

Term Project Guidelines

We're going to look at many national parks in this class, all of which are very different from one another. I want you to have the chance to explore the parks that interest you in more detail than we can cover in a survey course like this one. Ultimately, I would like you to venture out and actually visit the national parks that most interest you. That is my motivation for assigning the term project for this class.

Your term project is simply this: plan a trip to one of our national parks and summarize the main geologic features you will see there. Plan your trip this coming summer. Try to stay within a reasonable budget for your own personal financial situation - something that you could actually do, even if it meant a little scrapping and saving.

Although planning a trip to a faraway place may seem daunting at first, you have most of the semester to do the research. I will try to help you develop your plans throughout the semester by showing you in class how to get the different kinds of information that you'll need.

Key point: This is supposed to be FUN! Don't lose sight of the idea that you may actually go and do this trip in the very near future! Life is made of experiences.

At the end of the course, I will compile all of your trip plans and distribute a copy to everyone in the class. This way, you'll have nearly 30 trips planned and ready to go - I hope this motivates you to do a really nice, thorough job on this project.

National Parks Term Project Details

Introduction

- Statement of where you want to travel, the time of year you want to do so, and why you want to visit this particular National Park. Also include list of names of friends/relatives who'll join you on this trip.
- Describe the weather conditions you expect to experience while there (daily temperature ranges, precipitation, etc.). Be careful to pick a realistic time of year for your visit - if, for example, you want to visit Glacier National Park, you'll need to find out when it is accessible

Travel plans getting to the park and coming home

- Copy of a map of the park highlighting the specific places you'd like to visit
- If flying, find specific flight plans from the web (i.e., NOT from a travel agent!!!):
 - Airline with which you'll be flying
 - Flight number
 - Dates and times of all flights
 - Ticket price
 - If flying, determine how you'll get from the airport to the park and back (and how much that will cost).
- If driving:
 - Get a road map and mark your route with a highlighter
 - Calculate mileage and cost of gas
 - Estimate driving times
 - Plan where you'll stop for the night
 - Determine if you'll need to get tickets for a ferry, etc.
 - Plans for lodging on the trip to/from the park
 - Names, addresses, phone numbers, and rates for all hotels/motels
 - Names, addresses, and rates for all commercial campgrounds
 - Maps of USFS/BLM roads accessing other non-commercial camp sites

Logistics while you're in the park

- Plans for how you'll get around while in the national park area
- If renting a car, bicycle, or boat, then from what source and how much will it cost?

- If getting around by bus (e.g., Grand Canyon), find out where the bus goes, when it goes there, and how much it costs.
- If backpacking, camping or boating:
 - Write an explanation of the back country permit system, where you'll apply for your permit, how much in advance you'll need to do so, and any applicable fees
 - Determine where you'll get the equipment if you want to go on your own and you don't already possess your own (be prepared for the climate!!), or Determine the names, fees, etc. of the outfitter/guide if you choose to go with a professional guide
 - Write a complete list of the supplies you'll carry in your pack or boat (watch your weight!)
 - Write a planned menu for each meal if backpacking - breakfast, lunch, dinner, and snacks
 - Review your wilderness safety (and boating) safety and survival skills
- If you're trekking the park on a bicycle:
 - Determine where you'll sleep
 - If camping out, list the gear you'll need to pack (be sure you can carry it on your bike), and plot campsites on a map of your route
 - If sleeping at a lodge, find out whether you'll need reservations or not, how much it will cost, etc.
 - Make a complete list of the gear you'll need to pack on your bike and where you'll get any gear that you don't own

Things you'll see

- Find some photographs of some of the sights you'd like to see in the park
- Look on the web
- Look through travel books and National Geographic magazines
- Describe the geology of the key sites you will encounter on your visit in three to six well-written paragraphs. If you're going to visit Arches, for example, explain the age and origins of the rocks in the park, what the textures in the sedimentary rocks record, and how natural arches form.

***** THIS IS A KEY PART OF THE ASSIGNMENT! *****

Summary

- Day-by-day time table for your trip out, your stay there, and your return trip
- Overall summary of all costs involved with a grand total of the cost of the trip