Instructor:
Rick Graetz, UM Geographer with UM's Office of Research & Creative Scholarship and Director of UM's Crown of the Continent & Greater Yellowstone Initiative. As a member of the Geography faculty, Rick taught five to six classes each academic year from 2003 thru 2018. Since then, Rick has been presenting many guest lectures and working on research in the two ecosystems, as well as developing UM's This is Montana Community Vitality program. Rick has taught and developed Montana, Crown of the Continent, Greater Yellowstone, North America, Mountains & Society, High Asia in addition to 52 field courses between 2008 and 2019.

Course Description:
Through narrative and photography, students will be introduced or reacquainted to the human and natural habitat of western Montana. Rick often refers to this piece of geography as UM's habitat. Lectures will involve discussions of place and history (time and space will not be separated). Who arrived in these areas first and why. And how did the human occupancy evolve over time – who resides in these places now and what do they do to make a living. Mountain ranges, rivers and valleys extending westward from the Continental Divide will be explored. All regions of northwest Montana as well as topography south of Missoula through the Bitterroot and Big Hole River valleys will be included. In terms of antiquity, each place played a specific role in building the foundation of modern-day Montana. Logging, mining and agriculture; they all blended to create the whole that is now Big Sky Country.

Course Outcome:
Once students complete this course of study, they will be able to travel throughout this human habitat knowing what they are looking at is more than just scenery. Final day discussions will review all of the possibilities within easy reach of campus. Hopefully this class, in part, will help students enrolled understand the benefits of finishing their education at the University of Montana. There will be the realization that UM has an incredible extended campus that will take all of their four years to experience.