



Expedition Alaska

Course:	SC 11000 B01 Natural History of Alaska
Semester:	Fall Block 2018
Credit Hours:	4
Meeting Times:	August 20-24, 9:00am-5:00pm, GH 213 August 26-September 6 IN FIELD September 10-14, 9:00am-5:00pm, GH 213
Course Fee:	no fee
Instructor:	Professor Tim Rawson
Email:	tmrwson@alaskapacific.edu
Phone:	907.564.8301
Office:	GH 217

Course Description:

What the APU catalog says: This is an introduction to the animals, plants, and geology of Alaska's terrestrial and coastal ecosystems. Natural history is generally understood as the study of the non-human world. It is all-encompassing, including cosmology, atmosphere, tectonics, chemistry, fungi and plants, invertebrates and vertebrates, classification and processes. This course will limit that field to Alaska, especially places easily accessed from Anchorage. Satisfies SI Physical/Biological Scientific Inquiry for Foundational Studies. Offered: Fall.

To add to that: In these days of specialization, too few people know something about a lot of things. We'll be introducing you to a lot of things. There are two aspects of this: appreciation and investigation. The former allows us to look around with a heightened sense of understanding of what we are seeing, while the latter poses questions and ways of answering.

We will be spending a fair amount of time outdoors. The centerpiece of the block course will be what we call Expedition Alaska, an extended field trip to the Interior. We'll be steering rafts down 160 miles of the Yukon River, camping along the way and learning how to do natural history using pre-electronics methods. You need no camping or rafting experience, just a willingness to participate. Before and after we'll have indoors classes and shorter field trips to different environs.

Competencies: There is the what of learning, and the how (below), but what about the skills of learning? We call these Core Competencies, and we organize our curriculum around five of them. This course will introduce you to all. Match these to the acronyms seen above in the learning objectives:

- Effective communication (EC): demonstrating ability to get one's point across in writing, presentations, and organizations in order to share information and foster collaboration.
- Critical thinking (CT): demonstrating ability to compute, analyze, make sense of information or data, and reach reasoned conclusions cognizant of possible bias, perspective, and fallacies.
- Cultural and historical perspective (CH): demonstrating ability to effectively consider tradition and heritage in relation to decision-making in a world shaped by diverse cultures and abiding histories.
- Scientific Inquiry (SI): demonstrating ability to reach verifiable conclusions based on documented observations and recognized methods in order to know how things work in our world.
- Ethical engagement (EE): demonstrating ability to raise needed questions, frame problems effectively, and apply ethical problem-solving to make things better.



Learning Objectives: Students will:

- Develop an understanding of the geological history and geomorphology of much of Alaska (SI)
- Learn the taxonomies of pertinent floral and faunal communities (SI)
- Be able to tell 'histories' of various biomes through understanding ecological processes (SI)
- Learn techniques in field investigation and research (SI, CT)
- Learn observation and recording techniques by keeping a detailed field journal (SI, EC)
- Appreciate the human history and use of Alaskan landscapes (CHP)
- Practice presentation skills through student-led teaching opportunities (EC)
- Begin engaging in ethical understandings of land use issues (EE)

Active Learning

Active learning refers to the process of deep understanding that come from interactive and reflective education rather than rote memorization and information recall.

Instructional/Delivery Method

Achieving the course objectives and enhancing your competencies results from a dynamic process between the course instructors and the students. Rather than describe teaching methods, consider them as learning methods. No learning happens unless you want it to, regardless of the type of learning tool the instructor uses. These tools are such familiar things as lectures, discussions, presentations, projects, field work, assignments, and evaluations; you can expect all of these to be used, and each of them works if you agree to let them; call this student engagement. Insofar as these tools enhance engagement, they are all part of a toolbox of active learning methods.

Required Texts

Ronald L. Smith, *Interior and Northern Alaska: A Natural History*
Field notebooks

Attendance & Participation

We keep an attendance record. In a block course, attendance is mandatory: we're trying to cram a semester's worth of course into four weeks. If you find other things more important than coming to class, we suggest you closely examine your priorities. See the comments on Participation for more thoughts on this.

Note this from the APU Catalog: "Students who wish to withdraw from a course and receive a 'W' grade must drop the course prior to completion of 80% of the term. The 'W' grade may not be granted after that date unless the student files a Request for Special Consideration and the 'W' grade is approved." What we call the census date is August 25 for this term. You pay the full cost of the course after the census date, regardless of completion, and are responsible for the tuition.

Communications Expectations

All official communication regarding the course and APU information goes through APU email. Students are expected to be reading email prior to the course starting and for any portion of the course where meetings are held on campus. For the field portion of the course, there are different expectations regarding communications, which will be established prior to leaving the campus.

Technical Requirements & Applications

For technical assistance with APU's Blackboard, MyAPU, the Student Portal, contact the IT Helpdesk: 907.564.8350, ithelpdesk@alaskapacific.edu

UAA/APU Consortium Library

Developing the essential competency of Critical Thinking, APU students are challenged to grow their information literacy, analyzing and evaluating sources for truth claims, methodologies, and perspectives.



The Consortium Library contributes significantly to the information literacy of our community with rich collections and references, as well as expert staff and online services.

