

Program Assessment Plan

Outdoor Skills and Leadership Certificate University of Alaska Southeast

Primary Program Faculty

Forest Wagner, Program Director

Kevin Krein, Ph.D. Academic Director

Kevin Maier, Ph.D. Assistant Professor of English

Bill Glude, Adjunct Professor

Jacek Maselko, Adjunct Professor

Shea Mack, Adjunct Professor

Jody Goldsberry, Adjunct Professor

Program Description

Outdoor Studies at the University of Alaska Southeast combines outdoor skills and academic coursework in order to provide a liberal arts approach to studying human interaction with the natural world.

The Outdoor Skills and Leadership Certificate is an intensive 34 credit, ten-month program appropriate for students in at least their second year of university study. Topics of study include outdoor risk management, leadership, specific outdoor skills, environmental philosophy and literature, and academic electives. Many students complete the program while on academic exchange and others come to the program after completing bachelor's level degrees. The program is designed for students interested in becoming outdoor professionals, achieving more general goals related to personal development and leadership, or to achieve a better understanding themselves and the natural world.

Mission Statement

The University of Alaska Southeast's Outdoor Studies Program offers outdoor skills courses within an academic liberal arts framework. Through the combination of traditional academic and experiential courses, we help students develop a deeper understanding of themselves, their relationship to the natural environment, and the outdoor activities they pursue.

Through this approach, the UAS Outdoor Studies Program seeks to develop students with high level skills and characteristics that are essential to success as an individual, a group member, and a leader in outdoor and adventure settings.

Core Values

The ODS Certificate Program promotes two core values:

- 1. Excellence in Outdoor Skills:** Outdoor skills and decision making in various environments should be performed at highly developed skill level that utilizes

good judgment.

2. **Informed Understanding of Outdoor Activities:** We want our students to develop a understanding of, and continually reflect upon, the history of, cultural influences on, and environmental factors relating to, outdoor recreation and activities.

Program Objectives

Students who complete the Certificate in Outdoor Skills and Leadership will:

1. Develop skills required to participate in a wide range of outdoor activities and act as a group leader/entry level professional in some of those activities.
2. Be able to intelligently discuss and write about important academic and intellectual approaches to understanding human relationships to the natural world.
3. Understand the general theoretical foundations of outdoor leadership and education and be able to apply their understanding in leadership situations.
4. Have the ability to plan and execute significant trips in outdoor settings.
5. Develop their capacity to manage and lead groups in outdoor settings

Student Outcomes

Students fulfill the core values and program objectives through:

1. **Skill-specific Field Courses:** very student completes 12 credits of hard-skills courses such as ice climbing, sea kayaking, and mountaineering. Students are also required to complete a 4-credit Wilderness First Responder course, giving them a certificate in wilderness medicine. Most students are in the field 2-3 days a week throughout the spring and fall terms. This gives students not only specific skills outdoor skills, but also gives them a general level of comfort in outdoor settings. As well, it gives them ample opportunity to amass hands-on experiences that they can apply to their understanding of outdoor leadership and academic material related to outdoor recreation. Our skill-specific courses play a primary role in achieving goal 1 and supports goals 2-5.
2. **Required Philosophy and Literature Courses:** All students must complete Eng 393 Literature and the Environment, and Phil. 371 Perspectives On the Natural World or Hum 270 Sport Leisure and Culture. These courses play a primary role in developing students in the area of goal 2. Goal two is further supported by 9 credits of academic electives related to the ODS program of study that all students must complete.
3. **Outdoor Leadership Sequence:** All students complete 2 semesters of specific outdoor leadership courses. These courses cover the history and principles of outdoor leadership and primarily support goal 3. They also give students opportunities to reflect on and develop their own leadership style, in support of goal 5.
4. **ODS Capstone Project:** Each cohort of students must plan and carry out a major expedition lasting from 1-4 weeks as the final step in their program. This

experience contribute to both their general growth and their ability to plan and execute their own trips once they have completed the ODS program.

University Competencies

In addition to the core values, objectives, and outcomes of the Outdoor Skills and Leadership Program, UAS has established 6 areas of competency for all students:

- **Communication:** College graduates should be able to write, speak, read, and listen effectively for multiple purposes and to a variety of audiences.
- **Quantitative Skills:** College graduate should be able to read and follow logical reasoning, solve mathematical and quantitative problems, and apply logical and mathematical methods.
- **Information Literacy:** College graduates should be able to identify and locate needed information, analyze, integrate and communicate it, and evaluate its usefulness.
- **Computer Usage:** College graduates should have the knowledge to make efficient use of computers and information technology in their personal and professional lives.
- **Professional Behavior:** College graduates should have good work habits, make ethical decisions, recognize the value of community service, and engage in successful human relations.
- **Critical Thinking:** College graduates should be proficient in conceptualizing, analyzing, synthesizing, evaluating, interpreting, and applying ideas and information.

