

ECOEE COURSE POLICIES AND INFORMATION

The Environmental Conservation and Outdoor Education Expedition (ECOEE) is a program of the Department of Recreation Park and Tourism Administration (RPTA) that is affiliated with the Wilderness Education Association (WEA). The following policies incorporate both institutions. Please consider the following and contact the Program Coordinator or Course Instructor with questions and comments.

Administration and Logistics

- WEA and Western Illinois University's policies, procedures, and student handbook expectations of conduct will be followed.
- Tuition, fees, and refunds are to be handled according to the affiliate/program's policies and procedures.
- Students accepted into the ECOEE program will begin making payments to ECOEE during the spring semester to purchase books, gear and ECOEE promotional merchandise, make reservations for campgrounds and conferences, obtain permits, and so on, for the fall semester.
 - Usually an initial fee of \$300 (non-refundable) is to be paid by spring break.
 - Tuition for the hours of credit must be paid to the University. Tuition is not included in the ECOEE Fee. As an ECOEE student you will be involved in determining fees, itinerary, and other expedition matters during the pre-requisite courses.
 - The final fee must be paid to ECOEE before departure from campus.
 - Attendance at the Wilderness Education Association's annual conference is part of the spring pre-requisite courses. Conference and lodging fees are not included in ECOEE funds.
 - If monies are left over at the end of the expedition/semester, they will be divided evenly among all participants that have completed the expedition/semester.
 - If written cancellation is received 30 days or more before the start of the fall semester, all fees minus the initial payment are refunded. If written cancellation is received during the last 30 days before the start of the expedition, one half of the total fees will be refunded. No refunds are made for "no-shows". No refunds will be made after the start of the program.
- If you have not previously had a class that is offered on ECOEE you must be enrolled in that class while participating in the expedition. You must also be enrolled as a full-time student (12 undergraduate hours/9 graduate hours) to be an expedition member. If you have previously had a class, you will still be expected to be present at all visits, classes, and expedition activities. You will not have to complete course paperwork or assignments for the particular class.
- All participants must have personal medical insurance that is adequate to cover expenses in case of illness, injury, or evacuation. If you do not have regular health insurance, special short-term trip insurance can be purchased from an insurance agent. Each participant must arrange for obtaining his/her own medical insurance. Make sure you know the arrangements that are available as a full-time WIU student.
- Included in the participant packet (received during pre-requisite classes) are personal clothing, equipment and gear lists typically necessary for ECOEE. You will have to provide your own clothing and some of your own equipment (backpack, sleeping bags, boots). You will have an opportunity to purchase needed items during the planning of the expedition during the pre-requisite classes. Group gear rental fees, food, transportation fees, conference fees, and permit fees are included in the expedition fee. The Expedition Planning pre-requisite will familiarize you with the clothing selections and gear and equipment. ECOEE has several accounts through which some personal purchases may be made at wholesale prices.
- The WEA course is for mature adults over 18 years old without serious behavioral, psychological or emotional problems. Traveling, working, studying, and living with 15 – 20 others 24/7 for four months is rigorous and demanding. One should consider their ability to cope, thrive, resolve conflict, and maintain positive attitudes in circumstances where there is little personal time or space.
- Course attendance/participation does not guarantee certification. The following tend to be an advantage for those seeking certification: a previous base of outdoor skills and experience; serious attitude toward the curriculum; high motivation; prepared to teach lessons; appreciation and/or acceptance of the process of journaling, evaluation, and group dynamics; and physical fitness.
- A wilderness course in a group setting has innate risks. Though courses are planned and risk is managed to the best degree possible, not all factors are controllable. Among other things, individuals may

experience exposure to unexpected travel problems, cultural clashes, Federal searches, extreme weather, high altitude, steep cliffs, allergens, deep water, wildlife, sea creatures, loss of food and potable water, separation from the instructors, etc. Individuals may experience minor to major injuries, loss of limb or life, interpersonal and intrapersonal stresses, damaged or lost personal possessions, etc. This is shared to express that one's safety is not a guarantee and the nature of a wilderness course is unpredictable. Please talk to the ECOEE Coordinator about concerns you may have.

- Though the WEA course requires only average strength, you will be traveling through rough terrain with heavy packs (at times potentially more than half of your body weight depending upon course length, location, specialized skills/travel). We will keep them as light as possible. You will also be involved in various modes of travel in a variety of terrains and conditions. One should be as physically fit as possible so as not to "hold up" the group. You may be required to get a medical examination by a physician that certifies you as medically fit to participate in the expedition. You must pass a "fitness test" at the beginning of the fall semester, before ECOEE leaves campus.
- The WEA course is conducted in the wild outdoors away from doctors and ambulances. No prescription or nonprescription medication is allowed without notifying course instructors. Tobacco products, alcohol, and illegal drugs are not to be used at any time while on the course (even during "off" periods). See WIU/ECOEE student conduct policy statement (found on the website).
- If you have knee, shoulder, wrist or back problems, have serious allergies, or are on medication for an illness you must discuss your condition with the program coordinator and/or course instructor prior to enrolling.
- Same or mixed gender tenting practices on courses will be determined by the affiliate and specific situations. Individuals uncomfortable with decisions are invited to inform the course instructor so other tenting arrangements can be made. WIU will allow reasonable co-ed tenting in the backcountry, determined by student comfort, patrol resources, and equipment. In the frontcountry co-ed tenting will be avoided.

