EXPEDITION PLANNING CURRICULUM
NOLS/UNIVERSITY OF UTAH

Course Curriculum Description: The University of Utah Department of Parks, Recreation, and Tourism contracts the National Outdoor Leadership School (NOLS), an expedition-based school dedicated to teaching wilderness travel, leadership and camping techniques, to design and teach the Expedition Planning course which enables graduates to lead novices in the outdoors. As such, nearly all aspects of the NOLS / University of Utah curriculum support students' abilities to plan and execute an expedition. NOLS semesters that offer the expedition planning course include a special emphasis on student participation in the planning of the various expeditions that comprise the semester. These semesters culminate in a multi-day, student-led hiking expedition independent of instructors.

Over 30 hours of classes and 60 hours of supervised activities directly address the issues of planning a wilderness expedition. Please note that the total number of hours of both formal and informal classes is a minimum. Considerably more time may be devoted to individual subjects and topics; this varies among courses and is continually adapted to the varying terrain, climate and travel techniques. All instructors have the academic freedom to customize their course to fit the student group with whom they are working and the conditions they encounter. Instructors typically offer sessions from the following topics:

Food Planning:
- Nutrition (1 hr.)
- Expedition food selection (1 hr.)
- Ration planning (1 hr.)
- Food bagging and packing (1 hr.; practical 6 hrs.) Includes techniques for packing and storage of food for mountain, glacier, rock, and coastal expeditions.
- Field re-rationing (1 hr.; practical 4 hrs.)

Equipment Planning:
- Personal equipment selection (2 hrs.) Includes personal equipment options for mountain, glacier, rock, and coastal environments.
- Personal equipment care and repair (1 hr; practical 4 hrs.)
- Shelter selection, care, and repair (1 hr.; practical 2 hrs)
- Stove selection, care, and repair (2 hrs; practical 4 hrs.)
- Kitchen equipment selection, care, and repair (1 hr.)
- Sea kayak and kayak gear selection, care, and repair (2 hrs.; practical 1 hr.)
- Rock climbing equipment selection, care, and repair (2 hrs.; practical 4 hrs.)
- Mountaineering equipment selection, care, and repair (2 hrs.; practical 2 hrs.)

Route Planning:
- Mountain route selection (1 hr.; practical 6 hrs.)
- Written Travel Plans (1 hr.; practical 6 hrs.)
- Coastal kayaking route selection (1hr.; practical 4 hours) Tides, currents, nautical traffic, and hazards are examined.
- Rock climbing route selection (1 hr.; practical 4 hours). Emphasis on guidebook use and evaluation of routes for novices.
- Map and chart selection and preparation (1 hr.; practical 2 hours)
- Mountain route descriptions (1 hr.; practical 10 hours). Written route descriptions are required.
- Coastal route descriptions (1 hr.; practical 5 hours). Written "passage plans" are required.

Emergency Planning:
- Emergency communication devices (1 hr.). Includes satellite phones, EPIRBs, VHF radios, and flares.
- "Emergency Procedures" contingency plans (1hr.; practical 2 hrs.)
- Evacuation management (1hr.; practical 4 hrs.)
- "SOAP" notes and medical documentation (1hr.; practical 3 hrs.)
- Multiple victim scenarios, triage, and the incident command system (2hrs.; practical 6 hrs.)

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A reminder that the total hours listed above are merely minimums. Considerably more time is spent on these topics in informal, one-on-one, and practical settings. At NOLS we believe in supporting what we teach with direct field experience as much as possible. For example, organized group route discussion and planning sessions, evacuation option brainstorming time, first aid scenarios, and equipment repair time and other informal educational activities may occupy twice as much time as listed above, but may impose on time allotted to other topics, depending on the situational needs of the expedition.

Course Objectives: During the course we expect each student to apply the above knowledge to the activities of the expedition, demonstrating the ability to do the following:

- Plan field rations and utilize cooking skills to prepare nutritious meals.
- Use charts and maps to travel efficiently through a variety of terrain.
- Develop written travel plans for camp-to-camp travel which include route descriptions and contingencies.
- Effectively communicate plans and objectives to other groups and coordinate logistics accordingly.
- Appropriately respond to and document first aid incidents and evacuation situations.
- Select, use and maintain personal and group equipment in a sustainable manner.
- Participate in the planning and execution of a multi-day student-led expedition, independent of instructors.
- Debrief each expedition, making notes for future use.

Grades are based on:

- Application of the above material to the expedition,
- Participation in the planning and execution of the student-led expedition,
- Use of this material across the curriculum with regards to environmental ethics, risk management, and leadership,
- Use of this material for the accomplishment of group goals, and
- Maintaining a personal journal with debrief notes of what worked and what didn't on each expedition.

Resources

- NOLS Wilderness Educator Notebook (2006) Ed. Gookin, J. (teacher's guide)
- NOLS Expedition Planning (2007) Anderson, D. (student text) (draft versions used pre-publication)
- NOLS Wilderness Guide (1999) Harvey, M.
- NOLS Nutrition Field Guide (2002) Howley, Mary MS. RD
- NOLS Cookery (2004) Pearson, C.
- NOLS Wilderness Medicine (2006) Schimelpfenig, T.
- Sea Kayaking: a manual for long distance touring (2004) Dowd, J.
- Climbing: Expedition Planning (2003) Soles & Powers

We hope that this information is helpful. If you have further questions regarding the program, please contact our Admission Office at (800) 710-6657 between 8:00 am and 5:00 pm Mountain Time.

Curriculum Contacts:
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