

University of New Hampshire
Department of Recreation Management and Policy
OUTDOOR LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT
OUT 546 – Whitewater Canoeing
Fall 2024

COURSE DESCRIPTION: An introduction to the technical, teaching, and leadership skills required for operating in whitewater canoeing programs.

Prereq: OUT 552, prior paddling experience, or instructor permission. 3 cr.

INSTRUCTOR: Jayson Seaman Hewitt Hall 105

Phone: 603-862-1162

Email: jayson.seaman@unh.edu

OFFICE HOURS: By appointment at my [Bookings page](#)

COURSE MEETS: Fridays through October 11, 12:10 to 6 p.m. unless modified as a class

- Trip 1 on Friday-Sunday, Sept. 13 - 15 (Deerfield River, MA)
- Trip 2 on Friday-Sunday, Sept. 27 - 29 (Deerfield River, MA)
- Online final exam and individual final conferences: October 7-11

COURSE OBJECTIVES: The course objectives focus on proficiency in the technical skills of whitewater canoeing and an understanding of teaching and leading canoe programs on flat and moving water. By the course conclusion, students will demonstrate the ability to:

1. Perform basic technical whitewater canoeing skills including paddle strokes, maneuvers, and rescues in flatwater, moving water, and Class I-II current.
2. Understand flatwater and whitewater canoe lessons and programs that include basic river canoeing instruction and rescues.
3. Understand and apply group management techniques and instructional and leadership skills needed to assist with whitewater canoeing lessons.

Students will be evaluated according to the standards set by the American Canoe Association at Level II and are eligible for instructor certification at Level I according to ACA competency criteria. Students will experience Level III (Class I & II current) conditions and lessons. An optional certification fee can be assigned to student accounts if you qualify for and choose to be a certified instructor.

COURSE FEE: The \$200 lab fee covers van rental, gas, and camping fees.

REQUIRED TEXTS:

- Dillon, P. and Oyen, J. (2008). Canoeing. Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics. Available online or on reserve at library.

- [Ostis, N., & Gookin, J. \(Eds.\). \(2007\). *NOLS River Educator Notebook*. Lander, WY: National Outdoor Leadership School.](#)
- Gullion, Laurie. (1996). *Kayak & Canoe Games*. Birmingham, AL: Menasha Ridge Press. Pdf available on MyCourses
- Water-based sections of the OLM Operations Manual available through MyCourses.
- American Canoe Association course outlines available at: americancanoe.org.
- ACA Instructor's Manual. Available on MyCourses.

COURSE OVERVIEW:

The Whitewater Canoeing course is an introduction to canoeing in moving water and Class I-II whitewater. Students will demonstrate an understanding of necessary personal preparedness, group canoe equipment, boat control in Class I-II whitewater, rescues in flat and moving water, adherence to safety procedures, instruction of basic canoeing strokes and maneuvers, lesson planning and organization, and group management and leadership in river canoeing classes.

The first session on **August 30** will be spent at a flatwater practice site on Mendum's Pond, where students will review flatwater strokes and maneuvers. Flatwater rescues will be reviewed. (Be prepared to swim.)

The second session on **Sept. 6** will be spent at a flatwater practice site where students will review flatwater strokes and maneuvers. You also will be introduced to new whitewater canoeing strokes. Students will participate in a video analysis session to analyze canoeing technique.

The first Friday-Sunday trip on **Sept. 13-15** involves travel to the Deerfield River in Charlemont, MA. The focus will be developing efficient paddling form in Class I-II current and gaining experience with river reading. River rescue content is also covered on this trip. We will return to UNH Sunday evening.

The next session on **Sept. 20** will introduce you to solo canoeing on flatwater. Class will be held at Mendum's Pond where you'll be able to test a variety of solo canoe designs and enhance your control in high-performance tandem boats. You will also fine-tune your paddling technique and stroke teaching and begin to plan a public instructional clinic that includes stroke teaching development, practice of maneuvers, and fun games on water.

