

## RTM 151G Challenge/ Ropes Courses (2)

Department of Recreation and Tourism Management  
California State University Northridge

Fall 2010

Redwood Hall 151 – 1:00-4:10 on Jan 23, Feb 27.  
Plus Field Class intensive on March 5-7 (all day)

**INSTRUCTOR:** Al Wright, Ph.D.  
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### **COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

Introduction to the safe operation of challenge/ropes course activities for outdoor experience. Emphasis on proper use of equipment and safety of both high and low component challenge courses. This course is designed to give students a general overview of and experience in the practice of group challenges utilizing initiatives and high ropes elements. As part of the course, students will understand the concept of experiential education, how it can facilitate learning and ways in which group interaction can be enhanced through such activities. Through a mixture of demonstration, discussion, activities and training outings, students will gain a working understanding of how to efficiently and safely experience and facilitate challenge courses. Arranged field trips are required.

### **COURSE OBJECTIVES:**

#### Departmental Student Learning Outcome #1:

“Students will demonstrate critical thinking including analysis, synthesis, and evaluation in the fields of play, leisure, recreation, parks, and/or tourism through a variety of pedagogies.”

At the conclusion of the course students will:

1. Be able to evaluate safe techniques for operation of high component ropes course facilities and be able to list components of safe and effective challenge elements
2. Demonstrate an understanding of and appreciation for the natural environment by practicing low impact construction and operation techniques for ropes course facilities
3. Be able to describe the historical development of ropes course as urban adaptations of wilderness experiences
4. Be able to explain the value of group initiatives and the higher value of such activities in group dynamics, bonding and personal growth
5. Be able to synthesize information related to group size, maturity level and aptitude and facilitate challenge experiences appropriate for the group
6. Be able to apply rescue techniques for high component ropes course events
7. Be able to apply safe techniques for operation of low component ropes course facilities

## **COURSE CONTENT:**

### I. Introduction

- A. History of ropes course development
- B. Urban ropes and classic wilderness

### II. Program terminology and review

- A. Low components
- B. Group initiatives
- C. High components
- D. Trust activities

### III. Low component safety systems

- A. Spotting techniques
- B. Special hazards
- C. Trust techniques

### IV. High component safety systems

- A. Dynamic belay systems
- B. Static belays (lobster claws)
- C. Zip line systems
- D. Rescue systems

### V. Construction concerns

- A. Life safety lines
- B. Back-up techniques
- C. Inspection procedures
- D. Impact surfaces

### V. Special topics

- A. Paired events
- B. Health screening
- C. Administrative requirements

## **METHODS OF INSTRUCTION:**

1. Methodology: Lectures and experiential laboratory sessions will enable students to develop the skill competencies necessary for a safe outcome in facilitation of challenge course environments.

2. Schedule of Instruction: The class meets for 30 hours of instruction as a 2 unit class. The course is run in a non-traditional intensive format to maximize learning through experiential education methods. The class begins with face to face orientation and introductory lectures, followed by several on-line lectures (virtual class meetings), then there is a mandatory pre-field class meeting on campus, and finally the three day experiential class in an adventure challenge course setting .

### **Specifics for Spring 2010.**

First class meeting is in Redwood Hall 151 beginning at 1:00. Prepare for a longer class. Then class will meet again Feb 27 and then the majority of the class is in a 3-day intensive format March 5-7 on the CSUN campus. Class will run from 9-5 each day.

## **METHODS OF ASSESSMENT & EVALUATION:**

### Departmental Student Learning Outcome #1:

“Students will demonstrate critical thinking including analysis, synthesis, and evaluation in the fields of play, leisure, recreation, parks, and/or tourism through a variety of pedagogies.”

#### **A. Assessment Tools:**

Embedded questions on final written exam

Ability competency testing per certification standards where applicable

#### **B. Evaluation Tools:**

a) Quizzes account for 50% of the grade

b) Active participation and skill demonstration account for 50% of the grade.

**Text: The Challenge Course Manual by A.Wright will be available at class in either printed or pdf format.**

**The Complete Ropes Course Manual by Rohnke, Tait, & Wall (is an optional text – available at Amazon or other online retailers.)**

**Class Field Trip:** The specific weekend for the class trip is found on the first page of this syllabus.

Because the trip encompasses over 75% 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 SECTION YOU HAVE REGISTERED FOR, AND MAKE SURE THAT WEEKEND FITS YOUR SCHEDULE!**

## **OTHER FIELD CLASS INFORMATION AND MISC CLASS POLICIES:**

### A. Grading Criteria

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.

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

3. For Credit/No Credit grading, student must be doing passing work to receive “credit.” Credit/No Credit grading option must be requested on SOLAR by the appropriate deadline.

**B. Students may not attend the field trip without review of the field trip information by the instructor prior to the field class. You must attend that class session.** In addition to being adequately prepared for the environmental demands of the field setting, students are required to complete a release form and insurance verification form PRIOR to the field class session.

### C. Student Discipline

Inappropriate conduct by students (such as consuming alcohol on field trip and/or any other safety violation) is subject to discipline as provided in Sections 41301 through 41304 of

Title 5, California Administrative Code. Refer to CSUN catalog for further details. The consequence for use of alcohol or illegal drugs in a field class is a failing grade for the class.

#### D. Field Trip Advanced Information about Equipment and Student Costs

More detailed information will be provided during the class to indicate what to bring and so forth for the required field class. This information is general in nature and subject to change.

Travel: Students will be attending the class at the CSUN high ropes course on campus and thus normal student regulations apply regarding transportation to campus (in contrast to our off campus field trips for other RTM 151 classes).

Detailed explanation of any personal gear necessary for the field experience will be reviewed in class and any university issued gear will be provided. Common personal gear for the field class could include:

Rain Gear

Shoes

Food

Water Bottles

Clothes:

Loose-fitting & flexible pants and shirts

Warm clothes (pile or wool sweater/ wind gear).

Sunscreen

Sun glasses

D. Expenses the student can expect:

- a. No additional travel is expected so gas costs are not estimated.
- b. Campsite fees = 0 as the class will not stay overnight at the ropes course.
- c. Food = students provide their own food for field trips so cost varies according to your taste.
- d. Equipment rentals = None, CSUN will provide all essential trip gear.
- e. Students may choose to provide their own harnesses but there is no obligation to provide these as CSUN can provide those for you.

**The Syllabus:** This syllabus contains essential class information. Please read it carefully before sending an email asking questions that are easily answered in this document. Also check for other key documents posted at the class website. After your research, please do ask whatever questions you have.

**Last Updated:** 8/9/09