



Itinerary and Overview

Spring Southwest Canyoneering & Canoeing Outdoor Educator Semester – 55 Days – Ages 18+

Congratulations, you are in for the experience of a lifetime! The Southwest Canyoneering and Canoeing Outdoor Educator Semester is a 55-day exploration of the most beautiful canyons and geologically stunning landscapes in the entire world. Located in some of Outward Bound's most remote course areas in the beautiful state of Utah, The Southwest Canyoneering and Canoeing Outdoor Educator Semester is 55 days of discovery. 55 days of leadership and adventure. 55 days of challenge and compassion. 55 days of awe-inspiring beauty. 55 days of turning raw potential into reality. 55 days quickly becomes a lifetime of personal strength, leadership and friendship.

This course is designed for individuals seeking to build skills and enter into the Outdoor Education field. You will gain direct experience in what it is like to operate in an institutional setting. Throughout course, you will focus on four main topics: Risk Management, Interpersonal Skills, Technical Skills, and Education Skills (the same criteria Outward Bound staff are measured against). You will leave course with personalized, specific, and detailed Outward Bound evaluations in the above four categories which will not only help drive your professional development, but could set your resume apart and help you get a job in the Outdoor Education industry (maybe even with us!).

Colorado Outward Bound School semester courses are designed to develop outdoor skills and to enhance your leadership and communication abilities for when you return home, not only for while you are in the wilderness. There is a balance of knowledge that is experienced and acquired; from learning how to descend narrow obstacle-filled slot canyons, to how to communicate effectively, and learning to backpack while summoning the strength to lead. Working for the best of your community, learning technical rope systems and expedition canoe experience, as well as increasing your knowledge and awareness of the world around you will all occur on course. Oh, and having loads of laughs while you're at it.

The 7-10 people (depending on course size) you spend 55 days with -- day and night, through hardship and exuberance, sunshine and foul weather, harmony and conflict, working together to overcome wilderness challenges — become like a small family and community. Many previous students have become best and lifelong friends. However, like any family or community, there are times when everyone gets along and times when they don't. Because of this it is important that you maintain a spirit of compromise throughout the course. Other members of the crew may have a slightly different set of goals, desires and objectives than your own. Through this you learn a great deal about yourself and from each other.

Remember that in order 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's inside you.

Successful completion of your course demands mastery of skills, trust, fitness, confidence, tenacity, leadership, initiative, and especially compassion. The



promotion of these qualities, and the discovery of what's within you, is the purpose of Outward Bound.

Your Instructors are highly qualified backpackers, canyoneers, river runners, and dedicated outdoor educators. They will serve as teachers, trainers, and mentors as you learn the skills required for wilderness travel. Through daily discussions, they will also help you and your group to discover the larger lessons to be found in these activities. You will discover new things about yourself: how you adapt to uncertainty, stress or challenge; how you can better work with others; and your potential as a leader.

Wilderness travel is demanding. This course may be the hardest thing you have ever done. You should be aware of what you are getting into and be excited about tackling new challenges. It can literally take every waking moment to get from point A to point B. From getting up early to pack your bags and cook breakfast, to paddling miles of flat water under windy conditions, or hiking with a heavy pack for what can feel like forever. Traveling in the wilderness can be hard. Past students agree that arriving physically fit and mentally prepared to take on challenges will enhance your experience and ability to do well on your course. This ultimately allows you to take full advantage of your expedition.

The Colorado Outward Bound School (COBS) is indeed a school, though it will likely look radically different from schools you have attended in the past. Our "classrooms" are beautifully inspiring and rather than memorization for tests, our curriculum focuses on skills for the wilderness and most importantly for our students' everyday lives when they return home. Through challenge and adventure in a supportive environment your instructors will use teachable moments, experiential learning, and time for reflection to create progressions of skills and responsibilities. Many traditional schools may teach to specific mathematical or linguistic hard skills, but in addition to teaching canoeing, whitewater rafting, backpacking, and canyoneering, COBS aims to develop the character of each student; building resilient, optimistic, compassionate, and resourceful leaders. We explore, role model, highlight the merits of, and encourage examples of our values:

- Tenacity in Pursuit
- Readiness for Sensible Self Denial
- Indefatigable Spirit
- Enterprising Curiosity
- Compassion

Course Activities

Wilderness First Responder Course – During the beginning of your course, you will spend 8 days in an outdoor classroom at our Southwest Program basecamp, learning about wilderness medicine. You will have the opportunity to gain a Wilderness First Responder (WFR) certification, which is considered a standard for many wilderness based jobs in the Outdoor Industry.

Desert Backpacking – This backpacking portion of the course will occur in one of several amazing desert landscapes of southern Utah. The corner of desert you will travel through is famous for Ancestral Puebloan cliff ruins and rock art. Various canyons and tributaries characterize this beautiful backcountry, providing a connection to the canyon you will canoe through.



