# Outdoor Education and Leadership Courses

## Outdoor Education and Leadership

**OEL 110 Foundations and Techniques of Outdoor Education and Leadership (4)**

This core course provides an introduction to and overview of experiential education and the sub-discipline of outdoor and adventure-based education. We will examine the history, philosophy, techniques, and ethics involved in this educational approach. We will specifically focus on the experiential learning cycle, constructivist approaches to teaching and learning, and understanding the nature of effective design and facilitation in outdoor settings. Throughout the course, students will observe, discuss, and practice planning, sequencing, facilitating, and processing of experiential education activities. Out-of-class requirements: ½ day on a Friday.

**OEL 120 Outdoor Leadership (4)**

This course is designed for students with an interest in developing the outdoor leadership skills necessary to successfully lead participants in a wilderness setting. This is the introductory course for students pursuing the minor or major in Outdoor Education & Leadership. Students will learn the basics of wilderness camping and travel skills, and a range of leadership skills such as communication, judgment and decision-making, and how to manage a group in the field. Additionally, students will learn all aspects of planning and implementing an institutional outdoor trip. Classes are held both indoors and outdoors, including a required weekend backpacking trip.

**OEL 150 Indoor Rock Climbing (1-2)**

Indoor Climbing teaches students with little to no climbing experience to climb smoothly and confidently. Students will learn to top-rope and boulder, belay and tie-in, climb efficiently, and train for climbing. We will also discuss climbing equipment, culture and history. More advanced topics, such as anchor-building and lead climbing, will be introduced and can be expanded upon for students interested in developing those skills. This class will provide a foundation for students to pursue indoor or outdoor climbing with the outdoor recreation program or independently.

**OEL 151 Introduction to Outdoor Rock Climbing (2)**

Outdoor climbing is exhilarating, challenging, and an incredible way to explore the mountains. This course is designed for students with or without prior climbing experience who want to learn some of the technical and non-technical aspects of rock climbing outdoors. Students will top-rope climb, learn to lead climb, as well as develop safety and judgment skills. The primary objective of the class is for students to broaden their knowledge and improve their level of climbing.

**OEL 152 Women's Indoor Rock Climbing (1-2)**

Women's Indoor Climbing teaches students of all experience levels to climb smoothly and confidently. Students will learn to top-rope and boulder, belay and tie-in, climb efficiently, and train for climbing. We will also discuss climbing equipment, culture and history. More advanced topics, such as anchor-building and lead climbing, will be introduced and can be expanded upon for students interested in developing those skills. This class will provide a foundation for students to pursue indoor or outdoor climbing with the outdoor program or independently.

**OEL 153 Indoor Rock Climbing Level II (2)**

Indoor Rock Climbing Level Two takes students with previous climbing experience to develop intermediate to advanced climbing skills. Students will practice climbing technique and movement to improve efficiency and strength. Students will learn to lead climb, build anchors, ascend ropes to rescue a stuck climber, and target weaknesses through climbing training. This class is designed for students who wish to improve their bouldering and top-rope level, learn to lead or develop as a lead climber, and expand their knowledge of technical skills and climbing culture and history. Some previous exposure to climbing is expected.

**OEL 154 Introduction to Route Setting (2)**

In this course, students will learn to set routes on artificial climbing walls. Through studying climbing movement, climbing wall design, different hold designs and mastering the use of route setting tools students will set and critique boulder problems and climbing routes. The course will include both classroom time, time at the wall and exposure to outdoor climbing. Route setting safety, teaching climbing movement, and climbing wall management will also be emphasized.

**OEL 155 Introduction to Canyoneering (2)**

Students will finish this course with the ability to demonstrate competency in fundamental canyoneering skills in 3A Canyons, including basic associated knots, rappelling technique, anchor setup and removal, rope retrieval, safety in flash flood areas, map reading, travel techniques, knots, Leave No Trace skills, and associated safety skills. This will be accomplished through discussions, demonstrations, and practical, hands-on learning. Additionally, students will demonstrate an increased understanding of issues related to management of National Forest administered public lands, such as those used in this class, as they relate to recreation and other uses.

