

Encountering the Madawaska: Trip Description

Background

The Madawaska River lies in the Ottawa River Valley, a tributary of that great river, which itself flows into the St. Lawrence Seaway (the second-largest river in North America). The mighty Ottawa is one of only three large (mean discharge $> 500\text{m}^3/\text{s}$) rivers flowing into the St. Lawrence, and on its own carries some 80% as much water as flows out of the entire Great Lakes system; in previous geological eras the Ottawa River Valley drained much of the Canadian landmass West to the Rockies. The watershed of the Ottawa – including the Madawaska – has long been occupied by the Algonquin Anishnaabe people, probably for thousands of years before contact with Europeans in the 17th Century. The river likely takes its name from the band that lived along its banks, the Matouweskaroni or “people of the river shallows.” Algonquin territory in the Madawaska region was claimed by the British government in 1819 via the Rideau Purchase, a treaty negotiated with the Mississauga; this purchase has been ruled unlawful, and the region forms part of a [complex land claims case](#) which has been under negotiation for several decades.

Like much of the Ottawa River Valley, the Madawaska River basin was briefly below sea level after the last ice age and formed part of the [Champlain Sea](#), until the Earth’s surface rebounded from its glacial depression. Silt and fossils from that redoubt of the Atlantic can still be found in the region. Today it sits below the Opeongo Hills, which extend Eastward across the Ottawa to join with the Laurentian Highlands.

Little written evidence about the Madawaska before colonization has survived. It was likely used as a transportation route by native peoples and fur traders, though its ferocious untamed rapids made travel on it more difficult than on other rivers. In the centuries after colonization, the Madawaska was long used as a logging route, and more recently has been dammed as a source of hydroelectric power, flooding some of the most dangerous rapid areas and some historic settlements. The regional ecology is thus tightly tied with the water release cycles controlled by Ontario Power Generation.

Like most Ontario rivers, the Madawaska is a “drop-pool” river – a sequence of short rapids section separated by stretches of slow-moving water. Average air temperatures in October are under 10°C, and water temperatures are correspondingly cool. River hazards include exposed and sunken rocks, fallen branches, hydraulic phenomena such as waves and holes, and other common whitewater features.

Paddler Co-op occupies [a small wooded area on the North bank of the Madawaska](#). The river bottom falls quickly away from the land, and water is above head height just a few feet offshore. The river directly opposite the boat launch is slow-moving in the Fall despite being located just a few hundred meters from a substantial Class II rapid.

Schedule and Activities

Friday, Oct. 6: Travel to Paddler Co-op

We will depart separately in private vehicles on the afternoon of Friday, Oct. 6, convening at the [Paddler Co-op campground](#) (6535 Palmer Rd, Palmer Rapids, ON K0J 2E0). Cell reception is spotty and navigators are advised to store the driving route as an [offline area](#) before departure. The trip takes some 3.5 hours in good traffic conditions, but as we will be traveling on a holiday weekend, all travel estimates will be unreliable! Individual vehicles should manage their own dinner plans for Friday night. If you arrive before your instructor, pick a campsite (the best areas for large groups are to the left as you drive in) and set up camp. We will meet for a brief seminar/planning session around 7:00 Friday evening, barring traffic delays.

Saturday, Oct. 7: Whitewater Instruction

We will begin the day early with a communal breakfast, followed by a brief group meeting before we gather at **9:00AM** for a morning of basic skills instruction. We'll return to Paddler Co-op to make a cold lunch and go back out on the river for our first encounter with fast-moving water, where we will practice basic whitewater maneuvers and potentially run the lower set of rapids at Jessup's Chute. The course will wrap up around 5:00, after which we will convene for another communal meal and group discussions.

Sunday, Oct. 8: Running the Lower Mad

If all goes well, we will spend Sunday running a short stretch of river a dozen or so kilometers downstream of Paddler Co-op. A description of the route [can be found on the Whitewater Ontario website](#). Water levels in the early-summer ranges described on that website are unlikely for this time of year, and will most likely be in the 25-50CMS range. OPG [provides a record of recent flow rates from the dam above Jessup's](#), as well as [a real-time chart](#). We will need to be on the road before 9:00, so we'll spend the morning making breakfast, packing lunches, **and** packing our gear. The river run will take us to 4:00PM or 5:00PM and, after a debrief, we'll hope to head directly home. You'll be tired and it's a long drive, so **drivers should exercise caution on the way home**.



