



Course Overview

The North Cascades Mountaineering courses explore the Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest, one of Washington State's most remote and beautiful alpine environments. Students will learn wilderness skills such as setting up tarps, cooking, backpacking, climbing, and navigating using map and compass. Our mountaineering courses have added technical components that could include off-trail travel and alpine rock or snow objectives. The course includes a focus on cultivating skills around leadership, character development, service to others and interpersonal development. From getting up early to hiking in a mountain environment all day, wilderness travel is demanding. You do not need to have any previous experience but arriving physically prepared and excited for the opportunity for personal development will enhance your experience and allow you to take full advantage of the expedition.

Outcomes

Outward Bound promotes character development, leadership, and service in the most engaging classroom possible ... the wilderness. In real time, students experience the effects of their decisions on themselves and the other members of their group as they work to complete difficult tasks necessary for wilderness travel. Instructors challenge students to try new things and step outside their comfort zones. They also provide individualized feedback to students that can be implemented on course, as well as afterwards upon return home to their communities.

Course Area

THE NORTH CASCADES, WASHINGTON – Known as the “American Alps,” the North Cascades offer glaciated mountains, alpine lakes and high alpine meadows for endless exploration. The North Cascades host the greatest concentration of glaciers outside of Alaska, and are full of high mountain meadows peppered with wild flowers. The Outward Bound course area hosts some of the most stunning alpine climbing and backpacking routes in the United States. Temperatures range from freezing to 80 degrees Fahrenheit. Early-season courses (May, June) may spend time camping on snow, while mid-summer courses tend to have more moderate temperatures.



Course Activities

MOUNTAINEERING – Mountaineering courses move through high mountain terrain and focus on preparation for a peak attempt. Successful peak climbs require patience, efficiency, and teamwork to reach the summit, and may involve roped climbing on snow and/or rock. Students will start by learning backpacking skills, map and compass navigation, and Leave No Trace ethics, and progress to basic mountaineering skills. The instructor-to-student ratio is never more than 1:5 during this section, allowing for personal coaching from our expert climbing and mountaineering instructors on the physical techniques of mountaineering, as well as tailoring the curriculum to the interests and aptitudes of individual course participants.



FINAL EXPEDITION – Outward Bound believes that an appropriate amount of independence is a powerful educational tool. During the travel sections of this course, Outward Bound instructors purposefully and gradually transfer certain leadership responsibilities to the students culminating with our “Final Expedition.” Near the end of course—if the group has demonstrated the necessary leadership, team problem solving and wilderness living skills—students may have the opportunity to travel without instructors immediately present. Many of our students feel this phase of the course is the most rewarding, as the group learns to work as a team, problem solve, and accomplish a goal independently, while utilizing all the skills they have acquired.



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.

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.

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.



Sample Itinerary

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

15 Day Itinerary

Day 1	Course start
Day 2-4	Backpacking and team building
Day 5	Rock climbing
Day 6	Resupply
Day 7-10	Backpacking, peak attempt, rock climbing
Day 11-12	Solo
Day 13	Final expedition
Day 14	Final challenge event & service project
Day 15	Course end and transportation home



22 Day Itinerary

Day 1	Course start
Day 2-6	Backpacking & team building
Day 7	Rock climbing
Day 8-10	High alpine travel and peak attempt
Day 11	Resupply
Day 12	Rock climbing and Rappel
Day 13-14	Peak attempt
Day 15-16	Solo
Day 17-20	Final expedition
Day 21	Final challenge event & service project
Day 22	Course end and transportation home

REFLECTIONS FROM A NW OUTWARD BOUND SCHOOL MOUNTAINEERING ALUMNA:

"The physical difficulties I faced in climbing cols or passes, self-arresting, and navigating group tension have instilled in me a greater sense of purpose in overcoming obstacles and reconciling real passions."

- Hannah Sloan