

**RTM 151A Introduction to Backpacking**  
Department of Recreation and Tourism Management  
California State University Northridge

**Saturday 9:00-11:00 Redwood Hall 151**  
**Class meeting dates: August 27, October 8, and then**  
**the 3-day field class on October 14-16 (all day).**

**Online portions of the class are accessible through Moodle.**

**INSTRUCTOR:**

Email:

**FIELD TRIP: October 14-16 at Sequoia National Forest.**

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

Introduction to backpacking as an outdoor pursuit. Emphasis on proper use of equipment and safety of participants in the natural environment and minimizing impact on the environment. This course is designed to give students a general overview of skills, knowledge, and experience in backpacking and spending time in the backcountry. Arranged field trips are required.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES:**

At the conclusion of the course the students should be able to:

1. Demonstrate the ability to plan, organize and safely participate in a backcountry camping experience at the beginning and intermediate levels
2. Value the natural environment and protect it through leave no trace (minimum impact) camping and travel techniques.
3. Evaluate their individual abilities and use technology and knowledge of land management agencies to locate suitable areas for recreation
4. Demonstrate how to comfortably and safely spend time in the backcountry through awareness of environmental hazards.
5. Analyze through self-reflection the ways in which students can achieve a healthy balance of work and leisure in the outdoors
6. Apply safe techniques for operation of backpacking equipment such as stoves, water filters, fires, and shelters.
7. Demonstrate navigational skills in wilderness environment through map and compass and GPS technologies.
8. Comprehend human physiological needs in the backcountry regarding hydration, nutrition, and response to environmental conditions of cold, heat, and high altitude.

9. Value the contributions of team members in expeditionary travel.

**COURSE CONTENT AND TENTATIVE CLASS SCHEDULE:**

- |      |  |        |
|------|--|--------|
| I.   | Introduction   | Week 1 |
|      | A. Planning and information gathering                                      |        |
|      | B. Preparation: mental and physical  |        |
|      | C. General requirements of resource management agencies                    |        |
| II.  | Regulation of body temperatures  | Week 1 |
|      | A. Heat transfer mechanisms  |        |
|      | B. Heat production   |        |
|      | C. Insulations principles and materials                                    |        |
|      | D. The layering system   |        |
| III. | Cold emergencies   | Week 2 |
|      | A. Hypothermia: symptoms, treatment  |        |
|      | B. Frostbite: symptoms, treatment  |        |
|      | C. Prevention  |        |
| IV.  | Water and heat emergencies   | Week 2 |
|      | A. Bodily requirements for hydration                                       |        |
|      | B. Dehydration and heat exhaustion   |        |
|      | C. Hyperthermia: symptoms, treatment                                       |        |
|      | D. Water: sources and purification   |        |
| V.   | Altitude   | Week 2 |
|      | A. Acute Mountain Sickness (AMS)   |        |
|      | B. High Altitude Pulmonary Edema (HAPE)                                    |        |
|      | C. High Altitude Cerebral Edema (HACE)                                     |        |
|      | D. Acclimatization and prevention  |        |
| VI.  | Environmental considerations   | Week 3 |
|      | A. Minimal impact philosophy   |        |
|      | B. Ecosystems and environment sensitivity                                  |        |
|      | C. Leave No Trace (minimum impact) hygiene, camping, and travel techniques |        |
| VII. | Environmental hazards  | Week 4 |
|      | A. Weather   |        |
|      | B. Rock, Snow, and Water   |        |
|      | B. Snakes and reptiles   |        |
|      | C. Mammals   |        |
|      | D. Ticks, scorpions, spiders   |        |

	E. Fires	
VIII.	Backcountry travel techniques	Week 5
	A. Navigation with map and compass	
	B. Navigation with GPS	
	C. Hiking techniques: conserving energy	
IX.	Food in the Backcountry	Week 6
	A. Nutritional and caloric requirements	
	B. Menu options (freeze dried/ dehydrated)	
	C. Cooking techniques	
	D. Preparation, packaging and storage	
X.	Basic first aid	Week 6
	A. Safety: making good judgment	
	B. True emergencies: bleeding & breathing	
XI.	Short term survival	Week 7
	A. Priorities	
	B. Shelters	
	C. Water & Food	
XII.	Field Class Laboratory/ Skill Practice & Review	Week 8-15

## **METHODS OF INSTRUCTION:**

Students will receive lecture material, participate in class discussions, and take exams during the on campus portion of the course. During the field trip, the course will culminate as students demonstrate the direct application of lecture material mastered in the preliminary sections of class. Dyad learning through collaborative facilitation with equipment and technology, small group exploration of problem solving case studies, and demonstration will occur.

## **METHODS OF ASSESSMENT:**

### **Assessment Tools:**

- Embedded questions on final written exam.
- Ability competency testing during field class experience.

## **METHODS OF EVALUATION:**

Exams . . . . .

Exam I - generic topics of backcountry safety and environmental practices. . . . 35%

Exam II - skills and knowledge demonstrated in the field experience . . . . . 35%

Field Class Participation . . . . . 20%

General Class Participation . . . . . 10%

**TEXT:** Graydon, D. & Hanson, K. (2003). Mountaineering: Freedom of the hills. 8<sup>th</sup> edition. Seattle: The Mountaineers.

**COURSE POLICY AND PROCEDURES** (important fine print about class success and grading):

1. Learning is best achieved through active class time participation and actual preparation - doing things like reading assignments, rigorous study for exams, and careful preparation of papers and other written assignments. Preparation, timely completion of assignments and active participation are required and will affect the student's grade in the course.

