

## Short biographical sketch of Dr. Casey D. Allen

Not your typical bachelors-to-masters-to-PhD professor, I have had many professional, real-world experiences outside of the Ivory Tower. And, being trained formally as a Geographer, Educator, and Academic Advisor, my interests remain wide-ranging: rock art, virtual learning environments, aesthetics, sense/spirit of place, biological soil crusts, medieval cartography, assessment, biogeomorphology, and the list continues...But while my professional background may appear science-laden at first glance, upon deeper inspection, each piece inherently includes some form of humanistic geography that allows me to research how people learn complex knowledge and processes better through fieldwork – two fields where I am recognized as a leading scholar. Whatever I do, these two foci always guide my endeavors. Although I study Nature in all its forms, I am, at my core, a humanist – just as much artist as scientist.

On the technical side, I have experience in general editing, designing/managing websites, digital photography & editing, video and direct-to-web production, and spatial analysis ([historic] repeat photography, photogeomorphology, and remote sensing, including low altitude, high-resolution applications with a UAS). I pride myself on keeping current in New Media endeavors and up-to-date with technological advances as they pertain to my teaching and research, readily incorporating new concepts whenever possible. For example, I designed the format and assessments for several online courses at Arizona State University (and also taught a number of them) for a new graduate program. At University of Colorado Denver, I created (and taught) the first-ever high-enrollment online general science course, which received rave reviews from students in its inaugural debut and subsequent utilization. In a similar vein, I no longer use standardized tests of any kind in my classes – even large introductory survey classes. I focus instead on some type of application and/or knowledge production rubric. My upper division and graduate fares also center more on *doing* than lecturing, including local and extended field trips and in-class-based exercises and labs. In all instances, I champion non-traditional pedagogies, favoring humanistic and project-based assessments instead. I also work hard to incorporate student-driven fieldwork opportunities locally, regionally, and internationally – most recently in the Caribbean since that's where I live, but I've also conducted short-term, field-based study abroad programs in Morocco, the UK, France, Japan, the US Southwest, and the US-Mexico Borderlands.

As an Educator, I strive to give students meaningful and professional-level experiences. This usually entails some kind of fieldwork – getting out of the classroom and on the ground. Whether that means students experience the natural world through interacting with ancient petroglyphs etched in rock varnish, learn about the constructed world through art and architecture, or gain a deeper understanding of people by interacting with different cultures first-hand, it matters not to me. Experience gained *in situ* remains invaluable. A quick perusal of current and past research supervised displays a variety of topics, once again focused on humanistic geography and grounded in fieldwork: from drinking water quality, paleoflood processes, and alternative energy to interactive mapping, architectural analyses, and documentary production. In every situation, I ardently believe in providing students with the tools they need to succeed. Truthfully, I *live* to serve them.

As a Geographer, I use the World as my pedagogical stage. One of my greatest joys lies in exploring places, well-known and foreign, domestic and international. Just wandering allows for myriad discoveries not otherwise experienced. I encourage the same behavior in my students, and work hard to provide them with similar opportunities. To that end, all of my courses include some type of field element (really just an excuse for me to help students break the “four walls” of formal education). For example, I continue to lead students through the medieval streets of York, as well as modern-day Tokyo, help them gain appreciation for science and the Arts through interactivity in the landscape, aid them in discovering their own sense of place, and show them how to enjoy “Island Life” during time in

the Caribbean. In each instance, these experiences remain grounded in fieldwork, but contain a humanistic flair. To enhance these endeavors, I developed the concept of *Geography by Rail*® to help students experience, appreciate, understand, and learn about landscapes in a unique way, making use of what would otherwise be downtime on an excursion and bringing back the old-time way of assessing landscapes first attempted over a century ago by explorers. I have led GbR excursions assessing the physical geography of London and Paris, historical and cultural geography of Imperial Japan, urban geography and geomorphology of England & Scotland, and the general geography of Morocco. Students are eager for these kinds of experiential experience.

My combination of skills and experiences lend themselves well to spatial thinking – an oft-overlooked yet important skill to develop because it helps us see trends others might miss. Using this guiding principle, however, I have found many students, who otherwise might become lost or overwhelmed, suddenly realize they can make sense of things. Indeed, this represents the foundation of my pedagogy and, in my eyes, Geography. In the end, my goal rests in mentoring students to achieve success. This is what matters to my heart and soul. Whatever the case, I remain a vehement believer that everyone can succeed if they are given the proper guidance. So I stand ready to help in any way possible.