

**COURSE SYLLABUS**  
Lewis & Clark College  
Graduate School of Education and Counseling

Course Name: Wilderness & Adventure Therapy Immersion  
Course Number: CPSY 596-21  
Term: Summer 2023  
Department: Counseling, Therapy, and School Psychology  
Instructors: Christopher Russo, MSW, LICSW / [russoc@lclark.edu](mailto:russoc@lclark.edu)  
Katheryne Lewis, MA, MHCA / [kLewis@lclark.edu](mailto:kLewis@lclark.edu)

Course Days and Times:

- Friday July 14, 2023 at 9AM - Sunday July 16, 2023 at 5PM
- Friday July 28, 2023 at 9AM - Sunday July 30, 2023 at 5PM

Course Locations:

- Initial/Ending Meetings: Lewis & Clark Campus
- Field Locations:
  - Alder Dunes Campground
    - 89630 US-101, Florence, OR 97439

**Catalogue Description:**

This course provides an opportunity to explore ecopsychology concepts and practices in the context of a multi-day outdoor experience. Topics include backcountry safety, outdoor leadership, wilderness philosophy and conservation, benefits of immersion in natural settings and retreats from modern technologies, multicultural rites of passage, and techniques for mental health and substance abuse treatment. The course typically features an off-campus weeklong or multi-weekend residential format with activities such as tent camping, day or overnight hiking, mindfulness and team building exercises, rock climbing and river rafting. Equipment provided. Outdoor experience is not required. There is a course fee.

Prerequisites: CPSY 501.

Credits: 2

**Course Goals and Learning Objectives:**

The Wilderness & Adventure Therapy (WT / AT) Immersion Course is a key part of the Ecopsychology in Counseling Certificate sequence. The course provides an introduction to the therapeutic uses of experiential-based and nature-based adventure activities and an extended outdoor experience in which to explore ecopsychology and ecotherapy in a small group setting.

1. Students will gain experiential practice facilitating adventure therapy and

- wilderness therapy activities in at least 3 different settings
2. Students will learn at least 3 different adventure therapy and wilderness therapy activities that they can use in future practice.
  3. Students will understand common ethical challenges that can occur in front-country adventure therapy and wilderness therapy situations.
  4. Students will have an opportunity to discuss their professional goals as nature-based clinicians with instructors and peers.
  5. Students will practice demonstrating ethical and professional behaviors in a nature-based therapy setting.

### **Course Requirements:**

- Attendance of classroom and field activities
- Engagement in class activities
- Contribute to safe and cohesive group process and camp community
- Informed participation in class discussions
- Use of class Moodle page and forums
- Complete risk and release forms
- Pre-course assignments (online forms, personal description, land acknowledgement assignment)
- Post-course reflection assignment

### **Attendance requirements:**

Attendance is mandatory to successfully complete this course. Learning will occur in such a short period that any substantial amount of missed time could severely impact your grade. If you think you are going to miss any days on this course, please contact the instructor ASAP.

**Specific CTSP Attendance guidelines:** Class attendance is expected and required. Any missed class time will be made up by completing extra assignments designed by the instructor. Missing more than ten percent of class time may result in failure to complete the class. This would be 4.5 hours of a 45 hour class (3 credits), 3.0 hours for a 30 hour class (2 credits) or 1.5 hours for a 15 hour class (1 credit.) In case of extreme hardship and also at the discretion of the instructor, a grade of incomplete may be given for an assignment or the entire course. In such cases, the work to be submitted in order to remove the incomplete must be documented appropriately and stated deadlines met. Students are expected to be on time to class and tardiness may be seen as an absence that requires make-up work. Please note that exceptions to these policies may be worked out if you have an illness or family situation related to COVID-19

### **Accommodations for Students with Special Needs and/or Disabilities**

*If you have a disability that may impact your academic performance, you may request accommodations by submitting documentation to the Student Support Services Office in the Albany Quadrangle (503-768-7192). After you have submitted documentation and filled out paperwork there for the current semester requesting accommodations, staff in that office will notify me of the accommodations for which you are eligible. Please notify*

me of any special learning considerations that I should be aware of so that we can work together to make the appropriate accommodations.

