

Typical Daily Schedule

7:15 a.m. – Morning Exercise

- Activity: Yoga and a short run

8:15 a.m. – Breakfast

- Options: Bagels, oatmeal, cereal, pancakes, egg burritos, fruit, and juices

8:45 a.m. – Morning Chores

- Duties: Breakfast clean-up, sweeping, trash and recycling

9:00 a.m. – Community Meeting

- Activities: Check-in, news updates, quote of the day

9:30 a.m. – Environmental Science Lab

- Focus: Readings, case studies, documentaries

10:30 a.m. – Outdoor Leadership Lab

- Topic: Theory and philosophy— principles and practice of outdoor leadership, portfolio work

11:30 a.m. – Lunch

- Duties: Meal prep, cooking, cleanup, inventory update

12:30 p.m. – Prep and Pack

- Focus: Preparation for afternoon activity

1:00 p.m. – Afternoon Activities

- Options: Technical training & skills development in rock climbing, mountain biking, and whitewater rafting

3:30 p.m. – Environmental Science Study Hall

- Tasks: Portfolio work, readings /research

4:30 p.m. – Outdoor Leadership Study Hall

- Task: Portfolio work, reading new chapters

5:30 p.m. – Dinner

- Duties: Meal prep, cooking, cleanup, inventory update

6:15 p.m. – Free Time

- Options: Explore campus, journal, rest

7:00 p.m. – Debrief

- Activities: Closing circle, review next day's agenda, camp sweep

8:15 p.m. – Free Time

- Options: Hang out, brush teeth, make phone calls

9:30 p.m. – Cabin Check-In

- Final tasks: Head back to your cabin and stoke the fire before bed

OREGON — A Day in the Field

A day in the field during our Oregon semester offers a comprehensive blend of hands-on adventure and engrossing academics — all of which is designed to immerse students in the study and practice of environmental science and outdoor leadership.

The day begins at sunrise on the high desert plains, with students preparing for a day filled with field studies and adventure. Following a nourishing breakfast and a brief stretch, the group gathers to review the day's itinerary, which outlines field-based coursework, ongoing research projects, safety protocols, and environmental objectives. This morning routine sets the stage for both physical and intellectual challenges.

The morning's adventures are dedicated to activities such as hiking, rock climbing, or navigating the wild and scenic rivers once explored by Lewis and Clark, with the specific focus determined by the location and educational objectives. As students traverse these diverse landscapes, instructors lead immersive discussions on topics such as local ecosystems, geology, ecology, and sustainable practices. These discussions combine theoretical knowledge with practical application, encouraging students to connect academic concepts with their observations in the field. Throughout the day, students engage in extensive field-based research, developing and refining techniques for data collection and analysis in natural environments.

Midday offers a break for lunch, typically enjoyed in a picturesque setting that invites reflection and community-building. This pause is not only a time to rest but also an opportunity to address any challenges that have arisen earlier in the day, which seeks to foster camaraderie and mutual support. The afternoon continues with additional exploration or skill-building exercises, such as advanced navigation, wilderness first aid, or the principles of Leave No Trace — all of which are integral to the practice of outdoor leadership.

As the day progresses, the focus shifts to leadership development. Students rotate leadership roles, making decisions and guiding the group through thoughtful challenges while applying outdoor leadership theories under the guidance of NCOAE faculty. This experiential approach solidifies the connection between classroom learning and real-world application, allowing students to practice leadership in dynamic, real-time scenarios.

The day concludes with dinner preparation and an evening debrief. The evening debrief is a reflective session that is a cornerstone of the expedition experience. It provides a structured environment for students to discuss the day's achievements, lessons learned, and plans for the next day. It also reinforces the program's focus on group dynamics, personal growth, and environmental stewardship.

While each day in the field is unique, there is always a deliberate emphasis on academic inquiry, personal development, and time to practice ecological responsibility. Students are encouraged to be conscious of their environmental impact and to support one another in the collective academic journey of outdoor exploration and leadership.