The Outdoor Skills and Leadership program particularly emphasizes the development and mastery of written and oral communication, critical thinking, and professional behavior.

Outdoor Skills and Leadership Student Assessment:

Course Requirements: All ODSL students take 12 credits of skills courses in addition to a 4-credit wilderness medicine course. In these courses, instructors monitor students' skills and progress. Throughout their academic courses as well, students are assessed by their academic instructors.

Outdoor Leadership Sequence: The Outdoor Leadership sequence, however, gives the opportunity to provide focused assessment of students' overall progress. All students in the program are enrolled in the course during the fall and spring term. Students in the course have the opportunity to reflect each week on their field outings as well as, in the spring term, to plan their capstone trip as a group. This course is always taught by one of the program directors and plays a central role in the program.

Capstone Experience: The capstone experience at the end of the program generally requires students to go beyond anything they have previously accomplished in outdoor settings. Capstone trips require 1-4 weeks in the field, usually in difficult wilderness settings. This type of trip gives instructors ample opportunity to assess students and provide feedback to them.

Final Student Assessment has two components:

- 1. First Hand Observation During Capstone:** During the capstone expedition, instructors spent 10-24 hours a day with students. This gives ample opportunity to observe students. At the end of the capstone expedition, each student is evaluated on his or her strengths and weaknesses pertaining to hard skills, professional behavior, communication, and leadership. As well, instructors attempt to provide a narrative account of which types of jobs that would or would not suit the student. This evaluation is provided to the student during his or her exit interview.
- 2. Exit Interview:** After completion of the capstone, instructors conduct an interview with each student. In the interview, students are asked to evaluate themselves and their performance during the year and on the capstone outing.

Because the program requires students to complete a letter of intent before starting the program, students are also asked to reflect on whether or not the program met their expectations and in what way it exceeded those expectations, failed to do so, or did not match up at all. As well, students are asked to reflect on and record their future plans and the relevance of the ODSL certificate to them.

Finally, the evaluation described above is provided to the student.

Post Graduation Information: Where possible, the ODS program stays in touch with students after they have completed the program. Because of the relatively small number of program graduate and because the nature of the program supports mentor relationships with faculty, the ODS program has been able to keep track of most of our students.

ODS Program Assessment

Each spring, just after completing the capstone interviews, the program conducts an evaluation of the program in response to student and instructor feedback throughout the year. On the basis of this meeting, the directors determine the types of program improvements that should be made during the following academic year and in the future.

SAMPLE SYLLABUS 1:

Literature and Environment Spring 2009

Kevin Maier
English 303
kevin.maier@uas.alaska.edu

Tuesday/Thursday

1:15-2:45

Office: Soboleff 216

Egan 223

Office Phone: 796-6021

Office Hours: Tues/Thurs 11:15-12:15 and 2:45-3:15, or by appointment.

In the introduction to the second of his field-defining trilogy of books on environmental literature, aptly entitled Writing for an Endangered World, Lawrence Buell remarks that our "environmental crisis is not merely one of economic resources, public health, and political gridlock." Citing the sociologist Ulrich Beck, Buell asserts that "the success of all environmentalist efforts finally hinges not on 'some highly developed technology, or some arcane new science' but on 'a state of mind': on attitudes, feelings, images, narratives." It is Buell's conviction—and the argument of this class—that paying attention to environmental attitudes expressed and reflected in literature might prove beneficial not only to understanding our crisis, but for resolving it, too.

Since the 1990s when literary studies made what is often called the "environmental turn," ecocriticism has slowly emerged as a definable field of inquiry. As a result of this scholarship, a standard body of environmental literature is starting to come into focus. This course is intended as an introduction to what is fast becoming a recognizable canon of environmental literature. Although our goal is to familiarize our selves with this emergent canon, we will of course want to ask questions about omissions, exclusions, and oversights. Do the texts here best help us resolve environmental problems? Are there others that might be better suited to such a task? By attending to questions of environment first rather than to, say, race, class, or gender, do we do a disservice to such significant social concerns?

