

**Proposal to the University Curriculum Committee  
Freshman Inquiry Course  
Columbia River Basin**

**I Course Narrative**

**A. Statement of theme:**

Description: The Columbia River Basin is the second largest river by volume in the United States. Its watershed includes Oregon, Washington, Idaho, as well as portions of Nevada, Montana, and British Columbia. Portland, Oregon is the largest city in the Basin. Issues involving the Basin's economics, environment, and culture are ongoing dialogues in the press and community. Through this course, you will acquire an overview of the natural and human history of the Columbia River Basin, examine the ethical, political, and social issues surrounding human/environmental interaction in the region and make informed judgments about our stewardship of the region. We will accomplish these goals by studying the Basin's geology, including the Bretz Floods; the flora and fauna of the region; Native American lifestyles and treaty rights; the story of the salmon, dams, and energy production; ethnic and racial issues in the Pacific Northwest; the city of Portland and urban issues; and environmental concerns from watershed restoration to water pollution. You will be involved in collaborative inquiry, research projects, community-based projects, and you will participate in several field trips. Fall term focuses on historical and cultural issues; Winter term on ethnic and urban issues; and Spring term on environmental and political issues.

**B. Learning objectives specific to this theme:**

1. Narrate the geologic history of the Columbia River Basin.
2. Identify the major bio-geographic regions of the basin.
3. Describe Native American lifestyle and history prior to contact with Europeans and to discuss the complex interactions between indigenous and non-Native peoples in the region after contact (circa 1775).
4. Analyze the water cycle and discuss its importance in the region.
5. Identify sources of pollution and explain their relationship to human activities.
6. Explain the cultural and economic roles of salmon in the region.
7. Evaluate the impact of dam construction and removal in the region.
8. Evaluate energy needs and sources in the region.
9. Weigh in on the challenges facing human communities in the region.
10. Assess the causes and consequences of growth in an urban area.

**C. Assessment of student learning (specific to theme)**

Assessment of theme specific student learning will be based on graded written work and oral presentations; un-graded work such as personal journals, a themes specific measure of knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors related to community and appreciation of diversity; and a theme-specific measure of writing ability imported from Clackamas Community College

**D. Description of methods to ensure coherence of theme across participating faculty**

Columbia River Basin team will meet weekly throughout the academic year to discuss course implementation. Faculty will visit each other's classes on a regular basis and share their respective disciplinary specialty with other classes. Each term, we will share major assignments and readings. We are planning to organize a major public symposium offered on a theme relevant to Native American culture in the Northwest, as well.

**E. Inter-disciplinarity of theme:**

The Columbia River Basin team consists of faculty in anthropology (Robert Keeler), urban planning (Barry Messer), science education (Julie Smith), English (Greg Jacob) and ethnic studies (Toeutu Faaleava). The team is made up of PSU faculty (Messer, Smith, Jacob and Faaleava) and faculty from partner institution, Clackamas College (Keeler).

**F. Relation of course to other University Studies offerings (cohesion to future learning):**

Several cluster presently exist that would enable students to deepen and expand interests in history, social and natural sciences, urban studies, and ethnic studies. These include cluster courses in Global Environmental Change, Healthy People/Healthy Places, Environmental Sustainability, Community Studies, and American Studies. In addition there are several capstones applicable to this theme including Neighborhoods and Watersheds, Archeology, Global Portland, Us and Them: A History of Intolerance in America, Geology of the Northern Basin, Connecting Diverse Populations: Immigrant and Refugee Consortium, and Effective Environmental Education.

**G. How this theme will address university studies goals**

Representative assignments and the assessment plan for each of the University Studies goals to be followed by the courses in this theme is as follows:

## II. Course Schedule and Topics

TERM	TOPICAL OUTLINE	FACULTY
Fall Term	<p>Historical Issues in Columbia River Basin</p> <p>Geologic history:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Missoula Floods and their impact</li> <li>▪ Formation of the Columbia River Basin</li> <li>▪ History of bio-geologic regions</li> </ul> <p>Euro-American exploration and settlement</p> <p>Cultural history:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Native American lifestyles pre-1850</li> <li>▪ Early American exploration and contacts with Native Americans</li> <li>▪ Overview of US policies toward Native Americans</li> </ul> <p>Impacts of European and early American settlement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ On natural resources in the region</li> <li>▪ On native American cultures</li> </ul>	All
Winter	<p>Portland and Urban Issues</p> <p>City formation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Urban form – what is a city</li> <li>▪ Urban/suburban development</li> <li>▪ Urban growth and the impact to the natural/social environment</li> </ul> <p>Urban cultures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Immigrant experiences in Portland area</li> <li>▪ Current issues facing Native American Tribes</li> <li>▪ Expressions of diverse cultures</li> <li>▪ Community and neighborhood development</li> </ul>	All
Spring	<p>Issues of environment protection and sustainability</p> <p>Water resource management in Columbia River basin</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Role of dams</li> <li>▪ Contemporary issues of fishing</li> <li>▪ Endangered Species Act (ESA) and salmon recovery</li> <li>▪ Water quality restoration and preservation</li> </ul> <p>Sustainable development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Economic and political basis for sustaining quality of life</li> <li>▪ Urban “greening” initiatives</li> </ul>	All

III How will this theme address University Studies goals?

