

PRT 3042 - Natural Resources Learning: Wilderness Skills Practicum and Leadership Curriculum, 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 fundamental skills, 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 wilderness skills and leadership techniques.

Wilderness Skills begin with the safety of the students. Recognition of the inherent environmental hazards and the diverse limitations in experience and skill levels of each of the students is the first step toward safety management. After recognizing the potential hazards, both environmental and human, a student must learn the wilderness skills to cope with or avoid the hazard. Learning the skills of each outdoor activity provides the foundation from which a student then can lead others in the activity. NOLS courses excel in providing the opportunity for extended learning and application of wilderness skills and applying the skills in a leadership experience.

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 wilderness skills and 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 on wilderness skills and leadership:

- **Travel Techniques**, bio-mechanically correct movement and positions, appropriate rest intervals
- **Sport/Activity specific skills**, fundamentals to as advanced as the students are ready for
- **Navigation**, competent map and chart use in a variety of situations
- **Hazard Evaluation**, environment and activity specific technical skills gained by experience
- **Safety Management**, skills to competently handle or avoid a hazard or correct with back-up systems
- **Outdoor leadership and judgement**, reflecting on experiences as a group and individually
- **Leader of the Day**, responsibilities and expectations, a practical step toward formal leadership
- **Expedition planning**, organizing for the group: permits, food, equipment, participants...
- **Time control plans**, the endless possibilities for the day: route finding, timing, hazards, vistas...
- **Leadership decision-making styles**, fit your style to the activity, the people, and the situation

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

- travel competently, using correct wilderness activity skills, judgement, and leadership skills
- master the fundamental skills and demonstrate an understanding of more advanced skills in each activity
- consistently perform techniques taught on the course to reduce or avoid hazards
- understand the use, design, limitations, and proper care of the related equipment
- describe an emergency plan for a group in the outdoors
- accurately assess skills, strengths, and endurance in self and others, and conservatively apply those limits
- live comfortably in the wilderness, able to camp, cook, and dress for a variety of conditions
- take responsibility for health and safety of self and others

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.

Selected Text Resources:

Canoeing and Kayaking – Instruction Manual (1987) Gullion, L.
Fundamentals of Kayak Navigation (1993) Burch, D.
Learning to Rock Climb (1981) Loughman, M.
Mountaineering: The freedom of the hills (1992) Graydon, D.
NOLS Climbing Instructor Notebook (1997) ed. Powers, P.
NOLS Leadership Toolbox (2001) ed. Gookin, Doran, and Green
NOLS Mexico Sailing Instructor Notebook (1997) ed. Sickle and Burke
NOLS Sea Kayaking Instructor Notebook (1997) ed. Conlan and Peabody
NOLS Wilderness Educators' Notebook (1999) ed. Gookin
NOLS Wilderness First Aid (2000) Schimelpfenig and Lindsey
NOLS Wilderness Mountaineering (1993) Powers, P.
River Rescue: A manual for whitewater safety (1997) Bechdel and Ray
Sea Kayaking: A manual for long-distance touring (1988) Dowd, J.
The Complete Whitewater Rafter (1996) Bennett, J.
The National Outdoor Leadership School's Wilderness Guide (1999) Harvey, M.

Teaching and Learning Categories Common to Wilderness Skills Practicum Sections:**Safety and Risk Management**

Travel Conditions and Hazard Assessment	Weather Patterns, Avalanche Conditions, Sea State
Group Management Models	Time and Travel Control Plans for Team Leaders

Travel Skills

Navigation, Map and Compass	Equipment Use and Maintenance
Rules of the Road	Passing Another Party, Vessel, etc.

Rescue Procedures

Assessment and Stabilization	Stabilization of Group Situation
Rescues, Self and Assisted	Evacuations, Self and Assisted

Activity Skills

Multi-level, on-going, bio-mechanically correct skill development for each activity

Leadership

Leader-of-the-Day Model	Interpersonal and Group Maintenance Responsibility
Effective Small Group Expeditions	Leadership Theories Applied to Travel
Leadership Styles for Stressful Situations	Situational Leadership Theory
Risk/Benefit Model for Decision-Making	The Experiential Learning Cycle in Education
NOLS Models: "Every Member a Leader" and "Good Leadership requires Good Follower-ship"	

Transference

Activities as Metaphors
 Transferring Control and Responsibility Together
 Applying "NOLS Leadership Models" to Small Group Situations back home
 NOLS Leadership vs. "Top-down" Hierarchical Management that's so common at the office

Outdoor Living Skills

Leave No Trace camping and travel skills specific to environment and travel methods

Related Activities

Environmental Ethics and Studies
 Day hikes, Gunk-holing, flora/fauna identification

Curriculum Contacts:

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