The second trip on **September 27-29** involves travel to the Androscoggin River in Errol NH or back to the Deerfield River in Charlemont, MA or. The trip will include two river runs with students leading the group in Class I-II current, and the canoe practical final assessment. We will return to UNH Sunday night.

The **public flatwater lesson** will be **Oct. 4 (10/11 rain date)** at Mendum's Pond where the program will be used to determine if each student meets the qualifications for ACA instructor

certification at Level 1. You will deliver a lesson to a group of novices from the local or UNH community. Students will conduct the entire program without assistance from staff.

At the end of the course you will be tested in an online exam on knowledge of whitewater canoeing, logistics, safety, canoe instruction and leadership. You will also be asked to analyze a whitewater canoeing scenario and make suggestions to improve the quality of risk management and/or instruction/leadership.

ESSENTIAL ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS:

We can accommodate a variety of abilities in this class. Essential eligibility requirements (based on American Canoe Association recommendations) are:

- Breathe independently (i.e., not require medical devices to sustain breathing)
- Independently maintain sealed airway passages while under water
- Independently hold head upright without neck / head support
- Manage personal care independently or with assistance of a companion
- Manage personal mobility independently or with a reasonable amount of assistance
- Follow instructions and effectively communicate independently or with assistance of a companion
- Independently turn from face-down to face-up and remain floating face up while wearing a properly fitted life jacket
- Get in / out of a paddlecraft independently or with a reasonable amount of assistance
- Independently get out and from under a capsized paddlecraft
- Reenter the paddlecraft following deep water capsize independently or with a reasonable amount of assistance
- Maintain a safe body position while attempting skills, activities and rescues listed in the appropriate course outline, and have the ability to recognize and identify to others when such efforts would be unsafe given your personal situation.

Please let us know in advance if you will need modifications to the program or equipment.

PERSONAL PREPAREDNESS & RESPONSIBILITIES:

Whitewater canoeing requires that participants make effective and timely decisions under challenging conditions. Students are expected to participate in the class in a manner that promotes the well being of themselves and other students. Any consumption of alcohol or other drugs during and/or before class will result in dismissal from the class and all associated University penalties. Please do not come to class dealing with the consequences of lifestyle choices that will impair the ability to function well and jeopardize safety and participation.

Bring a day pack or dry bag to each class with water, snacks, sunscreen, and additional layers of clothing. This class expects that you will apply your knowledge of personal preparedness on water as learned in OUT 552 or through prior canoeing experience. You will be issued a wetsuit

and paddling jacket, since fall weather and water is highly variable in temperature. Sleep and eat well before class. Be prepared to paddle under cold, windy, and rainy conditions.

An inability to participate in weekly sessions requires that you make up the content before the next class. These classes review strokes and rescues in a sequential manner to build skills before the group paddles increasingly difficult rivers. We will function as a self-supporting group, where all participants need to be able to come to one another's aid including potentially in rescue situations. An inability to complete a weekend trip is difficult to replace and requires an alternative assignment to make up the paddling time; failure to make up content may prevent you from continuing in the class and/or undermine your final grade in the class.

Other student responsibilities may include: picking up and driving the van/trailer, signing out and checking in gear, managing group gear at our practice sites, include gear counts, and leading warm-up games and practice sequences. These responsibilities are important to demonstrate if you are interested in the instructor certification. (See below for more certification information.)

The class will be responsible for replacing any lost gear, so it's important for the group to sweep practice sites and count gear at the conclusion of activities. Any lost gear is the responsibility of class members to replace.

