

Overview

The Oregon Cascades and Idaho Salmon River Leadership Semester course is the longest course that the Northwest Outward Bound School offers and focuses on the human skills that support strong leadership. In addition to interpersonal skills like communication, feedback, decision making, and goal setting. You will also learn mountaineering, rock climbing and whitewater rafting in the wildest and most scenic areas in the United States. On this 65-day course, you have the opportunity to explore both technical and human skills in greater depth than on shorter semester courses. The course includes rock climbing at Smith Rock State Park, one of the best climbing sites in the United States. The course also travels into the Central Cascades of Oregon where you learn mountaineering skills and practice them on summit attempts of local peaks. A 3-day introduction to wilderness medicine with the opportunity to earn your Wilderness First Aid (WFA) certification is also included. Finally, you will whitewater raft on two of the most renowned rivers in the West, the Salmon River in Idaho and the Deschutes River in Oregon. Although there is time for rest and reflection during the course, it is a very intense experience: ten weeks of skill development, backcountry living and physical and mental challenges in the most spectacular of outdoor learning environments.

Outcomes

Outward Bound courses vary in length from 4 to 85 days. On shorter courses, participants will receive an intro to leadership skills, strength of character and a desire to serve. With longer courses, the same outcomes and benefits are achieved with the opportunity to reach a more profound level of mastery as there are more chances to develop technical skills, receive and implement feedback and further personal development. On the 65 Day Leadership Semester students should expect to come to a thorough understanding and demonstration of technical skills and be able to perform with little supplementary intervention during the final phase of course.

Educator Courses vs Semester Courses

Northwest Outward Bound School offers two distinct types of long-format (50 days +) courses: Semester courses and Outdoor Educator courses. Educator courses are specifically designed for students that want to explore a career in outdoor education, whereas Semester courses are designed for students looking for a long Outward Bound course that maximizes the depth of the experience. While both course types teach numerous technical and human skills, the Outdoor Educator courses add a layer of experiential education theory and are required to utilize their learning in a formal practicum where they design and implement an outdoor education experience for middle school students.

Semester courses spend more time in the field on expeditions and focus on technical travel and leadership skills. Students will come away from this course with foundational technical skills as well as an increase in self-confidence, communication, teamwork and group leadership. This course also includes a 3-day Wilderness First Aid course and certification. If you have any questions, or are having difficulty choosing between a Semester and Educator course, please call your course advisor.



Course Areas

DESCHUTES RIVER, OREGON – The Deschutes River is part of the national Wild & Scenic Rivers System, flowing north from the Oregon Cascades to the Columbia River and then on to the Pacific Ocean. Courses generally travel anywhere from fifty to one hundred miles along the Lower Deschutes. The rapids on the Deschutes are rated to class IV, mostly class II-III. The group camps each night along the banks of the river.

CENTRAL CASCADES, OREGON – Volcanoes dot the spine of the Cascade Mountains, rising over 10,000 feet above the forests, lakes, and rivers of the surrounding region. The Central Cascade Range is home to the Three Sisters, Broken Top, Mt. Washington, Three Fingers Jack, and Mt. Jefferson. Active glaciers, traces of avalanches, and the volcanoes themselves are the perfect setting for learning the more technical aspects of mountaineering and backpacking. Depending upon the peak, your summit attempt may necessitate glacier and roped-team travel.



SMITH ROCK STATE PARK, OREGON – Smith Rock State Park is a world-renowned climbing destination that attracts climbers of every ability level. The Crooked River winds its way through the canyon, and to the west, the snow-capped volcanoes of the Cascade Range rise on the horizon. Eagles nest in the rocks and the area is abundant with incredible wildlife. One of the most striking features is a prominent spire, Monkey Face. Given the dry and temperate climate, rock climbing is feasible most of the year.

LOWER SALMON RIVER, IDAHO – Starting in Whitebird, Idaho, the Salmon River has created the second deepest river gorge in North America (deeper than the Grand Canyon!) and is also the longest free-flowing river in the United States. Your group will travel over 73 river miles, through the Frank Church Wilderness and end in Hell's Canyon. Students will also explore historical and cultural sites along the Lower Salmon including the saga of the Nez Perce, the lives of Chinese miners from the late 1800's, and stunning Native American pictographs.

WEATHER – Temperatures typically range from freezing to 70 degrees Fahrenheit. Our course area is on the eastern side of the Cascades, and thus tends to be drier; however, rain and thunderstorms are not unusual. Fall weather varies and students could experience snow and wet conditions especially in the mountains.

Course Activities

MOUNTAINEERING/ CLIMBING SECTION (~18 DAYS) – Mountaineering courses move through high mountain terrain and focus on preparation for a peak attempt that may require the use of ropes, technical equipment, and possibly rock climbing or snow travel. Students will start by learning backpacking skills, map and compass navigation, and campsite selection, and progress to basic mountaineering skills. The instructor-to-student ratio is never more than 1:5 during this section, allowing for



personal coaching on the physical techniques of mountaineering, as well as tailoring the curriculum to the interests and aptitudes of individual course participants.



