

PRT 3041 Natural Resources Learning: Group Leadership Techniques Curriculum and Syllabus

National Outdoor Leadership School with the
University of Utah, Department of Parks, Recreation, and Tourism
Natural Resources Learning Program

Course Curriculum Description: Educating students to become leaders of their peers and their larger community is central to the curriculum of both NOLS and the University of Utah's Natural Resources Learning program within the Department of Parks, Recreation, and Tourism. Leadership begins by first educating oneself with fundamentals, and forming a foundation from which to step forward with the skills and knowledge to lead others toward a common goal. The extended outdoor field-course environment provides an ideal opportunity for developing leadership skills through a progression where each student observes, discusses, and applies leadership techniques.

Over 30 hours of specific classes and demonstrations in addition to the modeling of behaviors by instructors will guide students in their understanding and immediate application of leadership techniques 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:

- **Expedition Behavior**, leading by being a good follower and taking responsibility for oneself
- **Outdoor leadership and judgement** - reflecting on experiences as a group and individually
- **Hazard assessment** - outdoor environment specific and technical skills gained by experience
- **Communicating** ideas - being heard and listening for understanding
- **Conflict Resolution** - solutions with dignity and growth for all
- **Student teaching** - most students have opportunities to prepare and present material to the class
- **Leader of the Day** - responsibilities and expectations, a practical step toward formal leadership
- **Expedition planning** - organizing for the group: permits, food, equipment, participants, etc.
- **Time control plans** - the endless possibilities for the day: route finding, timing, hazards, vistas...
- **Leadership decision-making styles** - fit your style to the people and the situation
- **Small group expeditions** - many courses will reach the leadership maturity by leading for a few days without instructors being immediately present

Teaching and leadership progression begins with good role modeling. Instructors model instructor-team cooperation, public decision-making, and constructive feedback. Instructors pair up with students to specifically mentor each student. As the students develop, the instructors back off, allowing them to make choices and live with the outcome unless safety is compromised. Ideally, students take-over the course leadership from the instructors; and instructors become an outside source of expert information.

Course Objectives: By the end of the course we expect each student to...

- participate in the decision-making process; effectively communicate and problem solve on interpersonal and group levels
- take responsibility for health and safety of self and others
- demonstrate sound expedition behavior, including commitment to group decisions and positive attitude
- show initiative in leadership/teaching roles with peers
- employ leadership styles appropriate to the situation; support others in the leadership role
- work effectively as a team member; initiate participation in group tasks and camp work
- take responsibility for learning; set and attain personal goals

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:

NOLS Leadership Education Toolbox (2001) eds. Gookin, Doran, Green
Wilderness Educator Notebook (1999)
Learning to Lead (1994) Bennis and Goldsmith
On Becoming a Leader (1994) Bennis

A Sample Course Leadership Progression: modified from the *NOLS Leadership Education Toolbox*

PHASE I - SETTING THE GROUNDWORK**First two days:**

- Getting jazzed: overall course goals (big picture), involving students in organizing for the expedition.
- Explain Expedition Behavior (EB): discuss effective groups and what makes for a positive learning environment.
- Talk about instructor and student evaluations and leadership expectations of students.
- Introduce the **NOLS 7 Leadership Skills** and develop 2-4 group goals and personal goals.

First Few Field Days

Classes on the **7 NOLS Leadership Skills** and what they look like on this course:

Expedition Behavior

Competence (technical and group management skills)

Communication

Judgment and Decision Making

Tolerance for Adversity and Uncertainty

Self Awareness

Vision and Action

Subjects covered include leadership and course progression explanation, instructors' influence on student leadership, and criteria for students to earn participation on a small group expedition without instructors present. Instructors model leading and decision-making in front of the class. Instructors will also start skills, information and tool-oriented classes that students will need to lead (e.g. travel plans).

PHASE II – LEARNING LEADERSHIP

- Leader of the Day (LOD) role, responsibilities, and expectations explained, students lead with instructors present and coaching.
- Communication class and exercise, including structure for debriefing student leadership day.
- Leadership classes, discussions, or exercises in:

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| <u>Stages of Group Development,</u> | <u>In-depth Decision-Making model,</u> |
| <u>Leadership styles, (“no-doze”)</u> | <u>Gender and Leadership,</u> |
| <u>Leadership styles and decision-making</u> | |

PHASE III – DEVELOPING LEADERSHIP

Students focus on practicing leadership, peer coaching, increasing challenge, technical and group management skills.

Leadership oriented classes, discussions or exercises include:

The Waterline Model in conflict management

Decision-making for students

Resiliency = Tolerance for Adversity and Uncertainty

Teaching Self-Leadership at NOLS

Leadership Habits and & Leadership Faux Pas

Leadership Theories We Use at NOLS

Ten Commonalities of Transformational Leaders

The Four Dimensions of Leadership at NOLS

Participatory Leadership for a Small Community

The Leadership-Definition Model

A Simple Model for Debriefing Student Groups (Processing)

PHASE IV -- TRANSITIONING

Practical Experience Leading without Instructors/ Instructors present at debrief.

If ready, Independent, Small-Group-Expedition. Debrief with instructors at end.

Tools and Plans for further leadership growth at home.

Taking Leadership from here.

Briefing for Entry into a More Harsh Environment

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