, and CHP staff almost 24-7 during the field experience. We are happy to find space for a private meeting at almost any time.

Attendance. While in the field, attendance is required in every class and class activity unless options are noted, or unless you receive a medical excuse on site. That decision will be made jointly by all four members of the staff.

Academic Integrity. According to the Student Code, “It is the responsibility of each student to refrain from infractions of academic integrity, from conduct that may lead to suspicion of such infractions, and from conduct that aids others in such infractions.” It is my responsibility as an instructor to uphold the academic integrity policy of the University, which can be found here: http://studentcode.illinois.edu/article1_part4_1-401.html

Field courses represent a unique learning experience where non-academic activities make up part of the entire experience. We will address non-academic policies in the orientation meeting.

Pre-departure sessions

These sessions provide “book learning” to give you concepts and analytical frameworks that you can apply in the field.

November 13, Tuesday

4:00-6:00 p.m. Orientation, 111 David Kinley Hall

We will be hiking, but not camping, in a rugged desert environment. Please familiarize yourself with the information on this page, which applies to all of our parks:

Big Bend National Park. 2018. “Backcountry Preparation and Safety.” US Department of the Interior: National Park Service,

<https://www.nps.gov/bibe/index.htm>https://www.nps.gov/bibe/planyourvisit/bc_safety.htm

Familiarize yourself with weather at our parks

Big Bend, <https://www.nps.gov/bibe/planyourvisit/weather.htm>

For discussion, read Keiter, Chapter 1, “What Is a National Park?”

November 27, Tuesday

4:00-6:00 p.m. Parks and Recreation, 111 David Kinley Hall

READ:

Keiter, Chapter 2, “Nature’s Cathedrals”

Keiter, Chapter 3, “A Pleasuring Ground”

Keiter, Chapter 4, “The Nation’s Playground”

LO3: Landscapes

LO5: Dualism

WRITE: a two-page paper on one of the three chapters. Summarize, with an eye toward historical, political, and/or legal issues. Then extrapolate those issues to two of the park units we will visit. How do you expect to see these issues manifest themselves in the field? Conclude with how those issues matter for national parks more generally. Be sure to have a thesis in the first paragraph.

December 4, Tuesday

4:00-6:00 p.m. Parks on Larger Landscapes, 111 David Kinley Hall

READ

Keiter, Chapter 7, “Nature’s Laboratory”

Keiter, Chapter 8, “Fountains of Life”

Keiter, Chapter 9, “A Vital Core”

LO8: External Threats

LO9: Transboundary Cooperation

WRITE: a two-page paper on one of the three chapters, same instructions as above.

Plan of the Field Experience

This section serves as both itinerary and a schedule of readings for the field components of the course. While you're welcome to read in advance, these readings are arranged to accompany your field observations.

3 January, Thursday

Day 0. Pahre will go ahead, buy groceries, and make other preparations.

4 January, Friday

Travel Day

Day 1. Chicago to El Paso

If flights are on time, visit Chamizal NHS with Luzmarina as our guide.

LO2: Interpretation

LO9: Transboundary Cooperation

READ

Keiter, Chapter 10, "Growing the System"

Worksheet 01: Humans and Nature at Chamizal National Memorial

Stay: Hawthorn Suites, 6789 Boeing Drive, El Paso TX 79925

5 January, Saturday

Introduction to National Park Issues

Day 2. Guadalupe National Park

Busy day with early start!

Theme: Humans and Nature

Cronon, William. 1996. "The Trouble with Wilderness: Or, Getting Back to the Wrong Nature." *Environmental History* 1(1): 7-28 (January).

Morning: Visitor Center.

LO2: Interpretation

Lunch: Frijole Ranch and Smith Spring Trail

LO2: Interpretation

LO3: Landscapes

LO6: Indigenous

Please take notes for Worksheet 05 at Big Bend

Late Afternoon: McKittrick Canyon

LO7: Wilderness

Worksheet 02: Kinds of Wilderness

LO5: Dualism

Stay: Sleep Inn & Suites, 3825 National Parks Highway, Carlsbad NM 88220

6 January, Sunday

Wonders Down Under

Day 3. Carlsbad Canyon NP

Theme: Internal and External Impacts

READ:

Keiter, Chapter 5, "A Commercial Commodity"

National Parks Conservation Association. 2017. *Out of Balance: National Parks and the Threat of Oil and Gas Development*. Washington DC: NPCA.

