**History and Science of the Manhattan Project**

*Spring 2023, Deep Springs College, Prof. Brian Hill*

**Course Short Description**

The Manhattan project is a chance to look simultaneously at the almost unbelievable scientific and technological developments which came in rapid succession just before, during, and after WWII, and at their historic consequences. The fundamental science begins in the late 1800s with the discovery of natural radioactivity (by Becquerel and the Curies), the development of controlled fission (Fermi's atomic pile), and the possibility of violent fission chain reactions. The history includes the race to make weapons based on fission, the destruction of two cities, and the setting of the stage for the superpower stalemate that has continued with slowly shifting characteristics decade-after-decade ever since. A study of the Manhattan Project is not just an opportunity to study momentous scientific developments and past events. Its ongoing significance makes it nearly a duty to understand what we have collectively created. By the end of the course, each person will have their own response to the events and the resulting contemporary situation.