WHITEWATER RAFTING (TWO ~8-DAY EXPEDITIONS)– Students will travel on the river in four to six-person paddle rafts, and learn to “captain” (maneuver) their paddle raft team through Class II to III rapids. After lessons in basic river travel and safety, students will learn to read currents, anticipate obstacles, and scout rapids. Students will also learn river hydrology, swimming in currents, and paddle techniques. There may also be an opportunity for short day hikes.

ROCK CLIMBING (~7 DAYS) – Students will receive individual instruction and test their skills against the vertical cracks, steep faces and boulders of Smith Rock State Park. Among the skills students will learn are: basic climbing equipment, rope management, wearing harnesses, tying knots, belaying and rappelling techniques, and movement on rock.

WILDERNESS FIRST AID – The Wilderness First Aid (WFA) course is a 3-day introduction to wilderness medicine that combines classroom time with practical sessions. This section provides students with basic instruction and wilderness first aid skills. Students leave this 3-day section with a certification in Wilderness First Aid and the knowledge to manage simple injuries/illnesses in the backcountry. It is a great stepping stone into wilderness medicine and may lead to a desire to take longer, more complex courses in the future.

SERVICE – Service to others and to our environment is a core value of Outward Bound and is integrated into each course. Groups follow Leave No Trace ethics as they engage in acts of service while leading and supporting fellow participants. Designated service projects are coordinated with land managers like the US Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, and National Park Service to collaborate on land restoration projects. Additionally, students may have the opportunity to work alongside select social service agencies like nursing homes, hospitals, and organic farms. Students see the impact of their actions firsthand, and may develop a desire to continue service in their home communities.

SOLO – In order for profound learning to take place, students spend time reflecting on their experience, and Solo is that opportunity. The Solo experience provides an important break from the rigors of the expedition and gives students the opportunity to reflect on their Outward Bound experience. With sufficient food and equipment, students will set up camp at sites of their own, using the wilderness skills learned during the first portions of the course. The amount of time students spend on Solo is based on course length, weather, student condition, age, and Instructor preference. Solo campsites are chosen to offer as much solitude as possible (yet be within emergency whistle-signaling distance of other group members). Most students spend their Solo time journaling, drawing, reflecting, thinking and resting as they process lessons of the course to focus on their goals for the future. Instructors check on each participant at regular intervals, as safety is always a top priority.

FINAL EXPEDITION – Outward Bound believes that an appropriate amount of independence is a powerful educational tool. To deliver that benefit, Outward Bound purposefully and gradually transfers certain leadership responsibilities to the students, culminating with our “Final Expedition.” Near the end of course, your group may be given the opportunity to travel without your instructor’s direct guidance. Instructors maintain overall risk-management by using check-ins, careful route planning and accurate assessment of group abilities. Many of our students feel this phase of the course is the most rewarding, as the group learns to work together, problem solve, and accomplish a goal independently, while utilizing all the skills they have acquired during the expedition.

PERSONAL CHALLENGE – We typically end our courses with a Final Challenge Event—an individual final physical push. This might take the form of a run or a triathlon-style challenge.

Sample Itinerary

The following is an example of what your course itinerary might look like. Your actual course plan will vary according to weather, student skills and abilities and instructor preferences.

- Day 1** Course Start, welcome and introductions, duffle shuffle, course overview
- Day 2-10** Backpacking Section: Lessons on how to pack a backpack ,travel in mountain environment, navigation and map reading, camp craft skills, cooking, water treatment, hygiene, travel and etiquette. There is also a focus on group dynamics, leadership and communication.
- Day 11-13** Mountaineering: Travel in mountain environment, continue to practice technical and human skills, lessons on conflict resolution, teamwork, goal setting. Opportunity to climb one of the mountains in the course area.
- Day 14-16** SOLO-Longer courses have the opportunity for a 3 day two night solo. Length of SOLO is up to the discretion of the instructors and will be no longer than a 72 hour period
- Day 17-18** Mountaineering/Backpacking: Depending on group cohesion and interest there is an opportunity to climb one of the mountains in the course area.
- Day 19-24** Whitewater Rafting: Travel up to 100 miles on the beautiful Upper and Lower Deschutes River.
- Day 25** Travel to the Lower Salmon River in Idaho.
- Day 26-29** Whitewater Rafting: Exploration of the Lower Salmon River and Snake River, including cultural and natural history lessons.
- Day 31-33** Wilderness First Aid course
- Day 34** Travel to Smith Rock state park.
- Day 35-48** Rock Climbing: Develop knowledge of rock climbing technique and systems, including more technical elements including placement of artificial protection, anchor building and rescue. There may be an opportunity for a small SOLO experience during this section.
- Day 48-50** Service project
- Day 50-63** Final expedition. Students are responsible for planning and executing a multi-day expedition with little guidance from instructional staff.
- Day 64** Personal challenge event, de-issue gear, de-brief, course end celebration and graduation.
- Day 65** Travel Home



NORTHWEST
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Course Description

Oregon Cascades & Salmon River
Leadership Semester