**KEY IDEAS IN THE SOCIAL SCIENCES: THE GREAT SALT LAKE**

### HNRS SS 2150

**Where:** Social Sciences building room 333 (SS 333)

**When:**  Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, 11:30 AM to 12:20 PM

**Instructor:** Dan Bedford

**Office:** Social Sciences building, room 338 (SS 338)

**Office Hours:** MW 10:30 to 11:15 AM, Tu/Th 8:00 to 8:45 AM, **or by appointment**.

**Contact Information:** Phone: 801 626 8091

e-mail: DBEDFORD@weber.edu (this is **definitely** the best way to reach me)

**Web site:** http://faculty.weber.edu/dbedford

# Course outline and goals

This course examines one of Utah’s Seven Wonders, the Great Salt Lake. The lake plays an enormous role in many aspects of life in northern Utah, including influences on weather, climate, wildlife, economy and culture, and yet is widely ignored by the general population of the region. The goal of this course is to help remedy this situation, and raise awareness of both the extraordinary character of the Great Salt Lake, and the many ways in which it is central to the lives of those of us living in northern Utah (whether we know it or not). We will be approaching the Great Salt Lake from the perspective of the academic discipline of *geography*. Geography is a spatial discipline, in the same way that history is a temporal one. Historians can study particular time periods, and geographers can study particular places; historians can study how things change through time, and geographers can study how things change across space. Thus, two key aspects of geography’s perspective are (1) it matters where things are; and (2) geography integrates findings from many other disciplines, including economics, political science, physical and life sciences, arts, and many others.

# Readings

The following books are required for the class and available at the WSU bookstore:

Gwynn, J. W. (ed.) 2002. *Great Salt Lake: An Overview of Change*. Salt Lake City: Utah Geological Survey.

Ward, C. 1999. *Canaries On The Rim: Living Downwind in the West*. London; New York: Verso.

Williams, T. T. 1992. *Refuge: An Unnatural History of Family and Place*. New York: Vintage Books.

Each of these books is also available on 2-hour reserve at the Stewart Library reserve desk. Other readings for the class will be available on e-reserve (<http://ereserve.weber.edu/)>. **Please bring the relevant readings for each week to class**.

In-class discussions will be greatly facilitated if everyone has a copy of the readings to hand.

**Assessment**

Your grade will be assessed using several components: three short papers, one final project, and class participation. These components will be weighted as follows:

Short papers 45% (3 at 15% each)

Reflection papers 20% (4 at 5% each)

Final project 25%

Participation 10%

Total 100%

**Short papers** will be 5-7 page essays selected from a choice of topics (I will provide the paper topics, and you will be able to choose which one you want to write about), with references provided. A key part of your grade on the second and third papers will be *improvement*—based on how far the feedback I provided on the earlier papers has been incorporated into the later papers. We will also be working with some of the best student tutors in the Writing Center—the Writing Center Fellows—to further help your writing progress. You are required to take a draft to the Writing Center Fellows, and incorporate their feedback, before submitting a final draft to me. Papers that have not been pre-submitted in this way will not be accepted for grading. Your short papers will also be assessed in terms of the Social Science general education learning outcomes, which are outlined below. This general education assessment will not be a component of your final grade, but will serve to inform me about how well the learning outcomes are being met by the class as a whole.

**Reflection papers** will be reflections on each field trip, outlining what you found to be most striking, most noticeable, most memorable about the field trip, **and** explaining how what you saw and experienced on the field trip relates to the academic material we have been reading and discussing in class. Reflection papers should be about 2 pages, typed and double spaced. They **do not** need to be taken to Writing Center Fellows.

Your **final project** is much more open to your own creativity. You may work on any project that addresses an aspect of the lake, using your own particular skills, strengths and interests. For example, students in the past have chosen to write traditional academic papers, but they have also chosen to develop a set of paintings of the Great Salt Lake (from a fine arts major), a map of the Great Salt Lake (from a Geography major), a work of creative non-fiction (from an English major), and a Great Salt Lake quilt (from a student who had taken Prof. Elsley’s Honors class on quilting). Whatever you choose to work on, your final project will be a serious investment of time and scholarly effort, equivalent to a 10-15 page term paper (and indeed may actually be a term paper). **All final projects must receive approval from me**. This is to help ensure that flexibility is kept to a maximum, but insufficiently serious or demanding projects are eliminated. Project proposals must be submitted on Monday October 17th, and a rough draft is due on November 14th. I expect you to incorporate feedback from the rough draft into the final draft, due on the last day of class—expect to lose points if you do not do this, and gain points if you do (as with the short papers). Final projects will need to be well researched and referenced—at least 10 scholarly sources in the bibliography for a term paper, or equivalent for alternative projects.

