B8723: Global Immersion: Leadership Expedition in Patagonia

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1. Course Overview

This class centers on a 10-day field-based training that teaches leadership (as well as ecology and outdoor skills) in Chilean Patagonia, one of the world's most beautiful and diverse mountain environments and a growing site of ecotourism. The trip will take place on December 10-22, 2013, with the campus component of the class primarily before the trip.

The in-country immersion program for this class will take place from December 12th through 21st; and therefore students must be in-country by December 11th implying a departure on the 10th. The cost of this program is $2450, which covers program costs from the 12th through the 21st, but does not include international airfare, lodging for the night of the 11th or the 21st, and the gear required to camp during the program. Please note that this course is physically and personally challenging: students will hike and camp for nine days and evenings, sleeping out on the mountain and preparing their own meals outdoors.

The expedition begins and ends at the NOLS Patagonia site, a 500-acre working organic farm 11 kilometers from Coyhaique, in between rolling hills and snow covered peaks. NOLS Patagonia course areas range from 44° latitude to 48° latitude. The terrain is rugged and remote; the weather can be cold and wet. The phrase “out of your comfort zone” applies in its most literal sense. Through this you will be challenged to lead a group, make decisions under uncertainty, learn from experience, express yourself clearly and listen closely, and influence and motivate the others on your team.

Attendance and active participation are required for both campus sessions and the in-country program. Campus session will prepare students for the personal and team challenges ahead, and also will consider ecotourism as an industry.
What role does it play in the economy of Chile and other countries? How can this industry best grow without undermining the wilderness areas that consumers seek to experience? Students who miss the first class meeting may be removed from the course, and as per Chazen policy will not have their program fee refunded to them. No program fee refunds will be given after the add/drop period has closed.

The expedition is led by experienced instructors from the National Outdoor Leadership School (NOLS). Students will learn technical skills, environmental practices, and leadership skills that will allow them to function effectively as a group in the powerful and dynamic situations Patagonia provides. The weather in this part of the world can be unpredictable and challenging. However, tough conditions help develop resilience and tolerance for adversity. The role of NOLS instructors will evolve as the team’s knowledge, experience and abilities grow. Students will take on increasing levels of personal and team responsibility for technical and interpersonal decisions.

Each participant will take the role of designated team leader (practicing the use of authority) and “team member” (practicing active followership). NOLS instructors will guide learning from these experiences through individual and group discussions before and after each day’s hike (Kolb Learning Cycle – think, do, reflect). The group will draw lessons about situationally contingent leadership approaches that are applicable not only to expeditions but to school and work settings as well. The overall experience yields leadership insights that are immediate, personally applicable, and memorable.

2. Course Fit Into CBS Leadership Curriculum

The Program on Social Intelligence (PSI) sponsors experiential activities and courses designed to enhance students’ abilities as leaders throughout their careers. PSI activities feature learning from psychological assessments, experiential challenges, and one-on-one coaching. This combination helps students to sharpen their self-awareness, set learning goals, practice their skills, and learn from their outcomes.

After the core class in leadership, which provides practice and feedback in everyday team problem solving, this class provides the opportunity for practice and feedback about one’s leadership tendencies in a more physically and motivationally challenging setting. The mountain experience will invoke and
challenge your capacities for emotional and social intelligence. Some specific modes of leadership taught by NOLS are self-leadership, active followership, designated leadership, and peer leadership.

3. Grading and Credit

Students are required to:

- Participate in four mandatory team meetings in NYC (*September 4th, November 20th, December 4th, January 31st*)
- Write a pre-expedition paper
  - 2-3 pages: discuss your goals, weaknesses and strengths
  - this paper will be shared with a learning partner who will give you relevant feedback in a peer review
  - *due: December 4th*
- Write a post-expedition peer review
  - 2 pages
  - *due January 5th*
- Write a post-expedition paper
  - 5 pages: review execution vs. the plan
  - assess individual and team development during the expedition
  - *due: January 24th*

The final grade for the course comprises:

- 30% The NOLS instructor’s written and numerical evaluation of the student at the successful completion of their NOLS expedition.
- 15% Pre-expedition paper
- 15% Post-expedition paper
- 15% Post-expedition peer review
- 25% Participation in campus sessions

4. Class Schedule

Session 1: Introduction
September 4th

- Review syllabus as well as rules. The final syllabus with full details about the readings will be distributed in August.
- Discuss safety concerns, risks, and necessary preparations
- Review travel logistics and expectations. (Chazen)
- Introduction to Chile and region--history, politics and culture
- Introduction of class members (initial articulation of learning goals)
Session 2: Eco-Tourism and Mountaineering
November 20th
- Discuss ecotourism cases
- Conduct mountaineering simulation in teams

Session 3: Mountaineering Debrief, Goal Setting, Logistics
December 4th
- Goal setting paper due
- Debrief simulation
- Last minute check-in
- Review of logistics, safety, any other pre-departure information (Chazen).
- Additional group presentations as needed

Session 4: Debrief
January 31st
- Share reflections
- Discuss thoughts and review goals

