ENVS 307 – New England in Winter January 2027

Course Description:
This week-long course explores the winter environments of New England through a number of day-long and half-day hikes, readings, and discussion. We will explore Connecticut's famous traprock ridges, eastern hardwood forests, the glaciated Riga Plateau and Long Island Sound. Students are expected to participate in four of five hikes, participate in class discussions and investigate one of these environments in greater depth. This course includes a significant outdoor component and will expose you to wintry, possibly cold and/or wet environments. It requires adequate clothing and footwear as the hikes will be rain (snow) or shine. Additional equipment (e.g., snow shoes, microspikes) is available through Trinity's outdoor program. Students are strongly encouraged to check the course syllabus and contact the instructor with any questions prior to registering for the course.

Instructor: Christoph Geiss
McCook 217
christoph.geiss@trincoll.edu

office hours: by appointment

Time: Jan 4th – Jan 8th
half day hikes: 9AM – 2PM
full day hikes: 9AM – 6PM

The dates for these field trips are listed in the table below. You are required to attend four of the listed five hikes.

Date	Day	hike	duration	length (miles)	effort
12/30/2026	Fri	Introductory Zoom meeting	10:00AM - noon		
1/4/2027	Mon	Castle Craig (Meriden)	half day	4	moderate
1/5/2027	Thu	Mica Ledges (Durham)	half day	2	easy
1/6/2027	Tue	River Highlands SP (Cromwell)	half day	2.5	easy
1/7/2027	Wed	Bluff Point SP (Groton)	full day	5	moderate
1/8/2027	Fri	Bear Mountain (Salisbury)	full day	5 – 6	moderate to strenuous

Grading:

The course earns you 0.5 credits and bears a wellness credit in civil and environmental engagement. I will post several reading assignments on the Moodle course site. Response papers on these readings are due on the day of the hike. We will have some discussions about winter environments on the hikes, and I expect you to be an active participant rather than simply slogging along.

Hike / class participation: 50%
Daily response papers: 25%
Final paper: 25% (due January 14th at midnight)

What to bring:

We will hike every day, rain (snow) or shine. If conditions are particularly gnarly, I might modify a hike but hiking we will (unless the governor shuts the state down :). No, you do not need superhuman strength and stamina but be prepared to be outside. To stay comfortable and safe you need the following:

- A pair of hiking boots (waterproof preferred) and warm socks. You may be able to do some hikes in sneakers, but in the past, we've hiked through snow or mud and you'd be pretty miserable.
- A rain jacket with hood. Good against rain and wind. Staying dry means staying warm, means staying comfortable.
- A warm jacket to go under your rain jacket.
- A hat and gloves.
- Snacks / lunch / water bottle (it's likely going to be cool, so you won't drink a ton)
- A backpack to fit it all in.

None of that needs to be fancy.