

# the **epic** ADVANTAGE

## **Student/Faculty Collaborative Research Experience**

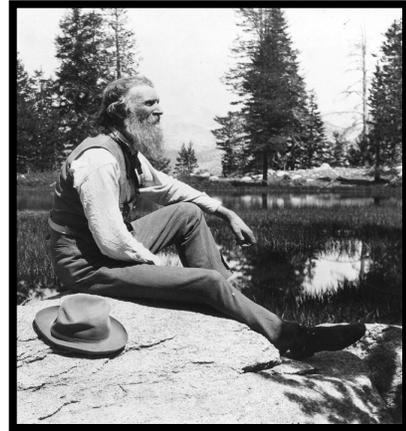
### **EPIC ADVANTAGE: Yosemite, John Muir, and the Origins of Environmentalism**

**Dates: May 13 – June 10, 2019**

**Credit: 3 credits (credit/no credit)**

**Leader: Scott Hess**

**Application Deadline: October 15, 2018**



John Muir in Yosemite, c. 1902

#### **Description of Experience and Research:**

The overall goal of this EPIC Advantage program is for students to gain extensive, firsthand experience with what it means to do archival research, as well as both experiential and scholarly knowledge of the cultural history of the Yosemite landscape and its significance for environmentalism. Students will both assist Scott in collaborative research and develop their own independent research projects, engaging in some way with the literature, art, and/or cultural and environmental significance of the Yosemite landscape.

Students will begin in the first week by working on the Earlham campus, starting intensive research on the cultural history of Yosemite, its associations with John Muir and the Sierra Club, and the significance of those associations for the origins and development of the American environmental movement. Students will also use the week at Earlham to develop a personal research project and do preliminary searches in various archives for materials relevant to those projects, to plan a research agenda, as well as getting in shape for Yosemite-area hiking.

We will then travel to California for the remaining three weeks of the collaborative research experience, staying mainly in the San Francisco Bay area in Oakland and Berkeley and in and around Yosemite National Park. We will do archival research on weekdays for roughly seven hours a day (9 am to 4 pm or 10 am to 5 pm, depending on the collection, with a brief lunch break) in a variety of archives and collections, including the Yosemite National Park Archives and Library in El Portal, Cal. and Yosemite; the John Muir Papers at the University of the Pacific in Stockton, Cal.; the Sierra Club Library in Oakland, Cal.; and the University of California-Berkeley Bancroft Library, in Berkeley, Cal. We will also visit the John Muir National Historic Site in Martinez, California, the home in which Muir spent much of his adult life while managing his family fruit business. We will take a number of afternoon and day hikes in Yosemite National Park and the surrounding area, including a visit to the Hetch Hetchy Reservoir, site of a major historical environmental conflict. If weather permits, we will also make a substantial three-day wilderness hike at the end of our stay. Students will also have some free time for their own independent cultural explorations of the Yosemite and San Francisco Bay areas.

While in California, students will both assist Scott in collaborative research and work on their own independent research projects, which we will present to each other at the completion of the program. We may also volunteer limited amounts of work time to a couple of the collections in which we research that are particularly small and understaffed, as a way to “pay back” their generosity in hosting us.

**Faculty:**

Scott Hess is a Professor of English and Environmental Sustainability at Earlham. He has published two scholarly books, most recently *William Wordsworth and the Ecology of Authorship: The Roots of Environmentalism in Nineteenth-Century Culture* (University of Virginia Press, 2012), as well as a significant number of scholarly articles and book chapters. The research from this collaborative project will contribute to a chapter on Muir and Yosemite in his current book project, provisionally entitled *Landscapes of Genius: Author, Nature, Nation, and the Transatlantic, Nineteenth-Century Origins of Environmentalism*. This book will explore how the “genius” of certain authors and artists became associated with specific natural landscapes—such as William Wordsworth with the English Lake District, Henry Thoreau with Walden, and Muir with Yosemite—in ways that have shaped the development of those landscapes and their significance for modern environmentalism. Scott has taught environmental literature, art, and culture extensively for many years, and has led an Earlham semester program in London, England. He will lead the Earlham New Zealand semester program in spring 2020.

**Expectations for Students:**

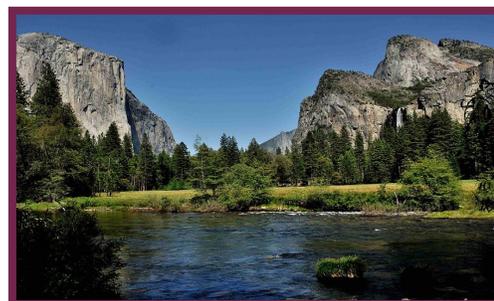
Students will camp together in Yosemite National Park and El Portal during our time in the Yosemite area, using camping equipment from the Earlham wilderness program, and will share hotel rooms or other similar accommodations in the Oakland/ Berkeley area. We will dine out occasionally, but also prepare our own meals on many occasions, especially while camping. Students will be expected to do substantial hiking in the Yosemite area, including as much as 10-12 miles and 4000 feet of altitude change per day by the end of our trip (we will work up to it, in terms of getting in shape, but you must have the capacity and desire for such extensive hiking). Extended camping and hiking require endurance and the ability to tolerate sometimes significant discomfort. Students will also be expected to work diligently in the libraries and archives during our time there, and to take initiative in conducting their own independent research projects. Because of the small sizes and spaces in some of the research archives, this trip is limited to four students.

**Dates of Experience:**

May 13 – June 10, 2019

**Travel To and From Site:**

Students will travel to and back from California together.

**Application Dates:**

Applications can be received from students starting on Sept. 15, 2018. Application window closes on Oct. 15, 2018.

**Link to Application:**

Apply in Handshake

**Preparation:**

Students will be required to take a 1 credit EPIC Advantage Orientation seminar during the Spring 2019 academic semester. This seminar will provide the necessary background and travel logistics for students to maximize the experience. Class meeting dates/times will be determined in the future.

**Student Eligibility:**

Rising Sophomores, juniors, or seniors are eligible to apply.

**Cost to Student:**

This experience is funded as an EPIC ADVANTAGE opportunity. Funding includes travel, room and board, and other expenses required by the program. Passports and immunizations as well as other personal expenses will be covered by students. Students who are accepted and withdraw after January 15, 2019 must reimburse the college for all expenses committed on their behalf.

**Program plans subject to change.**

**Program Policies:** <https://earlham.edu/academics/off-campus-study/program-policies/>