Packing Checklist -- Encountering the Madawaska

Camp Clothing

Avoid Cotton except for sleeping

- long sleeve shirt 1x
- short sleeve shirt 2x
- pants 2x
- rain coat
- closed-toe shoes
- warm layer (fleece, down, etc)
- hat and gloves
- sleeping clothes
- towel (you'll get wet!)
- underwear, socks

Paddling Gear

- swim shirt or quick-dry shirt
- swimsuit
- water shoes
- warm layer (can be the same layer as above, but expect it to get wet)
- wetsuit/drysuit if you have it
- dry bags, if you have them

First Aid / Self-care

- allergy pills (if you might need them)
- blister care
- tampons
- ibuprofen
- hand sanitizer
- toothbrush/paste
- personal medications, with an extra day
- sun screen
- chapstick with sunblock

Individual Camping Gear

- sleeping bag
- sleeping pad
- tent (to share w/ classmates)
- bowl & spoon
- water bottles
- sunglasses
- headlamp
- camp soap

- snack food (granola bars, Cliff bars, fruit bars, dried fruit, trail mix, etc.)
- folding knife/multi-tool, if you have one
- tupperware covered container for carrying food/leftovers

Other, Misc

- notebook, pens/pencils
- copy of your health insurance info
- spending money (mostly for car trip)
- underwater camera, or camera in drybag/pelican case

Student Code of Conduct

RLG239 Excursion, “Encountering the Madawaska”

The purpose of this document is to make “Encountering the Madawaska” student participants aware of their responsibilities and the expectations of them on the trip. Included in this document are the rules that students will be required to follow during the course of the trip. Please read the following statements and sign at the bottom to acknowledge receipt of this information.

Program expectations:

1. I recognize that I am travelling to Northern Ontario and that this is an optional trip undertaken to supplement RLG239.
2. I recognize that safety is of central importance and will endeavour to always work and travel in a safe manner. I recognize that, effectively, my own safety begins with careful consideration of my own actions, and the understanding how those actions can directly impact the safety of those around me.
3. As a representative of RLG239 and the University of Toronto, I agree to engage in respectful and reasonable behavior with self, classmates, faculty, guiding professionals, and all others with whom I come in contact during the trip. I agree to avoid conduct that, by itself, or in conjunction with the conduct of others, disrupts or impairs the normal functions of the trip.
4. I agree to cooperate with and carry out any reasonable directives, written or verbal, from faculty, guiding personnel or others acting in performance of their duties. I recognize that safety directives from these persons are of the highest importance and must be responded to with alacrity.
5. I understand that my full participation (as described more fully in the assignment description) will be required. I understand that I will be working in small and large groups, and that all group activities are obligatory.
6. I understand that my punctuality will be very important to the success of the trip. I will endeavour to be punctual at all times and ready for the planned activity.
7. I understand that I will be responsible for certain tasks on the trip, and will be required to complete them to the best of my abilities.
8. In addition to the above, I specifically agree to refrain from the following for the duration of the trip: use of drugs or alcohol; sexual activity with classmates or other persons; sexual harassment as defined by [the University's sexual harassment policy](#).

I, the undersigned, have read and understand the **Student Code of Conduct** and agree to abide by it. I understand that any action that jeopardizes myself, another participant or the trip, or any of the supervisors/staff members could result in being sent home early. I understand that in this situation, costs will be incurred by myself and not by the University of Toronto.



PLEASE SIGN

Signature of Participant

Print Name

Dated

**FOR A MINOR (if participant is under 18)
PARENT OR GUARDIAN OF MINOR MUST SIGN**

Signature of Parent or Legal Guardian

Print Name

Dated

This document is written based on a similar form from the [University of Toronto Risk Management and Insurance site](#) for off-campus activities.



DEPARTMENT FOR THE STUDY OF RELIGION, UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

Encountering the Madawaska: Trip Responsibilities

We'll be breaking up into groups of 4 or 5; each group will have at least one of the following.

- logistics
 - gear wrangler
 - food shopper
 - chef
 - navigator
 - (groups of 5): Leave No Trace/health and safety officer
- intellectual
 - documentarian
 - ecology teacher
 - history teacher
 - geology teacher

Use the course spreadsheet to sign up for these tasks

Gear Wrangler

Gear Wranglers make sure that the group has adequate gear for the trip.

