



Course Overview

Join other Veterans in the North Cascades Range of Washington for the opportunity to connect outside of the military in one of the most remote and beautiful alpine environments in the lower 48. Known as the “American Alps”, the North Cascades offer glaciated mountains, alpine lakes and high alpine meadows for



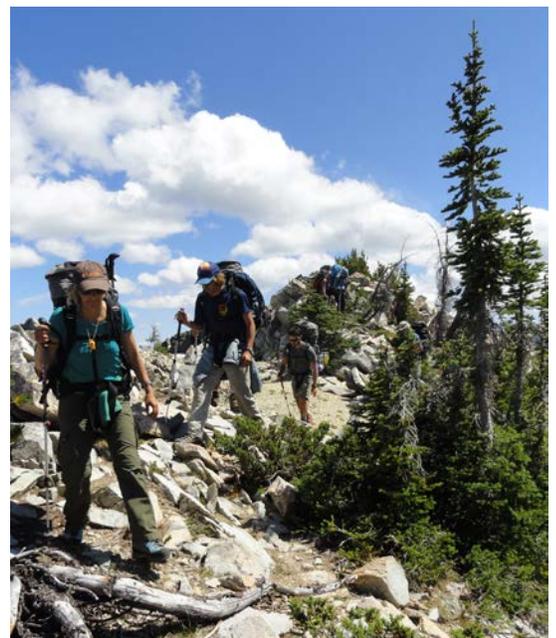
endless exploration. You will start off learning the basics of backpacking, campsite selection, backcountry cooking and Leave No Trace ethics amid towering snow-capped peaks. Over the course of the expedition, students will work together as a team through communication, practicing leadership and followership, and challenging each other and themselves. Using their backpacking skills to access remote technical terrain, students will begin a technical skills progression. Fall veteran’s courses focus on alpine rock skills which may include multi-pitch alpine climbing.

You don’t need to have previous experience. We will teach you skills for wilderness travel— set up tarps, cook, pack a backpack, navigate, and more.

From getting up early, packing your bags and cooking breakfast to hiking up a mountain, traveling in the wilderness is demanding. It can take every waking moment to get from point A to point B. Past students and instructors agree that arriving physically fit will enhance your experience and ability to do well on the course and ultimately allow you to take full advantage of the expedition.

Course Area

THE NORTH CASCADES, WASHINGTON – The North Cascades are called the “American Alps” for their rugged beauty and glaciated peaks. They remain some of the wildest and most untrammeled wilderness in the United States. The North Cascades host the greatest concentration of glaciers in the “Lower 48” and are full of high mountain meadows peppered with wild flowers. Our course area hosts some of the most scenic alpine climbing and backpacking routes in the United States. Our Alpine Backpacking courses operate in the Pasayten Wilderness and North Cascades National Park on the east side of the North Cascades and receive significantly less rainfall than the western coast of Washington. Temperatures typically range from freezing to 80 degrees Fahrenheit. Early-season courses (May and June) may spend time camping on snow, while mid-summer courses tend to have more moderate temperatures.





Course Activities

BACKPACKING – Students will work together to explore the high mountain landscape of the North Cascades with a focus on wilderness skills such as navigation, natural history, and backcountry living. Students will learn the essentials of backcountry travel necessary to carry them into remote meadows and high mountain vistas, including navigation with map and compass, Leave No Trace® ethics, first aid and backcountry cooking. Depending on the group and the conditions, an attempt to summit one of the many rugged alpine peaks in the course area can be made.

PEAK ATTEMPT – If weather, terrain, and student abilities permit, your course will include a peak attempt. Peak attempts are day-long ventures often entailing pre-dawn starts and require a high degree of personal and group tenacity. The peaks we attempt are challenging and beautiful, and often require scrambling skills, taught by our expert, experienced instructors. On backpacking courses we do not climb peaks that require technical gear or ropes.

SERVICE – Service to others and the environment is a core value of Outward Bound and is integrated into each course. Participants follow Leave No Trace ethics as service to the environment and do acts of service while leading and supporting fellow participants. Students develop a value of service, seeing the impact of their actions firsthand, and transfer this desire to serve their communities back home.

SOLO – In order for profound learning to take place, there must be time to reflect on the experience. Within course, the solo is that opportunity. It is a chance to experience solitude in the wilderness without distraction while also taking a break from the physical rigors of course. Students experience time away from their group for short periods of time throughout the course. These “mini-solos” are at solo sites chosen by instructors to provide as much solitude as possible (within emergency whistle-signaling distance of other group members). Participants have all necessary equipment, food and water. On this course, solos may range from 30 minutes to 24 hours.

OUTCOMES – This course will encourage students in the areas of leadership, character development, and service that are integral to Outward Bound. Students will develop these skills in an expedition setting so that they can continue to grow once they return home. Instructors will work to challenge students to try new things and step outside their comfort zones. As a team, each group will work together to complete difficult tasks necessary for backcountry travel. Courses for veterans are specifically focused on helping students engage their strengths and bond with fellow veterans, building the self-confidence and sense of purpose needed to continue serving as leaders in their families, communities and the nation.

