

ENVST 3011: Wilderness Studies, *Leave No Trace*, and Leadership Curriculum and Syllabus

National Outdoor Leadership School (NOLS) with the
University of Utah, Environmental Studies Program

Course Curriculum Description: Environmental studies is central to the curriculum of NOLS, second only to personal safety. The objective of conserving the lands we use for the future affects every moment of our courses. Understanding the complexity, diversity, and fragility of these wildlands guides how and where we teach, eat, sleep, travel, and learn skills. Even many of the NOLS rations are chosen based on the amount of fossil fuel attached to the true cost of the food. Based on scientific and empirical understanding of ecosystems, an ethic evolves to guide how we manage our field courses. Students learn the guiding principles behind land managers' decisions and regulations, and they apply these same principles to our group's behavior during the expedition. The social skills from the NOLS leadership curriculum work synergistically in developing tools for not only developing ethics, but taking these ethics to communities back home. Students take from these courses the knowledge, skills, and ability to lead others in an ethical way.

Over 30 hours of specific classes and demonstrations combined with the modeling of behaviors by instructors will guide students in their understanding and application of wilderness ethics throughout a course. Every instructor has the academic freedom to arrange the learning process to custom fit each environment, to serve each group of students. Most instructors offer the following core information:

- A wildland ethic based on ecology applied to outdoor recreation, and a sense of place
- Personal responsibility: implications of a land ethic and Leave No Trace (LNT) concepts
- A global perspective: widening the circle of awareness to other cultures and environments
- Federal land management in the United States : roles of the Forest Service, National Park Service, Bureau of Land Management, & Fish and Wildlife Service (NOLS courses based outside of the US focus on the native country's land management systems).
- Wilderness Preservation System – The Wilderness Act of 1964
- Sustainability of the biosphere via ecosystem services: goods, processes, and services
- Transference: citizenship and stewardship beyond the backcountry

Leave No Trace (LNT) is a guideline of ethical behavior in wild places co-developed by NOLS in collaboration with the U.S. federal land management agencies.

The LNT principles are:

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| 1) Plan ahead and prepare | 4) Leave what you find | 7) Be considerate of other visitors |
| 2) Travel and camp on durable surfaces | 5) Minimize campfire impacts | See more detail at: |
| 3) Dispose of waste properly | 6) Respect wildlife | http://www.lnt.org/programs/principles.php |

Course Objectives

By the end of the course we expect each student to:

- consistently demonstrate sound minimum-impact living and travel skills on personal and group levels; be able to extrapolate knowledge to varied settings
- understand the history of, and consider potential solutions to, pertinent environmental issues
- understand the function, organization, and local concerns of land managers
- make plans for the transference of wilderness ethics and practices into daily personal and professional life
- discuss sustainability concepts related to ecosystem services, applying sustainability to at least one example of expedition logistics, and to one example of life back home

Options

- 1) Some NOLS expeditions combine this course with certification in the national *Leave No Trace* program at the **LNT Trainer or LNT Master Educator** level. The latest standards for these certifications are explained at <http://www.nols.edu/lnt/> . This certification adds specific expectations beyond this syllabus.
- 2) **Graduate students** should enroll in PRT 6050 and expect to also write a paper to be graded by the U/UT faculty.

Letter Grades, By Percent:

93-100% A, 90-92 A-, 88-89% B+, 83-87% B, 80-82% B-, 78-79% C+, 73-77% C, 70-72% C-, etc.

Text Resources:

- Hampton, B. & Cole, D. (2003). *Soft Paths*, 3rd ed.
- Hunt, J. (1994). *Ethical Issues in Experiential Education*, 2nd ed.
- Lamb, J. & Goodrich, G. (2006). *Wilderness Ethics: valuing and managing wild places Leave No Trace Skills and Ethics*, V1-16
- Nash, R. (2001). *Wilderness and the American Mind*, 4thed.

Teachers Guides:

- Gookin, J. & Wells, D. (2002). *NOLS Environmental Education Notebook*
Gookin, J. (2006). *NOLS Wilderness Educator's Notebook*
Gookin, J. & Leach, S. (2008). *NOLS Leadership Education Notebook*
McKenzie-Mohr, Doug (1999). *Fostering sustainable behavior: a social marketing approach*
Tilton, B. (2003). *Leave No Trace Master Educator Handbook*

Selected Lessons from the NOLS Environmental Studies Curriculum**Defining Environmental Education**

1. NOLS philosophy of education.
2. NOLS expectations for environmental studies.
3. Spirituality: personal strength and authenticity based on a sense of self, community, and place.
4. Teaching values at NOLS.

Defining Ethics: the study of competing moral values

1. Learning Ethics: what the research says.
2. Defining a wildland ethic.
3. Self-discipline, needs vs. wants; morals and values for leaders in wilderness and environmental education.
4. Wildlands and people: What is your connection? (activity)
5. Aldo Leopold's *A Land Ethic*.
6. Personal responsibility: implications of a land ethic.
7. Environmental ethics and *the Lorax* by Dr. Seuss.

Leave No Trace (LNT), Guidelines for Ethical Use of Wildlands

1. Reading the land: a basic ecology lesson.
2. LNT: the seven ecologically-based LNT guidelines for ethical wilderness use.
3. LNT for diverse environments.
4. Transfer: LNT Trainer curriculum, student teaching in LNT.

Land Management and Ethics

1. U.S. land management history.
2. National Environmental Policy Act (N.E.P.A.); The Wilderness Act; The Wild and Scenic Rivers Act.
3. Local public policy issues.
4. Global environmental issues.
5. Land management debate (activity).
6. Transfer: Advocacy for wildlands.

Environmental Leadership

1. NOLS group leadership techniques: 7 skills and 4 roles of leaders.
2. Teaching LNT to your friends back home, without offending anyone.
3. Stewardship & citizenship: What does a responsible NOLS alum look like?
4. Transfer: Introduction to *Soft Sidewalks* or *Live No Trace*.

Sustainability

1. Ecosystem services- goods, processes, and services that we use on our expedition
2. Economic sustainability- NOLS ration choices based on fossil fuel costs
3. Systems theory: Whole systems thinking and mind mapping (activity)
4. Transfer: Is the modern lifestyle sustainable?

Curriculum Contacts

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