

GAP SEMESTER

60-Day Oregon to Ecuador

DATES: AUGUST 21 – OCTOBER 20, 2025 | TUITION: \$13,895 | AGES: 18+

HIGHLIGHTS:

- ▶ **Earn College Credit & Outdoor Certifications:** Participants can earn valuable college credits, along with certifications such as Wilderness Medicine and Leave No Trace (LNT)
- ▶ **Cultural Immersion in Ecuador:** Students will explore the rich culture of Ecuador, including stays with local communities, engaging in service-learning projects, and participating in sustainable development initiatives
- ▶ **Outdoor Skill Development:** Experience a transformative journey from backpacking in the Cascade Mountains to rafting in the Amazon and exploring the lush, biodiverse rainforests of Ecuador, this semester program focuses on developing technical outdoor skills while fostering personal growth, teamwork, and leadership

WHY TAKE THIS COURSE?

- ▶ **Unmatched Global Experience:** Embark on a life-changing journey from Oregon's scenic high desert to the heart of Ecuador's rainforests. This course offers an immersive blend of adventure, cultural exchange, and hands-on learning in diverse environments, preparing you for both academic and personal growth.
- ▶ **Leadership & Certification Opportunities:** Gain critical outdoor and leadership certifications like Wilderness First Responder (WFR) and Leave No Trace (LNT) while earning transferable college credits. This course equips you with essential skills for future academic, career, and outdoor pursuits.

WHERE YOU'LL BE:

- ▶ Deschutes Wild and Scenic River
- ▶ Three Sisters Wilderness
- ▶ Cotopaxi National Park
- ▶ Amazon River Basin
- ▶ Quito, Ecuador

TRIP INCLUDES:

- ▶ All lodging and transportation during the trip
- ▶ Equipment for all activities
- ▶ Up to two (2) dedicated NCOAE Field Instructors
- ▶ Meals, admissions, and gratuities
- ▶ Flight to Ecuador
- ▶ Shuttle to/from airport (if driving, contact NCOAE for drop-off/pick-up locations)



Scan QR code for more info.

For complete itinerary details, see reverse side



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NCOAE is accredited by:



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Itinerary *(Subject to change)*

- ▶ **Day 1: After a morning airport pickup, we'll drive to our basecamp in Maupin, OR.** You'll meet the other participants, then begin with an orientation. Topics covered include trip and menu planning, gear selection, and how to 'pack out' for travel in remote areas.
- ▶ **Days 2–6: Wilderness First Responder (WFR) training.** The next five days of your course are spent completing the WFR training portion of your course.
- ▶ **Day 7: Put-in on the Deschutes River.** The real fun begins when your group hits the water! Paddle to your campsite, then learn the basics of site selection and NCOAE's 'First 48' — the most important skills to know for wilderness travel, including shelters, stove use, water purification, and lightning protocol. Enjoy dinner and a campfire at the end of our first day of expeditionary travel.
- ▶ **Days 8–11: Multi-day Whitewater Trip.** Practice your paddling skills and study the basics of river ecology. Learn about river dynamics and swift water rescue techniques, as you raft or kayak downstream. You'll camp along the river each night and learn backcountry skills, including knots, Leave No Trace, and more. Your whitewater trip continues as you learn to read the currents of the river and help guide a raft through Class III – IV rapids.
- ▶ **Days 12–13: Re-supply.** Head into town for dinner out and relax before the next leg of your course.
- ▶ **Days 14–24: Multi-day Backpacking Trip.** Explore the Willamette National Forest and Three Sisters Wilderness as you ford rivers, explore crater lakes, and hike through alpine meadows while learning to manage the risks in these environments. You may see black bears, white-tailed deer, majestic hawks and more. Practice leadership skills, Leave No Trace, map and compass use, plant and animal identification, and backcountry cooking — while preparing and eating wonderful food we prepare ourselves.
- ▶ **Days 25–26: Flex Days.** Visit town and prepare for your upcoming river trip.
- ▶ **Days 27–29: Your Pacific Northwest adventure will culminate with a multi-day raft camping trip on the John Day,** the longest free-flowing river in Oregon. Paddle through colorful canyons and broad valleys, enjoying great camping, hiking, and spectacular views.
- ▶ **Day 30: Resupply.** Return to the Riverside Lodge for dinner, showers, and a campfire. Finish packing for the Ecuador portion of your course.
- ▶ **Day 31: Depart for Quito Ecuador.** After airport pickup, we'll drive 30 minutes outside of Quito to our basecamp. Spend the first in-country days at Palugo farm, a permaculture project integrating sustainability, community, and adventure. In the mornings, rise with the sun to help with daily farm tasks; splitting firewood, cleaning, gardening, and animal care.
- ▶ **Days 32–32: Learn about sustainability in a mountain environment** and continue to help with farm activities.
- ▶ **Days 34–36: Cultural Immersion Homestays.** Head North, gaining altitude as we travel to an indigenous community, in the mountains. Nestled below Volcán Imbabura, spend a few days in the homes of locals, helping work their land and learning about these mountain people.
- ▶ **Day 37: Volcán Imbabura & Otavalo Market.** Climb Volcán Imbabura in the morning. Then, spend the afternoon exploring Otavalo market, one of Latin America's largest indigenous craft markets.
- ▶ **Days 38–39: Expedition Preparation.** Finish packing and preparing for your Amazon expedition.
- ▶ **Days 40–42: Multi-day Amazon trip.** Travel by bus to the Amazon basin. As you descend from 9000ft to 3000ft, travel from snowcapped volcanoes, to cloud forest, to the magical green of the Amazon basin. Paddle out onto the river, home to an array of life. You'll camp at night on the riverbank, where toucans nest.
- ▶ **Days 43–44: Cultural Immersion in the Amazon basin.** Travel downriver to a remote Kichua community. Spend a few days with locals, rising early to drink wayusa tea and share dreams. Help harvest crops and learn to carve pilche bowls, in hammocks by the fire while gaining a deeper understanding of the "Lungs of the Earth". Learn from this traditional, indigenous culture. Discover the changes which they face today and the impact you can have by supporting community tourism, reforestation, and quality education.
- ▶ **Days 45–46: Chocolate Farm Visit.** Your journey continues, as we make our way to a jungle permaculture cacao farm.
- ▶ **Days 47–48: Re-supply.** Return to basecamp to rest and prepare. Learn about technical gear, glacier travel, ice climbing, and high altitude living.
- ▶ **Days 49–50: Volcán Pichincha Hike & Quito Visit.** Rise early to climb Volcán Pichincha as we acclimatize again to the high Andes environment. Then, explore Quito – walk through its old streets, enjoy traditional dishes, and visit vibrant markets.
- ▶ **Days 51–56: Trekking Cotopaxi National Park & Antisana Ecological Reserve.** Climb high above the tree line, as you explore the area's rugged landscape. Trek along Volcán Sincholagua, learning skills necessary to summit mountains. Refine your backpacking skills during a multi-day trek. Whatever the Andes throws at you, you will learn to safely enjoy it with grace and style.
- ▶ **Day 57: Summit Attempt.** On our last morning we will set off before dawn and attempt a final 'graduation' summit of Volcán Antisana. From here, you'll enjoy magnificent, 360-degree views, of the Inter-Andean valley.
- ▶ **Days 58–59: After a hearty breakfast, hike a short distance to the trailhead.** Return to Palugo Farm to clean-up, shower, and enjoy dinner. Then, visit a local hot spring for a soak. Lastly, we'll debrief the course, celebrate our individual and group accomplishments, and share a one-of-a kind graduation before departing.
- ▶ **Day 60: Departure from Quito, Ecuador**