



# **Outward Bound Wilderness**

## **Independent Study Guide**

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# I. OVERVIEW

## PURPOSE OF THE STUDY GUIDE

Many students, parents and teachers want to know how credit may be earned while attending an Outward Bound Wilderness course. The answer lies in developing an Independent Study Project while on a course 7-days or longer. Since our founding in 1961 thousands of students have been awarded high school, undergraduate, graduate and teacher re-certification credit. This guide is a tool for you and your school to use as you design an Independent Study Project to complete as part of your Outward Bound course.

Please note that Outward Bound Wilderness is not a credit awarding institution. It is *your* responsibility to arrange for credit either at your own school or with another institution able and willing to award credit. The cost of credit varies from institution to institution.

## WHAT IS AN INDEPENDENT STUDY PROJECT?

An Independent Study Project involves studying a topic before, during and after your course. Projects have included natural science, leadership, physical education, the environment, geography, safety, nutrition, first aid, business administration, group dynamics, communications, etc. The choices are broad and are generally limited only by your imagination!

## THE MOST COMMON MEANS OF ACQUIRING CREDIT

Prior to attending a course, make arrangements for fulfilling requirements and receiving credit with the school of your choice and the appropriate advisor or department head. They will require independent research on a topic which demonstrates the application of your Outward Bound experience to an area of study in that department – astronomy, geography, English, physical education, etc. (see Appendix B for a sample of independent study projects.)

- **Step One** - Confirm with a teacher, counselor, registrar, that credit is available through your own school or transferable from an outside institution.
- **Step Two** - Clearly establish exactly what type of credit(s) will be awarded/accepted and exactly what the credit will be used to fulfill.
- **Step Three** - Enroll on an Outward Bound course; insure that steps one and two (above) are complete *before* course start.

## **WHO SHOULD CONSIDER INDEPENDENT STUDY?**

1. Student's grades 8 through 12, undergraduate and graduate students, and teachers fulfilling recertification requirements may want to supplement their regular academic study with an Outward Bound course. **Only those students who are willing to add to the already rigorous nature of an Outward Bound course should consider applying.** Be assured, Independent Study requires additional study before, during and after the course and only students willing to exhibit considerable commitment should consider undertaking a project.
2. Students who want to earn credit towards the completion of their formal education while simultaneously experiencing Outward Bound.
3. Students looking to take a break from the classroom and ready to become thoroughly involved with "experiential" education.

## **II. HOW TO ARRANGE AN INDEPENDENT STUDY PROJECT**

1. Thoroughly read your Outward Bound catalog; or, once enrolled, the Welcome Packet materials, in order to become versed in what activities you will be doing and in what geographic area your course will be run. This information will give you a solid foundation in the educational pedagogy of Outward Bound Wilderness and its goals and objectives (see Appendix A, Rationale for Academic Credit, attached.) Our courses rely on a flexible, responsive curriculum that meets the needs of each group and student. We cannot guarantee that we will present a particular topic (ie. geologic history or human history) on every course, but we often have resource materials like books on flora and fauna, or history and weather.
2. Solicit your school's support. You will need to make a decision about who at your school is to monitor the quality and completion of your project: your Sponsor. Make sure that your sponsor (teacher, counselor, advisor, etc) is thoroughly familiar with the Outward Bound catalog, your reasons for undertaking Independent Study, and how you plan to receive credit. While Outward Bound can help you establish a course of study, it is essential that you understand and follow your school's particular requirements for independent study and the awarding of credit. If you are not able to receive credit from the school you are attending, outside credit may be awarded (see Appendix C, Academic Partnerships, attached.) You must make arrangements to insure that your school is willing to transfer the credit to your transcript.
3. Choose a subject that interests you and captures your imagination (samples are attached as Appendix B). Discuss your project with your sponsor in order to determine that the two of you are in agreement as to the value and realistic scope of your undertaking.
4. When appropriate, involve you parent(s) or guardian.

