



Expedition Alaska

Welcome to SC 11000 – Natural History of Alaska

Welcome! I am excited to be teaching Expedition Alaska's SC 11000, Natural History of Alaska. The course is an amazing immersion into Alaska wilderness, APU, and the environmental sciences. Here are some details that will help you prepare for the course.

Sincerely,
Dr. Erin Larson
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SC 11000 is an introduction to the animals, plants, and geology of Alaska. We explore both terrestrial and coastal ecosystems. We will be in the field even when we're close to campus – with daytrips to a variety of sites – and you will meet scientists with expertise from marine mammals to tundra flora.

The course is a section of Expedition Alaska with a cross-section of topics including cosmology, weather, tectonics, fungi and plants, invertebrates and vertebrates.

SC11000 introduces students to their peers, the Core Competencies of APU, and Alaska. As an APU Foundational Study in Scientific Inquiry, SC 11000 will develop the skills and competencies students need to be successful in all subsequent courses at APU.

This year the course will have three distinct sections.



Section 1: 8/23-27

The first 5 days will be focused on preparing for the field section.

Students will be introduced to APU's competencies. Though we will be staying on the APU campus, the class meetings will occupy most if not all of each day.

Each day will include an introduction to some aspect of environmental science, as applied to Alaska's varied ecosystems.



Section 2: 8/29-9/9

Once fully prepared, the course will travel along with other Expedition Alaska students to Eagle, Alaska. SC 11000 will then raft down the Yukon to Circle, Alaska. The Yukon is an excellent river to learn the art and skill of camping and rafting. Expect temperatures ranging from 65 degrees to sub-freezing.

We will be camping in Yukon Charley National Preserve, a remote, seldom visited park, with little communication and no emergency services. Though the Yukon is considered class I, or calm water, it moves at 10-15 mph and is one of the largest volume rivers in North America.



Section 3: 9/10, + 9/13-17

After finishing the Yukon at Circle, Alaska, all members of Expedition Alaska will spend a night in Healy. SC 11000 will reorganize in Anchorage for the final week of study.

This section, while situated back in Anchorage, includes day trips to learn about the flora, fauna, geology and marine life of southcentral Alaska.

The rewards are many!

What you can do to prepare . . .

1. Look up information about the Yukon River: this is an amazing waterway – learn as much as you can before you get to APU.
2. Read about Alaska, the Yukon, and anything you can find to learn more about this amazing place.
3. Get psyched! Where we are going and what we are learning is something that few people, college students included, ever get to do.

