

**California State University Northridge**  
**Department of Recreation and Tourism Management**  
**Field Class – March 10-12 – Joshua Tree NP**

**INSTRUCTOR:**

**RTM 452 (3) & ~~452L (2)~~ OUTDOOR RECREATION LEADERSHIP (& LAB)**

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

An analysis of leadership theory and small group dynamics. The course emphasis will be on the competencies and skills for successful small group leadership. Adventure based programming in the wilderness setting will receive special attention. Experiential opportunities provided for lab component.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES:**

1. The student will be introduced to general leadership theory.
2. The student will be introduced to adventure programming as a participant on the experiential level.
3. The student will comprehend the history, philosophy, and research surrounding leadership of outdoor based programs including adventure programs.
4. The student will comprehend a skill based outdoor leadership model and demonstrate skill development and increased competencies in instructional skills, decision-making skills (including risk assessment and prevention), team effectiveness, and the role of technical skills in leadership effectiveness. (RTM 351 focuses on the history of outdoor education, program design skills, and facilitation skills for outdoor programs).
5. The student will assess their current leadership competencies and create a learning plan for on-going professional development.
6. The student will become familiar with risk management and the practices of safety management demonstrated by outdoor leaders.

**COURSE CONTENT: (at Canvas site for the class)**

**SCHEDULE: (at Canvas site for the class)**

The experiential nature of the class is best taught in a field setting in order to integrate the wilderness leadership applications with the other leadership objectives of the course. An extended field trip of several days is used as a primary part of the course schedule. The class field trip is scheduled for **March 10-12** (all days inclusive).

~~Those students taking the Lab units (2) will show some variation in assignments based on the unique learning interests of each student. The focus is on learning about managing traditional~~

~~outdoor venues found in outdoor education programs (ropes courses; winter environments; rock-climbing environments; and lake and river aquatic environments). The dates of the field trips for these experiences will be posted on Canvas.~~

## **METHODS OF INSTRUCTION:**

The class will combine readings & lectures but will use experiential activities designed to develop the knowledge and skill competencies necessary for safe and effective leadership of outdoor programs.

## **METHODS OF EVALUATION:**

Regular Class – 3 units – 100%

- Exams (2 – at 12.5%). . . . . 25%
- Weekend Field Experiences & Class Participation . . . . . 25%  
Includes ‘fast think’ exercises and other in-class events
- Risk Management Projects . . . . . (40%).
  - Accident Analysis Case Study . . . . . 15%
  - Outdoor Activity Standards/Protocols . . . . . 15%
  - Check-List Development and Testing . . . . . 10%
- Outdoor Leadership Professional Development Plan . . . . . 10%

~~Lab Class – 2 units~~

~~Class Participation . . . . . Rivers/ Rock/ Winter/ Ropes Course – 100%~~

1. Examinations: Two examinations will be given to test the readings and class lecture material and will focus on comprehension. Each exam will represent 12.5% of the grade.

2. Field Experiences: Students will be expected to satisfactorily perform techniques and skills discussed in the class outline. Some of these experiences will take place in the regular time slot for the class. In addition to this, the class will take a three day trip to an outdoor laboratory that will enable introduction of and initial mastery of appropriate leadership skills. Evaluation will be a combination of individual student journals from the weekend and group feedback on individual leadership competencies. (25% of grade).  
**March 10-12** (block your calendar NOW – some may choose to drive up night before).

3. Risk Management Project (40%): Students will produce a risk management project with three very distinct parts.

- Students will research and analyze an outdoor accident as an individual assignment. Details of this analysis will be described at the class Canvas site. (15% of grade).
- The other part of the project will be an analysis and updating of several parts of the outdoor risk management plan at CSUN in preparation for accreditation process for the AEE. Students will work with a partner for this project and be required to collaborate with others in the compilation of the final report. (15% of grade). Details to follow.
- The third piece will be the development and/or testing of a Check-List for a

specific conduct of an outdoor activity. (10%)

4. Outdoor Leadership Professional Development Plan. Students will write a short plan for their future development as an outdoor leader identifying both current strengths and an outline plan for becoming more effective. Skill areas as well as learning resources will be identified in the plan. Length – 2-3 pages.