Qualifications

- knows at least a little about outdoor gear, or is willing to learn
- organized and meticulous
- resourceful

Responsibilities

- ensure that each individual has access to the personal gear required for the trip ("Individual Camping Gear" in the packing list)
- determine whether members of your group have any dry bags or wetsuits
- co-ordinate with other Gear Wranglers to collect the "Group Camping Gear" for the trip

Chef

Plans meal and organizes cooking of one meal (Saturday breakfast, Saturday dinner, or Sunday breakfast), co-ordinates with other chefs to make lunch plans, and provides shopping list to food shoppers. Meal should not be too elaborate & should take into account the tight trip schedule.

Qualifications

- enjoys cooking
- able to give direction to others
- can improvise with limited resources

Responsibilities

- solicits information on individual dietary restrictions, including food allergies & religious/ethical restrictions
- plans healthy meal for that day. In some cases multiple dishes may be required (e.g. a vegan

- version of a meat pasta sauce, gluten-free noodles boiled separately from wheat pasta, etc.)
- gives list of ingredients to food shopper
- ensures that gear wrangler is aware of cooking gear requirements (e.g., if a large pot is required)

Food Shopper

Makes sure that all ingredients for 1 meal are present on the trip. Co-ordinates with other food shoppers to make sure there's enough lunch food. May want to arrange a group shopping trip rather than shopping individually. Ensures that there's enough food to feed all of us (also the chefs' responsibility).

Qualifications

- enjoys shopping. Has a credit card or some other way to make initial cash layout before getting reimbursed.

Responsibilities

- make sure everything on the shopping list gets bought
- pack food for transport

Navigator

Makes sure everyone gets to Paddler Co-op on time

Qualifications

- good with maps. punctual.

Responsibilities

- familiarize yourself with the trip route & potential alternatives (in case of terrible traffic)
- bring a map that you can access offline (offline maps stored on a phone that will not run out of battery power are a good option)
- co-ordinate pickup & drop-off of participants
- search for a suitable place to stop for dinner in both directions
- ensure that your vehicle arrives at Paddler Co-op on time

Leave No Trace / Health and Safety Officer

Guides group on Leave No Trace practices regarding e.g. toileting, waste disposal, etc. Also helps set up handwashing stations and reminds classmates of whitewater safety

Qualifications

- Understands the [Leave No Trace principles](#)

Responsibilities

- talk to group about LNT
- inspect campsites and lunch spots before departure to ensure they have been left clean
- implement handwashing protocols during cooking activities
- remind other participants about safety protocols, while deferring to guides and course instructor on this issue

Documentarian

Documents this event with pictures and potential video, interviews, etc.

Qualifications

- enjoys using a camera

- able to take care of **own** camera without getting it wet

Responsibilities

- document all phases of the event, including lessons, whitewater practice, camping, group meetings, river running
-

History Teacher

Teaches your group about the history of the region

Qualifications

- enjoys history

Responsibilities

- do the supplemental readings
 - talk to your group about what you've learned. Draw up a 1-page max sheet of bullet point summaries.
 - help lead full-group discussion about history of the region.
-

Ecology Teacher

Teaches your group about the history of the region

Qualifications

- enjoys ecology

Responsibilities

- do the supplemental readings
 - talk to your group about what you've learned. Draw up a 1-page max sheet of bullet point summaries.
 - help lead full-group discussion about ecology of the region.
-

Geology Teacher

Teaches your group about the geology of the region

Qualifications

- enjoys geology

Responsibilities

- do the supplemental readings
- talk to your group about what you've learned. Draw up a 1-page max sheet of bullet point summaries.
- help lead full-group discussion about geology of the region.

Electronics Use Policy
RLG239 Excursion, “Encountering the Madawaska”

Mobile phones and portable electronics are powerful devices that can enrich our understanding of the world and provide an important safety function on an outdoor trip. We will rely on phones for navigation to and from Paddler Co-op, for instance. However, they are also extremely distracting and greatly diminish the “immersive” nature of an outdoors experience. They are also easily lost or destroyed in a whitewater environment.

On this trip, cell phone use is restricted to the following circumstances:

- cell phones are permitted during travel to and from Paddler Co-op
- at the end of the day on Saturday, we’ll have a brief leisure period either before or after dinner; you can use this time to briefly make contact with family if absolutely necessary
- in an emergency, one or more of us will use cell phones to contact emergency services

At all other times, electronics should be safely stowed and turned off. Recent studies have indicated that simply having a device in your immediate vicinity can be a distraction, *even if the device is shut off*. For this reason phones are best stored in cars, except on Sunday, when storage in a drybag may be appropriate.