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5. Establish a contract with your school (sample attached as Appendix E). It is important to thoroughly establish this contract before attending your course. Your contract must contain clearly measurable milestones and allow both you and your sponsor to understand exactly what your project is and how you plan to achieve your goals. Ask yourself questions like, "What will I actually submit to my sponsor to demonstrate that I have accomplished my project? Will it be a written report, a slide show, an oral report, a set of sketches, the completion of a set of readings, the demonstration of some newly-found skills?"

While establishing your contract keep the following in mind:

- How does your project compliment a class you are currently taking or one you plan to take?
  - What reading will you undertake to support your study?
  - What will you do during and after your course to complete your project? Keep in mind that an Outward Bound day is typically full from beginning to end. We do not provide significant free time for academic study or writing. Most students find a journal, sketch pad, or camera to be an essential element of their project. Portable computers, even the most portable, are not rugged enough to be submitted to the rigors of one of our courses.
  - How will you engage your Outward Bound instructors and group-mates during your course?
  - How is the success and completion of your project to be measured? How is its quality to be evaluated?
6. Send a copy of your Independent Study project and contract to your Course Advisor so they can notify your instructors of your project and be prepared to help you. If time does not permit communication before your course, make sure you bring a copy of your contract to the course start to discuss your project with your instructors.
  7. While on your course, keep notes, make sketches, take pictures, read; but **keep in mind that your course will demand your primary focus.**
  8. Upon course completion, continue your course of study as outlined in your contract. The outcomes of Outward Bound are unpredictable and many students radically alter their interests and pursuits during their course. You may find that your interests change dramatically and therefore the focus of your project. Be sure to communicate these changes directly to your sponsor immediately upon course completion.
  9. Submit a final copy of your completed project to your sponsor for approval. Once approved, together with your sponsor submit your final project to the credit awarding institution.

## **THE ROLE OF THE SPONSOR**

A project's sponsor will play an important role in the success of your project. It is the responsibility of the sponsor, in cooperation with the student, to insure that whatever credit awarding institution you choose is in fact willing to award credit when specific criteria are met.

The sponsor also plays an important role in helping to frame both the expectations of the institution and the outcomes of the project. The sponsor is expected to act as an objective liaison between the institution and the student to insure objectivity and quality. Only sponsors willing to work closely with both the student and school(s) involved should be considered for this important responsibility.

## **III. SAMPLE STRATEGY FOR DEVELOPING A PROJECT**

Projects have been developed around a wide variety of disciplines: Geography, History; Political Science, Physical Education, Psychology, Sociology, English, Safety, Environment, Nutrition, First Aid, etc. (see Sample Projects attached as Appendix B.)

The following example is a successful model used by many students.

### **ESTABLISH A GOAL**

"I will develop an independent study on the subject: Teamwork, Leadership and Maturity."

### **DEFINE SPECIFIC LEARNING ACTIVITIES AND OUTCOMES**

Before the course I will:

1. Read "The Secrets of Dynamic Communication"; "Zap, the Power of Empowerment"; "Leaders, the four keys of effective Leadership"; "Leadership is an Art".
2. Define qualities common to a successful team.
3. Define qualities of a leader.
4. Define maturity.

During the course I will:

1. Document in a journal specific examples of teamwork, leadership and maturity. What are the visible clues? Who are the leaders? When do they lead? When do they follow?
2. Document how styles of leadership change? Is the same person always in charge? Who is in charge when the going gets tough? Who is in charge when its time to pitch

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camp? Who does the dirty work? Who always seems to be absent when it's time to clean up?

3. Document examples of your patrol working as a team and failing to work as a team.

What is the role of your instructor in developing trust?

4. Document those examples of behavior you would define as mature and immature.

5. Discuss what aspects of leadership, teamwork and maturity you would like to take away from your course.

6. Interview an Outward Bound staff member, discussing your current observations and findings.

7. Lead a forum for patrol members on Teamwork, Leadership and Maturity.

After the course I will:

1. Interview a local community leader, discussing current observations and findings and how they relate back to the community.

