

PE/A 142 – Wilderness Leadership College Outdoors

This course will focus on the intersection of cultural perspective, wilderness, and leadership. It will include several 1-hour sessions preceding a week-long hiking and sea kayaking trip in the Redwood State and National Parks of California. This is a social learning experiment, and will rely heavily on group discussion, participation, and engagement. Participants – including the facilitator – should strive to teach and learn from everyone involved.

We will cover several sessions based on the survey data collected from the participants. They are as follows, and will each end within an hour. Please note that this is totally subject to change based on the changing interests of the group. It's just a proposal!

WEEK 1: Systems of Communication

Introduction to the framework of the course, its contents, and the mindset to take when participating. We will discuss the social construction of learning, the “interpersonal gap,” and start by assessing individuals and interpersonal relationships between two people. Expect more presentation and less discussion this particular week.

WEEK 2: Cultural Competency + Leadership

What is culture? What is leadership? And where do they intersect? Expect structured discussion. No homework, but the more you think about these questions the better! If you have time and want readings I can send some to you.

WEEK 3: Wilderness (and the American mind)

A brief history of wilderness past and present. Prepare to share your own experiences and understanding of wilderness, how you distinguish it from non-wilderness, and formative wilderness experiences you have. Try to come prepared to discuss what our culture says about wilderness through narratives, texts, and more.

WEEK 4: Skills in Culturally Competent Leadership

Taking a break from discussion, we will go through and discuss “VADER: The Dark Side of Leadership.” We will then practice skills that can help us ensure we are approaching the VADER framework (this will make more sense once you get there) in a way that is ethically comfortable. If time allows, we will cover basic theories surrounding behavior change.

WEEK 5: Historical Application

Looking at the history of wilderness development in America, some major cross-cultural conflicts related to that history, and modern interpretations from different lenses, we will try to construct narratives of the same event from different angles. This should be good practice in understanding how two human beings can see things in totally different ways!

WEEK 6: Risk Management, Time in the Field, and Bringing it All Together

Building off of College Outdoor's training (you'll hear about it soon) on Risk Management, we will talk about emotional risks, stress response, and why cultural competency matters. We will try to cover any other last things we want to, draft a plan for activities we may want to pursue on the trip itself, and cover topics like rapport (and risk), community building (and risk), and thinking about dynamics (and risk).