

Little Egypt: How the Land Shaped the People and the People Shaped the Land

UHON 351U

V 1.0

(3 credits)

Instructor:

Samuel J. Indorante, Ph.D. Adjunct Professor of Soil Science

116G Agriculture Bldg.

sjindorante@siu.edu

Office Hours: Right After Class

Field Trip Meeting: TBD

Class Days and Hours:

Tues and Thurs 3:35 to 4:50PM

Classroom Meeting Location:

0610A Morris Library

Course Description:

Little Egypt: How the Land Shaped the People and the People Shaped the Land -

An exploration into the influence natural resources of the region played in the civil, cultural and economic development of the land and the resulting influences and impacts those actions have had on those same natural resources.

"Little Egypt" is the common nickname for the southern third of Illinois, roughly the geographic region located south of Interstate 70 and lying between the Mississippi and Ohio rivers. It is generally believed the nickname originated in the 1830s, possibly due to settlers in northern Illinois traveling south to purchase grain after particularly poor harvests and difficult winters, much similar to the ancient Israelites' journey to Egypt seeking grain from settlements in the fertile regions along the Nile. Other similarities in the nickname are drawn between the Mississippi River and the Nile River deltas, as well as the pyramidal structures built by early civilizations.

In the course, students will be exposed to the fascinating and complex history of the region by researching the relationship between the inhabitants of the region and the land/natural resources of the region. Students will build their foundational knowledge of their selected topic of exploration by extensive use of SIU's excellent library, archival, and museum sources dedicated to the history of the region.

Guest speakers, mixed media presentations, video resources and (if possible) field day trips will also be utilized to enhance the students' research experiences. Students will develop research, writing and presentation skills that are applicable to all facets of professional development.

If possible, the course will be held in an on-campus Tech Enhanced Classroom to maximize the opportunities for participants to explore and develop project-based materials at the highest level.

Course Objectives:

- 1) Introduce students to the history of Little Egypt and how the land shaped the people and how the people shaped the land.
- 2) Gain an understanding of the rural and urban development of the region.
- 3) Become familiar with hands-on research methods to unravel the fascinating and complex history of Little Egypt.
- 4) Develop personal research capacities via producing an Annotated Bibliography. Utilize SIU Library Resources, SIU Press, SIU Museum. Present research findings with written reports, oral presentations, and open discussion.

D2L Learning Outcomes:

- 1) Critical Thinking skills through exposure to various modes of research. Show ability to delve into multiple resources (SIU Library, Local Libraries, Historical Societies etc.) to get hands on experience in researching a subject in depth and in detail.
- 2) Develop inquiry and analysis skills by reading texts and professional papers (science and social science).
- 3) Develop research skills, writing skills, and presentation skills that can be applied to all facets of a student's professional development.

Requirements:

*Additional Readings and Videos to develop your knowledge and understanding of the history, land, and the people of the Little Egypt region. This is to encourage and enhance class engagement and participation.

*Attendance at Class Discussions and Field Labs to ensure transfer of information and skill building.

*Keeping a notebook to list important ideas and concepts that would be useful in your selected project.

*Annotated Bibliography Presentation Due at End of Semester based on your chosen additional readings on your subject.

*Research Paper on your subject of choice.

*Research Presentation on your subject of choice, based on your research.

Grading:

Notebooks and Attendance 150 pts

Class Engagement, and Class Participation, 100 pts

Annotated Bibliographies on Your Subject, 100 pts

Research Paper on Your Subject. 150 pts

Research Presentations on Your Subject Using a Graphical Abstract. 100 pts

600 pts Total

Course Weekly Activities (Subject to Change. Changes will be announced the week before the change:

Class Introduction. Meet and Greet. Course Requirements. **Week of 8/16.**

Week 1 Tues. - Course Intro- Meet and Greet (Introduce myself. Get to know students, their backgrounds and interests.). Review Syllabus and Course requirements. Hand out notebooks. Emphasize the importance of keeping a notebook and taking good notes.

Week 1 Thurs. – Continue Meet and Greet. Dr. Sam- The Closing Circle-An Introduction to Humans as Part of the Natural World.

