



Itinerary Overview

Rockies to Ecuador Fall Leadership Semester



Welcome to one of the greatest experiences of a lifetime! Colorado Outward Bound semester courses are designed to cultivate leadership and strength of character through challenging outdoor adventures. The 81-Day Rockies to Ecuador Fall Leadership Semester focuses on developing the confidence, knowledge and integrity essential for effective leadership indoors and out. Whether you are deciding as a group how to navigate through difficult terrain, working through the inevitable conflict with another student, or considering your life back home from a refreshingly new perspective, this course will help give you the experience to step back into your life with renewed confidence and a greater belief in yourself and your potential.

Your decision to attend this Semester is an important commitment and should be made with the highest awareness of the course's length, difficulties and depth. The people you spend 81 days with -- day and night, through hardship and exuberance, sunshine and foul weather, harmony and conflict - will become like a small family and community. Many previous students have become lifelong friends. However, like any family or community, there are times when everyone gets along and times when they don't. Therefore, it is important that you maintain a spirit of compromise throughout the course. Other members of the patrol may have a slightly different set of goals, desires and objectives than your own.

Through this you learn a great deal about yourself and each other. Remember that to be an effective leader, you must know yourself and how you relate to all types of individuals. How you behave and cooperate during times of strife and stress on your course is a great test of your character and an opportunity to find out what truly lies inside of you. Successful completion of your course demands mastery of skills, trust in your team, fitness, tenacity and compassion. It will not be easy, and there will likely be times when you stop to consider if completing course is worth the effort. When you decide to press on, you and your teammates will have earned a badge of confidence that you will carry with you for the rest of your life. You will know that you are capable of more than you ever thought possible.



Course Areas



The Rocky Mountains, Colorado - One of the most famous mountain ranges in the world, the Rockies stretch 3,000 miles from central Canada to New Mexico. They have provided the foundation of legends and have had a profound influence on the development of the United States. The greatest concentration of high peaks in the Lower 48 — hundreds of “Thirteeners” (13,000+ feet), and 54 “Fourteeners” (14,000+ feet) — is in Colorado. You will be traveling both on and off trail while learning to thrive in one of Earth’s most challenging climates.



Utah’s Canyon Country - This landscape is desolate, mysterious, beautiful and boasts some of the darkest night skies and most remote stretches of land in the continental United States. Wind and water have sculpted the ancient sandstone into a labyrinth of canyons, alcoves, rock bridges, pinnacles, buttes, box canyons, ledges, and arches. In areas such as this, there are many hidden wonders: deep chasms two feet wide with walls several hundred feet on each side; cathedrals of aged red sandstone and hidden reflection pools. To find these places you need to learn how to navigate the complex terrain. You will also learn to leave the beautiful environment as pristine as possible.

Joshua Tree National Park, California - J-Tree, as we call it, is a surreal, magical landscape with Dr. Seuss-like plants and many animal species which combine to create an alien-like desert world. The bizarre and jumbled rock formations have created one of the most popular and diverse climbing sites in the U.S. Set in the Mojave Desert, Joshua Tree is made up of extensive 50' to 300' granite outcroppings. These provide over 5,000 different routes of all types and for all abilities. The variety of cracks, slabs, face, and bouldering is what makes Joshua Tree a mecca for rock climbers.



Ecuador - Ecuador is the smallest of the Andean countries and, as quoted in the Lonely Planet's guide to the country, it is "...the easiest and most pleasant to travel in." It is a colorful and diverse country, perhaps best known for the Inca Empire. By U.S. standards, it is a developing country, and is considered one of the safer countries in the Andean Region.

The Andes Mountains - This famous chain of peaks runs north and south, splitting the country into the western lowlands and the eastern jungles of the Amazon basin. In 200 kilometers, the land changes from the warm coastal climate of the Pacific beaches to snowy peaks over 6,000 meters (18,000 feet) high, to the steamy rain forest of the eastern side bordering Peru and Columbia. There are numerous high peaks in Ecuador. Chimborazo (20,703') and Cotopaxi (19,348') are probably the best-known Ecuadorian peaks. Trekking onto the slopes and plateaus of the *pàramo*, the high, alpine plains of the Andes will be the culmination of your experience.

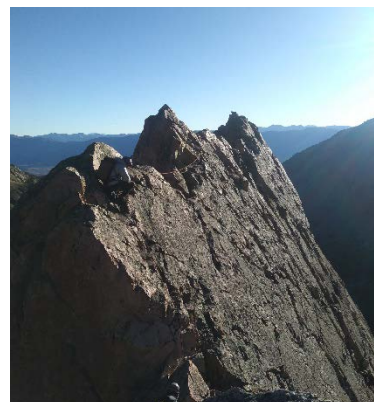




Course Activities

Mountain Section –Backpacking and Mountaineering Expedition Your course starts at our premier mountain basecamp in Leadville, Colorado. You will spend the first night camping at our basecamp, then transfer into the backcountry.

