

Unconventional Classroom

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Abstract

Life happens outdoors! Over the years, Ali Husain, who established Husaak Adventures more than 12 years ago, has successfully used the outdoors as a tool to lead people on a journey of self-discovery, pushing them outside of their comfort zone in a fun and exciting way. Overcoming obstacles, dealing with challenges, and experiencing something new develops skills that are essential to personal growth and development. Husaak, in collaboration with a regional university, created an ongoing "Unconventional Classroom" program that began in 2018.

Emphasis in the course is on self-confidence, teamwork, leadership, and outdoor appreciation, all in the spectacular geological backdrop of Oman. It is the first accredited course in the region that is based on geo- tourism. The talk will stress the importance for Earth science and engineering students specifically, and any university students in general, to have their first encounter with nature at an early stage in their academic journey. The technical and non-technical skills that the students are exposed to are beyond any learning they receive in the classroom. In Oman, students observe karst features first-hand in Al Hoota cave, examine faults, folds, and travertine deposits while navigating Snake Canyon, appreciate variable stratigraphy and depositional environments in Wadi Nakhur, and observe critical aspects of the Shuaiba/Nahr Umr/Natih petroleum system along the balcony walk of Sab Bani Khamis village. This is just a sampling of the rich program that is tailored for the students. With this six-year collaborative partnership as a foundation, additional programs are being custom designed for other regional and international universities based on their interests and academic disciplines.