

Less of a class, more of an experience

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This spring marks the 40th year that Tulane University will offer the [Grand Canyon Colloquium](#), a course that directly explores the majesty of one of America's great landscapes.



On a previous trip, students are shown hiking along the Colorado River. (Photo from Stephen Nelson)

Students enrolled in the course spend the semester dissecting the Grand Canyon area through the study of geology, biology, anthropology and history. The course concludes with an 8-day trip to the Grand Canyon for hands-on learning and a rafting experience that journeys 188 miles down the Colorado River.

For the past 39 years, Ronald Parsley, a professor in the Department of [Earth and Environmental Sciences](#), has led the course. Earlier this semester, Parsley retired from the university after 47 years of service and has passed the torch to [Stephen A. Nelson](#), associate professor of geology, who will take hold of the reins as the faculty member in charge beginning this spring.

"This course gives a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for students to explore the Grand Canyon region in the southwestern United States," says Nelson. "On the trip,

students get to explore the geology of the canyon, the biological diversity of the canyon, archeological ruins left by ancient inhabitants, and relive the historic trek of Major John Wesley Powell who first ran the course of the river in 1869.”

Faculty members Judith Maxwell of the Department of Anthropology and Donata Henry of the Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology also contribute to the course.

As registration for the spring semester gets under way, Nelson encourages students to enroll. The three-credit-hour seminar is listed as COLQ-4120 and meets on Mondays and Wednesdays from 3:30 until 5 p.m.

There is a fee of \$2,800 plus the cost of transportation. For more information about the course, email [Stephen Nelson](#).