

Santa Barbara City College
Department of Earth and Planetary Sciences

EARTH 131 - GEOLOGIC FIELD STUDIES OF THE EASTERN SIERRA NEVADA

OCTOBER 14-18, 2026

INFORMATION SHEET



Earth 131 is a five-day/four-night field course to study the geology and geologic history of the Eastern Sierra Nevada, California. The Sierra contains some of the most spectacular scenery anywhere, including the highest point in the contiguous United States. The Sierra is also geologically spectacular; here the rocks reveal the geologic history of the western United States over the last 500 million years. By studying the rocks and the processes that formed them, we will be able to piece together this history. In addition, we will see numerous examples of the geologic and hydrologic processes such as earthquakes, volcanoes, glaciers, and rivers that are actively shaping the mountains today.

Earth 131 is a 2-unit academic course that requires your active participation both during the day and in the evening. You will be expected to take neat and complete field notes and to prepare for quizzes each morning. You will also need to know the Geologic Time Scale before you depart on the field trip.

INSTRUCTIONAL STAFF

Stephanie Mendes and **Kristen Sneddon** are the co-instructors for this field course. **Earth Sciences tutors** are also available to provide additional instructional support and help you study.

SUPPORT STAFF

The Earth Sciences Lab Technician, **Kevin McNichol**, organizes and supervises the logistics of the trip and camp setup. He is assisted by a group of volunteers known as the **Woolly Crew**. Staff and students from the **School of Culinary Arts** prepare your meals. Basic first aid assistance is available, and first aid kits are provided for each group and in camp if needed.

COURSE CREDIT AND GRADING

You will receive two units of credit for taking Earth 131. Grades are based on the following:

Field Trip notebook	1/3 of grade
5 quizzes @ approx. 25 points each	1/3 of grade
Final exam	1/3 of grade

Quizzes are given each morning in camp. The Geologic Time Scale will be included on the first quiz. Completed field trip notebooks are turned in Sunday morning when you get on the bus prior to returning to Santa Barbara. They will be graded and returned approximately ten days after the end of the trip. You will take a final exam approximately a week later. Specific dates will be announced.

WORK CREWS

You will be assigned to a work crew and be required to help with daily camp chores. Most work crew assignments are a one-time responsibility although you may be asked to perform other duties such as loading luggage trucks. Your crew assignment will be included in the field guidebook you will be given prior to departure.

COST . . . \$104 (PLUS UNIT FEES)

Includes: Transportation, meals, field guidebook, and entrance fees to a swimming facility.

Not included: Camping equipment and personal items and expenses, SBCC registration fees. No textbook is required for the field course.

HOW TO SIGN UP

Register for EARTH 131 (either CRN # 43318, 43846 or 45518) and **pay registration fee and field course fee within 7 days**. If you do not pay the fees within 7 days, you will be automatically dropped from the class. Additionally, if you have an outstanding balance of any other fees on your account and it is not paid within 7 days of registration, you will be dropped from the field course. **Be sure to check your SBCC account!**



14 58 178 EASTERN SIERRA, CALIFORNIA

TO APPLY FOR A SCHOLARSHIP

1. Register for EARTH 131, but do not pay fees.
2. To obtain an email application, email Stephanie Mendes.
3. Fill out and submit the scholarship application as soon as possible. Applications are accepted on a rolling basis, with the last day to apply **Oct. 2, 2026**.
4. Your application will be reviewed within 2-3 days. You will receive an email informing you of the award decision.
5. If awarded a scholarship, pay the difference between the scholarship amount and course fees within 7 days of when you registered to avoid being dropped for non-payment. *Note: Make sure to pay course fees and all prior balances or you will be dropped from the course.*

MANDATORY PRE-FIELD TRIP

ORIENTATION MEETINGS

All students participating on the field trip **must attend** an orientation meeting on one of the following dates:

Monday, October 5
TBA

Monday, October 5
TBA

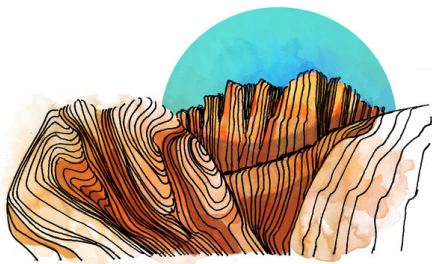
Tuesday, October 6
TBA

At these meetings we will go over trip logistics in detail. **If you do not attend one of the meetings, you will be dropped from the course.** See Stephanie Mendes **prior** to the meeting if you have an unalterable schedule conflict.

INFORMATION

Announcements. You will receive all announcements via email. Please check your Pipeline account regularly.

Field Trip Information. For equipment list, photos and more: [SBCC Geology Eastern Sierra Field Course Page](#)



PLEASE NOTE

Academic course. This geology field trip is an academic course, not a vacation, camp-out, or party. You should be prepared to work and study during both the day and in the evening.

Weather. You will be outside at the mercy of extremes in weather. The temperature may be in the 80s or 90s during the day and may drop into the low 20s at night. The evenings in the Sierra Nevada are not like the mild, balmy evenings in Santa Barbara. During most of the trip, we will be at 3500+ feet elevation. You should be prepared for heat and cold, wet and dry.

Accommodations. We do not camp at established campgrounds with modern restrooms and/or shower facilities. You should be prepared to adapt as needed.

No booze or drugs. No alcohol or drugs are allowed at any time from our departure to our arrival back on the SBCC campus.

All SBCC COVID-19 protocols will be enforced.

QUESTIONS?

Contact one of our instructors or stop by EBS 114!

Stephanie Mendes
Office: EBS 110
sdmendes@sbcc.edu
(805) 730-4113

Kristen Sneddon
Office: EBS 117
kwsneddon@pipeline.sbcc.edu
(805) 730-4270

For pictures of previous trips, visit:
[SBCC Geology Facebook Page](#)