LO8: External Threats

Carlsbad Cavern

XX Reservations for tour/entry?

LO4: Tourism Impact

LO3: Landscapes

LO6: Indigenous

Please take notes for Worksheet 05 at Big Bend

Please note: Carlsbad Cavern Trail, a steep downhill and elevator back up to the surface. If the elevator is down (get it?), we will discuss physical readiness for a round-trip hike to the main cavern level. There will be an alternative for people who do not want to take this very strenuous hike.

Optional: hike into Rattlesnake Canyon and Carlsbad Wilderness with fossils.

Stay: Sleep Inn & Suites, 3825 National Parks Highway, Carlsbad NM 88220

Worksheet 03: Internal and External Impact

7 January, Monday

"The Past Isn't Even Past"

Day 4: Fort Davis NHS

Theme: Historic Sites, Authenticity

Drive to Fort Davis, 2 hours 40 minutes. If we make good time, Texas BBQ outside park.

Afternoon at Fort Davis NHS, then free time in town.

Kohl, Jon. 2014. "What is Really Real?" A New Vision of Authenticity and Its Role in Interpretation and Alternative Tourism." *Legacy* 25(6): 6-9 (November/December).

LO2: Interpretation.

Stay: Fort Davis, TX

Be able to define the differences among preservation, rehabilitation, restoration, and reconstruction. Consult the following policy document for an introduction:

National Park Service, "Four Approaches to the Treatment of Historic Properties,"

<https://www.nps.gov/tps/standards/four-treatments.htm>

Pahre, Robert. 2011. "Fort Davis National Historic Site: An Indian Fort Without Indians," *Studies in Symbolic Interaction* 37: 3-27.

PLEASE NOTE: This article is eight years old, based on a site visit nine years ago. Things have definitely changed at Persimmon Gap, and have probably changed elsewhere. Keep an eye out for changes!

Also, Professor Pahre welcomes criticism of his work – especially since revised parts of this article are part of the book he's writing.

LO6: Indigenous

Please take notes for Worksheet 05 at Big Bend

Worksheet 04: Authenticity at Fort Davis

Stay: Hotel Limpia, 101 Memorial Square, Fort Davis, TX 79734, 800-662-5517

8 January, Tuesday

Day 5: Big Bend NP

Theme: Indigenous peoples

Early start to a long day.

READ:

Keiter, Chapter 6, "Ancestral Lands"

LO6: Indigenous

Big Bend National Park, "Interpretive Themes for Big Bend National Park." US Department of the Interior: National Park Service,

<https://www.nps.gov/bibe/index.htm><https://www.nps.gov/bibe/learn/management/interp-themes.htm>.

LO2 Interpretation

Stop at Persimmon Gap Visitor Center; another 2hr14min to Panther Junction Visitor Center
Fossil Discovery Exhibit, fossildiscoveryexhibit.com

Explore Chisos Basin, perhaps climb Emory Peak (9.3 miles plus scramble)

Stay: Chisos Mountain Lodge, Big Bend National Park TX 79834

Recreation and recreational impact

Big Bend National Park, "Leave No Trace." US Department of the Interior: National Park Service, <https://www.nps.gov/bibe/planyourvisit/leavenotrace.htm>.

LO4: Tourist Impact

Big Bend National Park. 2018. "Be Safe on Backcountry Roads in Big Bend National Park." US Department of the Interior: National Park Service,

https://www.nps.gov/bibe/planyourvisit/bc_road-safety.htm, accessed 20 October.

Worksheet 05. Indigenous peoples.