Sample Itinerary

Please note that this is an example itinerary, not a specific schedule or guarantee. All itineraries will vary depending on student groups, instructor teams, and environmental factors.

Day 1 Course start



Day 2	Hike into camp, intro to backpacking, camp craft, and team building skills
Day 3-4	Wilderness travel, navigation
Day 5	Peak Attempt
Day 6	Hike out and de-issue gear
Day 7	Course end and transportation home

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Where will I sleep?

Outward Bound utilizes tarps or tents for our courses. Sleeping shelters vary based on the location of your course. You may also spend the first and last night at our basecamp, depending on weather conditions.

What will I eat?

The menu is largely vegetarian, with lots of grains, pasta, cheese, beans and nuts. Meat is heavy and spoils easily, but we occasionally eat tuna and canned chicken if cans are permitted in the wilderness area. Our diet will have more fats and protein (depending on the season and the environment) than what you are accustomed to. To prepare, we suggest that you cut down on soft drinks, caffeine and junk food. Start eating well-balanced meals, drink plenty of water and commit to a training program.

Will I be able to take a shower?

Some base camps have showers available. We will make sure you get a shower prior to your departure for home.

Do you accommodate my food allergy or special diet?

We can easily accommodate vegetarians and with prior notice we can arrange to have some form of accommodation for vegans as well as people with certain food allergies. If you have any special dietary restrictions (nut allergies, lactose intolerance, wheat allergy etc.), please contact Student Services immediately so that we can try to accommodate your specific needs. We are unable to accommodate all special dietary needs. Please note that we may ask you to bring some of your own foods at your expense and that extreme food allergies will be considered on a case by case basis with an emphasis on evaluating the risk of traveling in a remote setting.

Should I bring contacts or glasses on course?

Either glasses or contact lenses are acceptable on course. Sterile lens care is difficult on the trail, and because of this, their use is not encouraged. In winter it can be especially challenging. Whether you wear contacts or glasses, you must bring an extra pair.

Do I need to bring any camping gear?



We supply all necessary equipment. You need to bring only personal clothing and footwear. See packing list for specific instructions. If you already own some equipment and would prefer to use it for your course please check your packing list as to what is appropriate. If you bring your own equipment it will be inspected by your instructor at the beginning of your course. If it does not meet our standards you can store it in a secure location during your course. You will not be able to purchase supplies while on course. All the equipment issued to you and your patrol must be returned. You and your group will be charged for any equipment that you lose or damage.

What happens to my belongings while on course?

Space will be available for storing luggage, excess clothing and valuables (watches, wallets). Please leave jewelry at home.

What is a typical day?

A typical day involves rising with the sun, making breakfast, packing up camp and hitting the trail. You will hike and/or climb all day—taking breaks for food, rest or to enjoy a view—but generally covering lots of territory. Once you reach camp, group members will divide chores to get food cooked and camp set up. After dinner you may meet to address the next day's plans or to talk and hang out with your crew before crawling into your sleeping bag for a well-deserved rest.

Can I bring a camera?

Please bring your camera if you want to record the events of your course - limited to a small point and shoot camera. Because our courses are rigorous, you run the risk of losing or damaging your camera. This rarely happens, but we want to remind you that the possibility exists. You might want to consider purchasing a waterproof bag (ziplock) for your camera and accessories.

What about iPods, MP3 players, Cell Phones, Personal Computers?

You are more than welcome to travel to and from your course with this equipment. Once you arrive we will ask you to leave it all in your luggage as you are not allowed to take it on your course.

Can I receive mail while on course?

No, the course does not offer an opportunity for mail to be sent or received.

Do I need to bring money for my course?

You do not need any money while on course. However, you are responsible for all incidental costs associated with getting to and from the course start. For example, meals along the road are your responsibility. The only other costs could be charges for lost/damaged equipment. Plan on bringing around \$50.

What happens with my prescription medications while on course?

Please bring your prescription medications and non-prescription medications in separate, labeled, non-breakable, waterproof containers. People with prescription inhalers and epinephrine injections must also bring and carry their own medications. Participants who would suffer severe consequences if they were to miss a dose of medication due to damage or loss should bring back-up doses of that medication. All prescription medications must be disclosed to Student Services prior to the course start.



NORTHWEST
OUTWARD BOUND SCHOOL

Course Description

North Cascades Alpine Backpacking
for Veterans

Reflections by NWOBS Veteran Alumni:

"The one thing that stood out from the first course in '09 was the actual trail that we took: the Oval Lake trail to the initial campsite. We had all kinds of obstacles that made the crew work together and bond quickly in that first day. But the big thing that stood out was the "circle up" time once the day was done. The first day was tense but as we got to know one another, we could relax and had a blast!"

- Michael Moen