

Legacy of Exploration: Explorers of Mountains

We have climbed the mountain / There's nothing more to do. / It is terrible to come down / To the valley / Where, amidst many flowers / One thinks of snow.

—Donald Justice

Explorers have ventured many places over the centuries, but mountains have had a special draw. Mountains have been viewed as both foreboding obstacles that divide peoples and spiritually significant points worthy of pilgrimage. Mountains have held both the promise of untold riches and the possibility of unforgiving terror. Some have been lured to the mountains for science, some for religion, some for personal glory, and others to harvest the earth's bounty. Whichever the reason, pioneering mountaineer Elizabeth Knowlton noted that, "to those men who are born for mountains, the struggle can never end, until their lives end." This course examines why people have explored mountains and the draw of reaching high altitude. Students will study first-hand accounts, literature, and primary sources--of both historic and contemporary mountain journeys from around the world--and compare them to their own experiences here in the Mountain West. This course will be conducted both in the classroom and in the field. There will be one required and one optional field trip. The required excursion is a hike up the La Luz Trail in the local Sandia Mountains (hikers will return via the Sandia Crest Tram; those not physically able to hike will ride the tram both ways). Dr. Lovata will also lead an optional field trip up TWA Canyon. The canyon is the site of a tragic 1955 passenger plane crash deep in the Sandia Mountain Wilderness, just below the top of the tramway. The required Sandia Mountain field trip will take place on Sunday, September 13th and the optional TWA Canyon trip will occur on or around November 7th. There is required, \$30.00 course fee to cover the cost of these excursions. The exact dates and costs of the optional hike will be determined by student interest.

Readings

A Lady's Life in the Rocky Mountains by Isabella Bird; *The Shameless Diary of an Explorer: A Story of Failure on Mt. McKinley* by Robert Dunn; *The Archaeology of the Donner Party*

by Donald Hardesty; *The Lost Horizon* by James Hilton; *Into Thin Air* by John Krakauer; *Nature Writings* by John Muir; *The Ice Maiden: Inca Mummies, Mountain Gods, and Sacred Sites in the Andes* by Johan Reinhard; a course reader with short excerpts about mountaineering and exploration available e-Reserves.

Requirements

This course stresses critical thinking. Students are expected to attend class and fully participate in seminar discussions. They will use a variety of texts, films, and first-hand observations from the field to complete a series of short papers and presentations (both solo and in collaboration with others in the class). This course, along with introducing the topic of exploration, will give students practice in Honors-level research, writing and presentation skills. There is a required field trip on Sunday, September 13th and an optional field trip on Saturday, November 7th (see above for a more detailed description).

About the Instructor

Troy Lovata is an Associate Professor in the Honors Program.

His courses explore our cultural relationship with the world around us and examine our connections to the past. Dr. Lovata was trained as an Anthropologist and Archaeologist and holds a Doctorate in Anthropology from The University of Texas.

T R 2:00-3:15 SHC 9

This course fulfills UNM's core Humanities requirement.