If you miss class, make arrangements with peers to collect class information, announcements and materials. Information will not be repeated for those who are tardy or absent.

2. Class Field Trip: The specific weekend for the class field experience is found on the first page of this syllabus and/or published online prior to the first class. Because the field encompasses over 60% of the time in this class, attendance on this trip is **mandatory**. Make sure you are available from Friday morning to Sunday afternoon of the weekend corresponding to your trip. If you have a commitment during the weekend trip, you will have to drop the class. Unfortunately, there is no way around this. **BE AWARE OF WHICH CLASS SECTION YOU HAVE REGISTERED FOR, AND MAKE SURE THAT WEEKEND FITS YOUR SCHEDULE!**

Details on the class field trip will be covered a week (or more) prior to the field class experience. This will require the completion of several university forms: a release form and insurance verification form PRIOR to the field class session. Students will also be provided a list of items to bring and items NOT to bring. Our risk management policy prohibits alcohol and illegal drug consumption during the field class experience. Students bringing these substances will be removed from the course and thereby be given a failing grade for the class.

Students will be expected to cover some field class expenses related to travel and food and perhaps entrance fees. Every effort is made to keep these costs to a bare minimum and will not preclude anyone from participation.

3. All written work must meet the following criteria before instructor evaluation:
- a. Be typed with adequate margins and spacing using APA format unless otherwise indicated by the instructor (follow format of specific assignment.)
  - b. Be clear, organized, and a logical development of the student's ideas.
  - c. Avoid vagueness and unsupported generalization.
  - d. NEVER use another person's ideas, phrases, sentences, or terms without acknowledging the source since this is plagiarism and is subject to an "F" grade and possible dismissal from the program. The student may be subject to more severe university discipline. Please refer to the California Code of Regulations and the University Catalog.
  - e. Be thoroughly proofread if you expect an A.
  - f. Work is expected to be original and created specifically for this class by the student.
4. Any assignments designated as deliverable electronically will be submitted at the Moodle site and/or directly to the instructor as an email attachment. Please note which of these systems is designated. If delivered as an attachment via email, you must pay attention to proper labeling. All submissions must be sent as an attached file in Word or WordPerfect software and the file name must be this format: Last name, first name, class number, short title (for example: Smith Samantha RTM 550 TeamContract or SmithSamanthaRTM 399Team). Failure to follow this procedure will result in a minor grade deduction.

5. All assignments are due at class time on the specified date unless otherwise noted. Late papers will be received but will be assessed a penalty of one letter grade (10%) per class session. Students are reminded to consider the mathematical impact on their final grade of failing to hand in an assignment. (Better late than never - up to a point!). No assignments will be accepted after the last official day of class.

5. If the student wants to demonstrate a higher level of competency for the subject material under evaluation, the written work may be resubmitted after consultation with the instructor.

6. This criteria for grading are followed by this instructor. Students should recognize that an A represents outstanding work far beyond the basic memorization of the subject material. 1. The CSUN criteria for grading will be strictly followed including that an "A" represents "Outstanding" work and "an innovative application of the subject matter." Refer to CSUN catalogue for additional details. Because class participation is such a significant part of the grade, attendance will be taken and failure to attend all class sessions will compromise your grade. Failure to attend the weekend field class will result in a failing grade for the class. Specific grading rubrics will be utilized for each assignment that will reflect this overall framework.

This class will be graded with plus and minus grades. An A represents work @ 95% or above and A- represents work @ 92%, a B+ @ 88% and so forth down the line. An F represents work below 60%.

7. An Incomplete ("I") is assigned only as specified by Instructor and upon consultation and approval of the Instructor. Incompletes are normally not permitted.

8. Students should retain copies of their graded work until a final grade is received for the course.

9. Students are advised to consult with campus services to receive assistance if they have concerns regarding skills in areas such as writing or studying or computer skills.

10. Email: Each student is expected to have access to their CSUN email account. If that is not your primary email you can set up a referral email and check it regularly.

11. Cellular phones, pagers and other electronic devices not being used for instructional purposes should be kept off during class.

12. The classroom climate is an important factor for learning. In order to create a safe, welcoming and productive classroom environment, individuals are expected to show respect for each individual associated with the class, the facilities and equipment. Abusive, violent, disrespectful or disruptive behavior will not be tolerated. Students are referred to the policies and regulations section of the University Catalog for university policies and code of conduct information. Students who are disruptive will be removed from class.

13. Students are encouraged to be proactive and seek out the instructor as soon as they have any concerns about the class or their performance. The end of the semester is too late to take action to bring up a grade. The instructor will deal directly with each individual student on questions regarding grades or progress in the class (not with parents, relatives, friends or other representatives of the student).

#### 14. STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

The instructor, in conjunction with CSU, Northridge is committed to upholding and maintaining all aspects of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act

of 1973. If you are a student with a disability and wish to request accommodations, please contact the office of Students with Disabilities Resources located in Bayramian Hall 110 or call (818) 677-2684 for an appointment. Any information regarding your disability will remain confidential. Because many accommodations require early planning, requests for accommodations should be made by the second week of class. Any requests for accommodations will be reviewed in a timely manner to determine their appropriateness to this setting.

15. Note: the most recent version of this syllabus exists on the course website. The Syllabus: Time has been spent writing this syllabus to include essential class information. Please read it rather than sending an email asking questions that are easily answered in this document. Also check for other key documents posted at the class website. Then if you have questions please ask the instructor in class and/or send an email.

16. Having now listed many 'policies and procedures' necessitated by our increasingly complex and frequently absurd cultural framework – remember that learning should be fun (at least most of the time) – so speak up if you are not having fun ye

t! ;)