Class Resources. **Week of 8/23**

Week 2- Tues. Guest Speaker from The SIU Press to present books and resources that are available to understand the history of Little Egypt. Might want to tour the SIU Press Facility.

Week 2- Thurs. Meet at Morris Library to tour facility with a staff librarian to become familiar with the present and archival resources that are available for student projects.

Class Resources. Research Topic Selection. **Week of 8/30**

Week 3-Tues. Tour the SIU Sharp Museum and learn about the Art, Science, and Humanities Collections that are available for study and reference.

Week 3 –Thurs. Introduction to potential research projects. Class brainstorming for research topic.

Understanding the Natural Resources of Little Egypt. **Week of 9/6**

Week 4-Tues. Joe Devera-The Geologic History of Little Egypt.

Week 4- Thurs. Dr. Sam-Little Egypt Soil and Water Resources. Brainstorming and Selection of Research Topic.

Nic Jelinski, University of Minnesota, How Soils Unite Us, TEDxUMN

<https://youtu.be/dzZ6ACiXtIE?si=X6GTNymH9erJq2pd>

This Week Emphasizes the Ancient History and More Recent History of Two Major Cities in Little Egypt.

Week of 9/13

Week 5-Tues. Cahokia: Prehistoric America's Largest City

<https://youtu.be/75kfl-pCmkU?si=yTVcLEffG3sESyp>

Week 5-Thurs. Before and After-Cairo

https://youtu.be/oGnOhd5RmQM?si=4r_Q_dlgM-xnjOI

Time set aside for brainstorming and selection of research projects.

Living in Little Egypt.

Week of 9/20

Week 6-Tues. Dr. Amanda Weidhuner (Assistant Professor of Horticulture, SIU-C) and her husband Thomas Atkins (Viticulturist and Enologist) will be our guest speakers. They will discuss the natural beauty of Little Egypt and what attracted them to attend SIU and then settle in Little Egypt. Dr. Weidhuner obtained her B.S., M.S., and Ph.D. in Horticulture from SIU-C. Thomas Atkins works at Blue Sky winery. He obtained his B.S. in horticulture from SIU. They live in rural Jackson County.

Week 6-Thurs. TBD Guest Speaker

Time set aside for discussion of selected research projects.

Background for Completing Projects

Week of 9/27

Week 7-Tues. YouTube-How to Study History <https://youtu.be/Ngk09xRRzW8>

Team Jig Saw Puzzle Solving Exercise as an Example of Organizing Information.

Week 7-Thurs. Prof. Schrader's Guide to MLA Quoting and Citing

[Prof. Schrader's Guide to MLA Quoting and Citing](#)

Skills Needed for Project.

Week of 10/4

Week 8-Tues. YouTube-Learn how to write an Abstract and Create a Graphical Abstract.

https://youtu.be/cHDmWfkCFdA?si=sgB6rAd3YSs_KsKe

Week 8-Thurs. YouTube-How to Write an Annotated Bibliography

https://youtu.be/CQK_Y0rCnvA?si=rc0WMDFDfy9thq2J

Learning How to Tell a Story. Learning How to Tell Your Personal Story.

Week of 10/11

Week 9-Tues. YouTube-How to Tell a Story

<https://youtu.be/Xjp7QNggHO4?si=sledYHPPuD2SeE93>

Week 9-Thurs. Hero Story TED-ed Talk

<https://youtu.be/Hhk4N9A0oCA?si=pPJaodiRYdShdaVS>

Settling and Living in Little Egypt.

Week of 10/18

Week 10 – Tues. Guest Speaker-Matt Benson, Attorney at Law, Du Quoin, Illinois

Matt's family tree traces back to settlement of Southern Illinois. His family worked in the coal industry, and he will share some of the fascinating history of the coal industry in southern Illinois. Matt is a graduate of SIU and a graduate of the SIU Law School. He will also share stories of past Illinois Avenue Halloween celebrations (during his college days)!

Week 10- Thurs. Working in class on your Hero Story.

This Week is Dedicated to In Class Help for the Students Projects.

