

N O L S - India

Young Leader Course

FEATURES OF THIS COURSE

- Age: 15- 16 only.
- Route: On and off trail hiking.
- Travel: Near or above tree line.
- Average backpack weight: 15-18 kilos.
- Hiking distance: Approx. 85 km.
- Hiking elevation: 6000-14,000 ft.
- Course duration: 14 days. (12 field days).
- Group size: 12-15 students / 3 instructors.

THE EXPEDITION

The Young Leader's course is a true wilderness experience for young people. It is designed to develop outdoor skills, leadership and experience the philosophy of NOLS. The course will be run in an expedition style format with minimal support of porters. For 12 days you will backpack in the Kumaon Himalaya of Uttarakand, surrounded by the perennial beauty of glaciers, ice and snow. The trek will begin after an 8-hour jeep ride from the NOLS India base at Ranikhet, to the road head.

NOLS instructors are some of the world's finest outdoor educators who specialize in teaching young people. Initially, classes will cover all the fundamental skills for living comfortably and sensibly in the outdoors. These include the basics of camping, cooking, stove use, map reading, "Leave No Trace" techniques of sanitation, camping and cooking. During the course you will share a tent with two or three others in a "cook group". This helps to disperse individual impact on the land and also enables you to master the art of backcountry cooking and living. In typical NOLS style, each "cook group" will cook their own food for the duration of the course. As the course progresses, you will take partake in formal, informal classes and discussions on natural history, land management, cultural issues, wilderness ethics, leadership, and expedition behavior etc.

A NOLS course is all about having fun, learning about the outdoors, traveling from camp to camp, exploring and achieving. You will gain independence and take responsibility for yourselves and your companions. You will not only learn outdoor living skills, but also learn how to get along with your group, how to be a leader and an even better follower. When you get back home, you will have the skills to enjoy outdoor activities on your own and the leadership qualities to help you step up in the classroom and on the playing fields.

Environmental studies are an integral part of the NOLS curriculum. It permeates every class and activity, whether learning "Leave No Trace" camping, observing ecological systems, pausing to enjoy beautiful scenery, exploring new environs, or adapting your schedule to nature's rhythms. It is based on both practical needs and developing a "sense of place." A NOLS graduate is expected to go home with the basic knowledge, leadership skills, conservation ethic and can-do attitude to be a more responsible steward and citizen.

Wilderness Skills are also the foundation of the NOLS curriculum. They provide a tangible medium for the entire curriculum and recreational skills that last a lifetime. Significant physical activities provide stimulation, conditioning and stamina. NOLS uses the classic teaching sequence of "discuss, demonstrate, do and reflect." Coached application and individual goal setting provide steps toward mastery and independence. While NOLS enjoys a long-standing reputation for the development of technical competence, these skills are directly coupled to a

broad education that also includes the development of judgment, environmental ethics and leadership.

Students should come prepared for long hard days and challenging terrain. Backpacks will be heavy, weighing up to 15 kilos. The difficulty of any given day is hard to predict. Long distances on a trail may be easier than crossing a high mountain pass. Your pack will get lighter as you approach a food re-supply day, or you may be carrying extra gear to lighten the load of your course mate who is not feeling well. The outdoors has a knack of finding challenges for everyone. We can't script our courses as tightly as a school because expeditions, unlike a classroom, are influenced by weather, terrain, the group's health and its skills, experience and ability.

During the course you should expect ongoing verbal feedback with written performance summaries at the end. Upon the successful completion of the course, each student receives a NOLS diploma.

Course Objectives

Each course is unique due to variables such as route, group dynamics, fitness levels, environmental conditions and international logistics. Working within this context, it is our intent to accomplish the following objectives in four basic areas.

SAFETY AND JUDGMENT

NOLS teaches wilderness visitors to practice responsible habits that promote the health and safety of self and others. Each student is expected to:

- Consistently demonstrate awareness of the mountain hazards encountered by the expedition, including rock fall, river crossings, boulder fields and steep terrain.
- Consistently demonstrate awareness of personal limits in a Himalayan environment, with particular consideration for the remoteness of the expedition.
- Describe an emergency plan for a remote expedition.
- Use experience and developing judgment to implement sound decisions and follow them through to completion.
- Consistently perform specific techniques taught on the course to reduce or avoid hazards.
- Demonstrate ability to perform basic first aid skills to support a patient until help arrives.

LEADERSHIP AND TEAMWORK

Students are exposed to the theory and practice of outdoor leadership, teamwork and expedition behavior. At NOLS, expedition behavior involves commitment to the group, acceptance of others, and cooperation to achieve goals. Each student is expected to:

- Work effectively as a member of a team, displaying a positive attitude despite hardship.
- Effectively communicate ideas and concerns on an individual and group level.
- Accurately identify personal strengths, skills and areas for growth as a developing outdoor leader.
- Take responsibility for learning by setting and attaining personal goals.
- Use abilities and initiative in a teaching/leadership role with peers.
- Balance personal goals and needs with those of the group.
- Respond to problem situations using decision-making and planning skills.

OUTDOOR SKILLS

NOLS students learn to live and travel in the mountains within a framework of personal safety and care of the environment. Each student is expected to:

- Consistently minimize impact upon the environment while camping and traveling.
- Live comfortably in the Himalayan environment: learn to camp, cook and dress for a variety of conditions.
- Travel and navigate competently on the approach trek while encountering high passes and possibly river crossings.
- Participate in the logistical preparation necessary for an extended foreign expedition.
- Display basic natural history observation and interpretive skills.

ENVIRONMENTAL AND CULTURAL AWARENESS

An integral part of every NOLS course is to raise students' awareness of their impact on the natural world. We expect each student to:

- Use basic observational and interpretive skills to demonstrate an understanding and respect for the course environment.
- Display a basic knowledge of the local culture.
- Discuss the history, facts and potential solutions relevant to sample pertinent environmental issues.
- Reflect upon the transference of wilderness ethics and practices into daily personal and professional life.

As a result of this course, we expect our students to be safe, competent and responsible wilderness travelers and leaders.