**Late policy:** Written work that is not turned in on time will be penalized at –10% of the points available per day late, unless there is a very good reason for the lateness, such as a death in the family.

**Recycling bonus:** Print on both sides of the paper, or use paper that’s already been printed on one side, and you will gain an extra point on your short paper or final project.

**Participation:** This is necessarily a very subjective component of your grade, but the following activities will help you accumulate points for participation: regular attendance in class, careful completion of reading assignments, asking thoughtful and informed questions, providing useful contributions to classroom discussions, and constructive completion of any in-class exercises. Be aware that good participation is an easy way to boost your grade—but be aware also that **good participation means more than simply coming to class**.

**Approximate grading grid:** Your performance in exams, homework assignments and the term paper will contribute to an overall grade in the class based on your scores in these various course components. Please note that the following grid is approximate and subject to variability, especially as a result of curving.

90-100% A

80-89% B

66-79% C

52-65% D

50% or less E

Plus and minus grades depend on where your score falls within the overall range for the grade; the high end of the range will gain a plus, the low end a minus. For example, a score of 88% is typically (*though not always*) a B+, 85% a straight B, and 82% a B-.

# Other Considerations

I am very aware that many students have work and family commitments outside the classroom. I am willing to accommodate conflicts within reason, but keep in mind that your responsibilities outside class do not excuse you from your responsibilities as a student. If you have any questions about those responsibilities, please check the Student Code, available on the web at <http://documents.weber.edu/ppm/6-22.htm>.

Any student requiring accommodations or services due to a disability must contact Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) in room 181 of the Student Service Center. SSD can also arrange to provide course materials (including this syllabus) in alternative formats if necessary. The SSD office has a web page at http://departments.weber.edu/ssd/

# Plagiarism and Academic Honesty

Plagiarism is difficult to define because it comes in many shapes and forms, but in simple terms it means copying material from somewhere else and passing it off as your own work, **either intentionally or unintentionally**. For this class, the issue of plagiarism applies to your short papers and your final project. For the sake of clarity, keep in mind the following: **every word of your paper is expected to be your own work, written specifically for this class** (no resubmitting work from previous classes)**.** It is acceptable to use a few short quotations so long as the source is properly attributed **and quotation marks are used**, but papers copied in whole or in part are entirely unacceptable. Failure to use quotation marks, even if only by accident, is still plagiarism.

If you are caught submitting a copied paper, **even if you didn’t mean to**, you are guilty of plagiarism and the range of penalties runs from failing the assignment (for the most minor infractions only), failing the class (the most common penalty) or expulsion from the university (for extreme repeat offenders). Regardless of the exact penalty, plagiarists will be reported to the Dean of Students. It is **your responsibility** to make sure your paper is plagiarism-free.

All written assignments *must* be accompanied by a signed copy of the statement on plagiarism, to be handed out in class.

# Social Sciences General Education

***Mission statement:*** The mission of the Social Science general education area is two fold: 1- to provide students with a basic understanding of humans and their behavior within their environments; and 2 - to assist students in their efforts to contribute to society in their particular professions and as responsible citizens of their various communities.

***Skills:*** We will emphasize the following two skill sets in this class:

* Written, oral and/or graphic communication
* Critical thinking, cognitive learning, and individual or group problem solving

***Learning outcomes:*** Social sciences gen ed classes must accomplish three out of five student learning outcomes. The five possible learning outcomes are listed below, with the three for this class listed in bold.

* **Describe a social science approach to studying and understanding human behaviour.**
* **Describe basic assumptions about humans and their behaviours from a social science perspective.**
* **Explain the basic elements and operation of a sociocultural system.**
* **Explain the interactions between individuals and their sociocultural and/or natural environments.**
* **Apply a social science perspective to a particular issue and identify factors impacting change (past or present).**

For more information on general education, see <http://weber.edu/AcademicAffairs/gened.html>

***Explanation:*** The following section explains how this course addresses the social science general education skills and learning outcomes identified above.