To address these questions and others related to the relationship between humans and the natural world we will read selections from this newly found "tradition" in a loosely chronological order. Along the way, we will note the historical and political contexts in which the writing was produced, attending to the myriad discourses that inform our perceptions of environment—from the philosophical to the political and from scientific to poetic. By observing and contemplating the available means of representing the human/non-human relationship, my hope is that we will leave this course with both a clearer sense of the "state of mind" that might best alleviate our environmental crisis and a sense for how environmental literature might help us arrive at this state.

Required Materials (available at the University Bookstore):

Henry David Thoreau. Walden.
John Muir. Travels in Alaska.
Aldo Leopold. A Sand County Almanac.
William Faulkner Go Down, Moses.
Rachel Carson. Silent Spring.
Edward Abbey. Desert Solitaire.
Leslie Marmon Silko. Ceremony.
Neal Stephenson. Zodiac.

Required Work:

ESSAYS and PRESENTATION: You will compose three essays of 3-4 pages in response to our class readings and discussions. One of these essays is due on the day that you make your 10-minute presentation; the other two essays will be due at the beginning of the class period on two Fridays of your choosing. A sign-up sheet and more specific instructions will be provided in class for both the presentation/essay and for the second two essays. Ideally, you will complete roughly one of these assignments per month of the course. These essays should be typed, double-spaced, and in a normal 12-point font (e.g. Times New Roman) with one-inch margins. Please give your essay a title and put your name and a page number on every page. I rarely accept electronic submission, so please plan on getting paper copies of your work to my campus mailbox. These will count for 45% of your grade, or 15% each.

DAILY QUESTIONS: For every day we meet you are required to post to Blackboard one question pertaining to the day's reading. As we will use these questions to generate discussion, they should clearly indicate that you have done the reading, and they should be questions that can't be answered with a simple yes or no. Please put some thought into these, and be sure to read all the questions posted on the discussion board before you come to class. Questions must be posted prior to noon before each class session. Though I won't grade the questions individually, the quality of your daily questions will be evaluated at semester's end for 10% of your final grade.

ATTENDANCE: Discussion of the course texts is the central component to this class, so attendance is mandatory. Each absence after your third will lower your final grade by a full letter (so four absences would make an A grade a B, while five absences would make an A a C). You will automatically fail if you miss 6 or more classes. Excessive tardiness or early departures will count as absences too. The overnight course outing April 24-25 will count as two class sessions.

PARTICIPATION While everyone participates in different ways—some are more vocal than others—you are expected to have done the reading and to be prepared to address it each day. At the end of the term, each student is required to submit a short self-evaluation, explaining what participation grade the student thinks he or she should receive and why. I will use the self-evaluation to assist in assigning participation grades, which will account for 10% of your final grade.

MIDTERM and FINAL EXAMS: On March 12 and April 28 there will be a mid-term and final exam. Each exam will consist of a handful of short answer questions and a couple of essay questions. I will prepare for what to expect on the exams as the time approaches. The midterm will count for 15% and the final exam 20% of your final grade.

Policies:

Prerequisite: Upper-division standing with a "C" or higher in English 211 or instructor permission.

The grade of "Incomplete" can be given only in unusual circumstances where a student has successfully completed the majority of the course with a grade of "C" or higher but has been unable to complete the final requirements of the course due to unavoidable extenuating circumstances.

Plagiarism is a serious academic offense that can result in disciplinary measures taken by the Committee for Student Disciplinary Action. All work submitted in this course must be your own and must be written exclusively for this course. The use of sources (ideas, quotations, paraphrases) must be properly documented following MLA style guidelines. Please see me if you have any questions about the use of sources.

If you have a documented disability for which you require academic or programmatic accommodations, please contact the Disability Support Services Office as soon as possible.

Learning Outcomes:

Content: You will demonstrate knowledge of the major texts and authors in environmental literature. This will include your ability to contextualize literature within the appropriate philosophical, political, and cultural history.

Communication (Writing): You will become a more confident writer by sharpening your critical analysis skills in both formal and informal writing assignments.

Communication (Speaking): You will practice speaking and listening in whole- and small-group discussions, you will also have the opportunity to give a class presentation.

Critical Thinking: Frequent reading and writing assignments will provide you with the opportunity to develop skills in analyzing primary texts. By participating in class discussion of literary works, you will learn that the process of critical reading is a social activity that involves exchanging ideas, listening to others, taking responsibility for your views, and keeping an open mind about alternative approaches.

