

Applied Risk Management for Outdoor Programs

Course Syllabus

PTRM 491 - 3 credits

Spring 2022

Wed, 12:30-1:50 Stone Hall 217

Instructor Information:

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Office Hours: by appointment

General Course Information

This course explores the theory and application of risk management in outdoor settings, from adventure programs to field research. Students study models of safety culture to understand risk as a necessary component of participant growth and effectiveness. The course explores heuristics of risk to prepare students for roles as leaders capable of balancing risk with fundamental program outcomes. For various reasons including scale and finances, small organizations offering outdoor programs or small research programs often have underdeveloped risk management plans. This course prepares students for assuming leadership roles in such situations, helping craft defensible risk acknowledgments and emergency response plans, while learning to educate and involve participants in risk management. Students will gain extensive practice in documentation, reporting, and emergency communications through case studies and practical scenarios, as well as learn best practices for teaching participants practical skills in wildlife conflict avoidance, maintaining group wellness and avoiding communicable disease, and medical screening for proactive mental health management. Student assessments include planning and executing an outdoor experience for volunteers, as well as participating in an incident response drill with Missoula County's SAR team and Aerie Backcountry Medicine.

Expected Learning Outcomes

Students taking this course will:

- Analyze several models of risk assessment and safety management and will further identify and analyze heuristic traps commonly associated with poor judgment and decision-making which can lead to accidents
- Evaluate their legal duty of care as outdoor leaders, considering the ethics and legalities of the relationship they enter into with clients when they become outdoor leaders
- Articulate and analyze the role that participants take on in outdoor program settings, including understanding the role of acknowledgment of risk forms and management of participant expectations of risk. Students will further demonstrate effective communication of the inherent risks of various activities as well as best practices for involving participants as managers of their own risk.
- Demonstrate consistent judgment development by practicing effective decision-making processes.

- Practice effective wildlife conflict avoidance across the spectrum from microscopic infectious disease vectors to potentially dangerous large mammals. Through focus on biology and wildlife behavior, this course emphasizes avoidance of injury and illness, as opposed to an emphasis on treatment addressed in wilderness medicine courses.
- Explore the role of medical screening in preventing outdoor incidents, including the expected role of a medical director. Students will use case studies and scenarios to understand the challenges involved in participant reporting.
- Explore and synthesize resources available for managing participant mental health crises in outdoor settings
- Design and implement a thorough emergency response plan for an outdoor trip, evaluating its effectiveness via an incident response drill with partner organizations, including Aerie Backcountry Medicine and Missoula County Search and Rescue
- Apply effective communication skills involved in incident response, including demonstrating mastery of communication devices, thorough understanding of critical information needed, and accurate documentation and record keeping
- Practice effective reporting of incidents and near misses, and explore the role that incident reporting plays in continuous improvement of outdoor practice
- Participate in an After Action Review and explore its strengths and limitations as a formal structure for individual and organizational learning
- Assess and manage the risks involved in leading others in an outdoor setting by investigating case studies, participating in mock scenarios, and planning/executing their own outdoor trip with volunteer participants

Readings will consist of various articles as well as selections from the following texts

Baierlein, J. 2019. *Risk Management for Outdoor Programs: A Guide to Safety in Outdoor Education, Recreation and Adventure*

Attarian, A. 2012. *Risk Management in Outdoor and Adventure Programs: Scenarios of Accidents, Incidents, and Misadventures*

Course Topic Schedule

Tentative Week #	Topic
1 Jan 18-20	Risk theory. Hazard and safety factors. Systems thinking.
2 Jan 25-27	Hazard analysis: frequency and severity. Industry standards and professional codes of conduct. Heuristic traps.
3 Feb 1-3	Legal aspects of risk management. Acknowledgements of risk. Managing participant expectations and communicating their role in risk management. Evaluating advertising and pre-program participant materials.
4 Feb 8-10	Safety briefings.
5 Feb 15-17	Medical screening
6 Feb 22-24	Trip Planning, including emergency response planning. Daily Log. Introduction to Caltopo for trip planning
7 Mar 1-3	Pre-Mortem trip planning exercise

8	Mar 8-10	Communication devices and communication systems. Outdoor scenario emphasizing ERPs and med screening.
9	Mar 15-17	Documentation and reporting
10	Mar 29-31	Incidents and near misses. Incident reporting systems.
11	Apr 2-7	SATURDAY, APRIL 2 Multi-agency incident response training exercise with Missoula County SAR, MC Office of Emergency Management, and Aerie Backcountry Medicine
12	Apr 12-14	After-action review
13	Apr 19-21	Navigation, topographic map interpretation, map & compass
14	Apr 26-28	Wildlife conflict avoidance and outdoor scenarios
15	May 3-5	Final Field Practicum
Finals		Monday, May 9 8-10am