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS: The four major areas of assessment include:

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|----------------------------------------|--------------------|-----------|
| 1. Whitewater safety analysis | 20% of final grade | Due 9/20 |
| 2. Practical exam | 25% of final grade | Due 9/30 |
| 3. Lesson planning and clinic delivery | 25% of final grade | Due 10/4 |
| 4. ACA self-assessment | 10% of final grade | Due 10/11 |
| 5. Online written exam | 20% of final grade | Due 10/11 |

Safety analysis: This assignment consists of two parts: (A) You will review current paddlesports accident data compiled by paddlesports associations and federal agencies, and (B) you will be given a scenario of a canoeing event/accident. Based on these two data sources, you are to write a synopsis of your findings in response to the 5 questions below. Resources for the assignment are available on MyCourses. The final written assignment should be submitted online MyCourses.

Questions

1. What are the significant environmental factors about the river section in the scenario and its condition on the day of the accident? How could they have contributed to the accident? How should these paddlers have accounted for the environmental conditions?
2. Based on common accident elements shown in other accident/safety data, analyze factors related to the paddlers' likely performance. What should they have done on the river to avoid the accident? To respond to the capsize? Be sure to reference other sources of data/information.

3. Paddlers can underestimate the skills required to canoe some river stretches. What river knowledge and paddling skills are essential to master before you go?
4. What could an instructor have done to reduce risk in the scenario presented in the case study?
5. What are your responsibilities as an employee when you are either taking people out on a recreational day trip or renting canoes and accessory gear to the general public on a river like the one included in the scenario? Imagine you have 15-30 minutes to conduct your river orientation. What do you say, particularly about a river stretch like this one?

Grading Criteria (100 points)

- Clarity of analysis (major rationales must be obvious and clearly stated)
- Depth of support/variety of resources used (cite multiple sources)
- Concise writing (3 pages single-spaced; business format with headings, lists of major points and explanatory narrative is preferred or 6 pages of double-spaced narrative with headings to organize info)
- Writing mechanics (spelling, punctuation, grammar count!)
- Understanding of legal issues and industry standards in risk management
- Recommendations follow from analysis and correspond with best practices

Practical Exam: The practical exam will happen near the end of the second weekend trip. Credit will be given for improved biomechanics and efficiency in canoeing technique. Your ability to model the flatwater maneuvers during the public lesson is a part of the ACA certification requirements.

Lesson Planning and Clinic Delivery: You will be responsible for planning and delivering a Level 1 skills clinic to a group of novice paddlers, during which you will teach many elements of a flatwater canoe program according to ACA guidelines. Certification requires that you model maneuvers effectively, teach strokes and other technical content clearly, demonstrate an ability to rescue paddlers, and safely manage a group on water with good judgment. ACA competency criteria will be used. A typed written outline for the public program is expected in advance. Part of your grade will consist of a peer evaluation of your contribution and performance. (See below for information on ACA certification.)

Written Exam: The written exam will be a mix of short-answer and short-essay questions. It will cover information from the text and field experience. The exam will be open on MyCourses during the last week of class.

GRADING: The following scale is used for the course:

94% and above	A	80 – 83%	B-	67 – 69%	D+
90 – 93%	A-	77 – 79%	C+	64 – 66%	D
87 -- 89%	B+	74 – 76%	C	60 – 63%	D-
84 – 86%	B	70 – 73%	C-	below 60%	F

READING ASSIGNMENTS:

It is expected that you know and follow the Outdoor Leadership and Management program policies. Be proactive, read in advance, and review as necessary, especially to develop the public clinic.

The *Canoeing* text provides a variety of information for your review of strokes, maneuvers, rescues, and teaching content. You are expected to use this book as necessary to support your engagement with the class meetings and assignments.

ACA CERTIFICATION:

Most students qualify for the ACA Level 1—Introduction to Canoeing (flatwater) certification by teaching an effective public lesson. Students must demonstrate basic strokes and maneuvers in the bow and stern, an understanding of technical content, an ability to teach to different learning styles, and group management & good judgment. Some students with prior river experience, especially with whitewater rescues, may qualify for the ACA Level 2—Essentials of River Canoeing (moving water) credential. You will need to be able to manage our group as a lead boat during the whitewater trips.

