

The Northern Forest Canoe Trail Course

Robert Sanford

University of Southern Maine

Joseph Staples

University of Southern Maine

It is commonly assumed that “distance learning,” or education that is asynchronous and non-residential, involves a substitution of the on-line version of traditional pedagogies—lectures, assignments, discussions, etc.—for live, in-class experiences, often at the cost of student engagement in the social and experiential aspects of learning. However, new technology can also allow faculty to design independent, unscripted, and embodied learning experiences that deepen students’ engagement with their own learning. The innovative course described below used simple and widely available technological tools to empower students to become self-directed learners while contributing to the body of public knowledge about an important environmental resource.

The Northern Forest Canoe course is a freshman general education (“core”) course developed by an interdisciplinary team of three faculty (Joseph Staples, chemical ecology; Robert Sanford, environmental planning; and Elizabeth Vella, psychology) at the University of Southern Maine (USM) to provide an experiential, non-residency learning experience. This course was designated an “entry year experience” (EYE) that reflects the principles of Science Education for New Civic Engagements and Responsibilities (SENCER). We wanted to create a course that would provide learners with

basic competency in environmental science field skills (GPS, compass, dichotomous keys, transects, shoreline field assessment, tree and aquatic plant identification, use of canoes and field equipment for water quality sampling) through an immersion experience that connected students to a natural community and would foster a sense of stewardship.

We developed this as a “distance learning” course rather than as a true online course, because the learning occurs at a distance, through field work, and is the result of the student’s own activities and reflections—there are no online lectures or formal sessions. Instead, the course is an asynchronous learning experience that takes place at the convenience of the student during a designated portion of the summer. However, the possibility remains of offering future versions as a synchronous “expeditionary” course led by an instructor.

The location of the course (fig. 1) is the Northern Forest Canoe Trail, 740 miles (1,190 km) of marked canoeing trail extending from Old Forge, New York to Fort Kent, Maine. The specific sections of the trail to be investigated are selected by the individual student. There is no fixed distance a participant must travel, but the student must spend at least 10 days in which five or more hours per day are spent on the waters of the trail.



FIGURE 1. The 740-mile (1,190-km) Northern Forest Canoe Trail runs from Old Forge, New York to Fort Kent, Maine. Students are free to select any use any portion of it or its related tributaries and watersheds. (Map by Northern Forest Canoe Trail, <http://www.northernforestcanoetrail.org/>).

Target populations for the course include military veterans returning to school and desiring a gradual entry through a contemplative nature experience, other non-traditional learners, and freshmen who want to get a head start on their college educational experience before the academic year commences. The authors of this paper, as veterans themselves, particularly sought the opportunity to reach out to veterans. Psychology Professor Elizabeth Vella’s research focuses on the benefits of outdoor experiences for combat veterans, and a number of the reading assignments address the therapeutic aspects of outdoor recreation.

This course is designed to credentialize a self-guided outdoor learning experience mentored by university professors with interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary expertise. Participants undergo the equivalent of ten or more days (which need not be consecutive) of canoe or kayak trips along portions of the Northern Forest Canoe Trail. Since the goal is experiential, it is not important how much of the trail is covered, nor that the travel be completed all at once. Instead, participants set their own schedule, provide periodic online check-ins, and submit assignments designed to foster an experience that is contemplative and that builds independent learning skills. The course provides an introduction to environmental data

gathering and assessment, to aspects of environmental management, and to critical thinking about personal, social, and ecological implications of the Northern Forest Canoe Trail. Students are assumed to have a knowledge of basic water safety, canoeing/kayaking ability, orienteering and map reading skills, and camping/cooking or other logistical support skills. The course is a self-guided experience; students are expected to rely upon their own abilities and to undertake only those trips that are safe and attainable within their skill set and equipment capabilities. Students are free to take along partners, friends, and family members.

This course is suitable for anyone seeking to explore the environment or learn about environmental science. It is also suitable for anyone who wants a self-paced entry to a college-level experience. The course fulfills the Entry Year Experience

core education requirement for USM. Accordingly the course meshes with the core EYE goals, as specified on the syllabus.