9 January, Wednesday

Borderlands

Day 6: Big Bend NP

Theme: Transboundary Cooperation, Wilderness

Visit Rio Grande Village, TX, and Boquillas, Coahuila, Mexico
Hot Springs, via trail or road

Return: Panther Junction Visitor Center

Optional: Evening hike to The Window

REVISIT: Keiter, Chapters 7-9

READ:

Keiter, Chapter 11, "Nature Conservation in a Changing World"

LO7: Wilderness

LO9: Transboundary Cooperation

Stay: Chisos Mountain Lodge, Big Bend National Park TX 79834

National Park Service, Natural Sounds and Night Skies Division,

<https://www.nps.gov/orgs/1050/index.htm>

Explore the links at this site.

Mark Wexler, "Let There Be Night." *National Wildlife* 54(5): 16 (August-September, 2016).

LO7: Lightscapes and Soundscapes

If you are joining our crossing to Boquillas, please read the following information very closely:

<https://www.nps.gov/bibe/planyourvisit/visiting-boquillas.htm>

We will pay for your river crossing. The group will walk to town, though you may pay for alternative transportation if you prefer.

Worksheet 06: Soundscapes and Lightscapes

10 January, Thursday

Day 7: Big Bend NP

Theme: Landscapes, geological and historical

Visit Castolon and Santa Elena, geologic sites as time and interest allows.

If we didn't do it earlier, interested people could have an early morning climb of Emory Peak, and return to the vans before lunch.

Rio Grande Wild and Scenic River, <https://www.nps.gov/rigr/index.htm>

Stay: Chisos Mountain Lodge, Big Bend National Park TX 79834

READ

National Parks Conservation Association. 2003. *Resource Assessment: Big Bend National Park*. Washington DC: NPCA.

Worksheet 07: Transboundary issues

11 January, Friday

Day 8: Return to El Paso via Terlingua (Lunch?)

4 hours 53 minutes to El Paso from Panther Junction

Stay: Hawthorn Suites, 6789 Boeing Drive, El Paso TX 79925

Worksheet 08 Experiential Learning

12 January, Saturday

Travel Day

Day 9: El Paso to Chicago

AFTER RETURN

Big Bend National Park. 2018. "Post-Visit Review." US Department of the Interior: National Park Service, <https://www.nps.gov/bibe/learn/education/selfpostvisitreview.htm>.

In spring 2019, you will present a draft of your capstone paper. Each student will have no more than ten minutes for the presentation, though 6-8 minutes is preferred. We'll have 5-7 minutes of questions and conversations after each presentation.

29 January, Tuesday

4:00-6:00pm Present draft capstone papers.

5 February, Tuesday

4:00-6:00pm Present draft capstone papers.

12 February, Tuesday

4:00-6:00pm Present draft capstone papers.

26 February, Tuesday

6:00pm Capstone papers due.

Capstone paper topics

Answer one of the following in 6-8 double-spaced pages, with a bibliography and citations in your preferred format. I expect you to use course readings, refer to the field experience, and do some light research to round out your essay. Park websites, articles from *National Parks Traveler*, and books you find in the park bookstores are examples of the additional readings you might use.

1. How would you describe your experiences to a future class? How did it differ from what you expected to experience? (EORS focus)
2. Evaluate transboundary cooperation in our parks, as a way of dealing with internal and external threats. What goals does it serve, and how well does it serve them? What goals should it serve, and how could it achieve those? (Policy focus)
3. Is "wilderness" important? Why or why not? How, in light of your experiences, would you define "wilderness"? Consider lightscapes and soundscapes as appropriate. (Values focus)
4. Photo essay. This should consist of two parts, an essay (500-1000 words) and about ten photos with long captions (50-100 words each). Please intersperse the photos and the essay. The photos should complement the essay, as in a National Geographic article or something similar.

Think about what point you want to convey with your essay, and how the photos help make the point.

Think about layout — put the photos where you want them, arrange the text appropriately (in columns? unconventionally?), and export into some accessible format like PDF.

To get you started, think about general themes like tourism, wildlife, wilderness, “the West,” humans in nature, or experiential learning.

If you prefer, talk to me about doing a video essay instead. It should be 7-8 minutes long.