

ADIRONDACK COMMUNITY COLLEGE  
ADVENTURE SPORTS:  
LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

**COURSE:** AVS 222 River Safety and Whitewater Rescue

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

Designed to prepare whitewater leaders with proactive prevention techniques and effective whitewater rescue management skills, students will learn and practice techniques for accident prevention, preparedness, and rescue response. Emphasis will be placed on effective river running, river safety, safe river leadership, management and operation skills necessary to avoid rescue scenarios, as well as whitewater rescue skills.

**PREREQUISITE:** HED 108, PED 107 or 108, PED 139, PED 149

**CREDIT HOURS:** Lecture: 2 hrs. Lab: 3 hrs. Credit: 3 hrs.

**COURSE OBJECTIVE:** Students will:

1. demonstrate competency in river safety and whitewater rescue
2. interpret liability and safety standards
3. assess risk and hazards
4. apply on-water group management and safe leadership skills
5. demonstrate proficient use and selection of rescue equipment
6. practice proactive prevention techniques, accident prevention, and rescue techniques
7. identify the impact of river topography, hydrology, and features on equipment and people

**COURSE TEXTS:**

Walbridge, C. & Sundmacher, W. Whitewater Rescue Manual. Camden, ME: Ragged Mountain Press, 1995.

**COURSE CONTENT:**

- I. Introduction
  - A. Overview
  - B. Waivers and medical forms
  - C. Safety
- II. Rescue Philosophy
  - A. Accident prevention
  - B. Proactive rescue
  - C. Accident timeline
  - D. Strategies
  - E. Accident management
- III. Rescue priorities
- IV. Liability and Ethical issues
  - A. Negligence
  - B. Duty to act
  - C. Breach of duty
  - D. Harm
  - E. Standard of care
  - F. Abandonment

- G. Moral vs. legal obligation to act
- H. Trip leader vs. common adventurer
- V. Trip organization
  - A. Lead and sweep
  - B. Know your group
  - C. River and the weather
  - D. Trip Planning
  - E. Risk Management Planning
- VI. Scene Management
  - A. Locate, access and assess, stabilize and transport
  - B. Prioritizing the rescue
  - C. Rescue structure
- VII. Incident Command Structure
  - A. Leader
  - B. Safety
  - C. Rescuer
  - D. Medic, rigger, runner
- VIII. Communication
  - A. Hand and whistle signals
  - B. Cell phone or radio if appropriate
- IX. Medical issues
- X. Equipment
  - A. Protection
  - B. Thermal protection
  - C. Personal rescue gear
  - D. Group rescue gear
- XI. Rescue vest
- XII. Throw Ropes
  - A. throwing and recovery zones
  - B. belay techniques
  - C. coiling and re-throwing
- XIII. Line Ferries and Line Crossings
- XIV. Knots
- XV. Anchors
- XVI. Mechanical Advantage
- XVII. Pins
- XVIII. Entrapment
- XIX. Stabilization, snag, and cinch lines
- XX. Hazards and Hydrology
- XXI. Swimming and wading
- XXII. Strainers
- XXIII. Boat-based rescue
- XXIV. Live bait rescues
- XXV. Contact Rescues and C-spine control
- XXVI. V-lowers
- XXVII. Scenarios

**ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:**

Bechdel, Les and Ray, Slim. River Rescue. Boston: Appalachian Mountain Club Books, 1997.

Ray, Slim. Swiftwater Rescue. Asheville, NC: CFS Press, 1996.

Ray, Slim. Swiftwater Rescue Field Guide. Asheville, NC: CFS Press, 2002.

Walbridge, C. River Safety Reports. Springfield, VA: American Canoeing Association, 1996.

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:**

With or without reasonable accommodation, all students must be able to:

- Navigate difficult and varying terrain in the mountain, aquatic, challenge course, and alpine environments.
- Lift and carry heavy loads that often exceed 50lbs. over difficult and strenuous terrain.
- Walk, paddle, climb, and hike long distances carrying substantial weight.
- Assist in rescue efforts which may include lifting, climbing and carrying substantial weight over difficult and varying terrain.

Under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, a post-secondary student with a disability who is in need of academic accommodations or auxiliary aids is required to notify the College of the nature of the disability and to provide appropriate documentation which supports the request for reasonable accommodations or auxiliary aids.

Individuals who would like to self-identify with a disability (and have not already) or think they may have a disability and want to request accommodations should contact the Office of Accessibility Services directly in Warren Hall, or call 743-2282 / (TTY) 743-2323 for an appointment.