This non-traditional approach constituted an act of faith between the developers and the summer program staff. The supervising program director stated: “I am pleased to have supported the innovative Northern Canoe Trail course as a pilot this summer, even with a small enrollment. If summer is not the time to incubate cool, experimental ideas that have the potential to reach students differently then I don’t know when is! I hope this course will continue to gain momentum while inspiring students and faculty alike.”¹ In furtherance of this goal, USM Online’s Center for Technology Enhanced Learning (CTEL) provided a \$2,000 development grant for the course. USM Reference Librarian Zip Kellog, author of several canoeing publications, provided input into the course development, as did the Veteran Certifying Officer, Laurie Spaulding; Susan McWilliams, Associate Provost for Undergraduate Education; and other staff at the university.

¹ Karin D. Pires, Associate Director, Academic Programs, Professional & Continuing Education (PCE), University of Southern Maine, personal communication.

This course and USM's Entry Year

Experience (EYE) goals:

1. Employ a variety of perspectives to explore the interrelationship between human culture and the natural world of the Northern Forest Canoe Trail.
2. Pose and explore questions in areas that are new and challenging: as a part of the river experience students will develop questions about the stewardship of this resource. Students may draw from conservation biology and ecology, geology, environmental history, environmental literature, economics, other social and physical sciences, and the fine arts.
3. The online posting requirements of this course give students opportunity to immediately respond to their experiences and to receive feedback from a mentor (one or more instructors).
4. Reflect upon and link learning in the course with other learning experiences (for example co-curricular experience). This course is co-curricular by its very nature. Students will provide formative assessments via their online postings/uplinks. The self-assessment piece at the end is a final summative.
5. Recognize that an individual's viewpoint is shaped by his or her experiences and by historical and cultural context. The student will evaluate his/her views and perspectives on the NFCT.

Course objectives

6. Complete a total of 10 or more days of canoe/kayak experience on the waters of the NFCT. These days need not be consecutive and can be selected at the convenience of the student within the timeframe of the course
7. Employ environmental science field skills (notably, GPS, compass, dichotomous keys, transects, shoreline assessment, tree and aquatic plant identification, use of canoes and field equipment for water quality and other environmental sampling) to gather data and document river travel.
8. Participate in a Google+ virtual community of paddlers.
9. Record reactions to an immersive, contemplative experience in rural or even wilderness riparian settings with the intention of deepening one's

connection to a natural community and fostering a sense of stewardship.

10. Be able to describe the interdisciplinary nature of independent learning and self-assessment as part of a college-readiness experience.

The course uses a variety of assignments in a low stakes writing approach. Low stakes writing—"writing to learn"—is central to the achievement and assessment of learning outcomes. It is low stakes because there are no right or wrong answers and there are frequent assignments. Low stakes writing for this course includes a journal and separate responses to experience posted in the discussion section of Blackboard. The questions and writing prompts are drawn from Bloom's taxonomy of educational objectives and are keyed to the assigned texts, conditions of the environment, and the experiential nature of the course as a self-guided river corridor transit.

The course establishes an online community in which students share their work and their reflections and in which stakeholders can participate. The civic engagement aspects of this course include a "client" partner, the Northern Forest Canoe Trail (NFCT) non-profit organization. NFCT provided input into the development of the course, including requests for specific projects to be accomplished by the participants. One member of the NFCT Board of Directors responded: "We are delighted that Professor Sanford and his colleagues at USM have developed this innovative



FIGURE 2. Environmental Science major Amy Webb and her dog camping out along the Northern Forest Canoe Trail. Photo courtesy of Amy Webb.

course for experiential learning along the Northern Forest Canoe Trail. Students learn and earn credits toward a degree while enjoying a potentially life-changing experience, and their notes and observations provide NFCT additional information about trail conditions and usage.”²

Although the numbers were small (six) for the trial run of this course, the participants seemed to benefit. One student (fig. 2) stated, “I really enjoyed the fully immersed, completely independent environmental experience that the Northern Forest Canoe Trail Course offered. While taking this class I was able to complete a full time internship, receive course credits, take my family along and teach them a thing or two about the environment!”