5. Extra credit assignments: Students may earn additional credit toward the course by either adopting one of the graduate student projects and/or by electing to take on a specific leadership role in one of the other field trip experiences that are part of the RTM department courses.

### **~~RTM 452/Lab:-~~**

~~The focus is on learning about managing traditional outdoor venues found in outdoor education programs (ropes courses; winter environments; rock climbing environments; and lake and river-aquatic environments). The dates of the field trips for these experiences will be posted on Canvas. Each student will receive credit for full participation in three of the four environments.~~

### **TEXTS:**

#### **Required Texts: =**

- Outdoor Program Policies and Procedures Manual for RTM Department by Al Wright – (provided as pdf at Canvas)

#### **Recommended Texts (Optional)**

- The Checklist Manifesto: How to Get Things Right Hardcover (2009) by Atul Gawande Publisher: Metropolitan Books (paperback);
- Beyond the Checklist by Suzanne Gordon, Mendenhall, O'Connor Publisher: ILR Press
- Thinking, Fast and Slow by Daniel Kahneman
- Effective Leadership in Adventure Programming - 2nd Edition Simon Priest (Author), Michael A. Gass (Author)
- Role of the Instructor in the Outward Bound Educational Process by Ken Kalisch
- Spiritual Dimensions of Team by Al Wright

**The grad student option:**

Grad students in the RTM Master's program who take this course have an additional project and area of study. Grad students taking the class will be assigned one additional textbook and one additional paper. Undergrads are welcome to pursue the additional assignments for extra credit but they are not a course requirement.

Schein's Organizational Culture and Leadership will be read and discussion groups will be held on two evenings for the last third of the class meeting time (6:00-6:45). See Canvas site for these dates and expected reading for discussion. There will also be an additional essay at the mid-term on the Schein work.

A short research paper will be completed on one of two topics – Leadership Development or Team Effectiveness in organizational settings. The goal is to take the general material of the class and make an explicit connection to a non-outdoor organizational setting. The paper can be submitted early in the semester but are due by the final week of class. The final exam time will provide a time for presentation and discussion of the research papers.

## **Q & A for RTM 452 & 452L**

### **Why take it?**

This class in outdoor leadership is designed both to teach general leadership through outdoor experiences as well as prepare people for specific roles of leadership in outdoor programs. So if you are interested in increasing your leadership effectiveness for any context this class will help you on that journey. If you are interested in leading specific outdoor trips as a professional instructor or volunteer youth worker or competent future parent then the course will meet those objectives as well. The class syllabus identifies the learning objectives for the class.

### **When will it meet?**

Some Saturday mornings the class will meet at the regularly scheduled time - plus two weekend commitments. The 'contact hours' for the class require 100 hours for the five units and the 'outdoor weekends' will cover 80 of those hours so that will leave five Saturday morning sessions. One long weekend will be with the entire class and the second weekend (or alternate time) will allow you to provide partial leadership for another RTM outdoor class experience (RTM 151B, D, F, G, H; RTM 251; RTM 310). A specific schedule will be posted at Dr. Wright's website shortly.

### **Other benefits of RTM 452 & 452L: (Beyond education for education's sake).**

- If you are an RTM Grad student you are allowed to take up to 6 units of 400 level classes to count toward your grad program. The program allows for 6 free electives in your 30 units degree program and these classes would likely be approved by your adviser.
- If you are an RTM Undergrad student you can take the class as part of the 21 unit elective package in the program.
- If you are an RTM Undergrad who has not already take RTM 302, if you wish to petition the faculty to substitute RTM 452 Outdoor Leadership for RTM 302 Leadership your instructor will support your petition. (There is no guarantee of approval prior to the petition process).
- If you are NOT an RTM major but want to take this course as an open elective you are encouraged to do so.

**More Questions:** Email Al at [awright@csun.edu](mailto:awright@csun.edu)