Canoeing in Labyrinth Canyon, Green River, Utah – You will launch on the Green River in two-person canoes for 63 miles through Labyrinth Canyon. The river enters Labyrinth Canyon slowly, named for the serpentine path it carves as it dives deep into the redrock sandstone that characterizes southeastern Utah and the Canyonlands area. Narrow and winding side canyons, towering cliffs rising vertically out of the river, pinnacles and ledges all await you as you fine tune your paddling strokes. The canoes provide you with great freedom and maneuverability. While many of the skills you learn canoeing are transferable to other water sports, the small craft will demand a high level of coordination and cooperation with your canoeing partner. During this initial phase of your course, your instructors will introduce you to the most important elements of the river life: environmental stewardship, outdoor cooking, natural history of the area, the night sky, and of course, paddling skills.



Canyoneering Section – Canyoneering involves exploration and travel in canyons that are often narrow, sinuous, and steep with many obstacles to negotiate. Traveling through them requires a combination of scrambling up, and down, climbing over boulders, possibly rappelling, lowering packs, and hiking with your pack on. This rugged, rocky terrain requires teamwork and delicate decision-making on the part of group members.

To meet the demands of the technical terrain you will encounter, instructors will begin by teaching the foundational skills necessary for efficient travel, such as basic movement over rock and spotting techniques. The instructors will then teach more advanced movement on rock, and roped techniques such as rappelling, knot-tying, self-rescue, and rope handling. These skills, along with the basics, are then ready to be put into use when the terrain becomes more challenging.

Solo – Solo provides an important break from the rigors of both the expedition and the distractions from everyday life. This is a truly once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. With sufficient food and equipment, you'll spend 1-3 days alone at your campsite to journal, rest, reflect on the past and look ahead to future goals. Your solo site will be close enough to the sites of the Instructors in case of an emergency, but far enough removed to assure your solitude. You will not travel during this time and your Instructors will check on you occasionally, but you will be alone. Many students are initially nervous about solo, but later recall solo as one of the highlights of their entire course.

Service – Service is an integral part of the Outward Bound curriculum. We encourage service to the environment in the form of leaving campsites cleaner than we find them and practicing Leave No Trace ethics throughout the course. Whenever possible, we coordinate service projects with land managers (US Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, National Park Service, State Parks and local land trusts, etc.) and select social service agencies (nursing homes, hospitals, etc.). You also practice daily service and compassion to your crew mates, whether that's making hot drinks on a cold morning, or helping someone with their pack.

Final Expedition – The Colorado Outward Bound School believes that an appropriate amount of independence is a powerful educational tool. In order to deliver that benefit, our instructors purposefully and gradually transfer leadership responsibilities to the students. This progression culminates with our "Final Expedition." Near the end of course, if you and your group have demonstrated the necessary leadership, problem solving and wilderness living skills, you may be given the opportunity to travel without your Instructors immediately present. This "Final Expedition" will range from three to five days depending on staff assessment of student abilities and terrain type. Many of our students love the

independence of this phase of course, as the group learns to work together, problem solve, and accomplish a goal independently, while utilizing all the skills they have acquired. Instructors periodically check in with the group to ensure student wellbeing and coordinate travel plans. When you emerge from this final phase of course you will understand a truth: For the rest of your life you and your team will see that there is more in you than you ever thought possible.

Challenge Event – There are no set-in-stone course end challenge events, as each challenge will be tailored to the current conditions and participants. The challenge event may take the form of a run or team challenge. This event is your opportunity to finish course successfully and with style, by embodying all the lessons you have learned during your Outward Bound course. You may be surprised by how far you can still go given the challenges you have already accomplished.

Guided Reflection and Transference – At Outward Bound we believe there is no learning without reflection. Throughout course, you will be prompted to reflect on what you're experiencing on course, and what it means in the greater context of your life. Sometimes this is a journaling exercise, sometimes a group sharing experience, and sometimes a moment of solitude to think for yourself. You spend focused time towards course end exploring how your new knowledge, skills and attributes can apply to your life after course.



Sample Itinerary

The following is an example of what your itinerary may look like. Your actual course plan will vary according to weather, your group's skills and abilities, and Instructor preferences.

Days 1-11 - Course start and basecamp training in Moab, Utah – day outings from our campus, camping on base, and your Wilderness First Responder Course and Certification

Days 12-17 - Desert Backpacking

Days 18-24 - Labyrinth Canyon Canoeing

Days 25-45 – Canyoneering and Solo

Day 46-53 - Final Expedition – Apply all you've learned to a final group challenge

Day 54 - Personal challenge event, course end celebration

Day 55 - Departure home

The Curriculum

The curriculum of the Semester develops those qualities associated with effective outdoor leadership and technical skills essential for rigorous and safe wilderness adventure. While the technical skills are taught according to the particular demands and opportunities of each wilderness environment, the outdoor leadership skills are continually developed throughout the course. The skills essential for effective outdoor leadership are divided into five categories: Risk Management, Interpersonal Skills, Technical Skills, and Education Skills. Each category is covered in detail and you are given ample opportunity to practice newly developed skills in real situations.