Certification is optional; if you qualify for a certification level, then you will need to pay a \$25 student membership fee (if 23 and under; \$40 if older) and a \$25 certification fee. If you meet the criteria and want the certification, the fee will be assessed to your student account.

To remain an instructor in good standing, you must pay this annual fee to the ACA, teach two courses based on ACA standards during a four-year period and register the courses with the ACA National Office (easy on-line process), and take an upgrade clinic within that four-year period. Also, you are expected to maintain first aid certification and CPR. Failure to maintain first aid credentials voids your certification status.

Further information about the ACA will be discussed in class.

University Information

Technical Requirements and Technical Support

See website listings for current recommendations and requirements related to this course - <https://online.unh.edu/technical-requirements>.

For technical assistance please call (603) 862-4242 or fill out an online support form at <https://itsupport.unh.edu/onlinelearning/>

University Disability Accommodations

The University is committed to providing students with documented disabilities equal access to all university programs and facilities. If you think you have a disability requiring accommodations, you must register with Student Accessibility Services (SAS) <http://www.unh.edu/studentaccessibility>. Contact SAS at (603) 862-2607 or SAS, please provide me with that information privately so that we can review those accommodations.

Academic Honesty

Students are required to abide by the UNH Academic Honesty policy located in the [Student Rights, Rules, and Responsibilities Handbook](#).

Plagiarism of any type may be grounds for receiving an “F” in an assignment or an “F” in the overall course. Plagiarism is defined as “the unattributed use of the ideas, evidence, or words of another person, or the conveying the false impression that the arguments and writing in a paper are your own.” (UNH Academic Honesty Policy, 09.3) Incidents are reported to the school dean and may be grounds for further action. If you have questions about proper citation refer to your department’s writing guidelines. You can contact me at any time on this issue. Additional resources are located below:

<http://libraryguides.unh.edu/unhmcitingsources>

<http://www.library.unh.edu/reference/citation.shtml>

Netiquette Guidelines

Netiquette is the socially and professionally acceptable way to communicate on the internet. We are all expected to abide by these guidelines of "netiquette" when using online communication tools with your classmates and instructor. Guidelines can be found on the Student Resource Hub and the Faculty Resource Hub, and in this [knowledge base netiquette guidelines article](#).

Affirming Credit Hour Compliance

This syllabus reflects the federal definition of a credit hour, which entails a minimum 3 hours of engaged time per week per credit over the duration of the class. Examples of engaged time include class time, assignments, examinations, laboratories, participation in course-related experiences (attending a talk or performance, speakers and events, fieldwork, etc.), conferences, and office hours. For more information, please see: <https://www.neche.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/Affirmation-of-Compliance.pdf>

Addressing Emotional or Mental Health Distress

Your academic success and overall mental health are very important. If, during the semester, you find you are experiencing emotional or mental health issues, please contact

UNH [Psychological & Counseling Services \(PACS\)](#), 3rd floor, Smith Hall, (603) 862-2090/711 TTY, which provides counseling appointments and other mental health services. If urgent, students may call PACS Monday through Friday, 8 a.m.-5 p.m., and schedule an Urgent Same-Day Appointment.

Addressing the Needs of Students of all Faiths

In the event that a student needs accommodation for a religious or cultural holiday/observance, that student is encouraged to make that request as early in the semester as possible.

Title IX Confidentiality and Mandatory Reporting

The University of New Hampshire and its faculty are committed to assuring a safe and productive educational environment for all students and for the university as a whole. To this end, the university requires faculty members to report to the university's Title IX Coordinator ([Donna Marie Sorrentino](#), (603) 862-2930/1527 TTY) any incidents of sexual violence and harassment shared by students. If you wish to speak to a confidential support service provider who does not have this reporting responsibility because their discussions with clients are subject to legal privilege, you can [find a list of resources here](#). For more information about what happens when you report, how the university considers your requests for confidentiality once a report is made to the Title IX Coordinator, your rights and report options at UNH, including anonymous report options, please [visit the student reporting options page](#)