**OEL 160 Introduction to Backcountry Touring (2)**

This classroom- and field-based course will provide a comprehensive introduction to the activity of backcountry touring. Through a classroom meeting and two field days on the snow, we will examine topics such as equipment selection and use, terrain identification, weather and snowpack factors that lead to avalanche hazard, and group management when traveling near avalanche terrain. Previous downhill skiing or snowboarding experience is required. A general awareness of avalanches is recommended. Previous experience traveling on backcountry touring gear is not required.

**OEL 161 Backcountry Touring Level II (2)**

Designed for students with some prior backcountry touring experience, this classroom- and field-based course is an opportunity to develop and apply more specialized backcountry touring skills. During two classroom meetings, students will focus on tour planning and the use of local avalanche advisories, while three days on the snow will be dedicated to conservative route-finding and group management in avalanche terrain. We will also spend time refining avalanche rescue techniques, as well as modeling various outdoor leadership skills when traveling in the backcountry. Previous backcountry skiing or splitboarding experience is required. Some form of avalanche hazard awareness is also required.

**OEL 162 Avalanche Level I (1-2)**

This professional level course provides a foundation in avalanche knowledge, skills, and the requisite certification to pursue future professional avalanche training. The curriculum is organized around a systematic approach to sorting and prioritizing information in a complex environment. The course also provides a framework to make decisions in avalanche terrain based terrain, snowpack, weather, and human factors. Approximately half of the course is field based and half in the field.

**OEL 163 Snow Camping (2)**

In this classroom- and field-based course, students will learn a variety of skills to allow for comfortable backcountry camping in snow. During two classroom meetings and a day trip, we will explore winter camping equipment, review the logistics of organizing winter camping trips, and learn about winter risk management concerns. On a 3-day/2-night trip, we will practice different winter camping techniques with regard to travel, cooking, shelters, and other general living skills. Students will be required to travel on uncompacted backcountry snow via snowshoe, backcountry ski, or splitboard. Previous backcountry skiing or splitboarding experience is highly recommended, although not required.

**OEL 165 Introduction to Mountaineering (2)**

The mountaineering course is designed for students looking to develop the technical skills and leadership to climb, travel, and camp in the mountains. Students will learn to travel and climb on snow, technical systems for travel steep/ exposed terrain, glacier travel, rescue systems and procedures, hazard evaluation, navigation, and ability to live comfortably in the mountains. The course will include both classroom and field time. In addition, students will explore the history and evolution of mountaineering, and use case studies to critique leadership and risk management decisions.

**OEL 165 Introduction to Ice Climbing (2)**

Climbing frozen waterfalls is an exhilarating and challenging form of climbing that enables the climber to keep doing what they love, even in the middle of winter! The Ice Climbing Seminar is designed for students with some indoor or outdoor climbing experience who want to learn some of the technical and non-technical aspects of ice climbing. Students will become familiar with the unique gear and techniques related to ice climbing, they will top-rope climb, learn lead climbing concepts, and develop safety and judgment skills. The primary objective of the class is for students to broaden their knowledge and explore different types of terrain.

**OEL 166 Introduction to Alpine Climbing (2)**

The Alpine Climbing course is designed for students with indoor/ outdoor climbing experience interested in beginning to climb in the alpine setting. Students will learn travel and risk management techniques in 3rd, 4th and 5th class terrain, refine artificial protection placement and anchor construction skills, various methods of decent, mountain weather observation and hazard evaluation. This course will include both classroom and field time. The primary objectives are to provide a foundation for students looking to transfer their climbing skills into the mountains, and to develop the ability to navigate technical mountain terrain.

**OEL 170 Introduction to Flyfishing (2)**

This course will provide an introduction, exploration and application of the basic techniques of flyfishing and fly casting. Students will apply skills learned in classroom sessions on the river during 2 field-based sessions.

**OEL 171 Introduction to Whitewater Kayaking (2)**

This course is an introduction to the fundamentals of whitewater kayaking. During this class students will learn the skills necessary for the challenging art of river running. We will begin by starting on flat water and eventually progressing to a three-day weekend whitewater adventure!

**OEL 172 Introduction to Packrafting (2)**

Students will explore the history and evolution of packrafting and will experience a packrafting trip that includes a combination of backpacking and paddling. Students will learn to use topographic maps, river flow data, and effective route planning techniques to create unique packrafting itineraries. Students will also learn to think critically about gear choices and care when planning for packrafting to ensure a safe and lightweight approach to packing. The course will include both classroom and field time.

