

**Field Leadership - Skills and
Awareness
CSS 404**

Semester in the Wild
Instructor: Gary S. Thompson
garyt@uidaho.edu
208.315.2058



Course Description:

Students will explore the practice of leadership, using a wilderness experience as the classroom. The course will focus on two primary areas of leadership study: skill development and awareness. The Semester in the Wild experience will provide the context in which the practice of leadership is explored. Field activities, theory, facilitation practice, faculty modeling of leadership techniques, written assignments, and skill development will be used to support learning. Topics to be explored will include small group dynamics, decision-making, communication and expedition behavior.

Course Goal:

- Students will develop a leadership practice that will aid them in leading others and in being high performing team members

Student Work:

- Participate in group discussions/debriefs of course content and team experiences.
- Practice disciplined reflection on personal leadership and group development
- Demonstrate professionalism in their course presentations, assignments and demeanor
- Lead and follow on multiday field trips.
- Most student assignments will require the practice of skills and competencies outside of the classroom.

Key Questions:

- How do I prefer to lead and what is my leadership style?
- What skills do I need to master in order to live and travel comfortably in the wilderness?
- What are the challenges encountered when leading my peers?
- How can developing my own awareness, empower me to make more effective decisions?
- What leadership skills can I readily transfer to my experiences beyond SITW?



Sources of Learning:

The primary focus of this course will be on the Semester in the Wild experience itself. This experiential method of learning will require a high degree of personal involvement and initiation by the learner. I will work as a facilitator and coach to aid students in the process of developing their leadership potential.

The Course Experience

This course is divided into four sections. Each section will build upon skills learned before. Sections one and four will involve more classroom time, while sections two and three will be in the field while backpacking.

1. Skills Orientation and Trip Planning
2. Backpack into Taylor Ranch
3. Student Expedition
4. Transference of Skills

Required Text:

- AMC Guide to Outdoor Leadership 2nd Edition (Kossef, 2010)
- Endurance (Lansing, 2015)
- The NOLS Cookery (Pearson, 1997)
- Leadership Field Guide – Will be handed out upon your arrival

Evaluation:

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|--------------------------|-----|
| • Leadership Action Plan | 30% |
| • Participation/Effort | 30% |
| • 1 route plan | 5% |
| • Chapter Presentation | 10% |
| • Skills checklists | 10% |
| • 3 reflective essays | 15% |

Other Useful Text:

- The Backpacker's Field Manual, Revised and Updated: A Comprehensive Guide to Mastering Backcountry Skills (Curtis, 2005)
- The Practice of Adaptive Leadership (Heifetz, Grashow, Linsky, 2009)
- The Tao of Leadership: Leadership Strategies for a New Age (Heider, 1985)
- The Leadership Educator Notebook – The National Outdoor Leadership School (Gookin, Leach, 2005)
- Outdoor Leadership (Martin, Cashel, Wagstaff, Breunig, 2006)