Week of 10/25

Week 11- Tues.

Week 11-Thurs.

Team Building and Connecting

Week of 11/1

Week 12 – Tues. Field Trip: Meet at local restaurant.

Week 12- Thurs. After Action Review (AAR) from the Fieldtrip, reading our hero stories

Cover Topics Suggested by the Students That Are of Interest, but Not Covered in Class. Week of 11/8

Week 13-Tues. Open Thread Day 1.

Week 13-Thurs. Open Thread Day 2.

The Future of Little Egypt-Where We Are and What Do We Do Next? Week of 11/15

Week 14-Tues. Guest Speaker- Keith Hagene - Retired Superintendent, Pinckneyville Community High School District #101.

As a Life-long resident of Little Egypt, Keith will discuss how his ancestors settled in Little Egypt, and how they worked in the farming and the coal mining industry. Keith has witnessed the economic ups and downs of the region and understands the economic and political forces driving them. Keith will provide insight into what he believes needs to be done to prepare our region for the next chapter in our history.

Week 14-Thurs. Student Presentations.

Week 15-Tues. Student Presentations.

Week of 11/22

Week 15-Thurs. Student Presentations.

Week 16-Tues. Student presentations.

Week of 11/29

Week 16-Thurs. Review and Wrap Up.

Week 17- Finals Week. Commencement Saturday 12/12/2026

Week of 12/6

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Class
on: Tuesday, Thursday
03:35 PM - 04:50 PM
Type: Class
Building: Morris Library
Room: 0610A
Start Date: 08/17/2026
End Date: 12/11/2026

Reading Suggestions (These are just suggestions. Other books can be used with prior approval.)

Bloody Williamson, Paul L. Angle, First Published 1952, Alfred A. Knopf, Inc.

War In Illinois, Donald Bain, 1978, Prentice Hall.

Any Books about Little Egypt Region by Herbert K. Russell, SIU Press.

<https://www.siupress.com/author/herbert-k-russell/>

The Land Between the Rivers, Horrell, Piper, and Voight, SIU Press.

<https://www.siupress.com/9780809336043/land-between-the-rivers/>

Managing Mississippi and Ohio River Landscapes, Olson and Wright, 2016, Soil and Water Conservation Society.

Life on the Mississippi, Mark Twain, 1883.

Adventures of Huckleberry Finn, Mark Twain, 1884.

The Cherokee Removal: A Brief History with Documents, Perdue and Green, 2005. Bedford/Saint Martin's Press.

The Cherokee Nation and the Trail of Tears, 2007, Perdue and Green, Penguin Publishing Group.

The Cahokia Atlas-A Historical Atlas of Cahokia Archaeology, 1997, Fowler, Illinois Transportation Archaeology Research Program, University of Illinois.

Envisioning Cahokia-A Landscape Perspective, 2003, Dalan, Holley, Woods, Watters and Koepke. Northern Illinois Press.

A History of the City of Cairo, Illinois, 2003, Lansden, Southern Illinois University Press.

<https://muse.jhu.edu/pub/186/monograph/book/4180>

Herrin: The Brief History of an Infamous American City Hardcover, 2009, Griswold, History Press Library Editions.

The Making of an All-American City: East Saint Louis at 150, 2010, Abbott, University of Chicago Press.

<https://press.uchicago.edu/ucp/books/book/distributed/M/bo19449085.html>

Immigrants in the Valley: Irish, Germans, and Americans, 2016, Wyman, Southern Illinois University Press.

Making the Heartland Quilt: A Geographical History of Settlement and Migration in Early-Nineteenth-Century Illinois, 2016, Meyer, Southern Illinois University Press.

Trigg's Ozark Tours at Shawnee National Forest, 2017, Todd Carr and Janet Trigg Davis, Arcadia Publishing.

Geology of Illinois, 2010, Kolata and Nimz eds., U of I, INRS and ISGS.

Soils of Illinois, 1984, Fehrenbacher et al., U of I Bulletin 778.

