Mountains draw us into their folds with the allure of mystery, discovery, and tranquility. They humble us with sheer mass, and shape life and culture with the anvil and hammer of bounty and hardship. They are of Earth, yet offer transcendence. What are mountains? How are they formed? Where are they found? And why? How do mountains shape environments, flora, and fauna that comprise them? How will mountain environments respond to climate change? These questions we can approach through the lens of Earth Science and Ecology data and materials. We need to dig a little deeper to uncover some of the more idiosyncratic ways human cultures have shaped themselves around mountain environments. For example, how have material, artistic, and food cultures been forged by the challenges and opportunities inherent in mountain living? In what peculiar ways have mountains nurtured human psycho-spiritual and philosophical development? To unearth some of this treasure we will look to texts available through The Mountain Institute and Mountain Forum, and in the following sources.

3. *Journal of Mountain Science*

Through the semester we will attend to the following six general topic areas:

1. Mountain formation (orogenesis) and degeneration, and a tour of the major mountain chains around the world
2. Effects of mountains on the environment, flora, and fauna
3. Mountains environments and global change
4. Adaptations, livelihoods, and other specialized characteristics of mountain cultures
5. Mountains as sites of in human psycho-spiritual and philosophical domains
6. Mountains and contemporary society

We'll spend approximately two weeks on each topic. The course will run as a reading seminar, meaning we will do readings on the topics in the course, include short presentations, and will be largely discussion based.