Basic technological literacy and equipment were required for students enrolling in this course, including a digital camera, GPS, and computer, iPad, or iPhone for online connection to the campus Blackboard³ system for announcements, assignments, grades, discussions and other support activities. A Google account was required for participation in the Google+ virtual community. Links are provided to the various course documents.

About the Authors



Robert M. Sanford chairs the Department of Environmental Science & Policy at the University of Southern Maine, in Gorham, Maine. He is a SENCER Fellow and a co-director of the SENCER New England SCI.



Joseph K. Staples (PhD.) conducts research in the areas of forest ecology, environmental entomology & physiology, and integrated pest management in the Department of Environmental Science & Policy at the University of Southern Maine. He is a graduate of the Scholar Educator Program at Illinois State University and has taught more than thirty different courses in biology, ecology, and environmental science.

² Will Plumley, NFCT Board of Directors, personal communication.

³ This description of the course assumes the use of Blackboard Learning System for course delivery. And Blackboard will be used to maintain an on-line confidential grade book. However, the final version of the course may use Google Community or other format as per the final syllabus.

APPENDIX 1:

EYE 199 Northern Forest Canoe Trail Syllabus

EYE 199 Northern Forest Canoe Trail

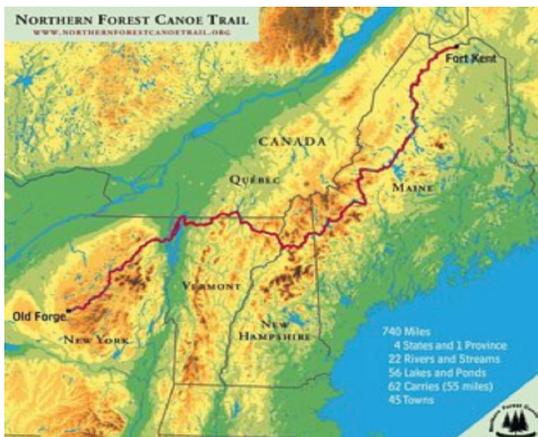
Summer 2014 3 credits DRAFT proposed syllabus 3/25/2014

Instructors:

Dr. Robert Sanford, Department of Environmental Science;

Dr. Elizabeth Vella, Department of Psychology; Dr. Joseph Staples, Department of Environmental Science.

Class Times: This is an experiential learning course undertaken at the convenience of the student during Summer Session II (June 30–August 15). Each student is required to spend 10 or more days on or along the waters of the Northern Forest Canoe Trail. These days do not have to be completed all at once; choose the days you want—whatever fits your schedule—as long as ten of them occur within the prescribed Summer Session time period.



Location: Off-campus at various sections of the Northern Forest Canoe Trail selected by the participant. 740 miles (1,190 km) of marked canoeing trail extend from Old Forge, New York to Fort Kent, Maine. There is no fixed distance a participant must travel, but the student must spend at least 10 days in which five or more hours per day are spent on the waters of the trail.

Texts and Resources recommended/required:

1. A personal NFCT narrative, such as Brakeley, Sam. 2012. *The Northern Forest Canoe Trail: A Journey Through New England History*. You can get a copy from the Northern Forest Canoe Trail web site <http://www.northernforestcanoetrail.org/> (only \$10-\$11). You can also use a different book or narrative.
2. The official NFCT trail guide, Thompson, John et al. 2010. *The Northern Forest Canoe Trail: Paddle and Enjoy the 740-Mile Water Trail Across New York, Vermont, Québec, New Hampshire, and Maine*. The NFCT Official Guidebook. The Mountaineers Books. <http://www.northernforestcanoetrail.org/> The Mountaineers Books publishes trail maps for various sections of the NFCT—select the ones for where you plan to travel.
3. Invasive aquatic plant species guide, such as Hill, Roberta and Scott Williams. 2007. *Maine Field Guide to Invasive Aquatic Plants and Their Common Native Look Alikes*. Maine Center for Invasive Aquatic Plants, Maine Volunteer Lake Monitoring Program. This is a nice spiral-bound, affordable book with good pictures. Feel free to use online sources or select an aquatic plants guide more suited to the region you will be paddling in.

4. A tree book that has a key for identifying trees in the northeast. Choose your own. *Forest Trees of Maine*, 2008 centennial edition, Maine Forest Service, has a simple winter key and summer key. This terrific spiral-bound book has color photographs and diagnostic features.