UNST Goal

Representative Assignments

Assessment Plan

Writing

Journals, essays, research papers and creative writing projects

UNST writing assessment in portfolio review. Theme-specific pre- and post-course assignments

Graphics

Graphics on streamflow, hydro-power, salmon migration, population growth and mapping

Assess ability to interpret and create appropriate graphic representations of data

Oral Communication

Class discussion and oral presentation of research

Assess preparation and delivery

Quantitative Reasoning

Media use of statistics, water quality dataset. Assignments may involve use and interpretation of statistics

Assess ability to interpret and to use statistics appropriately

Visual Communication

Use of visual images in research papers and other assignments, use of visual aids in oral presentations

Assess ability to interpret visual images and use them appropriately

Group Process

Small group problem research and field trips

Peer evaluations, assess individual contributions to group

Computer Literacy	Computer operation, word processing, e-mail, web searches, Excel and Power Point integrated into one or more class assignments	Assess how effectively computer applications are used as tools to complete class assignments
Inquiry & Critical Thinking	Bretz Floods as case study in scientific method, exercises in debating theme-specific controversial topics such as salmon recovery, tribal sovereignty and land-use planning	Assess ability to use critical thinking concepts and skills. Assess progress from bias and opinion to reasoned inquiry and analysis
Diversity & Human Experience	Projects on Native American cultures, cultural diversity in the CRB. Videos, commentary and discussion, guest speakers, cultural events and written response pieces	Assess ability to engage in and convey to others the depth and richness of diverse experiences. Appreciate the interactions of resistance and survival. Readiness to acknowledge importance of alternative sets of values
Ethics & Social Responsibility	Service learning project, role playing and mediation of theme-specific decisions involving complex ethical issues	Assess personal journals early and late in term. Assess oral and written assignments for ethnically-based perspectives and argumentation

#### IV. Preliminary reading list

- Allen, John et.al, Cataclysms of the Columbia. Timber Press, 1986. 0-88192-215-3
- Barcott, Northwest Passages. Sasquatch.
- Clark, Robert. River of the West. Picador. 0-312-16987-6.
- Cody, Robin. Voyage of the Summer Song. Sasquatch Books.
- Durning, Alan. This Place on Earth. 1996. Sasquatch. 1-57061-040-1
- Dietrich, William. Northwest Passage: The Great Columbia River. Univ of Wash Press. 0-671-79650-X.
- Egan, Timothy. The Good Rain. Vintage. 0-679-73485-6.
- Harden, Blaine. A River Lost. W.W. Norton.
- Hiss, Tony, The Experience of Place, Random House. 0-679-73594-1
- Holbrook, Stewart. The Columbia. Comstock Editions.
- Houck, Michael. Wild in the City. OHS Press.
- LaMorticella, Barbara, ed., Portland Lights, A Poetry Anthology, Nine Lights Press. 0-9672060-0-6.
- Lang, William and Robert Carriker eds. Great River of the West. Univ of Wash Press. 0-295-97777-9.
- Lesley, Craig. River Song. Houghton Mifflin
- Lichtowich, Jim. Salmon Without Rivers. Island Press. 1-55963-360-3.
- Miles, Malcom, ed., The City Cultures Reader, Routledge. 0-415-20734-7
- Phillips, E. Barbara, City Lights, Urban-Suburban Life in the Global Society, Oxford University Press. 0-19-505689-2.
- Rubin, Rick. Naked Against the Rain People of the Lower Columbia River. Far Shore Press.
- Ulrich, Roberta. Empty Nets. Oregon State Press.
- White, Richard. The Organic Machine. Farrar, Straus. 0-8090-1583-8.

December 12, 2001

To: Phil Jenks  
From: Barry Messer

RE: Revised Section III of Columbia River Basin Course Proposal

Attached is a revised Section III "How will this theme address University Studies goals?" as you requested.

The revision includes more detailed and specific reference to assignments that will address each of the University Study Goals.

Give me a call if you have any questions or need clarification. Thanks.

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UNST writing assessment in portfolio review. Theme-specific pre- and post-course assignments

Graphics

Graphics on streamflow, hydro-power, salmon migration, population growth and mapping

Assess ability to interpret and create appropriate graphic representations of data

Oral Communication

Class discussion and oral presentation of research; debates on different cultural perspectives and contemporary issues

Assess preparation and delivery; assess use of visual aids

Quantitative Reasoning

Media use of statistics, water quality dataset. Assignments may involve use and interpretation of statistics

Assess ability to interpret and to use statistics appropriately

Visual Communication

Use of visual images in research papers and other assignments, use of visual aids in oral presentations; use of PowerPoint in presentations. Use of digital graphics.

Assess ability to interpret visual images and use them appropriately

Group Process

Small group problem research and field trips; including neighborhood and watershed problem solving

Peer evaluations, assess individual contributions to group

Computer Literacy

Computer operation, word processing, e-mail, web searches, Excel and Power Point integrated into one or more class assignments

Assess how effectively computer applications are used as tools to complete class assignments

Inquiry & Critical Thinking

Bretz Floods as case study in scientific method, exercises in debating theme-specific controversial topics such as salmon recovery, tribal sovereignty and land-use planning

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