**OEL 173 Teaching Practicum in OEL (1-2)**

This course provides students with previous experience and proficiency in a specific technical outdoor skill to serve as a teaching assistant for a designated OEL skill course. Students will be required to attend seminars on teaching, facilitation, and instruction during the semester as well as actively participate and contribute to the skill course to which they are assigned. This course is repeatable for credit.

**OEL 210 Wilderness Education (4)**

This is a field-based expedition-style course. Students will play a significant role in planning and implementing the expedition it its entirety and will share ownership of and responsibility for course outcomes. Students will be highly involved in leadership, teaching, ration planning, assessment of group abilities, evaluation of group goals, hazard evaluation, and equipment needs. Throughout the course, students will also explore the concept of Wilderness through reading, reflection, and concrete experiences.

**OEL 220 Adventure Programming (4)**

What does it take to be an effective outdoor instructor, and how can you build an effective outdoor program? These are the fundamental questions that this course seeks to answer. By using two textbooks to guide discussion and learning—Outdoor Program Administration: Principles & Practices and Effective Outdoor Program Design and Management—students will learn how human, educational, and outdoor skills form the cornerstone of effective program instruction and management. Students will also put these ideas to the test. With the help of instructors, students will plan a 2-week expedition.

**OEL 230 Instruction and Facilitation (4)**

This course addresses the need for the student and future practitioner to understand and demonstrate the ability to integrate applied social-psychological theory and effective group facilitation practices while using outdoor education-based activities. This course highlights the major impacts that facilitators have on both groups and individuals. Effective outdoor educators are trained to ensure that the lessons of adventure transfer into everyday lives. The course will emphasize the stages of group development, peer mediation, briefing/debriefing, and transference in field-based settings.

**OEL 240 Skills Practicum (2)**

Working in concert with other courses in the immersion semester, the Skills Practicum affords students the opportunity to engage with a wide range of adventure activities, each providing unique site management challenges for instructors. Through observation, participation, practice, and reflection, this course is designed to bring students to an advanced level of abilities to conduct outdoor education programs.

**OEL 245A/245B Wilderness First Responder (1-2)**

This course is the industry standard for wilderness medicine certifications for outdoor guides and leaders traveling for multiple days and/or in remote settings. Certification is dependent on testing and performance and participation in the course. Through this course, students will learn how to assess, treat, and prioritize illnesses and injuries in remote settings. Active engagement is required as students will participate in skills labs and simulations. In order to attend the practical session students must study for and pass the pre-course exams.

**OEL 250 Desert Writing (3)**

In Desert Writing, students will explore creative writing and wilderness simultaneously. While hiking in the desert and mountains, students will be given writing prompts and exercises to generate new work. While meeting in the classroom, students will workshop works-in-progress and study the craft of creative writing. By the end of the course, students will have developed a polished piece of writing. Students can work in the genre of their choice and are encouraged to write about a range of topics—they do not need to produce nature or wilderness writing.

**OEL 251 Foundations of Adventure Therapy (3)**

In this course, discussion and experiential group activities will provide an introduction, exploration, and application of theoretical models, psychological frameworks, best practices and ethical considerations of Adventure Therapy (AT). Students will survey the major characteristics and tools utilized in AT and investigate how they are applied in the practice of AT. Students will design and implement an experiential activity that synthesizes all of the major tenants of AT. The course includes a 3-day, 2-night field-based trip that will allow students to experience and apply the principles and techniques of adventure therapy in an outdoor, wilderness-like setting.

**OEL 252 Adventure Media (3)**

In this course, students will explore the art of multimedia storytelling through video, photography, and social media in outdoor and adventure settings. Students will learn to gather content in outdoor settings, which includes managing resources and equipment to capture powerful images in challenging conditions. Students will focus on creating compelling stories, editing imagery, and using different platforms to showcase their work. The course will include classroom, lab, and time in the field.

**OEL 253 Western Rivers: An Expedition (4)**

In this course students will examine the current state of rivers in the western United States. This field-based course will travel various waterways in the Colorado River watershed and experience the complex pressures on this resource first-hand. The course will examine western water history, water rights, western development, environmental legislation, and the impacts of climate change. Students can expect to travel on both free-flowing and dammed river sections, on foot, in boats and by vehicle. Students will learn the requisite river travel and backcountry skills to effectively navigate waterways, research and teach specific topics, and explore future solutions for this complex issues.