### **Lewis & Clark Policies:**

This course adheres to the general policies outlined in the catalog and student handbook of the Lewis & Clark Graduate School of Education and Counseling. This includes full adherence to the following policies:

*Nondiscrimination Policy:* [go.lclark.edu/gsec-nondiscrimination](http://go.lclark.edu/gsec-nondiscrimination);

*Standards for professional student conduct and academic integrity:* [go.lclark.edu/gsec-conduct](http://go.lclark.edu/gsec-conduct);

*Sexual misconduct Policy:* [go.lclark.edu/titleIX](http://go.lclark.edu/titleIX).

*Alcohol/Substances Policy:* In alignment with Lewis & Clark's alcohol and drugs policies, students should not use alcohol or other drugs/substances (i.e. marijuana) throughout the duration of our field-course. If you have any questions/concerns regarding this policy, please contact the instructor.

*COVID Policy:* (subject to change due to CDC and Lewis & Clark recommendations)- Face coverings will not be required for fully vaccinated students. If you are fully vaccinated, you will need to document your vaccination status via the Health Information Portal (<https://lclark.medicatconnect.com>) before class. Lewis & Clark respects and supports any student, staff, or faculty member's choice to continue to wear a mask on campus for any reason and at any time. For further information see the Student COVID-19 Vaccination Policy page on the LC website ([https://www.lclark.edu/offices/health\\_service/vaccine-education/student-covid-19-vaccination-policy](https://www.lclark.edu/offices/health_service/vaccine-education/student-covid-19-vaccination-policy))

We will have hand sanitizer available and encourage students to bring their own.

- Students are encouraged to use their own gear. For items shared/borrowed, we will discuss measures of cleaning/sanitizing to reduce potential risk of viral spread. If you have any needs/concerns regarding this matter, please reach out to the instructor.

### **Additional policies**

*Diversity, Culture & Accommodations:* The instructor(s) will make efforts to recognize diversity, culture and individual differences in the classroom and to create a safe and collegial learning environment for all students. We will work to maintain a culture of respect and tolerance in this course. This means that any of the "isms" (homophobia, racism, sexism, ableism, ageism, any other form of discrimination) will not be tolerated. Knowing that no one is perfect in this regard, we will attempt to respectfully and constructively correct these situations as needed. I also encourage you to do the same. This is ongoing work where we can all do better. Please contact the instructor regarding any special needs, concerns, or accommodation requests.

*Sustainability:* We are all encouraged to consider personal and environmental impacts associated with this course. This includes reducing or mitigating high impact behaviors by practicing alternate or communal forms of transportation (e.g., using carpools, biking; see commuter tips below). This also includes being efficient with use of energy and resources (e.g., turning off lights, computers and power strips when not

in use). The use of recycled paper is encouraged as well as double-sided printing or printing on the blank side of previously used papers (clearly draw a line through non-course content). LC Commuter tips: [http:// www.lclark.edu/live/news/22982-top-10-tips-for-lewis-amp-clark-commuters](http://www.lclark.edu/live/news/22982-top-10-tips-for-lewis-amp-clark-commuters)

## **Course Readings**

### ***Pre-Course Readings/Videos (All posted on course Moodle page)***

Alvarez, T., et al. (2020) *Adventure Group Psychotherapy: An Experiential Approach to Treatment*. New York: Routledge.

Chap. 3 Building Blocks of Adventure Group  
Psychotherapy Chap. 4 Overview of the Facilitated  
Wave

Davis, J. (2020, May 20). Wilderness Rites Of Passage [web log]. Retrieved 2022, from

[https://schooloflostborders.org/journal\\_school/wilderness-rites-of-passage-by-john-davis/](https://schooloflostborders.org/journal_school/wilderness-rites-of-passage-by-john-davis/)

*Tying the Threads of the Past to the Future*. (2016).

Youtube. Retrieved 2022, from

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=11Mq9ZuxZMc&t=846s>.

## **Supplemental Readings**

Due to the volume of resources available, a list of supplemental readings/resources are also available on the course Moodle page. Students are encouraged to continue to expand their knowledge and expertise of wilderness and adventure literature after the course.

## **Course Calendar**

**Tentative Itinerary:** Due to unpredictable events, this schedule is subject to change. The aim is to ensure that all activities and topics will be met throughout this schedule. However, the nature of outdoor programming is that “squiggles” come up and require the entire group (students and staff alike) to shift and adapt to such unforeseen events.