Incomplete List of Ideas for Research Topics - Keywords

Natural resources of Little Egypt (Soil, Water, Air, Minerals, Forests, Wildlife).

Use of those natural resources (Agriculture, Mining, Recreation, Urban Development).

Natural History of Little Egypt (Can include geologic time and current time).

Land Use History and Land Use Change in Little Egypt.

See: A Local Example of Land-Use Change: Southern Illinois—1807, 1938, and 1993. Pub. 2003
Duram, Bathgate, and Ray. The Professional Geographer 56:127-140.

Immigration and Settlement of Little Egypt

Why certain areas were developed into towns (e.g., Pinckneyville, Herrin) and urban centers (e.g. East St. Louis, Carbondale, Cairo, Belleville).

Significant events in the histories of the towns and urban centers.

Role of Little Egypt during the Civil War.

Impacts the Mississippi and Ohio Rivers on the settlement and development of the area.

Railroads, highways, and roads that were part of Little Egypt's development.

Contributions (e.g., soldiers, manufacturing, population) of Little Egypt to the Civil War, World War I, World War II, Korean War, Vietnam War.

Rise and Fall of Cahokia Mounds settlement.

Role of SIU-Carbondale and SIU-Edwardsville in development of Little Egypt.

The 1925 Tri-State Tornado.

Valmeyer, Illinois Flood of 1993.

Illinois Avenue and SIU Halloween History.

Little Egypt and the Great Depression.

Shawnee National Forest-founding, development, current state, and future.

Civilian Conservation Corp (CCC) contributions to the development of Little Egypt.

Crime in Little Egypt. Especially around the time of Prohibition. (See War in Illinois Book).

Struggle between coal miners and coal companies in the past. (See Bloody Williamson book).

Lewis and Clark expedition on the Ohio River and the Mississippi River.

Lincoln-Douglas Debate in Jonesboro, Illinois

After studying the history of Little Egypt, what do you see for the future of the area?

Americans with Disabilities (ADA) Statement:

Southern Illinois University Carbondale encourages all persons with disabilities requiring special accommodations to meet the expectations of this course to bring this to the attention of the instructor as soon as possible. Written documentation of the disability should be submitted during the first week of the semester along with a request for special accommodations. **Please contact the SIU Disability Support Services (DSS) to facilitate requests: <https://disabilityservices.siu.edu/> DURING THE FIRST WEEK OF CLASS**

SIU-C COVID POLICY

Go to this link for current COVID status on campus.

[Campus Messages | Coronavirus Information | SIU](https://siu.edu/coronavirus/campus-messages.php)

<https://siu.edu/coronavirus/campus-messages.php>

Emergency Procedures:

Southern Illinois University Carbondale is committed to providing a safe and healthy environment for study and work. Because some health and safety circumstances are beyond our control, we ask that you become familiar with the SIUC Emergency Response Plan and Building Emergency Response Team (BERT) program. Emergency response information is available on posters in buildings on campus, available on the BERT'S website at www.bert.siu.edu, Department of Public Safety's website www.ds.siu.edu (disaster drop down) and in the Emergency Response Guidelines pamphlet. Know how to respond to each type of emergency. Instructors will provide guidance and direction to students in the classroom in the event of an emergency affecting your location. It is important that you follow these instructions and stay with your instructor during an evacuation or sheltering emergency. The Building Emergency Response Team will provide assistance to your instructor in evacuating the building or sheltering within the facility.

Syllabus Attachment

Fall 2026

MISSION STATEMENT FOR SOUTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY CARBONDALE

SIU embraces a unique tradition of access and opportunity, inclusive excellence, innovation in research and creativity, and outstanding teaching focused on nurturing student success. As a nationally ranked public research university and regional economic catalyst, we create and exchange knowledge to shape future leaders, improve our communities, and transform lives.