I have read and understood this document, and agree to abide by the above policies

PLEASE SIGN

Signature of Student

Print Name

Dated

Participant Medical Information Form
RLG239 Excursion, “Encountering the Madawaska”

Name: _____

Address: _____

Provincial/Territorial health card/medical number(s): _____

Expiry date(s) (if applicable): _____

Emergency Contact Information

In case of emergency the University should contact: (one or more persons)

Contact person: _____ Telephone: _____

Email: _____ Other (cell phone): _____

Relationship to the participant: _____

Contact person: _____ Telephone: _____

Email: _____ Other (cell phone): _____

Relationship to the participant:

Medical Information

*Disclosure of medical information is voluntary, but please remember that **failure to disclose can put you and your partners at risk, and make it difficult for your instructors to design a program that is safe for you.** The class trip may involve travel to areas where rapid evacuation is difficult; conditions with acute and dangerous symptoms, such as allergies, cannot easily be treated in the field when the condition is not known to the first responder.*



1. Do you have any illnesses and/or medical conditions that have required the regular care of a doctor (eg. physical ailments, allergies, heart disease, or diabetes)? If yes, please explain (use an additional page, if necessary).

2. List all medications that you are taking at this time and the dosages.

3. List any special dietary requirements (eg. food allergies):

-

Health Statement

I attest that I am in good health. I further attest that I am capable of caring for myself during the course of the trip. With that understanding, I certify that I have not been recently treated for, nor am I aware of any physical condition that would create a hazard to myself or other members of the trip. **I hereby give permission for any necessary medical treatment by qualified medical practitioners in the event of illness or injury sustained while participating in the trip.**

Name: _____ Signature: _____

Parent/Guardian's Signature (if under 18): _____

Date: _____

This document is written based on a similar form from the [University of Toronto Risk Management and Insurance site](#) for off-campus activities.

**Consent Form and Release from Liability for
RLG239 Excursion, “Encountering the Madawaska”**

Please read this document carefully. It must be signed by all students. If the student is a minor (under 18 years of age), at least one parent or guardian (referred to below as “Parent”) must also sign, as evidence of Parent’s acknowledgement and agreement to the following, on the **Parent’s behalf and on behalf of the minor student.**

RLG239 is a second year religion course at the University of Toronto that examines the cultures of rivers and canoes through historical, literary, anthropological and practical exploration. This consent form governs participation in an optional white water canoe trip on the Madawaska River (“Encountering the Madawaska”), which is offered to supplement the course. All participants are required to complete this form before the trip dates (October 6-8, 2017).

BY SIGNING THIS LEGAL DOCUMENT, YOU ARE GIVING UP CERTAIN LEGAL RIGHTS, INCLUDING THE RIGHT TO SUE IN CERTAIN CIRCUMSTANCES, SO PLEASE READ CAREFULLY.

1. I acknowledge that I have voluntarily applied to participate in the RLG239 Wild Water “Encountering the Madawaska” Trip run by the University of Toronto, and that I have read the description of the trip as it appears in the University of Toronto Outdoors website (<http://outdoors.hackinghistory.ca/wild-water/>) together with all information contained in the supplementary material I have received from Professor Matt Price. I am voluntarily participating on this trip and I recognize there are potential risks and hazards involved.
2. The following precautions will be taken by the University of Toronto or by its subcontracting partner, Paddler Co-op:
 - Participants will be supplied with outfitted canoes, PFD’s, paddles and gear for whitewater trips;
 - Participants will receive a recommended packing list provided to ensure proper clothing to complement the provided whitewater gear;
 - Paddler Co-op will provide basic whitewater skills instruction on the first day of the trip, and professional guiding on the river-running day. Participation in river running will be contingent on guides’ assessment of participant skill levels.
 - A pre-trip discussion during RLG239 on Oct. 1, 2017 will include detailed discussion of participant roles, rights, and responsibilities, including detailed safety policies.
3. I understand and acknowledge that despite the precautions taken by the Governing Council of the University of Toronto, there are potential risks associated with “Encountering the Madawaska”, including risks of physical injury, accident, sickness,

death, delay, inconvenience or damage to personal property as a result of my participation in this trip. I understand that these risks can be reduced by carefully following instructions at all times while participating in the Program. Some of the associated risks arise from and include, but are not limited to, the following activities:

- Travel by car, bus, etc.;
- Whitewater canoeing, on rapids up to Class II on the International River Scale of Difficulty;
- Encounters with wildlife;
- Exposure to the outdoors and weather (including the potential for cold, heat, and storms);
- Activities related to tent camping;

4. I agree for myself, my family, heirs and executors that the Governing Council of the University of Toronto and its officers, employees, agents, and assigns shall not be liable for any injury to my person or loss or damage to my personal property arising from or in any way resulting from my participation in the trip unless such injury, loss, or damage is caused by the sole negligence of the University or its officers, employees, agents, or assigns while acting within the scope of their duties.