Computer and Information Literacy: You will demonstrate your ability to use computing resources as you write your course papers. You will also practice using computer and hard copy reference tools in the Egan Library for your presentations and papers.

Professional Behavior: You will learn the importance of class attendance, preparation, and participation for enhancing and ensuring college success. This includes turning work in on time and evaluating the level of polish required by different kinds of assignments.

Other Considerations

This course emphasizes writing and speaking skills. To make sure your essays and presentations are sufficiently polished, you may want to work with tutors in the Learning Center. Information is available at <http://www.uas.alaska.edu/TLC/learning-center/wc.html>

Tentative Schedule

Week 1

1/13 Introductions

1/15 Early American Natural History: William Bartram, Alexander Wilson, and John J Audubon (handout)

Week 2

1/20 British Romantics: Dorothy and William Wordsworth (handout)

1/22 American Romantics: Ralph Waldo Emerson's "Nature" (handout)

Week 3

1/27 American Romantics: Henry David Thoreau's Walden ("Economy")

1/29 Walden cont. ("Where I lived..." through "Visitors")

Week 4

2/3 Walden cont. ("The Bean-Field through "House-Warming")

2/5 Walden cont. ("Former Inhabitants" through "Conclusion")

Week 5

2/10 Romanticism comes to the Last Frontier: John Muir's Travels in Alaska (Ch. 1, 2, 4, and 10)

2/12 Muir's Travels continued (Ch. 15, 17, and 19)

Week 6

2/17 New England Women: Susan Fenimore Cooper, Celia Thaxter, and Mabel Osgood Wright--and Isabella Bird (handout)

2/19 Murder to Dissect? Sarah Orne Jewitt's "A White Heron" and George Bird Grinnell (handout)

Week 7

2/24 Enter Ecology: Aldo Leopold's A Sand County Almanac (Foreword through "November")

2/26 Leopold cont. ("Marshland Elegy," "On a Monument to the Pigeon," "Flambeau," "Thinking like a Mountain," "Conservation Eesthetic," "Wilderness," and "The Land Ethic")

Week 8

3/3 Ecopoetics I: Emily Dickinson, Elizabeth Bishop, Gary Snyder, and Friends (handout)

3/5 Ecopoetics II: Haiku (handout)

Week 9

3/10 The Big Woods of the South: William Faulkner's Go Down, Moses ("The Old People," sections 1-2 of "The Bear")

3/12 MIDTERN EXAM

SPRING BREAK

Week 10

3/24 Faulkner cont. (sections 3 and 5 of "The Bear" and "Delta Autumn")

3/26 Walden for the Southwest? Edward Abbey's Desert Solitaire ("Author's Introduction" through "Cliffrose and Bayonets")

Week 11

3/31 Desert Solitaire cont. ("Polemic: Industrial Tourism..." and "Down the River")

4/2 The Rhetoric of Toxicity: Rachel Carson's Silent Spring

Week 12

4/7 Silent Spring cont.

4/9 Leslie Marmon Silko's Ceremony

Week 13

4/14 Ceremony cont.

4/16 Ceremony cont.

4/21 No class, read Zodiac.

4/23 Short class meeting for outing preparation. Cont. reading Zodiac.

4/24-5 Course Outing: discuss Stephenson's Zodiac.

Final Exam Tuesday April 28, 1:30-3:30

SAMPLE SYLLABUS 2

Intro to Outdoor Leadership: ODS 243
Syllabus for Fall 2008
Thursday, REC 115, 12:30-2:30PM

Instructor:

Forest Wagner
forest.wagner@uas.alaska.edu
796-6361

Office Hours: by appointment in HB 204

Scope and vision:

Outdoor Leadership is designed as a theoretical and practical foundation for developing a personal and professional leadership style. Students will be exposed to diverse topics within the umbrella of the outdoor industry including, but not limited to: outdoor leadership, communication, risk management and legal liability, environmental ethics, experiential education, eco-psychology and outdoor business. Additionally, students will be required to critically examine course texts/ readings and actively participate in discussions, activities and assignments in a positive and respectful manner.

Organization and Grading:

Course is designed as a diverse theoretical overview and is the first class in a three-part sequence including ODS 244, *Leadership II* and ODS 245, *Leadership Capstone*.

Topic presentation will include a mix of lecture, guest speakers, and student-led presentations and will also include an overnight outing.