While in the mountains, each day is spent learning to live and travel comfortably in this beautiful but demanding environment. You'll learn navigational skills and group decision-making as well as movement through steep alpine terrain. Each day your instructors build on previous skill sets and empower you with more responsibility and freedom. Breaks throughout the day for lunch, snack or just to rest, provide unparalleled views and time to take stunning photos. Time on the trail is a great way to make friends and provide stories and laughter throughout the day.



Rock Climbing - Next, you will travel to rock camp at Joshua Tree National Park in California. Here, where the granite domes are scattered across the desert like a playground for climbers, you and your patrol will learn the techniques to safely climb a variety of rock features, from steep cracks to sparsely featured faces. Your instructors will introduce you to the more advanced aspects of rock climbing systems such as anchor building and rappel self-rescues. Depending on the educational aims of your staff, weather, and the group's learning progression, you may have the chance to go on a multi-pitch climb of 300' or higher, or lead a pitch of your own.

Technical Slot Canyoneering - After rock camp you travel to southern Utah, where you will begin the canyon section of course. The desert environment is a wild, rocky and windswept place, but for those willing to spend the time to see, it is also filled with life, beauty and adventure. You and your patrol will spend about two weeks travelling over the vast, red slickrock. You will learn to walk delicately through the fragile and ecologically crucial crypto-biotic soil, and you will rappel and weave your way down narrow slot canyons. Here you will build on your rope and movement skills learned in Joshua Tree to move safely through this committing environment. While the desert has the reputation of being hot you may find this the section of course colder than expected.

Solo – The canyon section is a good time to take a break from the group, and from the physical difficulties. This is time to process what you've done, where you're headed and what it all means to you. Your instructors will set you out alone with a bit of food, a sleeping bag and a shelter for three days. With no distractions, aside from the wind and the occasional lizard, past students have said this is one of the most impactful sections of course as they gain a deeper insight into what matters most in their lives at home.



COLORADO OUTWARD BOUND SCHOOL

Acclimation and Wilderness First Aid – After the desert, it's back to the Colorado high country where you spend 2 days participating in a 16-hour Wilderness First Aid class. This certification, which includes CPR, is the entry level standard for work in wilderness settings. This class time also helps you acclimatize for the altitudes of Ecuador.

Ecuador Section - After a few days in Colorado, you and your crew will head to Denver and fly south. After arriving in Quito, the capital of Ecuador, you'll be driven to a beautiful farm outside of Quito. Here you will continue acclimatizing while packing for your trekking expedition. You will spend time at this multi-generational family farm and sustainable living center where you will prepare food used for your trek into the Ecuadorian High country. Once your body adjusts to the altitude, you will take a small bus to a trail, where you will venture up onto the slopes and plateaus of the *pàramo*, the high, alpine plains of the Andes.

Here, the mist passes slowly in waves, and the lowland eucalyptus trees have been replaced by long grasses, hummocks, and the *chuquiragua* plant with its mesmerizing, orange flowers. You will travel across the expansive *pàramo*, broad and empty except for the occasional pack of wild horses and llamas, who watch curiously as you navigate glacially carved stream beds and hills. The hiking can be challenging at altitudes greater than Colorado's summits. You will have fantastic view of the glaciated peak, Cotapaxi, a volcano that rises to 19,347 feet.

Service – Service is a wonderful way to give back to the community while learning about the culture around you. You and your team will perform service for at least four days in Ecuador. While helping local groups with needed projects, you will learn more about this community and space you have been travelling in and around. Past projects have included helping on a farm, learning sustainable farming techniques and helping prepare supplies for mountaineers at a high camp at the base of a glacier.



Expedition Life

You will be starting the day with a morning warm up, making breakfast, packing up camp, and hitting the trail. You will be busy and active all day. Once you reach your destination, group members will divide and conquer to cook dinner and set up camp. After dinner, you may meet to address the next day's plans, or to discuss leadership and teamwork methods. Finally, you'll slip into your sleeping bag for a well-deserved rest.

Group Living – You and your course mates will become a family over 81 days. It's hard to describe how intricately linked you will all be. You'll take responsibility for each other's wellbeing while hiking, while rock climbing, and traveling the world. Every action, whether helpful or hurtful, will have a ripple effect on your group. Most of the time, your group will be a source of much fun, humor and camaraderie. It also can be a source of friction and challenge. In "normal" life it can be easy to avoid these frictions, but on course personal space is at a minimum, so you must address it. Working through these challenges is one of the primary sources of learning on an Outward Bound course, especially a semester.

Food – You and your team will learn to cook tasty and nutritious meals over portable gas stoves. Our meals are mainly vegetarian (meat is heavy and spoils quickly) and consist of grains, pasta, nuts, beans, cereals, and other light, dehydrated foods. The food may seem unfamiliar at first—we don't pack many processed foods or "junk food"—but you will find that it tastes good and gives you energy at the end of a long day. A typical breakfast might be granola or oatmeal; lunch generally includes tortillas and cheese or peanut butter and jelly; dinner might be macaroni and cheese or beans and rice. We can accommodate some special food needs (such as lactose intolerance or vegetarian eaters), but only if we know well in advance. If you have an uncommon diet, we may ask you to bring some of your own foods. Contact us for more specific information.