5. **Environmental education:** Orion. 2013. *Leave No Child Inside: A Selection of Essays from Orion Magazine*. The Orion Society, Great Barrington, MA.

6. **Thoreau on rivers:** Thoreau, Henry David. 1848. *A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers*. You can purchase this from various sources but you do not have to buy it—you can read it online or download it for free (<http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/4232>)

7. **Outdoor experiences and psychological/personal benefits.** Read at least one of the following articles posted on Blackboard and use for Assignment 5 (Restorative Powers)

- + Berman, M.G. et al. 2008. The cognitive benefits of interacting with nature.
- + Dustin, D. et al. 2011. The promise of river running as a therapeutic medium for veterans coping with post-traumatic stress disorder.
- + Garg, R. et al. 2010. Perceived psychosocial benefits associated with perceived restorative potential of wilderness river-rafting trips.
- + Kleiber, D.A. et al. 2002. Leisure as a resource in transcending negative life events: Self-protection, self-restoration and personal transformation.

8. **Journal:** It is good to have a physical notebook even if you also use a digital one or laptop. Rite in the Rain all-weather environmental field books work well (there are various versions of this—get the one you like), and there are other manufacturers. Bring rain-proof writing utensils.

9. **Other resources and field guides:** rocks, trees, birds, insects, etc. *National Audubon Society Regional Guide to New England* (National Audubon Society Regional Field Guides). Turtleback.

10. **Northern Forest Canoe Trail** (non-profit organization): In addition to maps, gear and other resources, the online bookstore contains a number of guides to the trail, including Sam Brakeley's book. <http://www.northernforestcanoetrail.org/>

11. **Suggested reference and writing guide:**

Hacker, Diana (various years and editions), *A Writer's Reference*, Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's; or Hacker, Diana and Nancy Sommers, *A Pocket Style Manual*, Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's.

Required technology: Digital camera, GPS, and computer, iPad, or iPhone for online connection to the Blackboard¹ system established for this course. This course uses Blackboard for announcements, assignments, grades, discussions, and other support activities. All students enrolled in courses at USM receive an email address that enables access to Blackboard. Please contact the Computer Center for information on access and use of Blackboard. The following link presents a quick guide for students new to Blackboard: http://www.learn.maine.edu/crs/bb5_guide.html

¹ This proposed syllabus assumes the use of Blackboard Learning System for course delivery. And Blackboard will be used to maintain an online confidential grade book. However, the final version of the course may use Google Community or other format as per the final syllabus.

Introduction:

This course is designed to credentialize a self-guided outdoor learning experience mentored by university professors with interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary expertise. Participants undergo the equivalent of ten or more days (which need not be consecutive) of canoe or kayak trips along portions of the Northern Forest Canoe Trail. Since the goal is experiential, it is not important how much of the trail is covered, nor that the travel be completed all at once. Instead, participants set their own schedule, provide periodic online check-ins, and submit assignments designed to foster an experience that is contemplative and that builds independent learning skills. The course provides an introduction to environmental data gathering and assessment, aspects of environmental management, and critical thinking about personal, social, and ecological implications of the Northern Forest Canoe Trail. Students are assumed to have basic water safety, canoeing/kayaking ability, orienteering and map reading skills, and camping/cooking or other logistical support skills. Since this is a self-guided experience, students are expected to rely upon their own abilities and to undertake only those trips that are safe and attainable within their skill set and equipment capabilities. Students are free to take along partners, friends, and family members.

This course is suitable for anyone seeking to explore the environment or learn about environmental science. It is also suitable for anyone who wants a self-paced entry to a college-level experience. The course fulfills the Entry Year Experience core education requirement for USM.