## **MEASURING OUTCOMES**

How is the success and completion of your project to be measured? How is its quality to be evaluated? Cooperatively evaluate your project with your sponsor, submitting relevant photographs, sketches, journals, etc. and present your sponsor with a copy of your Course Completion Certificate from your course. Following the above example, complete your project by submitting a paper to your sponsor defining teamwork, leadership and maturity and how they manifest themselves on an Outward Bound course. Discuss how what you learned is practical to every-day existence. Submit the completed project to the appropriate institution for evaluation, acceptance and credit.

## **IV. APPENDIX A**

### **RATIONALE FOR ACADEMIC CREDIT**

An Outward Bound expedition, laced with the invaluable wisdoms of life experience, take you deep into remote and beautiful wilderness areas and deep into the core elements of life. All Outward Bound courses and programs are based on *six core values*:

Adventure and Challenge, Learning by Doing, Compassion and Service, Social and Environmental Responsibility, Character Development, and Inclusion and Diversity. Our courses demonstrate these values by concentrating on the following learning objectives:

A. Cognitive Development – intellect, mental strength and the ability to organize; knowledge involves logic, problem-solving, memorization and decision making.

B. Psychomotor Development – aside from the issues of good health and wellbeing, development of the physical self impacts mental and spiritual well being.

C. Affective Development – congruent feelings, values and attitudes are fundamental components of the well-rounded individual truly augmenting personal growth.

The differences between traditional education and Outward Bound's "experiential" model lie largely in two areas: the setting (traditional classroom vs. the wilderness classroom) and the proportionate emphasis placed on the three objectives listed above. An Outward Bound course, regardless of duration, emphasizes equal cognitive, psychomotor and affective development. Since traditional education focuses most heavily on cognitive learning, the balance of an Outward Bound course positively affects most students by improving confidence, motivation, commitment, trust, communication, honesty. For many, a course provides a high-impact and long-lasting milestone.

### **LEARNING OBJECTIVES defined**

#### **COGNITIVE**

(35%) Map and compass work, expedition, lectures, reading and problem planning/solving, first aid and emergency, preparedness, geology, natural history, ecology, field sanitation, etc.

#### **PSYCHOMOTOR**

(35%) Skill development in activity: backpacking, mountaineering, climbing, rappelling, whitewater rafting, sailing, canoeing, camping/camp craft, etc.

#### **AFFECTIVE**

(30%) Group process, curiosity, self-discovery, structured and unstructured self and group reliance, development of spirit, tenacity, socialization with others, compassion

## **V. APPENDIX B**

### **SAMPLE OF INDEPENDENT STUDY PROJECTS**

The following topics are only samples. Feel free to submit any and all ideas for consideration – be creative! Tools you may want to bring on your course include binoculars, small magnifying glass, camera, small tape recorder, pens, colored pencils, etc. Every student will be issued a journal; you may want to bring a special notebook. Notebook/laptop computers will not survive the rigors of a typical Outward Bound course and should not be brought to course.

#### **Art**

While on your course create a notebook of sketches, watercolors, poems, reflections, aphorisms, photographs and sounds that develop a personal theme.

#### **Astronomy**

1. Outward Bound courses are typically great opportunities for studying the stars. Assume you can only travel by night using the stars as your guide; describe step-by-step directions for retracing your route. This will include a map of the sky with star key. Identify constellations. Describe how other cultures have identified the same stars and constellations and the mythologies behind them.
2. Using the oldest rock you are able to identify, discuss that rocks relation to the furthest star you are able to see through binoculars on a clear night.

#### **English**

1. Read the journals of those who traveled the routes before you (John Wesley Powell's The Exploration of the Colorado River; Harvey and Cohn Fletcher in the Grand Canyon; Edward Abbey's Desert Solitaire in the canyon lands.) Keep a detailed journal of your course including art and poetry. Publish sections in a local or school newspaper.
2. Adventure literature – both fiction and non-fiction – is an important genre. Read a number of books on adventure (Krakauer, Into Thin Air, Admiral Byrd's Alone; Shackleton's Endurance; Huckleberry Finn; Moby Dick; Treasure Island; The Way West; Exodus (the original); Little House on the Prairie.) What parallels can you draw between these literary adventures and your own?

