Death Valley Field Studies, 2013

What is it about? Death Valley is possibly the most spectacular geologic exposure in the entire western United States. The oldest rocks and fossils are found here, as well as rocks from every geologic era. The presence of recently active volcanoes and faults make it an ideal laboratory for the study of structural geology, and the unique animal and plant species allow us to understand adaptation and evolution in a harsh climate.

It should be understood that this trip will be a rigorous test of your patience and health. There will be several long driving days, and conditions may become harsh, with rain, snow and wind as serious possibilities (on the other hand, there is fair chance of working on your tan as well!). The success of the trip will depend on your amiability and willingness to put up with inclement conditions.

Dates: February 14-18, 2013: Please note: you will be missing class on Thursday night. Make arrangements now to make up any missed assignments.

Academics: 2 units. Add cards available from Garry Hayes, Science 128. Fee is $60.00, payable at time of admission. Payments are made in the MJC Business Office in the Student Center (the fee is not charged when you enroll; you have to go to the business office). The fee must be paid before the trip.

Text (Recommended):

Geology of Death Valley National Park by Miller and Wright (2nd edition is best)
Geology Underfoot in Death Valley and Owens Valley, by Sharp and Glazner

Academic Requirements:

BEFORE THE TRIP:
• You must attend the organizational meeting: Thursday, Jan. 31 at 5:30 PM in Science 132 (or SCC 325 if we have moved the department to west campus)
• You must research and write a short synopsis (2 pages) on some aspect of the geology of Death Valley National Park or the Mojave Desert. Topics might include the paleontology, mining and resources, or faulting. This synopsis MUST be submitted BEFORE the trip departure.

DURING THE TRIP:
• You will be expected to take complete lecture notes
• You will be expected to complete the worksheet provided at the beginning of the trip.

AFTER THE TRIP:
• Notes and worksheets are to be submitted by February 26
• Final exam on Thursday, Feb. 26 at 5:30 PM in Science 132 (or SCC 325)
Tentative Itinerary: (Stops and Campsites subject to change)

Thursday Evening: (leave at 5:00 PM)
   Drive to Bakersfield (200 miles)
   Campsite: Kern River County Park - (805) 861-2345

Friday, Feb. 15:
   **Stops:** Sharktooth Hill  
   Redrock Canyon State Park  
   Fossil Falls  
   Cinder Cone  
   Darwin Plateau

**Campsite:** Stovepipe Wells or Furnace Creek Campground, Death Valley. Note that flexibility on your part is needed: no reservations can be made, and in the worst case scenario, we might be camping in the middle of nowhere in the desert, without facilities. At best, camp facilities are somewhat limited: no tables or chairs. Fairly expensive restaurants and showers MAY be available nearby. See equipment list for recommendations.

Saturday, Feb. 16:
   **Stops:** Jubilee Pass Chaos and Aulacogen  
   Cinder Hill  
   Black Mountains  
   Badwater, Fault Scarps  
   Devil's Golf Course  
   Death Valley Sand Dunes  
   Mosaic Canyon

**Campsite:** Same as previous night

Sunday, Feb. 17:
   **Stops:** Charlie Brown Outcrop  
   Emigrant Pass  
   Tecopa Lakebeds  
   Gower Gulch  
   Dantes View  
   Titus Canyon or  
   Ubehebe Craters

**Campsite:** Same as previous night

Monday, Feb. 18:
   **Stops:** Aguereberry Point  
   Wildrose Graben

Route home will be by way of Bakersfield.  
Return to MJC, approximately 8:00pm
Logistics:
You will be responsible for your own meals for this trip. I strongly recommend getting together with others to save money and space. Keep meals as simple as possible. For breakfast, it is best to use meals requiring only milk or hot water for their preparation. Lunches should consist of snacks that can be eaten all day. Dinners are easiest when they're out of a can! Expect to bring or buy dinner on Thursday evening. You will need 4 dinners, lunches and breakfasts (Expect to buy dinner on the road Thursday, or bring a sack dinner)

We will be camping out and there are no assurances that we will be in a campground every night. Cold temperatures are very likely. Wind, snow and cold rain are possibilities. Please be prepared to be comfortable in these conditions. We will be doing some moderate hiking, so please bring adequate walking shoes as well.

No alcohol or drugs allowed at school functions. Use of these substances is grounds for immediate removal from the trip and a long bus ride home at your expense.

You may wish to bring some extra cash for junk food, visitor center trinkets, or other items essential to survival.

Suggested Equipment

SPACE IS AT A PREMIUM: PLEASE PACK AS COMPACTLY AS POSSIBLE!

Personal:
Warm Sleeping Bag                         Foam Pad
Personal Toilet Kit                       Day Pack
Eating utensils, cup, plate               Poncho or rainsuit
Warm jacket or coat (layers)             Warm hat
Walking shoes                            Gloves or mittens
Changes of clothes                       Flashlight (maybe even two)
Sunglasses                               Extra batteries
Sunscreen                                Toilet Paper
Clipboard, Pen, Pencils                   Paper
Towel                                    Canteen
Lip balm                                  Ground cloth

Group
Tent                                      Cleaning supplies
Cooking utensils                          Ice Chest
Stove                                     Lantern

Optional:
Camera and Film                           Rock hammer
Extra blanket                             Small folding chair
Small pillow