This course and USM's Entry Year Experience (EYE) goals:

- Employ a variety of perspectives to explore the interrelationship between human culture and the natural world of the Northern Forest Canoe Trail.
- Pose and explore questions in areas that are new and challenging. As a part of the river experience, students will develop questions about the stewardship of this resource. They may draw from conservation biology and ecology, geology, environmental history, environmental literature, economics, other social and physical sciences, and the fine arts.
- The online posting requirements of this course give the student opportunity to immediately respond to his/her experiences and to receive feedback from a mentor (one or more instructors).
- Reflect upon and link learning in the course with other learning experiences (for example co-curricular experience). This course is co-curricular by its very nature. Students will provide formative assessments via their online postings/uplinks. The self-assessment piece at the end is a final summative.
- Recognize that an individual's viewpoint is shaped by his or her experience and historical and cultural context. The student will evaluate his/her views and perspectives on the NFCT.

Course objectives

- Complete a total of 10 or more days of canoe/kayak experience on the waters of the NFCT. These days need not be consecutive and can be selected at the convenience of the student within the timeframe of the course
- Employ environmental science field skills (notably GPS, compass, dichotomous keys, transects, shoreline assessment, tree and aquatic plant identification, use of canoes and field equipment for water quality and other environmental sampling) to gather data and document river travel.
- Participate in a virtual community of paddlers.
- Record reactions to an immersive, contemplative experience in rural or even wilderness riparian settings with the intention of deepening one's connection to a natural community and fostering a sense of stewardship.
- Be able to describe the interdisciplinary nature of independent learning and self-assessment as part of a college-readiness experience.

Evaluation

Evaluation will be through student assignments. Through low-stakes writing—“writing to learn”—we assess achievement of learning outcomes. It is “low stakes” because there are no right or wrong answers and there are multiple assignments. No one assignment is critical; they all add up. Assignments consist of individual task write-ups you do at your own pace, and a journal you maintain. The journal is your own record, but we will read it, review it, and if it is in physical form, we will return it to you after the course concludes. The journal can also be kept online as an assignment section in which only you and the instructors can see it. Thus, it is separate from anything you might post in the discussion section of Blackboard, although you can use it to develop ideas and observations that you might want to go on to post in the discussion section or for other assignments. The questions and writing prompts drawn from Bloom’s taxonomy of educational objectives and are keyed to the assigned texts, conditions of the environment, and the experiential nature of the course as a self-guided river corridor transit.

When to do it	Assignment #	Description
Week 1	Assignment 1	Introduce self
Continuous	Assignment 2	Maintain personal journal
Continuous	Assignment 3	Travel log postings
By halfway point of course or trip	Assignment 4	Environmental education reaction
By halfway point of course or trip	Assignment 5	Restorative powers article
Your choice	Assignment 6	Tree identification
Your choice	Assignment 7	Shoreline erosion
Your choice	Assignment 8	Invasive water plant
Second half of course	Assignment 9	NFCT data contribution
Second half of course	Assignment 10	Thoreau report
Upon completion of final leg of canoe trip	Assignment 11	Hand-drawn explorer’s map
Final week	Assignment 12	Self-assessment memo

Assignment 1: Personal introduction. During your first week of the course, use the discussion section of Blackboard to introduce yourself. You can try Screencast-O-Matic (it is free), photos, documents, drawings, or other ways to accompany a short narrative introduction. Post information about yourself that you do not mind sharing. For example: Do you work? Where are you from? Kids/siblings? Pets? Academic major or interests? Career and life goals? Preferred learning styles/formats? Things you like about the outdoors? What canoe/kayak do you use? The objective is to improve learning by establishing an online community, and for us to know a little more about you so we can do a better job as instructors.

Assignment 2: Maintain a journal for each day you are on the water (ten days) and for any additional days you spend working on the course. We are interested in understanding your perceptual experience as a student in this class. Please consider this journal a medium for your expression. Although you are being asked to write in this journal following each day on the Northern Forest Canoe Trail, please feel free to write in this journal on other occasions throughout the duration of your enrollment in this course, should you feel inspired to do so by other experiences/reflections of time spent outdoors. Please be sure to mark the date and time of each entry.

General Instructions: Following each day on the Northern Forest Canoe Trail, please take a moment to reflect upon your experience by writing in this journal. In particular, please reflect upon any personal insights that you may have experienced during your time outdoors, as well as the thoughts, feelings, and emotions that surfaced throughout the day.

First Entry Instructions: Please describe why you selected this course amid the other Entry Year Experience options and document three goals/expectations that you have for your overall experience as a student in this course. What emotions did you find yourself experiencing today? Please feel free to write about any other thoughts/concerns that may be on your mind.