- Website: <http://lib.uaa.alaska.edu/> Phone: 907-786-1871
- Ask-a-Librarian: <http://lib.uaa.alaska.edu/research/ask/>
- To activate your library privileges (for both online and onsite access), contact the IT Department.

Disability Services

It is the policy of Alaska Pacific University to make reasonable accommodations for qualified students with disabilities, in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). If a student with disabilities needs accommodations, the student must meet with the Assistant to the Dean of Students in the Atwood Building. Assistant to the Dean of Students: 907-564-8287

Procedures for documenting student disability and the development of reasonable accommodations will be provided to the student upon request. Students will be notified by the Assistant to the Dean of Students when each request for accommodation is approved or denied in writing via a designated form. In an effort to protect student privacy, the Assistant to the Dean of Students will not discuss the accommodation needs of any student with instructors, without written student consent. Faculty are not expected to make accommodations for individuals who have not been approved in this manner.

Honor Policy

APU is a community of learners in which all enjoy freedoms and privileges based upon mutual trust and respect as well as a clear sense of responsibility. Students are expected to do all work assigned, to do it honestly and with integrity.

We assume your personal integrity and honesty, and that you will adhere to APU's Honor Policy as defined in the Catalog and Student Handbook. Understand plagiarism and don't commit it. Course instructors have latitude in addressing plagiarism, including giving a course grade of F. We expect you to use many sources to inform your learning; cite them, and all will be well.

Risk Management

Travel: This course travels in a remote wilderness setting where medical services and communication with civilization are not readily available. Students on this course are expected to act in a professional manner. They will be expected to understand, be aware of, and avoid the hazards of the area. If an incident does occur the group will act as a team to provide the best care for the patient as possible. Independent student travel is a possibility if weather, route, and student abilities allow.

Emergency Contact: For family emergencies only families can contact APU's intown coordinator at 907-562-0791. APU will then assist the family in contacting the course.

Group Dynamics: Students understand that we will be working together in close proximity for and extended time. Each person will do their best to take care of themselves and others, being aware of their behavior in order to be respectful traveling companions. Good expedition behavior requires that each individual take care of themselves so in order to better take care of others in a selfless way.

Alcohol, Drugs, Tobacco, Phones: We aim to have as safe a course as possible. To this end no alcohol, tobacco, illegal drugs or phones/musical listening devices are allowed.

Insurance: All students must show proof of major medical insurance (insurance card and/or fill out and send in Student Insurance application) and sign a waiver before being allowed on the course.



Grading

Successful completion of this course includes fulfillment of the assignments and preparing for class participation. See the assignment sheets for specific details on these.

Participation	30%
Field journal	30%
Alaska Subject Presentation	5%
Alaska Character Presentation	5%
Exams (2)	30%

Grading policies

We won't grade on a curve. All of you can get an A, but each of you will have to earn it. Grading criteria are outlined on each assignment.

100-90 % A range

Note our definition of an A grade: "Superior mastery of facts and principles; demonstrated clear evidence that stated course objectives and requirements were met by the student." Please note that does not say that you must agree with me on matters of historical or political interpretation.

89 - 80 B range

79 - 70 C range

69 - 60 D range

59 - F range

An incomplete grade (I) is possible if conditions beyond your control impede your conclusion of the course, and you have been making satisfactory progress. Receipt of an incomplete involves negotiation with me.



Agenda & Schedule: Meetings and Agenda Subject to Change

Census Date (last day to DROP): August 23

Withdrawal Date (last day for W on transcript): September 12

Dates	Agenda	Notes
Monday 8/20	Meet & Greet, course intro, expectations, and packing demonstration.	Room: CG 102 Meet the Yukon team, paperwork, expedition risk and reward.
Tuesday 8/21	Guest: Campus discovery and sampling techniques 11:30am student gear check. Arrive at 9am with all gear you will take on the trip.	Goose Lake raft demonstration.
Wednesday 8/22	River hydrology, safety, and hygiene.	Guest: Alaska Geology Expedition Anchorage: shopping for last minute items (seriously, get some wet wipes)
Thursday 8/23	Bear discussion; Meet Erin Trochim	Receive rented gear from NOLS IMPORTANT: Last Day to DROP
Friday 8/24	Guest: Alpine Biome walk (field trip)	Self-directed packing, learning, exploring, napping, dreaming big.
Sunday 8/26	Departure Day: Meet in Atwood parking lot no later than 7:00am. Students should arrive with everything for the trip. Eagle, AK - HERE WE COME!	
8/27-9/5	ExpAK floats the Yukon: Eagle – Circle, Alaska	
Wednesday 9/5	Arrive at Circle, camp near Fairbanks.	
Thursday 9/6	Return to Anchorage and SHOWER	
Friday 9/7	Classroom (GH 231) Debrief. Exam distributed. Self-directed time to re-visit journal, scrub the river off your clothes, catch up on 10-days of social media, go for a hike with your new friends,	Time to complete exam Gear clean up
Monday 9/10	Natural History & Technology *Exams due @ 9am	Guest speaker IMPORTANT: last day to drop the course and receive a "W".
Tuesday 9/11	Travel to Seward Sealife Center, Kenai Fjords, Exit Glacier	
Wednesday 9/12	Guest speaker on climate in Alaska	Marine Mammals
Thursday 9/13	Programming, coding, and SCIENCE	
Friday 9/14	Careers and Natural History	

