

PDP OE 110: Introduction to Backpacking

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Meets once per week for half semester: 0.5 Credits

Course Description:

This course is an introduction to backpacking, a term used to describe how people travel by foot carrying what they need. Our course is designed around the following objective: a 2-night/3-day backpacking trip along New Hampshire's Monadnock-Sunapee Greenway Trail. With this planning objective in mind, our course will give you all the tools (and the thinking behind the tools and processes) to plan other adventures as well. The Monadnock-Sunapee Greenway Trail Backpacking Trip will be offered as a supplemental non-credit course to practice your skills, but it is not required to pass this credit course.

*****NOTE: This is a non-standard course which means that the deadlines to drop this course differ from most university courses. Please check STUDENT LINK to review these deadlines*****

Course Goals:

The purpose of this PDP class is to provide a comprehensive introduction to the basics of backpacking.

Specific goals include:

- Learning safety management for backpacking
- Learning how skills, gear, and supplies contribute to a successful backpacking experience based on specific goals and conditions for the trip
- Understanding the importance of planning for specific objectives and conditions so that you will be aware of planning for personal trips
- Be prepared to complete the optional non-credit backpacking course to the Monadnock-Sunapee Greenway Trail

Accessibility Statement:

This class is designed as a planning and methods course with heavy emphasis on meeting a trip's objectives. This class will not involve hiking because it is classroom-based. The class will use finger dexterity to tie knots and light stoves among other activities, coordinated full body movement to load and carry backpacks (weighing up to 40 pounds) and set up tents. If you have specific accessibility requirements, please contact me so that we can strategize how best to serve you while still learning some technical skills for outdoor recreation.

Equipment Notice:

Most required equipment (backpacks, stoves, pots, sleeping bags and pads, water treatment) will be provided for instructional purposes. If you have your own backpacking and camping gear, you're welcome to bring it for specific classes. Clothing and footwear are not included, but examples will be available for instructional purposes.

Grading Policy:

This class will be graded Pass/Fail, based on attendance. Please visit the [Registrar's website](#) often to view relevant deadlines! Below is a list of possible grades you may receive in this class:

P – Pass: Completed course requirements, 80% or more classes attended

W – Withdraw: If you drop this class after the specified deadline, you will receive a “W” grade.

MG - Missing Grade: If you decide you do not want to take this course, but forget to drop it, this grade will appear on your transcript. You will still be allowed to graduate, and it will not affect your overall GPA; however, you are strongly encouraged to drop this course within the allotted deadline to avoid this grade. Dropping before the deadline will remove this class from your transcript entirely.

I – Incomplete: If you fail to meet the attendance requirements of this course, you will receive an “I” until you have made up all missed classes. Please make arrangements with your instructor to do so within the following semester. Your grade will be changed to a “P” once you have made up all classes.

AU- Audit: If you intend to audit this class, please fill out and ask your instructor to sign a Class Adjustment/AU form and turn it in to the Registrar's Office by the deadline.

F- Fail: A grade of “F” will only be given in extenuating circumstances.

Attendance Policy & Make-Up Classes:

Because this class is graded solely on attendance and learning is cumulative, it is important that you attend each class. You will need an 80% attendance record to receive a passing grade. You are allowed 1 absence. If you have more than 1 absence, you will need to make up the missed class(es). Please arrange makeup session(s) by contacting the instructor at bbeck@bu.edu.

Blackboard, FitRec Website & Course Evaluation:

A Blackboard course site may be available for this class online at <http://www.learn.bu.edu> and can be accessed by entering your BU username and password. All students enrolled in this class should have access to this site, even if your school does not use Blackboard. This site will give you access to the course syllabus, any additional content, and allow you to email other students in this class. Emergency cancelations as well as other announcements may also be posted here.

For a broader explanation of PDP credit class policies, information on registration, or schedules please visit [FitRec's website](#).

Course evaluations will be sent via email at midterm and at the end of the semester. Please take the time fill these out – your feedback is very important to us!

Student Conduct:

Boston University's codes of conduct are enforced at the Fitness and Recreation Center at all times. Use of Boston University facilities is a privilege and participants are expected to be good citizens and respect the rights of others. Individuals who engage in unacceptable or irresponsible behavior may have their access to the Fitness and Recreation Center revoked or modified indefinitely as determined by the Executive Director of Physical Education, Recreation and Dance. Students may be subject to further university disciplinary action as outlined in the [Boston University Code of Student Responsibilities](#).

Schedule:

Class 1: What is your objective and what are your conditions? Everything else follows from these two questions. Backpacking guide Andrew Skurka puts it this way: “A backpacker needs the gear, supplies, and skills that are appropriate for their objective and the conditions.”

- Objective: Monadnock-Sunapee Greenway Trail, New Hampshire
 - We will emphasize skill development: Gear’s in your backpack. Skills are in your head.
- Conditions: What conditions will we encounter, and how will they impact our planning?

Class 2: The Backpack [gear, skills]

- Carrying capacity and style (frame vs. frameless)
- Packing principles
- Maintenance and care

Class 3: Sleeping systems [gear, skills]

- Shelter: tents, tarps, hammocks, and built-structures
- Sleeping bags and sleeping pads
- Campsite selection principles

Class 4: Consumables [gear, supplies, skills]

- Food and menu planning; safe food handling and storage
- Water: sources, treatment, and storage
- Stoves and fuel
- Cookware

Class 5: What you wear [gear, skills]

- Appropriate for the objective and conditions
- How to balance insulation, weight, and protection

Class 6: Safety management and related on-trip requirements [skills]

- Hazards and safety management: weather, terrain, first aid, fitness, group dynamics, equipment, flora and fauna
- Bathroom, pacing, and other day-to-day needs

Class 7: Logistics [gear, supplies, skills]

- Navigation, permits, paperwork, transportation to/from trailhead
- Leave No Trace

Class 8: Shakedown trip plan [gear, supplies, skills]

- To tie it all together, you will produce an annotated gear list, menu, and safety management plan for our planned backpacking trip to New Hampshire’s M-S-G Trail

Optional non-credit course: The Monadnock-Sunapee Greenway Trail: offered on select weekends

Join a 2-night/3-day (Friday-Sunday) backpacking trip to practice your skills and gain new ones. There is no better teacher than experience. Based on the group’s objective and the conditions, we will finalize the itinerary together, but expect to hike above tree line on rocky terrain, and through forested lands. The trip will have a fee that covers transportation and food. Gear rentals are available for additional cost. Come explore this lesser-known but fantastic trail with BU’s Outdoor Program, FitTreks!