

Advanced Wilderness Leadership

NRM 361

3 Credits

Instructors- Frank Olive

Guest Instructor- Sam Braband

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Outdoor Adventures Office

Field Fee: \$395

Class Meets- Mondays 5pm- 7pm- **3/21 thru 5/9**

Final Capstone Field Experience 5/24-6/4

Course Requirements

Students must have fulfilled the prerequisite of NRM 161 – Introduction to Wilderness

Leadership or have obtained instructor permission with equivalent experience. Students must have developed knowledge of the basic technical skills being used in the class. This includes all of the skills to be comfortable on a weekend backpacking trip. If the instructor does not know the student's skill level from previous interactions, an assessment day can be scheduled.

Course Description

This course will take the student through the full progression of wilderness leadership skills. We will start in the classroom with a series of concepts and guiding principles of leadership including; group dynamics, risk management, environmental ethics, minimum impact camping, forest and arctic natural history, and adaptable judgment and decision-making. Next the course will allow the students to choose, plan and implement a 10 day wilderness expedition. The students will focus on the logistical, practical, budget and safety concerns of this expedition. During this ten day, student planned, journey we will apply and test the concepts of leadership in the field. The student will also continue to hone their hard skills such as: hiking through boreal forest and along tundra ridges, river crossing, snowfield ascents bear safety, snowfield crossings, navigation, leave no trace ethics, group dynamics, route finding and other field skills necessary to have a safe and enjoyable expedition. The primary means of transportation for this expedition will be hiking, but we may also utilize skis, snowshoes, or watercraft such as packrafts.

Course Goals

By the end of the course students will feel comfortable with the ins and outs of expedition planning including: route planning, contingency plans, logistics and food preparation. Students will also have a developed skill set and be prepared to teach other students the basics of an activity while maintaining a safe site and effective leadership. The technical lessons will not be focused on how to better climb or paddle, but how to guide others during the specific activity. Managing a group of students in an open ocean or on a steep scree slope is very deliberate and can mean the difference between serious injury or a warm meal in camp at the end of a great day.

Required Texts: Denali's Howl by Andy Hall
Mountaineering: Freedom of the Hills

Instruction Style

Students will be challenged to think outside the box and break old habits since there is a large difference between recreational activities and institutional guiding. The beginning of the course will focus on the theories of site-management and situational leadership. Students will then be tested on their comprehension of these theories through direct application in the form of backpacking, mountain travel or paddling. This course will require full participation from the students and they will receive feedback in many different forms throughout the course. There are only a few right ways to manage a group in a high-risk wilderness environment, but there are many wrong ways.

Assignment Explanations

Attendance, participation, homework (50 points)

Due to the field component of this course, students must have 100% attendance. Not only do they have to be present for all classes, they must actively participate and be engaged in the material.

Post-course paper (150 points)

This paper will be a self-evaluation assigned after the course. The details of the assignment depend on what happens during the trip.

Midterm Paper (150 points)

This paper will be an analysis of the aspects of outdoor leadership in the book Denali's Howl. The students will need to look at the different ways in which leadership or lack of it contributed to the climbing disaster on Denali that is discussed in the book.

Journal (100 points)

Students will keep a continuous reflection about the course, how they feel about any feedback given and notes about the local area being used for the course. The instructor will pose questions to the students to answer throughout the course.

Expedition assessment (200 points)

The students will be assessed on their ability to demonstrate expedition behavior, and to positively affect the group dynamics both during the preparation for the expedition and during the time in the field.

Feedback/De-briefing/Assessment measures

Students will receive many forms of feedback, constructive criticism and assessment. There will be one-on-one meetings with the instructor throughout the course. Never will you receive a grade without an explanation on how to improve. These methods will provide you with a grade, but also another lesson to help you throughout your academic career.

Students with disabilities

The Office of Disability Services implements the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and insures that UAF students have equal access to the campus and course materials. I will work with the Office of Disabilities Services (203 WHIT, 474-7043) to provide reasonable accommodation to students with disabilities. Please inform me of any disabilities during the first two weeks of class.