**Friday (7/14):** Meet at Lewis & Clark at 9AM. Group will run through final departure checklists. Students/staff will arrange in carpools to head to Alder Dunes Campground to set up basecamp. Group will have the opportunity for hiking/activities at the surrounding park. Group will engage in experiential activities and participate in conversations/discussions focused on identifying a theoretical framework/approach for adventure/wilderness therapy. This lens will be used throughout the course. Dinner and evening group.

**Saturday (7/15):** Breakfast/pack lunches. Group will travel to a nearby trailhead. Discussions to include confidentiality in the outdoors, nature as co-therapist, and

elements of wilderness therapy. Group will return to base camp. Dinner and evening closing ceremony and reflection.

**Sunday (7/16):** Breakfast and debrief. Break down camp and prepare for the transition of returning back to campus. Final closing exercise. Carpools return to Lewis & Clark no later than 5pm.

**Friday (7/28):** Students arrive to campus by 9AM to attend workshops. Evening debrief.

**Saturday (7/29):** Students arrive to campus by 9AM to attend workshops. Evening debrief.

**Sunday (7/30):** TBD

### **Course Activities:**

This course is highly experiential (i.e., featuring hands-on activities and learning). Some of the activities covered through this course are as follows:

- Archery
- Campsite creation
- Challenge & High Ropes Course
- Classroom Instruction
- Day hiking
- Equine Therapy Activities
- Gardening/Horticultural Activities
- Group process
- Mindfulness/Use of Self-reflection
- Nearby Nature Activities
- Risk Management
- Team Building Exercises
- Writing/Journaling

### **Topics Covered (or Reviewed from other Ecopsychology Courses)**

- Personal Safety & Responsibility in the Outdoors
- Attention to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (includes attitudes toward nature, wilderness and the wild)
- Risk Management and Safety in Outdoor Programs
- “Leave No Trace” Camping Principles
- Therapeutic properties of natural settings (e.g., stress reduction and attention restoration theory, biophilia, personal meaning, cultural significance).
- Group Leadership & Stages of Group Development
- Ritual/ Meaning Making / Spirituality

- Rites of Passage
- Relaxation / Meditation in the outdoors
- Facilitating Initiative Games and Adventure Therapy Activities
- Sequencing Initiatives & therapeutic interventions
- Appropriate Challenge Level and the “Full Value Contract”
- Use of Therapeutic Metaphors
- Therapeutic Interventions (e.g., journals, groups)
- Facilitating “Office-based” Interventions in the outdoors
- Solo Experiences
- Natural History and Landscape Interpretation
- History of Wilderness and Adventure Therapy
- Cultural Discourses about nature and “Wilderness”
- WT / AT with Teens: Outdoor Behavioral Health Care (OBH)
- Clinical & Diagnostic Issues
- Assessment and Outcomes Research

**Course Evaluation and Assessment:**

Course evaluation is based on your attendance, written work, verbal and non- verbal class participation, observed level of effort, and online Moodle assignments. Written and oral work will be evaluated on the basis of its clarity, thoughtfulness, effort, and integration of themes of the class. It is the instructor’s hope that students will be able to focus on engaging and learning through the course experience without the extra stress of of earning an “A”. If you have any questions/concerns about this process, please reach out to the instructor at any time before/during/after the course.

**Overview of Assignments and Points**

Letter of Intent	15
Land Acknowledgement	15
Course Participation	50
Journaling/Reflection	20

**Grading**

Final grades will be based on a 100 point total and will be distributed as follows:

91-100 = A	80	= B-
90 = A-	78-79	= C+
88-89 = B+	71-77	= C

**Description of Course Assignments**

There are a selection of pre-readings and assignments to prepare for the course. It is recommended that you reflect on these before the course. The pre-course readings are intended to help set up a framework which will be used throughout the course to understand the theory and application of wilderness and adventure-based therapy approaches. These readings will be referenced throughout the course and will help

serve as a foundation from which the whole class can move together. These readings will provide a theoretical background along with some of the language that may be used in implementing wilderness and adventure interventions.

Students are provided access to an abundance of supplemental readings/ resources. After course immersion, students are encouraged to engage in these resources to further their learning and engagement with course material and the field.