Final Entry Instructions: Please take a moment and reflect on your experience as a student in this course. What events come to mind for you as shaping your overall experience? Revisit the three goals/expectations that you documented in your first entry, commenting on the degree to which each of these was realized, or if new goals/expectations emerged for you throughout your enrollment in the course. Please describe any experiences that you feel may impact your life in a meaningful way. Please feel free to write about any other thoughts/concerns that may be on your mind.

Assignment 3. Travel log postings. For every day you are on the water or camping/traveling as part of the course, post an entry into the discussion section of Blackboard about your experience. You can use your journal as the basis for this if you wish. If you do not have internet access for several days during your travels you can make up for this by posting multiple entries as soon as you are able. Your entries can include (or be in the form of) reactions to other people's postings as you deem appropriate.

Assignment 4. Environmental education reaction. Read one of the essays in the Orion book and critique it or react to it from the context of your NFCT experience. Five pages.

Assignment 5. Restorative powers article. Read one of the posted articles posted on Blackboard (Berman et al., Dusting et al., Garg, et al., and Kleiber et al.). Having been on the NFCT waters yourself by now, write a personal reaction to the article in which you assess the potential role of your trip as a "restorative powers experience." (Write 4-5 pages double-spaced, full reference citations. Illustrations/figures optional.)

Assignment 6. Tree Identification. Select a site with trees, take one or more digital photos of them, provide one set of GPS coordinates for the site, identify five different trees on it using a dichotomous ("two equal parts") key, tell whether the trees are native to the area, state what type of habitat the tree is commonly found in, and describe the condition of the tree (e.g., mature, healthy, damaged by insects). A dichotomous key has us compare a characteristic that can have only one of two outcomes, something that we can fairly easily decide. We continue with a pattern of yes/no decisions based on our answers that narrows down the species. If you happen to already know what the tree is, that is OK, but you still have to give a pathway through the key to identify it, showing that you know how to use the key. For example, suppose we have a tree that we think is a pine. Instead of just looking up pines and seeing which is closest, start at the beginning of the key. For example, a first question might be whether or not the tree has needles (actually, a type of leaf) or "regular" leaves—something that usually is fairly easy to decide. If our answer is yes to needles, then the key leads us to a second question, whether the needles occur individually or in bundles. If in bundles, are they in groups of three or not? If not in groups of three, are they in groups of five; if not in groups of five, are they in groups of two? If in groups of two, are the needles short or long (7 or more cm)? If yes, you have a red pine (*Pinus resinosa*) as the result of a series of characteristics that have gradually narrowed down the range of species. There are over a hundred species of pine, so constructing such a key has to be done with care, and it is best tailored for specific regions. Tree report should be 4-5 pages, with references.

Assignment 7. Shoreline erosion. Select a site where water craft can access the river (use a current access point or a potential one) and where you believe there are some erosion control issues. Fill out an erosion control checklist (use one of the forms

on Blackboard), with photos to illustrate key issues. Assess the overall stability and the overall condition of existing erosion control measures. Accompany your form with a one-page summary narrative.

Assignment 8. Invasive water plant. For this assignment you will write a brief field report on one invasive water plant. Identify an invasive water plant you have encountered on/in the water during this course. Draw the plant by hand and digitally photograph it. Provide ecological background on the plant—guiding questions: where did it come from, how does it propagate, how invasive is it, what does it do to the ecosystem, what role do humans, other plants, animals play in its lifecycle? What management issues does it present for the waterway? What do you recommend? Submit as a 4-6 page report with figures and references.

Assignment 9. NFCT data contribution. Each student will select and do a project from the needs identified by the NFCT organization/staff. This may be environmental data collection, inventories, aspects of a management plan, an environmental lesson/education activity, or some other project we agree upon.

Assignment 10. Thoreau report. Henry David Thoreau spent a great deal of time on various rivers and ponds. He wrote about this in several books, especially *A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers*. By now you yourself have spent some time on rivers of the Northern Forest Canoe Trail. Select several points or aspects of Thoreau's writings and respond to them from the context of your own experience. What might Thoreau notice if he were on the river with you? 4-6 pages.