Leadership skills – These are taught as three distinct topics: Leadership Styles, Leadership Theories and Decision-Making Strategies.

- You will explore Leadership Styles by first learning about self-leadership -- developing confidence, positive self-image, discipline and responsibility in situations that challenge you directly. Then, you look at qualities of a group leader, various leadership types (authoritarian, democratic, bureaucratic, etc.) and gender/cultural differences as they apply to leadership.
- Leadership Theories are presented to familiarize you with the conceptual frameworks that have been successful and popular in recent years. These include situational leadership, transactional leadership, transformational leadership and followership.
- Understanding Decision-Making Strategies is essential to any leader. Therefore, you learn the differences between and discuss appropriate use of consensus, committee, majority rule, minority rule and dictatorial decision-making.

Communication skills - These are taught as four topics: Self-expression, Listening Skills, Feedback Skills and Conflict Resolution.

- Self-Expression involves learning how to identify thoughts and feelings, articulate them, and finally, recognize how trust is increased in the process.
- Listening Skills are necessary to gain a clearer understanding of various situations and your group members thoughts and perspectives. These skills are developed through group discussions regarding listening and through group processing of activities and situations.
- Feedback is a very delicate skill, perhaps the hardest one to learn, but when given adeptly can be a priceless gift to the recipient. Good feedback involves crediting good performance, giving constructive criticism, and moving beyond personal judgment and giving advice. Instructors will model effective feedback and provide structure to help you master the art of giving and receiving feedback for yourself.
- Conflict Resolution involves learning how to productively confront others when there are disagreements or misunderstandings. The instructors will lay the foundations for creating the supportive environment that will give you a practice arena to successfully face interpersonal and group conflict.

Environmental Stewardship and Natural History skills are developed to nurture, respect and promote a feeling of responsibility for whatever environment you're traveling in. Environmental Stewardship includes Leave No Trace® skills for camping, hiking, backcountry hygiene, avoiding disruption of plant and animal habitats and archaeological preservation.

Natural history is often a fascinating part of each wilderness environment. Instructors familiarize you with the flora and fauna, geology, weather systems and human history of the areas. At night you will be introduced to astronomy, constellations, and some of their associated myths.

Teaching skills are developed to prepare you as a leader who, when circumstances require, can teach others the skills you have mastered. Teaching is divided into four topics: Types of Learners, Qualities of a Teacher, Interaction, and Experiential Education.

Because students gather and process information in a variety of ways, you will learn how to identify Learner Types and structure presentations accordingly.

You will discuss qualities that make effective teachers and how instructors or leaders from your own life have modeled such qualities. You will work to incorporate these into your own personal delivery style.

Technical Skills - These are needed to safely travel in the wilderness and overcome the various challenges which differ between environments. However, some skills are needed in all areas. You learn these early and refine them throughout the course. They include Expedition Planning, Wilderness First Aid, Canoeing, Whitewater Rafting, Backpacking, and Canyoneering.

Experiential Education is what Outward Bound is all about. You will learn how this model functions and experience first-hand learning by doing, reflecting on experience and transferring lessons learned to other areas of life.

Expedition Life

Group Living – Living and working with a small group is an opportunity to make lifelong friends and enjoy memories that will last a lifetime. It is also a source of friction and challenge. You may feel frustration or annoyance with your teammates at times as you and your group attempt to meet your goals and make decisions big and small. Students step off the bus with varying levels of motivation, fear, and doubt. Once the trip starts even the most eager students may become reluctant to take a certain risk or try their best. Investing in working out differences in your group, sharing



insights from your challenges and laughing your heads off over the most delicious dinner you've ever tasted (hunger is the best spice) are all part of why students walk away from their Outward Bound course with a deeper understanding of life, living, themselves, and each other.

Food – You and the other members of your group will learn to cook tasty and nutritious meals over portable gas stoves. Our meals are sometimes meat-free (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 would include tortillas, cheese, and summer sausage or peanut butter and jelly; dinner might be macaroni and cheese or bean, rice, and cheese burritos. We can accommodate some special food needs, but only if we know well in advance. If you have a particularly unusual diet, we may ask you to bring some of your own foods.

Camp – As this is not a guided trip, all group members will work together to do camp chores, including cooking, washing pots, setting up tarps, and cleaning boats. You'll find that as the expedition progresses, your mastery of these camp craft skills will enable you to operate more efficiently and effectively around camp and on the boat or trail.

Hygiene – A common misconception about the backcountry is that you have to be dirty all of the time. Not true—it is entirely possible to stay clean and semi-fresh smelling while in the field, as long as you are willing to take the time to get clean. Your instructors will demonstrate clean-up options and explain more about backcountry hygiene when you arrive.

Typical Day – A typical day involves rising with the sun, starting the day with stretching, making breakfast, packing up camp, and hitting the trail or the river. You will be busy all day. Once you stop for the day, group members will divide and conquer to get food cooked and camp set up. After dinner, you may meet to address the next day's plans, or to discuss leadership and teamwork methods, before crawling into your sleeping bag for a well-deserved rest.