#### **Environmental Studies**

1. Observe, record and document natural versus human impact on your course area. What are the signs of flooding, erosion, deforestation, overuse. Managing public campsites and wilderness access are areas of great environmental concern. Write a paper describing the future of your course area as you see it, including observations of both good and bad management.



2. There are numerous state and federal agencies charged with a wide variety of environmental goals and objectives. Which agencies manage your course area? Describe their mission. How is it being realized? Describe the future of land management in America. What are the primary issues? Who are the big stake holders? How should the complexity of the environmental discussion be successfully resolved? Who wins? Who loses?

### **First Aid/Safety/Sanitation**

1. During your course strict safety policies must be followed. Identify and review these policies. Choose a policy used in rock climbing, first aid or sanitation and describe the origin of the policy, its application, its effect, its outcomes. Were the policies well thought out? Are they open to inspection or written in stone? How do the safety policies used on course apply to the management and welfare of all people?
2. One of the fundamental Outward Bound elements is preparing students to serve in an emergency. In the 50+ year history of the school students have been called upon repeatedly to facilitate a search and rescue or handle some other pressing emergency. Safety in the wilderness hinges on one's ability to sense another when the chips are down. What are the fundamental search, rescue and evacuation skills? How are these skills best taught. Contact the Mountain Rescue Association in Salt Lake City, Utah, for the location of a search and rescue team near you.
3. Obtain American Red Cross First Aid Certification before your course, read three books on wilderness medicine and first aid. What first aid skills and equipment are critical for safe expeditions into the backcountry? Read Accidents in North American Mountaineering, published annually by the American Alpine Club, and debrief one or two accidents in light of your personal philosophy, background and experience. Discuss the single biggest cause of injury in the backcountry.

### **Geography/Geology**

1. Map your course with four different types of map: latitude and longitude; topographic; land form; ecosystem; demographic... Create your own map, including a detailed scale and key. Compare and contrast the information each map provides. Make a geography notebook composed of photographs and drawings. Compare the geography to the geology and how the two impact one another. Identify key geologic events that have shaped the geography of your course area.
2. Describe how the geography of the land impacted the first native cultures in your course area. How does the geography impact other life?

### **History**

1. Your course area is rich in human history from the remains of ancient civilizations to modern cowboys and mining camps. One of the many periods steeped in lore is the Western Expansion; here are the tales of first natives, early settlers, trappers and explorers. Gaining an understanding of the history of your course area will significantly add to your enjoyment. Read John Annerino's Running Wild through the Grand Canyon on the Ancient Indian Path.

2. The history of the Environmental Movement in America is rich lore and controversy, intrigue, political corruption, heroism, failure and magnificent success. How has this movement impacted your course area? What are the major environmental concerns influencing your course area today? Who are the agencies responsible for land use in your course area? Who are the major environmental players impacting your area?

### **Natural History**

1. Study animal tracking before course start. Identify possible animals in the environment in which your course will be held. Document what you see and learn about animal habitat, eating patterns, life cycles, characteristics and behavior.
2. Wildflowers, cactus, forests, lichen, moss, grasses, rocks, rivers, eagles....

### **Nutrition**

Make a list of all food available during your course. What is the nutritional composition of the food: percentage of friendly and unfriendly fat, carbohydrate, protein, vitamins, minerals, water? How many calories do you estimate you burn while at rest, for each mile covered on foot, on each day of your course? What is the source of these calories? How does nutrition contribute to optimal performance? Design a totally alternative menu.

### **Physical Education**

Keep a record of the physical conditioning you did to get ready for your course. Describe your program and an ideal program. Document during your course a record of your physical activity. Record the number of miles traveled per day and the number of calories burned. Note body changes. Document which muscles are used and how. Note any changes caused by altitude. Describe what activity you will need to do to maintain fitness after the course. Define fitness and health. Discuss: motivation, fat, muscle, health, adaptation, exercise, specificity, training, rest, nutrition... Read Cooper, Sheehan, Anderson, Wilder, Ulliot.

