
Quarter/Year	Course Number	Day/Time	Instructor
Spring 2020	ART-HIST 101	TR 2-3:20	Linrothe
Course Title			Degree/Distro Fulfillment
Everest: Altitude and Attitude			1 st Year Seminar



Mountains of trash, littered empty oxygen bottles, corpses covered in snow and ice for decades, deep within crevasses or left in the open to serve as path markers, blackened frostbitten fingers, toes and noses, later amputated, \$45-130K per attempt paid to commercial climbing companies, including an \$11K fee to the Nepalese government. At least 296 deaths on the mountain are known to have occurred, a third of them Nepalese Sherpas engaged as guides and porters to carry supplies, set the ropes and metal bridges and assist the wealthy climbers. Every year, about 1000 people attempt to reach the 29,029 (and still growing) peak;

more than a third turn back, despite the upfront, prepaid cost. Why do they come? Do they know why, themselves? What are the rewards and motivations for attempting it? In the past century and a half, there have been both national and personal pride invested in being the first, or one of the only. But for most of human history, climbing into the “death zone” was considered suicidal and avoided at all costs. Even today, most of the people who live in the Himalayas consider it an unnecessary sacrilege to trample on the goddess, Chomulungma, and do it only regretfully to support their families via adventure tourism. This course will examine the geology of Everest, explore different perspectives on the history of attitudes toward it, as well as the motivations, costs and rewards for those who attempt to climb it today.

Photo: crowds of climbers waiting to summit Everest; by Nirmal Purja, printed in the New York Times, Sept. 18, 2019; used here without permission.

Required Textbooks

B. Coburn et al, *Everest: Mountain Without Mercy*, reprint edition; ISBN-10: 0792269845
ISBN-13: 978-0792269847

Assessments

Regular writing exercises, short presentations, in class discussions