

Typical Daily Schedule

7:15 a.m. – Morning Exercise

- Options: Yoga, surf, or run on the beach

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, collecting 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, portfolio work

10:30 a.m. – Outdoor Leadership

- 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 kayaking, surfing, sailing, and rock climbing

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

- Tasks & Focus: Portfolio work, readings /research

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

- Tasks & Focus: Portfolio work, readings/research

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

NORTH CAROLINA — A Day in the Field

A day in the field during our North Carolina semester features a comprehensive blend of hands-on adventure and engrossing academics — both of which are designed to immerse students in the study and practice of environmental science and outdoor leadership.

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

The morning's adventures are dedicated to activities such as hiking, rock climbing, or whitewater paddling, with the specific focus determined by the location and educational objectives of the day's focus. As students navigate the day's landscape, instructors lead immersive discussions on topics like local ecosystems, geology, ecology, and sustainable practices. These discussions are rooted in both theoretical knowledge and practical application, encouraging students to connect academic concepts with their direct 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, fostering a sense of camaraderie and mutual support. The afternoon continues with further 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 advances, attention shifts to leadership development. Participants rotate leadership roles, making decisions and guiding the group through thoughtful challenges, all while applying outdoor leadership theories under the guidance of NCOAE faculty. This experiential approach solidifies the link between classroom learning and real-world application, allowing students to practice leadership in dynamic, real-time scenarios.

The day concludes at basecamp, where dinner preparation and an evening debrief are the immediate focus. This reflective session is a cornerstone of the expedition experience, providing a structured environment for participants 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 day is unique, there is always a deliberate emphasis on academic inquiry, personal development, and 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.