Course will be graded on attendance, participation, written assignments and action plans, group presentations and Mid/ Final Exam essays. Due to the diversity of topics covered in the course, attendance and participation are key grading criteria and make up 25% of total grade. Overall grading is based on a 100-point scale.

FOLLOWING ATTENDANCE POLICY APPLIES TO ALL (10% of grade*):

1. 0-1 absence: A; 2-3 absence: B; 3-4 absence: C; 5 or more absences, Incomplete
2. Must attend outing to pass class

***Even if a passing grade is earned in the class, if a student misses 5 or more classes or misses the outing, s/he cannot pass.**

PARTICIPATION (10% of grade):

The participation grade is primarily based on a student's ability to respectfully participate within a diverse group.

ESSAY ASSIGNMENTS [3], SPEAKER RESPONSES [3], ACTION PLANS [2] (30% of grade):
Three Essays will be assigned per the class schedule distributed Sept 4, 2008. Essays must be organized and mechanically functional; one to two pages in length, and should offer a succinct analysis/ application of theory to the readings assigned per essay assignment.

Three Speaker Responses are assigned following the guest speaker presentations on 9/25, 10/23, and 12/4. Speaker Responses should be typed and at least two paragraphs. One paragraph should address pertinent points from the presentation and the second should connect the speaker's topic with information developed during ODS 243.

Two Action Plans will be assigned regarding personal training and environment.

INDIVIDUAL PRESENTATIONS (10% of grade):
As assigned per class readings.

GROUP PRESENTATIONS (15% of grade):
The group presentations grade is based entirely on an Investigative Case Study activity that will include an individual follow-up analysis.

MID-TERM EXAM (10% of grade):
3-5 pg critical analysis of Environmental Ethics *or* the development of ODS advertising media, specifically an ODS Emblem or Flier/ Pamphlet.

FINAL EXAM (15% of grade):
3-5 pg Risk Analysis and Legal Liability Investigation of *Into Thin Air*.

Texts and Readings:

The following three primary texts are required and can be found at the UAS bookstore...

PRIMARY, [REQUIRED]:

Krakauer, Jon. *Into Thin Air*. Anchor Books: New York, NY; 1997.
Hampton, Bruce and David Cole. *Soft Paths*, 3rd Ed. Stackpole Books: Mechanicsburg, PA; 2003.
Leave No Trace Trainer Pack.

SUPPLEMENTAL, [SUPPLIED]:

Ajango, Deb. *Lessons Learned II*. SafetyEd: Safety Education for the Outdoors: Eagle River, AK; 2005.
American Alpine Club. *Accidents in North American Mountaineering 2004*. AAC: Golden, CO; 2004.
Fraleigh, Douglas and Joseph Tuman. *Speak Up!* Bedford/ St. Martin's: Boston, MA, 2009.
Fredston, Jill and Doug Fesler. *Snow Sense*, 2nd Ed. Alaska Mountain Safety Center: Anchorage, AK; 1999.
Gladwell, Malcolm. "Blowup," from *The New Yorker*. 1/22/1996.
Gilbertson, Ken et al. *Outdoor Education: Methods and Strategies*. Human Kinetics: Champaign, IL; 2006.

- Graham, John. *Outdoor Leadership: Technique, Common Sense, & Self Confidence*. The Mountaineers: Seattle, WA; 1997: pg 94.
- Horwood, Bert. *Hospitality as an Environmental Metaphor*. Personal copy.
----- *Stewardship as an Environmental Ethic*. Personal copy.
- Potterfield, Peter. "Mount Foraker," from *In the Zone: Epic Survival Stories from Around the Mountaineering World*. The Mountaineers: Seattle, WA; 1996: pgs 23-103.
- McCammon, Ian. *Evidence of heuristic traps in recreational avalanche accidents*. NOLS: Lander, WY; 2002.
- Vernon, Gordy. "Everest." Personal copy.
- Rothwell, J. Dan. *In Mixed Company*
- Soles, Clyde and Phil Powers. *Climbing: Expedition Planning*. The Mountaineers: Seattle, WA; 2003.
- Soles, Clyde. *Climbing: Training for Peak Performance*. The Mountaineers: Seattle, WA; 2002.
- Smith, Tom and Pete Allison. *Outdoor Experiential Leadership*. Raccoon Institute Publications: Lake Geneva, WI; 2006.
- Watters, Ron. *Minimizing the Liability Exposure of Outdoor Recreation Programs*. Idaho State University: Pocatello