Camp – At camp, all group members pitch in to do what needs to be done, including cooking, washing pots, setting up camp and picking up trash. You'll find that as the expedition progresses, your mastery of these skills will enable you to operate more efficiently and effectively in the backcountry. Depending on section and season, you use a mix of tarps and expedition tents to sleep in. You'll use foam sleeping pads and sleeping bags. Throw in a nicely rolled jacket as a pillow for deluxe lodging.





Student Independence – COBS courses use an intentional progression of skill and responsibility to help students gain a maximum amount of independence while still maintaining oversight of safety concerns. All student independence must first be earned. Independence might begin with cooking or setting up tarps. Well performing groups would then begin managing all the details of their day, from navigation to team conflict management. A hallmark and highlight of the Rockies to Ecuador Leadership Semester is a five-day trek across the challenging topography of Ecuador's *páramo*. This final expedition is classically run by students with instructors following behind.





Curriculum

The curriculum of the Rockies to Ecuador Leadership Semester focuses on Colorado Outward Bound's three primary outcomes:

STRENGTH OF CHARACTER	ABILITY TO LEAD	DESIRE TO SERVE
<p>Demonstrating these qualities in action and thought:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enterprising curiosity Readiness for sensible self-denial Indefatigable spirit Tenacity in pursuit Compassion <p>Increased self-awareness and self-confidence</p> <p>Increased resilience, initiative, and integrity</p>	<p>Increased ability to set goals, and inspire and guide others to achieve them</p> <p>Increased ability to collaborate, communicate, solve problems and resolve conflicts effectively</p>	<p>Increased awareness of others</p> <p>Demonstrating helpfulness and acts of kindness and compassion toward others.</p>

In addition to the primary outcomes, you'll learn the technical skills necessary for each unique environment and adventure, which not only enhances your ability to be an outdoor leader in the future, it also prepares you for a lifetime of exploration.

<p>Backpacking and Mountaineering</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Navigation Map reading Compass use Micro and macro route finding Stove use & maintenance Leave No Trace Travelling and living in comfort Camp craft Campsite selection Shelter construction Cooking methods Nutrition & ration planning Sanitation & hygiene Emergency preparedness Weather 	<p>Canyon</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Canyon rappel techniques Canyon anchors Pothole escape Cultural and natural history <p>Rock Camp</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Belay Techniques Knots Climbing technique Protection placement Rappelling Rappel self-rescue Anchor building 	<p>Wilderness First Aid</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 16-Hour Course Patient Assessment Injury & illness prevention Emergency response CPR Treating burns Treating shock Splinting Blisters Wound management Insect & Snake Bites Altitude illness High altitude pulmonary edema High altitude cerebral edema Level 1 Avalanche Course Using Avalanche bulletins Route finding in avalanche terrain Snow stability assessment Group dynamics and decision making
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Course Staff



The **Course Director (CD)** oversees the entire Semester. He or she is a bit like the school principle, and establishes the priorities, tone and level of instruction for the proctors and sectionals. The CD also consults with students about any more difficult issues and works to resolve conflicts encountered during the course. The CD coordinates the entire staff team to ensure you and your group have the best experience possible.

The **Proctor** of your course is a senior COBS instructor who stays with your patrol throughout the course and supervises the overall curriculum. The proctor also works to educationally tailor the semester for each individual, so that you get what you need most out of each section, including academic credit, when appropriate.

Sectional Instructors are the staff who are with you for particular sections of course. Each sectional staff member is a specialist for that environment and will help to teach the curriculum and guide the course along with the proctor. For example, your mountaineering sectionals will likely be different from your canyon sectionals due to the different skill set.

The **Logistics Coordinator** will also be supporting most of your course with food, gear, and transportation.

These staff work together to provide you the most challenging and beneficial semester possible. Their different perspectives enable us to maintain a high level of involvement with each student's progress.



General Course Information

Groupings - For much of the course you will function in a group of 7-12 people called a “patrol” or “crew”. This group is co-ed and comprised of individuals from diverse backgrounds. The age spread can be wide, with the average age being early to mid-twenties. Relatives and friends are generally placed in different patrols for educational purposes.

Town days - Semester courses are long and demanding. In order to keep energy up, town days have been scheduled in between sections. This will be a chance to eat out, see a movie or do any personal shopping that you might need to do.

Mail - Throughout the course, except for the Ecuador section, you will be able to send out mail. Because it is a mobile course, it can be difficult to receive mail. Just prior to your course, your Course Advisor will send the course schedule and mailing addresses to you. Packages containing emergency items should be marked “URGENT” and include the student name and course number.

Equipment & Personal Belongings - Read the equipment and clothing list thoroughly and carefully, consider all that you bring. Some storage is available at the base camps, but we will not be able to get at it until the end of the course. Rugged cameras, extra batteries/ memory cards, notebooks and pens are well worth bringing. Expensive jewelry and several changes of casual clothing are not.

Money - You may have occasional expenses: laundry, toiletries, a meal out between course section, some new clothing or gear, or souvenirs. Do not bring personal checks. The course schedule and locations do not support banking hours. Bring Traveler’s Checks, credit cards and/or cash. You will also need up to \$40.00 US cash for the exit tax out of Ecuador.