***Skills:***

* This class will involve a lot of careful, detailed, thoroughly researched writing (three 5-7 page papers at a minimum, plus more if your final project involves writing), thus written communication is an essential skill. Discussion is integral to Honors classes, thus oral communication is an essential skill. To the extent that final projects involve graphics work (map making, painting, photography) then graphic communication is also a component of this class.
* The papers that form the core of the graded work for this class all require problem solving and critical thinking; in-class activities will involve group critical thinking and problem-solving work.

***Learning Outcomes:***

* The perspectives of geography, that space and place matter, that phenomena vary across space in meaningful ways, and that understanding complex geographical problems requires integrating physical, life, and social sciences, are central to this course.
* Understanding the Great Salt Lake in its current form requires understanding the interactions between people and their physical environment.
* The Great Salt Lake embodies change. It is a highly dynamic physical and therefore biological system, one which both impacts and is impacted by human society. As views of the lake have changed over time, so have approaches to lake management. Geography’s integrative and spatial perspectives make it particularly well suited to understanding the changing character of the coupled human-natural system that is constituted by the Great Salt Lake and the human population of the Wasatch Front. Spatial scale, another concern of geography, is also highly significant in understanding the Great Salt Lake, as forces and events acting at the global, hemispheric, and regional scales can impact the lake.

**Quick Reference: Important Dates and Deadlines**

Short paper #1 due Saturday September 10th, on field trip #1

Short paper #2 due Saturday October 8th, on field trip #2

Short paper #3 due Friday November 4th, at the start of class

Final project proposal due Monday October 17th, at the start of class

Final project rough draft due Monday November 14th, at the start of class

Final project final draft due Friday December 2nd, at the start of class

Reflection papers Each Monday following a field trip

# Tentative schedule

The course structure generally follows Bedford’s (2005) systems approach to the Great Salt Lake, examining both physical and human/societal components of the Great Salt Lake system. Woven into the class is a series of field trips, which will allow all of us to gain hands-on experience with the Great Salt Lake. Ideally, during weeks with field trips scheduled, we will not meet during the week but instead will take the entire three hours of the week’s class on a single day, as the field trip (most likely a Saturday, but this is dependent on what we can work out as a class with everyone’s schedule). However, it may turn out to be necessary to meet during some or all of those weeks.

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| **Week starting** | **Topics** | **Readings** |
| 22-Aug | Course introduction; systems thinking and the Great Salt Lake; comparable environments elsewhere in the world (Mono Lake, California; Aral Sea, central Asia; others?) | Refuge 3-20  E-reserve 1, 2, 3 |
| 29-Aug | The physical system- water | Gwynn 1-32  E-reserve 4, 5 |
| 5-Sept | **No class Monday (Labour Day)**  **FIELD TRIP #1**- the GSL drainage basin (Malan’s Peak hike or Snow Basin gondola ride) Saturday September 10th  **Short paper #1 due on field trip day** |  |
| 12-Sept | The physical system- water  **Reflection paper #1 due Monday** | Gwynn 87-120, 171-183 |
| 19-Sept | The physical system- weather and climate | E-reserve 6, 7  Gwynn 295-302 |
| 26-Sept | The physical system- ecology | E-reserve 8, 9  Gwynn 327-374 |
| 3-Oct | **FIELD TRIP #2**- on the lake via Antelope Island Saturday October 8th  **Short paper #2 due on field trip day** |  |
| 10-Oct | The human system- human prehistory  **Reflection paper #2 due Monday** | Gwynn 71-83  Refuge 179-190 |
| 17-Oct | The human system- modern extractive industries (brine shrimping and mineral extraction)  **Final project proposals due Monday**  **No class Friday (Fall Break)** | Gwynn 187-272 |
| 24-Oct | **FIELD TRIP #3**- visit to GSL Minerals evaporation ponds, Saturday October 29th |  |
| 31-Oct | The human system- GSL as art (photography, satellite images, Earth Art, literature)  **Reflection paper #3 due Monday**  **Short paper #3 due Friday** | Gwynn 553-584; colour section  Refuge to p. 280 |
| 7-Nov | **FIELD TRIP #4**- to the Spiral Jetty and the north arm of the Great Salt Lake |  |
| 14-Nov | The human system- population, settlement and human responses to floods  **Reflection paper #4 due Monday**  **Final project rough draft due Monday** | Gwynn 303-312  E-reserve 10 |
| 21-Nov | The human system- pollution of the lake (especially from US Magnesium/MagCorp, and sewage discharge into Farmington Bay). **No class Friday (Thanksgiving)** | Canaries, esp. ch. 9  Refuge, esp. 281-290 |
| 28-Nov | The human system: lake management and lake politics.  **Final project due Friday December 2nd** | E-reserve 11  Gwynn 515-549 |