**OEL 254 History of U.S. Outdoor Recreation (3)**

This survey course provides a historical overview of social, political, environmental, and cultural influences that have shaped the outdoor recreation and education industry in the United States since 1800. The course will focus on topics such as westward expansion, social movements, educational reform, and emerging trends. The course will emphasize multiple historical perspectives of outdoor and wilderness recreation in the U.S., including underrepresented groups.

**OEL 300 Special Topics in OEL (4)**

Special topics in OEL.

**OEL 301 Outdoor Program Management (4)**

This course studies the management of outdoor and adventure programs. Topics include the use of public and private lands, basic understanding of the impact of use on the natural environment, review of biological and physical science concepts relative to land use, care of the environment, permits, staffing, supervision of staff, staff training, personnel issues, certification, scheduling, budgeting, risk management, insurance, marketing, logistical planning, strategic planning, public policy, access to outdoor resources, and search and rescue.

**OEL 351 Public Lands Policy (3)**

This course will be an overview of the history, policy changes, administration and current issues related to public-owned land in the United States. Specifically, the course will study the Department of Agriculture (Forest Service, National Resource Conservation Service), the Department of the interior (National Park Service, Bureau of Land Management, Department of Reclamation, US Fish and Wildlife Services, US Geologic Survey), and the myriad of interest groups using public lands. With a historical and structural foundation students will analyze current events, current land use issues and the health and sustainability of our public lands. This class will include both classroom and field time.

**OEL 352 Avalanche Ecology (3)**

This field-based course examines how the avalanche cycle is determined by meteorological and geological processes and, in turn, how avalanches affect surrounding ecological communities. Students will understand how to gather and collect snowpack data for the purpose of predicting the likelihood of avalanches. Further, students will engage the phenomenon through field studies on skis or snowboards, by gathering and analyzing snowpack and meteorology data, through lecture, and through first-hand accounts from avalanche survivors. In addition, this course examines the impact of avalanches on human activity in alpine terrain, from both historical and modern perspectives, and particularly on modern outdoor recreation.

**OEL 353 Gender and Leadership (3)**

In this course students will explore historical and current issues related to gender and leadership. Today’s leadership climate has changed to some degree for women; however, women are still vastly underrepresented in higher leadership positions. This course will analyze the role gender plays and what barriers are in place that account for this inequity. Topics include the constructs of leadership in a variety of contexts. e.g., higher education, politics, and the corporate world; how the gender binary/continuum influences our conception of leadership; leadership and feminist theory; intersectionality; and an overview of some of the current research on gender and leadership. Students will explore leadership from a personal and political perspective; they will critically think about their own definitions of and experiences with leadership and deconstruct how gender has influenced their views. Stemming from a critical and feminist perspective, students will explore ways in how leadership can be more inclusive, participatory, and egalitarian.

**OEL 401 Directed Studies (1-4)**

A tutorial-based course used only for student-initiated proposals for intensive individual study of topics not otherwise offered in the Outdoor Education and Leadership Program. The scale of the individual study, and the final product will determine the number of credits offered for the directed study. The directed study will ideally combine intensive study and experience with experts in the community or outdoor education field.

**OEL 410 Seminar in Outdoot Education and Leadership (4)**

In this capstone course students will integrate their experiences, research, goals, and practical application of outdoor education and leadership. The course will focus on contemporary issues and trends in the field with topics including social justice, public land management (federal, state, and local), ethics (environmental and virtue-based), practical application of research, options for further education in the field, and career opportunities. During the course, students will identify their individual context within outdoor education and leadership, and complete a comprehensive capstone project. The project requires students to research their area of interest, write a literature review, present their personal professional philosophy, and how they plan to contribute to the field based on their career goals and education.(WCore: SC)

**OEL 440 Internship (2-8)**

Students receive credit for meeting pre-arranged learning objectives while working for a business, a non-profit, a government program or some other organization within outdoor recreation and education. The internship is critical for students' hands-on experience in the outdoor field. Faculty will work closely with students to ensure a successful and supported professional learning opportunity that aligns with students' goals. Discussion and reflection will be incorporated throughout the internship. Students must have junior or senior standing (for transfer students, at least 15 hours completed at Westminster or permission of instructor), minimum 2.5 GPA, completion of the Career Resource Center Internship Workshop, and consent of Program Chair and Career Center Internship Coordinator.