Grading Scale & Points

This course is graded on the traditional A – F letter grade scale only; it is not offered under the credit/no credit option. Upon completion of the course, your points earned will be expressed as a percentage of total points possible in the course and translated into a letter grade as follows:

A 93-100%; A- 90-92%;

B+ 88-89%; B 83-87%; B- 80-82%;

C+ 78-79%; C 73-77%; C- 70-72%;

D+ 68-69%; D 63-67%; D- 60-62%

F 59% and below

Total points possible in the course = 300 points

- 40% Homework Assignments
 - Discussion Questions; Medical Screening I and II; Safety Policy; After Action Review; Topographic Map Questions; Prevention Strategy for specific medical/environmental issue
- 20% Portfolio
 - Trip Plan, Emergency Response Plan, Safety Briefing
- 20% Final Practicum
- 20% Participation is based on classes attended (31 classes total)
 - 10= 31/31
 - 9= 30/31
 - 8= 29/31
 - 7= 28/31
 - 6= 27/31

Student and Instructor Expectations

Participation

This class requires weekly application of reading material; in order to facilitate this, I ask that students read the assigned readings prior to class and be prepared to discuss the readings in class. The text and concepts may be new and challenging; at the very least, I ask that you bring your questions from the readings and willingly share them with the class. I seek input from all students and I will likely ask students questions to solicit input and to assess comprehension of difficult topics. I reserve the right to initiate daily or weekly reading quizzes if I find that students are generally unprepared for class. Any student who misses class will be held responsible for all materials covered and all announcements made during their

absence. If your absence was University-approved, you are eligible to make up any missed in-class work collected for points. I am generally flexible with regard to unforeseen absences and make-up work as long as you are transparent and diligent in communicating with me.

The UM "Class Attendance/Absence Policy" can be found in the [UM Catalog Academic Policies and Procedures](https://montana-catalog.coursedog.com/academics/policies-procedures) (<https://montana-catalog.coursedog.com/academics/policies-procedures>)

Respect, Inclusiveness and Diversity of Thoughts, Ideas and People

In teaching courses, I believe and act upon the idea that all students are entitled to and deserve respect, courtesy and tolerance, regardless of their race, background, religious affiliation, gender, sexual preference, disability or any other perceived difference. Likewise, faculty, staff and fellow students deserve the same treatment from other students. Therefore, within the bounds of my courses and professional responsibilities as a university instructor, I make every effort to promote and create a safe space for diverse thoughts, regardless of the form of communication. I ask that you do the same.

Academic Honesty

All students must practice academic honesty. Academic misconduct is subject to an academic penalty by the course instructor and/or a disciplinary sanction by the University. All students need to be familiar with the [Student Conduct Code](http://www.umt.edu/student-affairs/community-standards/default.php) (<http://www.umt.edu/student-affairs/community-standards/default.php>).

Plagiarism

I will not tolerate plagiarism in any form. Students need to be familiar with plagiarism and how to properly cite references and attribute the ideas of others to original sources in their work.

The following is taken directly from the [UM Catalog Academic Policies and Procedures](https://montana-catalog.coursedog.com/academics/policies-procedures) (<https://montana-catalog.coursedog.com/academics/policies-procedures>):

"Plagiarism is the representing of another's work as one's own. It is a particularly intolerable offense in the academic community and is strictly forbidden. Students who plagiarize may fail the course and may be remanded to Academic Court for possible suspension or expulsion.

Students must always be very careful to acknowledge any kind of borrowing that is included in their work. This means not only borrowed wording but also ideas.

Acknowledgment of whatever is not one's own original work is the proper and honest use of sources.

Failure to acknowledge whatever is not one's own original work is plagiarism."

Equal Access

The University of Montana assures equal access to instruction through collaboration between students with disabilities, instructors and [Disability Services for Students](http://www.umt.edu/dss/) (<http://www.umt.edu/dss/>) (DSS). If you think you may have a disability adversely affecting your academic performance, and you have not already registered with DSS, please contact DSS in Lommasson Room #154 or at 406.243.2243. I will work with you and DSS to provide an appropriate modification.

Basic Needs Security Statement

Any student who faces challenges securing their food or housing and believes this may affect their performance in the course is urged to contact the [Office for Student Success](http://www.umt.edu/oss/) (<http://www.umt.edu/oss/>) for support. Furthermore, please notify me if you are comfortable in doing so. This will enable me to provide any resources that I may possess.