Experiential Spring Break Travel Course

This travel course explores spectacular geologic features exposed in southwest Texas. Students will develop technical field skills through hands-on geologic mapping exercises, decipher the geologic history of one of the most complex areas in North America, and learn how integrated geologic mapping and geophysical exploration permits hydrocarbon extraction. Several exercises will take place in remote, desert landscapes within Big Bend National Park, a highly scenic part of southwestern Texas renowned for geology field excursions. The trip will include tent camping in primitive campgrounds for six nights. Temperatures in March in the Big Bend area range from an average high of 77°F to an average low of 45°F. This trip will include collaborative learning with students and faculty from Purdue University.

Students who have completed a 100-level course or will be enrolled in a spring 100-level geology course are eligible. Space is limited and declared geology majors hold priority but non-majors are encouraged to enroll and are routinely able to participate. An information session will be held Wednesday November 2 at 5pm in O’Leary 103. The course will depart Bucknell on Saturday March 10 and return on Saturday March 17. Participants must pay a course fee ($450) to partially subsidize travel expenses; financial aid is available. Contact Prof. Jeff Trop for additional information or to register.

False-color satellite image of northern part of Big Bend National Park. Note northwest-trending topography (Lamariee structures) in the eastern part of the Park and circular topography (volcanic features) in the central and western parts of the Park. Black lines are major normal faults (Basin and Range extensional features). Red lines are roads. Scale and north arrow in lower central part of image near Park Headquarters. Image from Southwest Satellite Imaging.