WILLIAMS-MYSTIC: The Ocean and Coastal Studies Semester of Williams College and Mystic Seaport Museum

Executive Director: Thomas Van Winkle

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- Ned G. Schaumberg, Assistant Professor at Williams-Mystic
- Sofia E. Zepeda, Assistant Professor at Williams-Mystic

The Williams-Mystic Semester offers students a unique opportunity to explore the ocean, travel the Atlantic, Pacific, and Gulf coasts, and conduct original active research of their own design in the humanities and sciences. Williams-Mystic is considered the coastal and ocean studies campus of Williams College. Sophomores, juniors, and seniors of all majors welcome to apply. A term at Williams-Mystic includes credit for one semester plus one Winter Study requirement, as well as writing skills course credit and physical education credit. Four Williams courses are offered as an interdisciplinary curriculum in the semester-long program based at Mystic Seaport, in Mystic, Connecticut: Americans and the Maritime Environment, Literature of the Oceans, Marine Policy, and either Marine Ecology or Oceanographic Processes. Travel includes an offshore voyage on the open ocean sailing aboard a tall ship, a seminar along the Pacific Coast, and a Louisiana field seminar, all of which are cross-disciplinary and interdisciplinary exercises. Students live in historic, cooperative, co-ed houses at Mystic Seaport, the world’s largest maritime museum, and have full access to world-class maritime collections, a maritime library, a state-of-the-art Marine Sciences teaching and research center, and diverse coastal habitats (where field research can be undertaken in a wide variety of environments, ranging from tide pools and salt marshes to sandy beaches and estuaries). Students also participate in maritime skills under professional instruction, with choices such as ship carving, music of the sea, shipsmithing, or small boat handling and sailing. Williams-Mystic seeks candidates who are willing to try new things and work in a compelling academic environment. No sailing experience necessary. Participation in Williams-Mystic can also be used in partial fulfillment of the Maritime Studies Concentration at Williams. Admission is competitive, and interested students should email wmadmissions@williams.edu, call 860-572-5359, or visit the Williams-Mystic site.

GEOS 210 (S) Oceanographic Processes

Cross-listings: MAST 211 GEOS 210

Secondary Cross-listing

This course examines ocean and coastal environmental science issues including carbon dioxide and the ocean's role in climate, El Niño and other ocean-atmosphere oscillations that influence our weather, coastal erosion and other hazards, coastal pollution, and fisheries. The focus is on controlling processes with regional comparisons. Blue water oceanography is conducted in the Atlantic and comparative coastal oceanography includes trips to southern New England shores, and the West and Gulf coasts of the US as part of the Williams-Mystic program. This course is in the Oceans and Climate group for the Geosciences major.

Class Format: including coastal and near-shore field trips, 11 days offshore, and a laboratory or field research project

Requirements/Evaluation: two tests, a research project, and a presentation

Prerequisites: none

Enrollment Limit: 24

Enrollment Preferences: none

Expected Class Size: 10

Grading: yes pass/fail option, yes fifth course option

Unit Notes: offered only at Mystic Seaport

Distributions: (D3)

This course is cross-listed and the prefixes carry the following divisional credit:

MAST 211 (D3) GEOS 210 (D3)