Course Tone, Expectations and Challenges

- Teaching is on a college level and participants should be motivated for a highly educational program. Journaling, group processing, and extensive evaluation are utilized.
- Curriculum points will start at the basic level and progress from there. This is for several reasons, two being to (1) prevent errors in assuming level of student knowledge, and (2) create a common base for all members to build on and advance.
- Though this program is educational, it also encourages enjoyment, fun, companionship, reasonable comfort, and good food as integral to any successful course.
- This program is not designed to be a high-risk adventure for the sake of adventure, nor designed to be therapeutic in nature. They are educational trips primarily; however, adventure is an integral component. Risk management and enjoyment are stressed. The goal of any WEA program is to teach leadership, technical skills, judgment, and decision-making; and to enable participants to plan and execute a safe and enjoyable expedition for a group with minimum environmental impact.
- One of the principle outcomes you can expect from the course is a better understanding of yourself as a person. You will be expected to critically analyze your strengths and weaknesses. You will also be evaluated by your peers and by your instructors. You will be expected to participate in all course activities to the best of your ability. You will find that ECOEE is unlike courses taught in the classroom. Emphasis is placed on learning experientially. You will need to be self-motivated, adaptable, focused, and self-disciplined. Please be prepared for it.
- The course may provide a variety of challenges-- physical, emotional, social, spiritual. The setting often times can be intense, uncomfortable, and unexpected. Private time may be at a minimum. There are many factors encountered on a course that cannot be predicted. Please be aware of this nature of a wilderness course.
- Because there is a lot of material to cover, and time for student practice and demonstration of skills and knowledge is necessary, it is important and expected that students appreciate the need for timeliness, responsibility, and communication.
- WEA and WIU strive to have no prejudice of any kind on its programs. WEA does not discriminate on

the basis of race, color, religion, creed, sexual orientation, national origin, age, or disability in the administration of its admission or employment policies. Reasonable accommodation is made for special needs (dietary, fears, physical, psychological or emotional conditions) but the nature of the program precludes accommodation for all conditions. Potential applicants should consider their special needs and the nature of the program before applying. If questions arise contact the ECOEE coordinator. Participants are encouraged not to hinder the freedom of others with missionary actions for their special philosophies or beliefs. Likewise, the program does not interfere with one's private beliefs. Religious services are not available on the expedition. If the expedition is in the frontcountry and on break, students may attend religious services of their choice.

- WIU and WEA strive to maintain a learning environment free from sexual harassment so that maximum learning may take place. If you feel that you have been treated inappropriately by a WIU/WEA staff member, instructor, or another participant please follow WIU's and WEA's written policies concerning sexual harassment available from the WEA National Office and the WIU website.

I have read, understand, accept and agree to abide by the rules, policies and guidelines set forth in the WIU student handbook and ECOEE policy statement or website. I understand that the relationship between me and WIU/ECOEE will be governed by the substantive laws of the State of Illinois and any suit, mediation or arbitration of any dispute with WIU must be filed exclusively in the State of Illinois. I understand that I am not accepted on my course until all enrollment forms have been received and approved by the ECOEE Coordinator. I give WIU/ECOEE permission to share my contact information with other ECOEE students or graduates and/or with environmental organizations or strategic partners in which ECOEE graduates may be interested. I also give WIU/ECOEE permission to use my name, contact information and picture in promotional materials and press releases.

Name

Date

Print, and sign this Course Policies and Information Statement, then include it with your ECOEE application.

Climbing (mountaineering, rock climbing, and snow and ice climbing) – List all routes and peaks you’ve climbed, your role (follower, leader, guide), the difficulty level of each climb (e.g. 5.6, 5.9, etc.). Describe any experience you have had teaching or guiding climbing, including the name of the program, training, etc.

River Travel (kayaking, canoeing, and rafting) – Describe any paddling experience you may have and the class of water you would feel comfortable navigating. List names of rivers you have floated, difficulty of runs, distance in miles, number of days per trip, and your role in the trip.

Additional Outdoor Activities (sea kayaking, backcountry skiing, horse packing, caving, etc.) – Describe your skill level and give detailed descriptions of your experiences in any other outdoor experiences.

8. Please describe any coursework, skills, and experience in natural and cultural history, environmental education, hunting, fishing, conservation/land management, minimum impact camping, etc.
9. Please describe any experience you have in teaching, leadership, and communication, including leading groups, working with the public, group dynamics training, team course facilitation, etc.
10. Please give two to three examples of any emergency or safety management situations you have been involved in. Identify safety and judgment considerations, your role in the situation, and what you may have learned from any mistakes you or the group made.

Your responses to the above questions should be typed and submitted to the ECOEE Coordinator along with the rest of your application materials. It is also recommended that you attach a **detailed outdoor resume** to complement this questionnaire. Although somewhat redundant, the resume can help clarify the details of dates, jobs, and experiences.