

World of Water Course Content Document

UD OLLI – Fall 2022

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Introducing Water

- Exploring the most common – and uncommon – substance on Earth, water, something we all need, use and, unfortunately, waste – water’s simple structure – H₂O
- Where we find water – oceans, aquifers, rain, waterfalls and rivers, snowflakes, clouds, oceans, frozen ice caps, glaciers
- How much of Earth’s water is available for our use – a very, very small percentage

Water use and misuse

- How much water an average family uses daily, to wash our cars, take showers, water our lawns and golf courses (even in desert communities)
- “Virtual” water use – how much water is used in making the things we use everyday
- The Flint, Michigan water crisis

Scarcity of water

- Places where water is scarce and how people manage to obtain water – water from the sea, water from fog, public vs. private water providers

Water Conversation

- Recycling water for drinking – water from wastewater in Singapore, Namibia and in space

A Water History Tour

- Roman aqueducts, discovery of microbes in drops of water, London’s water-borne cholera epidemic, Great Plains Dust Bowl of the 1930s

International Water Issues:

- Damming rivers and denying neighboring countries access to water – and potentials for military conflict
- Climate change, decreased snowpack, less meltwater that hundreds of millions depend on
- Sinking cities, low-lying countries at risk of being submerged by rising sea levels

Water in Space

- In recent years, we’ve discovered other worlds in the Solar System with water, some are planets, but most are moons – and some have more water than Earth
- Could the presence of water lead to discovery of life beyond Earth?