5. Course Objectives

Leadership Agility

The course will demonstrate that no one style of leadership works across different situations. Different decision-making styles will be needed depending on situational factors, such as the group’s skill level, task urgency, and outcome predictability. But throughout students will practice commitment to your team, acceptance of others, and cooperation to achieve goals. As a member of this course, you will be expected to:
- Function effectively in the following four leadership roles: self-leadership, active followership, designated leadership, and peer leadership.
- Practice seven key areas:
  i. Continually increase technical competence.
  ii. Display strong expedition behavior by working effectively as a member of a team and serving group goals with a positive attitude.
  iii. Maintain flexibility, commitment, and positive attitude in the face of adversity and uncertainty.
  iv. Accurately identify personal strengths and areas for growth.
  v. Work to understand the leader’s vision and, when appropriate, develop your own vision as a leader; follow through with appropriate action to help the group achieve its potential.
vi. Employ leadership styles and decision-making strategies appropriate to the situation; broaden decision-making styles individually and as a team.

vii. Effectively communicate ideas, perceptions, and concerns on an individual and group level.

• Provide effective oral feedback to peers and instructors.
• Reflect on the daily experience and actively engage in the debrief process.
• Discuss how leadership behaviors that manifest in the wilderness translate to the business environment.

Risk Management and Judgment

NOLS teaches wilderness users to practice responsible habits that promote the health and safety of self and others. Each student is expected to:

• Recognize and consistently perform appropriate techniques to reduce or avoid hazards in a remote mountain environment, e.g., rockfall, weather, river crossings, etc.
• Practice effective peer decision-making to mitigate hazards.
• Display sound judgment and an awareness of team and self-limits.
• Demonstrate ability to implement emergency procedures for backcountry situations.

Outdoor Skills

• NOLS students learn to live and travel in mountains within a framework of personal safety and care of the environment. Each student is expected to:
• Live comfortably in a mountain environment, learn to camp, cook, and dress for a variety of conditions.
• Travel competently in mountain terrain using map and compass skills, off-trail navigation, hazard evaluation, route-finding and river-crossing techniques.
• Learn basic skills necessary to traveling on steep snow, ice or rock (3rd and 4th class terrain): self arrest with an ice axe, crampon use and efficient rope handling techniques.
• Accurately assess skills, strengths, and endurance in self and others and conservatively apply those limits to given situations.
Environmental Studies

Participants will explore ethics and develop skills that value and protect the environment. As a member of this course, you will be expected to:

- Practice Leave No Trace minimum impact camping skills.
- Learn about local ecosystem’s flora and fauna, geology, and history.

Cultural Intelligence

CBS groups are diverse in terms of national backgrounds and prior industry and social experiences. In short, they are culturally diverse. This experience of living and working through challenges together in close quarters provides an arena for developing one’s cultural sensitivity and adaptiveness. NOLS attempts to have at least one Latin American Instructor in each group, which adds an element of local culture to the group experience. Openness and a willingness to share are the two most important skills that you can bring to the group. Students should come to their course with enthusiasm and a desire to learn. They need to be flexible and willing to do things in a style that may be different from your own. They should be excited to face the unknown, adapt to situations and schedules at a moment’s notice, and help others do the same. Finally, learning some basic Spanish will enhance their experience.

Environmental Challenges

The weather in Patagonia is a mixture of wind, rain, snow, and sun. Be ready for just about any type of weather condition. For a country no more than 120 miles wide, Chile contains many micro-climates. On your course you could end up living camped on a windy glacier in whiteout conditions or cooking in a heavy downpour. Or hiking in the hot sun, longing for the next stream. The wind can howl, the snow can pile high, the rain can come in sheets- sometimes for days at a time. Students should be prepared for rain and cold. Instructors will help students learn how to manage the challenges of the environment and weather.

6. Readings

The readings are still being finalized but some examples can be noted. Some cases about ecotourism in the region are: Ecotourism: A Brief Introduction (HBS 9-700-099), Patagonia Sur: For-Profit Land Conservation in Chile (HBS 9-211-103) and Posadas Amazonas (SKE029).
As a preparation for the teamwork and leadership challenges on the mountain expedition, we will conduct a web-based simulation of an Everest expedition, Leadership and Team Simulation: Everest V2. This role-play game requires preparation ahead of time from each student and then group decision making under time pressure and challenging communication conditions. It provides a common ground to think about the experience ahead and to set learning goals. Our debrief of the simulation will conclude with a discussion of High-Stakes Decision Making: The Lessons of Mt. Everest – a recap of the 1996 Everest disaster behind the book “Into Thin Air”.

To prepare for field-based learning, you will read the NOLS’ Leadership Educator Notebook, edited by John Gookin & Shari Leach. A list of recommended readings will also be made available. These will include some analyses by managers and by researchers of what business leadership skills are learned in outdoor leadership education. For example, an HBR article “Wilderness Leadership – On the Job” distills five principals from outdoor exploration that will make you a better manager. As NOLS has offered courses for several decades, research studies have been conducted to measure the long-term learning outcomes from their programs.

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1 http://hbsp.harvard.edu/list/7000-demo-page-basic
2 http://hbswk.hbs.edu/item/3074.html
3 http://rendezvous.nols.edu/content/view/1812/816/