IMPORTANT DATES:

Semester Classes Begin:08/17/2026

Last day to add full-term course (without Dean's signature):08/21/2026

Last day to withdraw from the University with a full refund:08/28/2026

Last day to drop a full-term course for a credit/refund:09/18/2026

Last day to drop a full-term course (W grade, no refund):10/23/2026

Final examinations:12/07/2026–12/11/2026

Note: Please verify the above dates with the Registrar calendar and find more detailed information on deadlines at <http://registrar.siu.edu/calendars>. For add/drop dates that apply to shorter-than-full-term courses, please look at the Schedule of Classes search results at <http://registrar.siu.edu/schedclass/index.php>

FALL SEMESTER HOLIDAYS:

Labor Day 09/07/2026

Fall Break 10/02/2026

Veterans Day 11/11/2026

Thanksgiving Break 11/21/2026 - 11/29/2026

DIVERSITY: Southern Illinois University Carbondale's goal is to provide a welcoming campus where all of our students, faculty and staff can study and work in a respectful, positive environment free from racism and intimidation. For more information visit: <http://diversity.siu.edu>.

OFFICE FOR ACCESS AND ACCOMMODATIONS: SIU Carbondale is committed to providing an inclusive and accessible experience for all students with disabilities. Office for Access and Accommodations coordinates the implementation of accommodations. If you think you may be eligible for accommodations but have not yet obtained approval please contact OAA immediately at (618) 453-5738 or <https://access.siu.edu>. You may request accommodations at any time, but timely requests help to ensure accommodations are in place when needed. Accommodations and services are determined through an interactive process with students and may involve consideration of specific course design and learning objectives in consultation with faculty.

MILITARY COMMUNITY: There are complexities of being a member of the military community and also a student, and military and veteran related developments can complicate academic life. If you are a member of the military community and in need of accommodations please visit Veterans Services at <http://veterans.siu.edu/>.

STUDENT MULTICULTURAL RESOURCE CENTER: The Student Multicultural Resource Center serves as a catalyst for inclusion, diversity and innovation. As the Center continues its work, we are here to ensure that you think, grow and succeed. We encourage you to stop by the Center, located in the Student Services Building Room 140, to see the resources available and discover ways you can get involved on the campus. Visit us at <https://smrc.siu.edu/>.

SALUKI CARES: The purpose of Saluki Cares is to develop, facilitate and coordinate a university-wide program of care and support for students in any type of distress—physical, emotional, financial, or personal. By working closely with faculty, staff, students and their families, SIUC will continue to display a culture of care and demonstrate to our students and their families that they are an important part of the community. For information on Saluki Cares: Call (618) 453-2461, email siucares@siu.edu, or <http://salukicare.siu.edu/>.

SAFETY AWARENESS FACTS AND EDUCATION: Title IX makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender is a Civil Rights offense subject to the same kinds of accountability and the same kinds of support applied to offenses against other protected categories such as race, national origin, etc. If you or someone you know has been harassed or assaulted, you can find the appropriate resources here: <http://safe.siu.edu>.

PREGNANCY: Title IX makes it clear that students who are pregnant or have a related condition may contact the Title IX Coordinator to request accommodations or to report any allegations of discrimination. The Title IX Coordinator may be contacted at: Nick Wortman, Associate Vice Chancellor for Human Resources, Southern Illinois University Carbondale, 0135 Woody Hall, 900 S. Normal Avenue, Mail Code 6520, Carbondale, IL 62901, (618) 453-6667, equity@siu.edu.

SIU COUNSELING AND PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES (CAPS): Mental health counseling services are available by calling CAPS at (618) 453-5371. CAPS offers confidential same-day services and ongoing counseling. For after hours crisis care, students are encouraged to call 988, 911, or present to their nearest emergency room.

WITHDRAWAL POLICY (Undergraduate Only): Students who officially register for a session must officially withdraw from that registration in a timely manner to avoid being charged as well as receiving a failing grade for those classes. An official withdrawal must be initiated by the student, or on behalf of the student through the academic unit, and be processed by the Registrar's office. For the proper procedures to follow when dropping courses and when withdrawing from SIUC visit: <https://registrar.siu.edu/students/withdrawal-petitions/>.

