

Community Education - Fall Term 2026



Course Title: Natural History of Mount Saint Helens

Instructor: Prof. Kyle Dittmer

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Course Details

- Item #44281
 - Fee \$79.00
 - Ridgefield/Boschma Farms facility (7000 Pioneer Street), in-person, Room #208
 - Monday afternoons, October 19th, 26th, November 2nd; 1:30pm to 3:30pm
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Course Description

Learn about the geology, plants, and fish/wildlife assets, plus human exploration, of a world-class active volcano here in our backyard. An optional field trip (outside of class time) to the main MSH Visitor Center is also offered at the end of the course. Taught by a M.S. level trained Geologist who's visited the volcano many times since the 1980 eruption.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, students will:

- Learn about the geology of volcanoes, what forms and drives them, and MSH in particular
 - Examination of rock hand-specimens to better understand how volcanoes come into being
 - Learn how the landscape and ecosystem/biota have been transformed
 - Learn about the human dimension – early history and exploration
 - Learn how the studies of MSH have benefited humanity and the sciences
 - Learn about ways to visit the volcano and future options
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Course Schedule

Week 1

Overview of Plate Tectonic Theory; Volcanic Geology (rocks and landforms); Film: Deepest Place on Earth.

Week 2

Events leading up to the 1980 MSH eruption; Transformation of the MSH landscape; Current variety of plant, animal, and fish populations around MSH. Film: The Eruption of MSH.

Week 3

Human exploration, settlement, and recreation; Native American stories of MSH; Future of MSH. Film: Oregon Field Guide. Optional Field Trip: MSH Visitor Center (Castle Rock/Silver Lake, WA).



Resources

Recommended references for further study:

<https://www.usgs.gov/geology-and-ecology-of-national-parks/geology-mount-st-helens-national-volcanic-monument>

Class Evaluation

- Class evaluations are sent by email.
 - If you don't see it right away, check your **junk/spam folder**.
 - Evaluations are **anonymous** and come directly from Clark College.
 - If you don't receive one, contact:
 - Email: continuingeducation@clark.edu
 - Phone: 360-992-2939
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Inclement Weather

- If the college closes due to weather, updates will appear at www.clark.edu
 - Community Education may also cancel classes independently if travel is unsafe.
 - If canceled, you will be notified by both phone and email.
 - Please check that your contact information is correct on the class roster.
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