The Desert Studies Institute (DSI) was established in 1997 as a cooperative program between the Department of Anthropology at Boise State University and Celebration Park, which is operated by Canyon County Parks, Recreation and Waterways. Each year the Desert Studies Institute provides a broad range of academic offerings of interest and value to students, teaching professionals, Idaho’s citizens and visitors.

The mission of the Institute is to provide educational programs and scholarly presentations concerning the prehistory, history, ecology and politics of Idaho’s desert environments and deserts worldwide. The programs are presented to enrich the understanding and appreciation of complex desert ecosystems in Idaho and to promote their perpetual preservation as educational resources for the future.

Workshops may be taken for Boise State credit, or we have a new non-credit option available.

DEsert studies Institute workshops 2016

History & Archaeology of Chinese Immigrants in Idaho
May 18 & 19, 2016, Pei-Lin Yu, Boise State University
In this workshop students will learn about the adaptive strategies of the Chinese immigrants in Idaho, and the economic and cultural forces that led to the slow demise of the once-thriving 19th century Chinese communities of Boise and neighboring Idaho City. On the second day students will take a field trip to Idaho City’s Pon Yam House to view the exhibits and artifacts Cross-listed with Anthropology and History. 1 credit/unit

Volcanoes of the Western Snake River Plain
June 3 & 4, 2016, Brittany Brand, Boise State University
This two-day workshop focuses on the volcanic history of the western Snake River Plain, Idaho. The workshop will consist of lectures and local, same day field trips to local volcanic centers. Cross-listed with Anthropology and Geosciences. 1 credit/unit

What Evolving Landscapes Teach Us
June 4 & 5, 2016, William Jerrems, Boise State University
This workshop examines the concepts of historical geography as they relate to the archaeological landscape. The focus will be on the study of prehistoric land use in the desert environment of Southwest Idaho. Through the use of basic tools, we will learn how the current conditions of soils, water, and plant-life can increase our knowledge of the ancient landscape. There will be a field trip to the Snake River and Celebration Park, Idaho’s only archaeological park, where we can explore an ancient landscape and discover how it relates to Idaho’s prehistory. Cross-listed with Anthropology, Environmental Studies, and Geosciences. 1 credit/unit

Basques in the High Desert
June 6 & 7, 2016, Nikki Gorrell, College of Western Idaho
This workshop focuses on Basque economics, politics, and gender roles of sheep herding/boarding houses and how the Taylor Grazing Act and cattle/sheep wars ended that period that Basques in the American West romanticize. We will also discuss the disconnect Basques in the homeland have from what Basques here in the high desert most identify with. Cross-listed with Anthropology, Basque Studies, History, and Sociology. 1 credit/unit

Great Basin Birds of Prey
June 6-9, 2016, Marc Bechard, Boise State University
This workshop focuses on the types of birds of prey found in North America, their identification, and breeding biology with emphasis on the Snake River Plain of southern Idaho. Included are field trips to the Snake River Birds of Prey National Conservation Area and the World’s Center for Birds of Prey. Cross-listed with Anthropology, Biological Sciences, and Environmental Studies. 2 credits/units

Japanese-American Camp in Idaho Desert
June 8 & 9, 2016, Russell Tremayne, College of Southern Idaho
In 1942 the United States Government built Camp Minidoka in the Idaho desert northeast of Twin Falls, Idaho. That camp was home to over 13,000 Japanese aliens and American citizens of Japanese ancestry removed from their homes on the West Coast and imprisoned there during World War II. The workshop will focus on the interaction of that “community” with their environment. The second day of the workshop will be a field trip to the site, named a national monument in 2001. Cross-listed with Anthropology and History. 1 credit/unit

Ethnobotany: Introduction to Edible, Medicinal, and Useful Plants
June 11 & 12, 2016, Raymond Vizgirdas, Consulting biologist
This workshop focuses primarily on plants used by Native Americans as food, medicine, clothing, and building materials. Class and field activities will emphasize plant identification, ecology and Ethnobotany. This workshop will bring together aspects of our region's natural and cultural history. Cross-listed with Anthropology, Biological Sciences, and Environmental Studies. 1 credit/unit

Owls of the Snake River Plain
June 13-16, 2016, Marc Bechard, Boise State University
This workshop focuses on the identification, natural history, and food habits of owls found in the western United States with emphasis on the Snake River Plain of southern Idaho. Instruction will be given in owl pellet dissection and field trips will be taken to the Snake River Birds of Prey National Conservation Area. Cross-listed with Anthropology, Biological Sciences, and Environmental Studies. 2 credits/units

Project Archaeology for Teachers
June 14 & 15, 2016, MaryAnne Davis, Idaho State Historical Society, and Jeanne Moe, Bureau of Land Management
This workshop will provide teachers with the training and knowledge to use archaeology in the class. Text available in the Boise State Bookstore. Class meets at Celebration Park, 5000 Victory Ln., Melba, ID 83641, (208) 495-2745. 1 credit/unit

Field Botany Crash Course
June 18 & 19, 2016, Raymond Vizgirdas, Consulting biologist
This workshop is a 2-day short course in field botany. The workshop will concentrate on the basic skills of recognizing families and local species of plants as well as an understanding of plant communities and basic plant ecological principles. Cross-listed with Anthropology, Biological Sciences, and Environmental Studies. Text in the Boise State Bookstore. 1 credit/unit

Death of an Ecosystem
June 22 & 23, 2016, Eric Yensen, College of Idaho, Emeritus
This workshop will focus on important ecological interactions in northern Great Basin ecosystems. Learn about the ecological roles of ground squirrels, badgers, raptors, coyotes, grasshoppers, sagebrush, and many others; how they interact to form a functional ecosystem; and how human activities are causing the collapse of this ecosystem. The workshop includes a field trip to the Morley Nelson Snake River Birds of Prey National Conservation Area. Cross-listed with Anthropology, Biological Sciences, Environmental Studies, and Geosciences. 1 credit/unit

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Fish & Invertebrates of the Snake & Boise Rivers
July 26 & 27, 2016, Terry Maret, U.S. Geological Survey, Idaho Water Science Center
In this workshop students will learn about aquatic species in the Snake and Boise Rivers and their habitat needs. Part of day one will be in the classroom covering ecological principles of rivers along with an overview of fish and aquatic invertebrates that live in the region. We then head to the field with various sampling gear to collect and identify aquatic invertebrates from local waters. Day two will focus on collecting and identifying native and nonnative fish species. There will also be an opportunity to investigate various aquatic habitat and water quality measures to assess river health. If you like to fish, this class may even help you catch more fish! Students should bring waders if they have them. Cross-listed with Anthropology, Biological Sciences, and Environmental Studies. 1 credit/unit

The Desert Studies Institute workshops combine classroom instruction with field experiences appropriate to an integration of knowledge concerning desert environments.

FACULTY
The faculty of the Desert Studies Institute is selected annually on the basis of their expertise in areas relating to the objectives of the DSI. Faculty from Boise State University and the region form the core of the instructional faculty.

COST
The Desert Studies Institute workshops may be taken for credit or there is also a non-credit option available. The credit fee is: $269 per undergraduate credit; $354 per graduate credit. The non-credit fee is: $100 per unit. Some workshops have additional fees attached. These must be paid by credit and non-credit registrants. To learn more about the non-credit option and how to register, call 426-1709 or go to: extendedstudies.boisestate.edu/summer/dsi-workshops.

Registration is now open on my.boisestate.edu. If you have questions, call Boise State Summer Sessions/Extended Studies (208) 426-1709 or visit summer.boisestate.edu