Assignment 11. Annotated map of route. Provide a map that shows where you traveled for each day on the water. Remember, you are not expected to travel a specific distance—this is more about the experience you had while traveling. Please indicate what days, start and finish points, and other salient features for this geographic record of your experience. Choose appropriate scale, whether your distance was a few hundred yards or many miles. Provide at least one page of interpretive narrative/key information to accompany your map.

Assignment 12. Concluding self-assessment memorandum. Submit an assessment of your learning from four perspectives and in the context of the Sam Blakeley book *Paddling the Northern Forest Canoe Trail*. A couple of pages is sufficient.

- a. **descriptive** What did you do? Provide a literal description of your project.
- b. **analytical** Think about all the course materials. How did they fit into the course objectives, your own objectives, and your chosen field of study?
- c. **affective** How did you feel about the experience?
- d. **reflective** What did you learn from the experience, including the readings?

What to bring:

The list of recommended equipment depends on a variety of factors, including whether you will be camping trailside, how many people accompany you, how long you will be gone, the weather conditions, and what type of experience you intend. A sample list might include canoe or kayak, spare paddle, tarp, lifejacket, first aid kit, tent/hammock, sleeping bag, towels/washcloths/soap, personal toiletries, backpack for day use (or functional equivalent), GPS unit, wide-brimmed hat, sun-screen (at least SPF 25), bug spray, sunglasses, clothing for a variety of weather conditions (including rain), canteen/water bottle, field notebook and pencils, personal entertainment, sketchpad, camera/iPhone/iPad. Always have a pack that can sustain you if you get stranded overnight in questionable weather.

Online support:

This course has a Blackboard site for announcements, discussions, grades, and other course support activities. All students are expected to access this site and use it. All students receive a university email address that allows them into Blackboard for their courses. The following link presents a quick guide for students new to Blackboard: http://www.learn.maine.edu/crs/bb5_guide.html

Letter Grade Criteria:

We will sum up your performance as a percentage of 100.

A: Excellent. The student has clearly learned and obtained an excellent level of proficiency in critical thinking and in meeting the course objectives through the assignments. Aggregate 90–100% performance on evaluative instruments. Strong quality online participation. Quality writing, research, and analytical skills and superior documentation are evident.

A-: This is essentially a high B with an average of 87–89%.

B+: Good work, with an average of 85–86%.

B: Good work, 80 to 84% on evaluative instruments. Good writing, research, analytical skills. Work shows good development of ideas and thorough support of analyses. Student has a significant understanding of concepts and abilities reflected in the course objectives.

B-: Acceptable work, average of 77–79%.

C+: Acceptable work, average of 75–76%.

C: Acceptable or average, 70–74% on evaluative criteria. Acceptable college-level writing and analytical skills. Demonstrates reasonable organization and clarity. The student has demonstrated a basic understanding of the concepts and abilities identified in the course objectives.

C-: Marginal work, 68–69% aggregate average performance on exams and other evaluations, based on a scale of 1–100.

D: Marginal work, average of 65–67%. Meets minimal requirements to pass the course. Only a few objectives met. Majority of assignments are not satisfactorily completed.

F: Below 65%.

GRADING WEIGHTS

Assignments: 90%

Participation (interaction with instructor, Blackboard, others): 10%

Support for Students with Disabilities:

This course involves activities in an outdoor setting, including watercraft events. It is for adults who are expected to know their own abilities and to comport themselves safely. We are committed to providing course adaptations or accommodations as needed. Since we all learn in different ways, please do not hesitate to let us know your needs. We will do our best to accommodate you. If you need course adaptations because of a disability, please contact the Disabilities Services Center www.usm.maine.edu/dsc located in Luther Bonney 242, Portland Campus. Phone number 780-4706; TTY 7804395.