SIUC'S EARLY WARNING INTERVENTION PROGRAM (EWIP): Students enrolled in courses participating in SIUC's Early Warning Intervention Program might be contacted by University staff during a semester. More information can be found at the University Core Curriculum's Overview webpage: <https://corecurriculum.siu.edu/for-faculty/>.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES: We ask that you become familiar with Emergency Preparedness at SIU. Emergency response information is available on posters in buildings on campus, on the Emergency Preparedness at SIU website, and through text and email alerts. To register for alerts visit: <http://emergency.siu.edu/>.

CATALOGS:

catalog.siu.edu

gradcatalog.siu.edu - Graduate policies often vary from Undergraduate policies. To view the applicable policies for graduate students, please refer to the graduate catalog.

CENTER FOR LEARNING AND SUPPORT SERVICES:

Tutoring: <https://class.siu.edu/>

Math Labs: <http://math.siu.edu/courses/course-help.php>

WRITING CENTER: <http://write.siu.edu/>

PLAGIARISM: See the Student Conduct Code: <http://srr.siu.edu/student-conduct-code/>

INCOMPLETE POLICY (Undergraduate Only): <http://catalog.siu.edu/grading/>

REPEAT POLICY: <http://catalog.siu.edu/grading/repeat-policy-gpa-scholastic-standing.php>

MORRIS LIBRARY HOURS: <https://libcal.lib.siu.edu/hours/>

ADVISEMENT: <http://advisement.siu.edu/>

SIU ONLINE: <https://online.siu.edu/>

Soil Evaluation Report

In accordance with 77 Illinois Administrative Code, Chapter 1, Subchapter r, section 905

Report Prepared for:

Name: Sean Dakin

Investigation No: 2026-24

Date: 8/18/2026

Address: 27976 Tatum Road

Property Owner: Sean Dakin

City: Tamms State: IL

Zip: 62988 County: Alexander

Site and Contact:

Detailed Soil Description ¹ / Interpretations - Site 1

Depth (In.)	Matrix Color ²	Texture	Structure	Consistence	Mottles ²	Silt Coatings ²	Fe-Mn Soft Masses	Loading Rate ³ G/D/Ft ²

Limiting Layer: _____ Depth: _____ Slope: _____

Soil Classification: _____ Aspect: _____

Physiography: _____ Parent Material: _____

Estimated Drainage Class: _____ Depth to Seasonal High Water Table: _____

Depth Saturation Observed: _____ Depth to Compacted Layer: _____

Remarks: _____

Detailed Soil Description ¹ / Interpretations - Site 2

Depth (In.)	Matrix Color ²	Texture	Structure	Consistence	Mottles ²	Silt Coatings ²	Fe-Mn Soft Masses	Loading Rate ³ G/D/Ft ²

Limiting Layer: _____ Depth: _____ Slope: _____

Soil Classification: _____ Aspect: _____

Physiography: _____ Parent Material: _____

Estimated Drainage Class: _____ Depth to Seasonal High Water Table: _____

Depth Saturation Observed: _____ Depth to Compacted Layer: _____

Remarks: _____

Detailed Soil Description ¹ / Interpretations - Site 3

Depth (In.)	Matrix Color ²	Texture	Structure	Consistence	Mottles ²	Silt Coatings ²	Fe-Mn Soft Masses	Loading Rate ³ G/D/Ft ²

Limiting Layer: _____ Depth: _____ Slope: _____
 Soil Classification: _____ Aspect: _____
 Physiography: _____ Parent Material: _____
 Estimated Drainage Class: _____ Depth to Seasonal High Water Table: _____
 Depth Saturation Observed: _____ Depth to Compacted Layer: _____
 Remarks: _____

Site Map

Report Prepared By: Samuel J. Indorante, Ph.D.
 SI Natural Resources Consulting, LLC
 708 Solitude Dr.
 Du Quoin, IL 62832

Phone: 618-967-4509

Certified Professional Soil Classifier #61

Signature: *Samuel J. Indorante*

¹ USDA Soil Survey Manual: *Ag Handbook No. 18* (1993)

² Soil Color Designations *Munsell Soil Color Charts* (2000)

³ Private Sewage disposal Licensing Act and Code Illinois Department of public Health AppendixA Illustration M (1996)