I HAVE READ THIS AGREEMENT CAREFULLY AND FULLY UNDERSTAND ITS CONTENT. I UNDERSTAND THAT THIS IS A CONSENT AND RELEASE FROM LIABILITY AND CONSTITUTES A CONTRACT BETWEEN ME AND THE GOVERNING COUNCIL OF THE UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO. I AGREE TO PARTICIPATE IN THE PROGRAM ON THIS BASIS.

PLEASE SIGN

Signature of Releaser

Print Name

Dated

**FOR A MINOR (if participant is under 18)
PARENT OR GUARDIAN OF MINOR MUST SIGN**

I, as a parent or legal guardian of the above named minor, hereby give my permission for my child or ward to participate in the trip and further agree, individually and on behalf of my child or ward, to the terms of the above.

Signature of Parent or Legal Guardian

Print Name

Dated

This document is written based on a similar form from the [University of Toronto Risk Management and Insurance site](#) for off-campus activities.

**Media Use Permission Form
RLG239 Excursion, “Encountering the Madawaska”**

This permission form grants the Governing Council of the University of Toronto and University of Toronto Outdoors, and their legal representatives, full and exclusive permission to use your name, visual likeness, and personal quotations in any public or private media in connection with the marketing, website and communication activities and materials of the Wild Water Madawaska trip, “Encountering the Madawaska”.

I HAVE READ THIS AGREEMENT AND I UNDERSTAND THAT THIS CONSTITUTES A CONTRACT BETWEEN ME AND THE GOVERNING COUNCIL OF THE UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO. I AGREE TO SHARE PHOTOS AND IMAGES OF MYSELF, AND UNDERSTAND THAT OTHERS MAY USE AND REDISTRIBUTE THESE IMAGES IN RELATION TO THIS COURSE.

PLEASE SIGN

_____ Signature of Releaser	_____ Print Name	_____ Dated
--------------------------------	---------------------	----------------

**FOR A MINOR (if participant is under 18)
PARENT OR GUARDIAN OF MINOR MUST SIGN**

I, as a parent or legal guardian of the above named minor, agree, individually and on behalf of my child or ward, to the terms of the above.

_____ Signature of Parent or Legal Guardian	_____ Print Name	_____ Dated
--	---------------------	----------------

This document is written based on a similar form from the [University of Toronto Risk Management and Insurance site](#) for off-campus activities.

Encountering the Madawaska: Personal Risk Mitigation Plan

This Pass/Fail assignment is worth 5% of your final grade, and is due 10/02.

Before completing this assignment, carefully read the Trip Description, as well as Chapter 3 of [Beames & Brown](#), *Adventurous Learning*, esp. pp. 24-25, 30-33.

Risk Assessment

“Risk” is not only a concept of recent origin (cf. [Beames & Brown 2016](#)), but a feature of many parts of our experience: physical, social, emotional, etc. In a brief statement or essay of no more than 300 words, describe the various risks involved in a trip such as “Encountering the Madawaska,” foregrounding those you think are most serious.

Learning Goals

One often-repeated risk management principle for outdoor educators is that risks should be taken only where they contribute directly to the learning outcomes of the experience (or, phrased differently, to the mission of the organization). What goals have you set yourself for this trip (or, if you are unable to attend, what goals *would* you set for yourself if you were to come)? Answer in no more than 200 words.

Personal Risk Mitigation Strategy

How can you personally minimize unnecessary risk, and optimize the outcome in any risky situation you encounter, while simultaneously attaining the goals stated above? Again, answer in approximately 200 words.

Group Risk Mitigation

What responsibilities lie not with you, but with your instructors? What can you expect from Prof. Price and your guides? Can you enhance the learning outcomes for the group as a whole? Another 200 words

This assignment asks you to think about the risks and learning outcomes associated with our upcoming excursion. Details Coming Soon