Blackboard Discussion Rubric

EXPECTATION	RESPONDS TO DISCUSSION PROMPT	COMMUNITY	PROFESSIONALISM
10	The participant contributes well-explained, thoroughly addressed, thoughtful, and reflective ideas that have substance/depth. Includes pertinent questions, and additional or referenced resources. Discussion Prompt posts refer to the readings and are used to support the writer's position. The entry stimulates and opens discussion. Entries include references to one's own experiences that support the topic.	The participant is central to the discussion. Posts are made across the discussion period (beginning, middle, end). Posts indicate "listening" to others' positions, ideas, and questions by responding reflectively and with substance. Contributes multiple interactions and responses that foster a sense of community. Participant has more responses of substance than those of short comment or praise.	Entries are free of misspellings and grammatical errors. Entries use "People First" language and maintain respectful language, tone, and content. Maintains confidentiality. Electronic "Netiquette" (*below) is consistently practiced.
7	The participant contributes moderately well explained ideas that have some substance/depth. May include questions and additional or referenced resources. Discussion Prompt posts do not refer to the readings—instead they copy or restate content verbatim. The entry results in some continued discussion.	The presence of the participant is noticeable. Posts are made consecutively. Posts indicate "listening" to others' positions, ideas and questions. Responses include items both of substance and of brief comment or praise.	Entries are mostly free of misspellings and grammatical errors. Entries use "People First" language and maintain respectful language, tone, and content. Maintains confidentiality. Electronic "Netiquette" (*below) is practiced.
4	The participant contributes poorly explained, weakly addressed ideas, which lack substance/depth and reflection. Discussion Prompt posts do not refer to the reading/other comments at all. The entry does not stimulate discussion; lacks references to one's own experiences.	The presence of the participant is barely noticeable. All posts are made in one day thus leaving no time for reciprocal conversation and commenting. Posts do not "listen" to others and respond. Responses are mostly brief comments or praise statements and contain almost no posts of substance.	Entries have misspellings and grammatical errors. Entries do not use "People First" language and may include disrespectful or offensive language, tone or content. Adherence to electronic Netiquette (*below) is not consistently practiced.
0	No participation or insignificant participation	No participation or insignificant participation	No participation or insignificant participation

*Netiquette, or network etiquette, is the contemporary term for the proper way we communicate and interact with each other using email over the Internet. <http://www.library.yale.edu/training/netiquette/>

APPENDIX 2:*Pack List for Expeditions*

Day	Wkend	Week	GEAR
1	3	4-7	under-garments
1	3	4-7	pair socks (wool/wool blend or poly – not cotton)
1	1-2	2	shorts (nylon, not denim)
1	2	2-3	t-shirts
1	1	3	long sleeve shirts
1	1	1	wool or fleece shirt
1	1	1-2	pair pants (not denim)
1	1	1	fleece pants (not cotton)
1	1	1	rain jacket (lightweight, waterproof, breathable recommended)
1	1	1	rain pants (lightweight, waterproof, breathable recommended)
1	1	1	Sandals or water shoes
1	1	1	visor or hat with a rim
1	1	1	sunglasses

Day	Wkend	Week	OPTIONAL GEAR
1	1	2-3	long underwear
1	1	1	bathing suit
1	1	1-2	bandana
1	1	1	pile or wool mittens
1	1	1	wool or pile hat
1	1	1	parka
0	1	1	sneakers
1	1	1	hiking boots
1	1	1	boot gaiters
1	1	1	extra shoe laces
1	1	1	pajamas

Day	Wkend	Week	FIRST AID KIT
3	5	10+	antiseptic wipes
3	5	10+	pain reliever
0	1	2	safety pins
1	1	1	3" wide elastic bandage
1	1	1	box Band-Aids
2	3	5+	4" gauze pads
1	1	1	3" roll gauze
1	1	1	blister care kit (moleskin, mole foam)
1	1	1	1" wide waterproof first aid tape
1	1	3+	bottle tincture or benzoin
1	1	3+	rubber gloves
1	1	1	tweezers (may be attached to a knife) suited to remove ticks

Day	Wkend	Week	OPTIONAL FIRST AID.
1	1	1	allergy medicine / bee sting kit (Benadryl, epi-pen)
1	1	1	prescriptions (as needed)
1	1	1	CPR mask
1	1	1	Emergency blanket
1	1	1	electrolyte replacement powder (Gator-aid)
0	1	1	sewing kit (thread, needle, buttons, patch)
1	1	1	emergency snack food (protein bar)