



nevada and
california
Travel Seminar

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A map of Nevada and California is shown, overlaid with a dense, pixelated pattern of yellow and black. The map is centered in the upper half of the image. Below the map, there is a dark blue area with some faint, illegible text and a small green horizontal band.

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"Biology of Wild Horses
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TC

This image is a vibrant, abstract composition. It features a background of blue and purple with a dense, pixelated pattern. A prominent horizontal band of yellow and red is located at the bottom. The text "nevada and california" is written in large, white, sans-serif font across the middle. Above it, "Travel Seminar" is written in a smaller, yellow, sans-serif font. At the bottom, there is a quote: "Biology of Wild Horses" followed by some fragmented text and the letters "TC".

The wild horse has a long history. Why did this animal that had prospered so in the Colorado desert leave his amiable homeland for Siberia? There is no answer.

We know that when the horse negotiated the land bridge — he found on the other end an opportunity for varied development that is one of the bright aspects of animal history. He wandered into France and became the mighty Percheron, and into Arabia, where he developed into a lovely poem of a horse, and into Africa where he became the brilliant zebra, and into Scotland, where he bred selectively to form the majestic Clydesdale. He would also journey into Spain, where his very name would become the designation for gentleman, a caballero, a man of the horse. There he would flourish mightily and serve the armies that would conquer much of the known world.” —*James Michener*

Humans and horses have been interacting for more than 5,000 years, and despite industrialization horses are still used for transportation, agricultural power, and food, as well as for recreation, companionship, and therapy. The domestication of the horse changed human culture, agriculture, warfare, and politics—but how did it change the horse?

There are no ancestral wild horse populations remaining, but the ease with which free-ranging or feral horse herds survive in many different climates argues that the fundamental biology of the domesticated horse is not so different from its wild predecessors. Studying the behavior and biology of feral horse communities such as the mustangs of the western U.S. give us important insights into how to manage our domestic horses’ health, behavior, and reproduction.

In addition, mustang herds in the west are the focus of much debate over their role in the ecology of the area. The success of the feral herds brings increasing competition for resources in a challenging environment and fuels conflicting views about the type of management that should be implemented by humans on this wild horse population. We will view mustang behavior and ecology both in the wild and in captivity, and study the viewpoints of those charged with their management and other stakeholders.

This “Biology of Wild Horses” travel seminar (TX 100A) and its companion course “Inside Equus” (BI 152) comprise a classroom and field-based introduction to animal physiology and behavior, including adaptation to domestication. After several on-campus meetings, students will travel to Nevada and California March 14–22, 2015, to observe wild horses at liberty and in confinement. Observations will be documented and used in a formal presentation at the end of the

REQUIREMENTS

- Fall period
- Concurrent enrollment in BI 152 or BI 316 during spring 2015 or completion of BI 316 in a previous semester with a grade of B-minus or better
- Excellent physical and mental stamina for hiking, walking, and standing out doors for prolonged periods in variable conditions.

Previous experience with horses is not required.

COST

The anticipated fee for the seminar is \$2,600 (subject to fluctuation). This includes Skidmore tuition, round-trip airfare between Albany and Reno airports, ground transportation for program excursions, on-site accommodations (generally double occupancy), two meals per day, entrance fees, local guides, program excursions, faculty on site, and the support of OCSE. The fee does not include personal expenses. Financial aid is available for eligible students.

Please apply by Friday, October 24, 2014. Application forms are at www.skidmore.edu/ocse. All applicants must submit a \$250 deposit at the time of application to hold their space in the program (100% refundable for applicants not accepted to the program). This deposit is non-refundable.