- **Nature Day Walk/Engagement and Letter of Intent (15 pts) — 7/12/23**

**Intention:** (*noun*) a thing intended; an aim or plan. Intention can mean goal, desire, aspiration, or purpose. For this assignment we ask that you take some time to meditate on the simple questions of “Why this? Why now?” In certain cultural traditions, it is common to spend the day communing with nature to receive clarity on many things in life. However that may look for you, whether that is a long walk or hike for the day or sitting and meditating at a park, take some time to turn to nature and listen to the ways it may help clarify your intent. What is the purpose of this course, of this certificate, as you consider your future role in the field of mental health? What impact do you see it having on what you want to do and what you wish to offer the world? You will write your letter of intent after you have taken your walk and reflected on these questions.

- **Land Acknowledgement (15 pts) — Post to Moodle by 7/12/23**

Utilizing the Native Governance Center’s “Guide to Indigenous Land Acknowledgement” and NYU’s “Guide to Indigenous Land and Territorial Acknowledgements for Cultural Institutions” (along with any additional resources you wish to use), develop a land acknowledgement that you might use for yourself, with a client, or with a group/class. This acknowledgement can be specific to Lewis and Clark’s campus, one of the locations we will visit during our course, or somewhere else in/around Portland.

- **Class Participation (50pts)**

Students will be evaluated on their level of participation, attitude, cooperation, engagement, behavior, and observed learning. The instructor recognizes that participation and engagement come in a variety of forms and encourages and support the diverse array in which students may participate. There is no formalized assessment being used to “grade” participation. These are things that will be taken into account:

- There will be multiple opportunities for verbal and non-verbal participation during our class.
- Peer engagement: Students will be intentional with the use of getting to know and engage with their peers.
- Group Culture: Be mindful of contributing to safe and cohesive group processes and a vibrant camp community
- “Chosen Adventure”: Reflect on how the course structure or activities may be an opportunity to explore your zones of comfort.
- Restoration: Notice opportunities for you to relax, “unplug” or reflect on your personal or professional selves

- **Course Journal/Reflection: (20 points)**

- Students will use some kind of medium throughout the course to keep track of personal and course reflections. This could be a written journal, drawings, collection of items, etc. Instructors will have a one-on-one check-in with students on this process near the end of the week. (Note: Students will not be graded on the content of their reflections.)

### **Logistic Notes**

Gear needs, carools and other individual needs will be arranged in advance (see questionnaires and releases on Moodle). See suggested gear list posted on Moodle for personal items needed. All food will be provided and diet preferences will be noted and taken into account. No pets or outside visitors. Technology use and phone and internet access will be highly limited during the course. Please contact the instructors with questions.

### **Questionnaires and releases:**

Please check Moodle for these forms and please respond promptly. If you have any questions, please reach out to the instructors.

- ***Food preferences, carpool survey, and gear check in — Due: 6/16/23***
- ***Risk and Health and Diet Questionnaires — Due: 6/30/23***
- ***Acknowledgment and Assumption of Risks (liability release) – Due: 7/14/23***

**For camping:** Expect camping weather to be mild. Cool nights, warm days, possible rain (though unlikely). Through the duration of the course, we will be in what is considered as the “front-country”. For the wilderness weekend, we will be camping at Alder Dune Campground. Alder Dune Campground is a part of the Siuslaw National Forest, southwest of Portland. We will be nestled between several bodies of water and will make time to cool off during these hotter summer days. At Alder Dunes, there will not be any hiking to get to our campsites, and there will be potable water and nearby restrooms/showers on site.

Please make sure to review the gear list. Students are not required to have a backpacking pack to transport gear, though they are free to bring one if desired. Bring a tent, pad, sleeping bag, pillow, and whatever you need to sleep comfortably. Also, if you can, bring your own mess kit (eating utensils, cup, plate/bowl). Also bring a head lamp and light source for moving around camp at night. Group gear will include two burner table-top stoves, cooking gear, and other kitchen necessities. ***If there is anything you need/desire for camping that you will not be able to bring, please let us know beforehand to ensure we have any additional gear for you.***

**For Days in Field:** Bring rain gear (rain pants/shell), a warm mid layer, and breathable clothes. It might be warm or dry enough that none of this is needed. However, the weather could fluctuate. We will watch the weather and if anything extreme comes in, we will adjust our day as needed. Bring a day backpack with the ability to carry your layers, a headlamp, lunch, water, extra sun protection and

whatever you need to be comfortable. A typical summer hiking outfit will be breathable hiking shorts/pants, boots/trail runners, mid-layer, t-shirt, hat, and sunglasses. Also, some folks may prefer to bring a sit pad or blanket that they can sit on while in a field.