

Class Syllabus

Survey of Outdoor Education Literature (PE 440)

Course

PE 440 Survey Outdoor Education Literature – 2 credits

Course Instructor, Office and Contact Information

Ron Watters is an adjunct faculty member of the Physical Education Department. He is the former director of the ISU Outdoor Program and the author of seven books on outdoor activities. He is one of the founders of the Association of Outdoor Recreation and Education, and is the director of the National Outdoor Book Awards.

Note that he is a part time instructor and does not have office hours like full-time faculty. Feel free to contact him via email (wattron@isu.edu). You may reach him at the Outdoor Program Office (236-3912), or feel free to call him at home 232-6857.

University Catalog Course Description

"An examination of recent research, literature and contemporary writing in outdoor education. Course work consists of a series of reading assignments followed by oral reports and class discussions."

Course Content

This is a course on outdoor literature. Outdoor literature, of course, is a broad topic and includes several different genres including writings in outdoor adventure, nature, the environment, and adventure travel writing. To keep things manageable, the emphasis of this course is on outdoor adventure writing: exploration, survival, sailing, mountaineering, whitewater boating, kayaking, etc. But outdoor adventure writing can't be totally divorced from other related genres. There are a number of key works which--although not technically outdoor adventure--have had a profound influence in all outdoor writing. One prime example is Thoreau's *Walden*. Knowingly or unknowingly, many of the reasons that people offer these days on why they participate in outdoor adventure activities can be traced to the pages of *Walden*.

In addition to covering important works which had an influence on outdoor adventure writing, it is also the purpose of this course to provide some sense of history. Outdoor adventure activities such as mountaineering and river running have a rich history populated with fascinating men and women, and filled with triumphs and failures, and real-life mysteries. A great amount of satisfaction is derived from knowing something about the people and events which shaped outdoor activities. Mountaineering, for instance, is much more alive and you have a greater appreciation for the sport when you understand the struggles that climbers went through in the past.

Thus this class encompasses outdoor adventure, its history and the writings which influence outdoor adventure. To provide variety, readings will be selected from a range of different outdoor activities. Some of those activities include survival, mountaineering, horseback riding, river running, arctic exploration, sailing, canoeing, kayaking, desert hiking, and backpacking.

Texts ****

Three texts are required for the class:

Krakauer, John. *Into Thin Air: A Personal Account of the Mt. Everest Disaster*. New York: Random House, 1997. (Paperback or hardbound versions are acceptable)

Nash, Roderick. *Wilderness and the American Mind*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967. (Used copies include several revised editions. All editions are acceptable.)

Watters, Ron. *An Anthology of the Outdoor Experience*. Pocatello, Idaho: Idaho State University, 2001.

Course Readings ****

The anthology text (listed above) covers the following authors and outdoor personalities: Henry David Thoreau, Mark Twain, Edward Whymper, Wallace Stegner, John Wesley Powell, Isabella Bird, John Muir, Mary Kingsley, Robert Falcon Scott, Roald Amundsen, Sir Ernest Shackleton, Roland Huntford, Aldo Leopold, Sigurd Olson, Edward Abbey, Colin Fletcher, and Walter Blackadar. Complete citations are provided in the anthology.

Other class readings will come from a variety of sources. Included among those are the following:

Deschner, Whit. *Travels With a Kayak*. Baker, Oregon: Eddie Tern Press, 1997.

Dillard, Annie. *Pilgrim at Tinker Creek*. New York: Perennial Classics, 1974.

Herzog, Maurice. *Annapurna*. New York: Lyons, 1997.

Hayes, David. *Passion Below Zero: Essays from Last Chance, Idaho*. Ketchum, Idaho: Lost River Press, 1995.

Houston, Pam. *Cowboys Are My Weakness*. New York: Pocket Books, 1992.

Gillman, Peter and Leni. *The Wildest Dream: The Biography of George Mallory*. Seattle: The Mountaineers, 2000.

London, Jack. *Short Stories of Jack London*. New York: Funk & Wagnalls, nd.

McPhee, John. *Coming into the Country*. New York: Bantam, 1976.

Service, Robert. *Collected Poems of Robert Service*. New York: Dodd, Mead and Company, 1968.

Russell, Osbourne. *Journal of a Trapper*. New York: MFJ Books, 1955.

Walka, Ann Weiler. *Waterlines: Journeys on a Desert River*. Flagstaff, Arizona: Red Lake Books, 1990.

Williams, Terry Tempest. *Refuge*. New York: Random House, 1991.

Course Requirements & Assessments

This is a reading course, and the best way to do well in the class is to keep up with the regularly assigned readings. By keeping up with the readings, you'll be able to fully participate in classroom discussions which are a key part of the learning experience.

Assessment of your progress in the class is done through written tests. Most classes will have a short quiz on that day's reading material. Additionally, one mid term and one final exam will be given which cover readings, lectures and classroom discussions.

Class Schedule

The class is scheduled for Tuesday and Thursday from 3:30 to 5:00 pm. Since a two-credit class normally meets two hours a week, this provides for flexibility in the schedule and allows for some off-days. The off-days will be scheduled during times of particularly heavy reading loads. The hope is to

provide you with adequate study time to digest the material and keep up with out-of-class assignments. The instructor will keep you apprised since the schedule will vary depending on class progress.

Attendance Policy

According to Physical Education Departmental policy, students must attend at least 75% of a class in order to receive a passing grade. Since frequent quizzes will be given and major tests will cover material discussed in class, it is to your advantage to make a concerted effort to attend all classes.

Evaluation Criteria and Grading Scale ****

Quizzes, mid term and final exam are each 1/3 of the total grade.

Idaho State University standard four-point grading scale is utilized:

A 4.0 Excellent Performance
A- 3.70 Excellent Performance
B+ 3.30 Good Performance
B 3.00 Good Performance
B- 2.70 Good Performance
C+ 2.30 Adequate Performance
C 2.00 Adequate Performance
C- 1.70 Adequate Performance
D+ 1.30 Marginal Performance
D 1.00 Marginal Performance
D- .70 Marginal Performance
F 0.0 Unacceptable Performance

Reasonable Accommodation for Students with Disabilities

If you have a diagnosed disability or believe that you might require "reasonable accommodation" on the part of the instructor, please call the Director, Center of Services for Students with Disabilities at 282-3599. As a part of the Americans with Disabilities Act, it is the responsibility of the student to disclose a disability prior to requesting reasonable accommodations.