### **Political Science**

With few exceptions, our courses are conducted within designated Wilderness Areas. The landmark Wilderness Act of 1964 was a piece of legislation significantly impacting the future of American wilderness. Trace the political development of this Act. What are its future political ramifications? What are the political interests competing for commerce, preservation and recreation in these wilderness areas? Which is more important, a person a job or the environment? How are these two conflicting interests balanced and managed?

### **Psychology/Sociology**

1. The first American Expedition to Mount Everest involved a study of human behavior under stress. An Outward Bound course involves similar dynamics. Read Hans Selye's *The Stress of Life* (the recognized bible on the subject.) Define friendly and unfriendly stress. Keep a record of the stresses and adjustments you experience on your course. Identify and describe responses to stress.

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2. The development of your patrol or crew into a working and functioning team is a major component of your course. Read Abraham Maslow's *Towards a Psychology of Being*.

Identify Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs as one perspective on group dynamics and development. Consider how decisions are made in light of these needs. Discuss your instructors' roll on the course as the course progresses.

3. What is the Outward Bound Process. Define it. How is this Process applicable on both micro and macro levels? How does process relate to personality'?

### **Religion**

Many students find God alive and well in the wilderness. He/She or It has played a significant roll in nurturing and transforming the spirit from the time of the aesthetic desert hermits to the walkabouts of native cultures to the early morning musings of Thomas Merton, Annie Dillard. Describe your personal relation with God and how the wilderness reflects this vision.

### **Service**

Service is a fundamental element of every Outward Bound course. Define the word service and provide examples. Describe examples of service on your course. Reflect upon the school's motto, To Serve, To Strive, and Not To Yield. What place does service play in your life? Read Hesse, *The Journey to the East*; Fox, *A Spirituality Named Compassion*; Greenleaf, *Servant Leadership*.

## **VI. APPENDIX C**

### **ACADEMIC PARTNERSHIPS**

For those students requiring credit from an outside source, an academic partnership has been developed with Western State College of Colorado. Western State College of Colorado would like to invite you to receive college credit for Outward Bound courses through the Department of Continuing Education in cooperation with Outward Bound Wilderness.

Credit can be received on the following basis:

71+ day course 3 to 12 credits  
51-70 day course 3 to 10 credits  
31-50 day course 3 to 8 credits  
25-30 day course 3 to 6 credits  
19-24 day course 3 to 5 credits  
15-18 day course 3 credits  
9-14 day course 2 credits  
5-8 day course 1 credit

Evaluation is based on the student's successful completion of the course; written analysis based on the learning objectives; and the student's fulfillment of the learning objectives as evaluated by the Outward Bound Instructor.

Registration can be completed by contacting Western State College's Department of Continuing Education to request a registration packet. You can also access the registration packet on Western's website: [www.western.edu](http://www.western.edu). In the search bar at the top of the site type in Outward Bound. Registration and tuition of \$125 per semester credit hour (payable to Western State College) must be received by Western State *before* you begin your Outward Bound course. Eligible high school students may also apply for credit.

For further information contact:

Jen Foster, Asst. Director Extended Studies

Western State College of Colorado

phone: 970-943-2885 fax: 970-943-7068 email: [jfoster@western.edu](mailto:jfoster@western.edu)

206 Taylor Hall, Western State College, Gunnison, CO 81231

## VII. APPENDIX D

### INDEPENDENT STUDY CONTRACT

Make sure your instructor has a copy of this contract at course start

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_  
School Attending \_\_\_\_\_  
Name of school awarding credit \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_\_  
Number and type of credits to be earned \_\_\_\_\_  
Sponsor \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
Title of Independent Study \_\_\_\_\_  
Outward Bound Course Number \_\_\_\_\_ Start \_\_\_\_\_ End \_\_\_\_\_

COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING ON SEPARATE PAPER

A. "I would like to pursue an independent study for the following reasons:"

B. Describe your plan, developed cooperatively with your sponsor:

- Goal
- Specific learning activities and outcomes before, during and after course
- Measurable outcomes
- Reading plan

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent / Guardian Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Sponsor(s) Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Instructor Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Instructor Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Registrar Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date