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### HNRS SS 2150

**SHORT PAPER ASSIGNMENT #1 Due Saturday September 10th (field trip day)**

Please write a paper (5-7 pages, typed, double spaced, 12-point font, length does not include maps, diagrams or references section) on one of the following three topics. Please make sure you use the topic specified rather than a more generic, related topic—think of this as being a little like a take-home exam, where you have to answer one of the three questions. Please use at least five references (in-text citation, preferably APA format but MLA is acceptable)—the four listed, plus at least one more that you find on your own. Provide complete bibliographic information in a References section at the end of your paper.

Please work with the Writing Center Fellows to improve your writing. You will need to take a draft of your paper to one of the Writing Center Fellows—and incorporate their feedback—before you turn a final draft in to me on September 10th. Papers that have not been worked on with a Writing Center Fellow will not be accepted.

HNRS 2050: Perspectives in the Social Sciences: The Great Salt Lake

**SHORT PAPER ASSIGNMENT #1 Due Saturday September 10th (field trip day)**

Please write a paper (5-7 pages, typed, double spaced, 12-point font, length does not include maps, diagrams or references section) on one of the following three topics. Please make sure you use the topic specified rather than a more generic, related topic—think of this as being a little like a take-home exam, where you have to answer one of the three questions. Please use at least five references (in-text citation, preferably APA format but MLA is acceptable)—the four listed, plus at least one more that you find on your own. Provide complete bibliographic information in a References section at the end of your paper.

Please work with the Writing Center Fellows to improve your writing. You will need to take a draft of your paper to one of the Writing Center Fellows—and incorporate their feedback—before you turn a final draft in to me on September 10th. Papers that have not been worked on with a Writing Center Fellow will not be accepted.

* **Identify four words that describe the Great Salt Lake better than ‘big’, ‘salty’, ‘stinky’, and ‘buggy’. Justify each of your choices with reference to evidence.**

Bedford, D. 2005. Utah’s Great Salt Lake: A complex environmental-societal system. *Geographical Review* vol. 95 no. 1, 73-96. (e-reserve #1)

Williams, T. T. 1992. *Refuge: An Unnatural History of Family and Place*. New York: Vintage Books.

Gwynn, J. W. (ed.) 2002. *Great Salt Lake: An Overview of Change*. Salt Lake City: Utah Geological Survey.

Trentelman, C.K. 2009. ""Big, Smelly, Salty Lake that I Call Home": Sense of Place with a Mixed Amenity Setting" (2009). *All Graduate Theses and Dissertations.* Paper 402. Chapter 4: Analysis of Interview and Focus Group Data, pages 255-375. Available online **Error! Hyperlink reference not valid.**

* **What do other places around the world have to tell us about the Great Salt Lake, and how we as a society are treating (or mistreating) it?**

Micklin, P.P. 1988. Desiccation of the Aral Sea: A water management disaster in the Soviet Union. *Science* vol. 241 no. 4870, 1170-1176. (e-reserve #2)

Bedford, D.P. 2009. The Great Salt Lake: America’s Aral Sea? *Environment* vol. 51 no. 5, 8-19. (e-reserve #3)

Bedford, D.P. 1996. International water management in the Aral Sea basin. *Water International* vol. 21, 63-69. (available from me on request)

Gwynn, J. W. (ed.) 2002. *Great Salt Lake: An Overview of Change*. Salt Lake City: Utah Geological Survey.

* **What does the future hold for the Great Salt Lake, and how does an understanding of the past help inform your views about the future?**

Bedford, D.P. 2009. The Great Salt Lake: America’s Aral Sea? *Environment* vol. 51 no. 5, 8-19. (e-reserve #3)

Bedford, D. and Douglass, A. 2008. Changing properties of snowpack in the Great Salt Lake basin, western United States, from a 26-year SNOTEL record. *The Professional Geographer* vol. 60 no. 3, 374-386. (e-reserve #4)

Kunzig, R. 2008. Drying of the West. *National Geographic* February 2008.

(e-reserve #5 and available in the library.)

Gwynn, J. W. (ed.) 2002. *Great Salt Lake: An Overview of Change*. Salt Lake City: Utah Geological Survey.