

ATS/CIRA Colloquium

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from Colorado State University

3 p.m. Thursday, Sept. 14
ATS 101 and Zoom

Teaching Climate Science Around the World

Semester at Sea is a floating college campus currently headquartered at CSU that has sailed nearly every semester since 1963. A typical voyage includes 500 undergraduate students, 35 faculty that teach 70 courses, faculty families, and some “lifelong learners.” About half the semester is spent on long ocean crossings, which is when we teach. The other half is spent in over a dozen countries with an average visit of 5 or 6 days in each one. It’s an incredible life-changing experience for both students and faculty.

In Spring of 2020 and again in Spring 2023, I was the “Blue World Specialist” on Semester at Sea, teaching climate science, oceanography, and a lot of physical geography to every student on the ship every day. The 2020 voyage was an adventure in every way as we sailed from San Diego directly into the jaws of the emerging pandemic. We only visited four of our planned 11 countries, though we finished all the courses and nobody onboard got COVID. The 2023 voyage was successful, visiting 11 countries.

It’s not a cruise. The ship is an intentional living-learning community in which we get to know students very well as colleagues and companions. Learning about the Earth and ocean from the middle of the ocean is a powerful experience. So are repeated encounters with horrific pollution and poverty, learning how people very different from us find joy in their lives. Nothing I’ve ever done in my career has felt as impactful as hosting so many young people on these voyages of discovery.

Colloquia page: atmos.colostate.edu/colloquia