

An Average Day – What to Expect

(a) Daily timeline	<p>We will live at a research station for two weeks. We will sleep in single sex cabins that house 6 to 8 people each on bunk beds. We'll eat breakfast (6:45 am) and dinner (6:00 pm) at a dining hall (a short walk from the cabins) where there is also access to bathrooms, showers, and laundry. At breakfast we will be able to pack a bag lunch.</p> <p>Each day we'll head outside shortly after breakfast and be back by dinner. You should expect to be outdoors all day, rain or shine. Evenings will include time to work on field journals, free time (camp fires, canoeing, cards games), and occasional mandatory or optional class activities.</p>
(b) Work habitat & Physical exertion	<p>We will hike both on and off trails in terrain that varies from flat to quite steep and rugged. Trail conditions are likely to be muddy in many places. Expect to carry a daypack all day through rugged terrain. The most strenuous hike will be on the last day of the course which will be a recreational day hike up and down one of the taller Adirondack peaks (approx. 8 hrs of strenuous hiking).</p> <p>Wearing a good-fitting and sturdy pair of hiking boots and having good raingear with you will help you stay comfortable and safe.</p>
(c) Common activities	<p>Common activities include riding in 11- seat vans on rural mountain roads, hiking (as described above), practicing forest measurement techniques individually and in groups. During free time, there is the opportunity to canoe or swim in a cold lake at the research station. Canoe safety training is provided by the College of Environmental Science and Forestry staff. Swimming is done at students' own risk and must be restricted to daylight hours when others are present.</p>
(d) Weather, dehydration, & biting insects	<p>Weather conditions are highly variable. It is likely that at different points during the course, you will be outside in the rain, be uncomfortably cold, uncomfortably warm, physically fatigued, and annoyed by biting blackflies.</p> <p>Students should carry two litres of drinking water with them each day to remain hydrated. On sunny days, sunscreen is recommended because we will walk through forests before the leaves have completely emerged and so UV exposure can be significant.</p>
(e) Toxic/poisonous, wildlife/ plants	<p>Natural dangers include possible encounters with black bears, poison ivy, ticks carrying Lyme disease, and venomous snakes. All of these are unlikely to be problems. In 10 years of teaching the course, we have encountered a bear once (without incident), seen poison ivy once or twice (no reactions), and never encountered venomous snakes or Lyme's disease. Nevertheless, proper vigilance and regular tick checks are good practice.</p>
(f) Sleeping, washroom & laundry facilities	<p>We live in single sex cabins with 4 bunkbeds each. Depending on the number of male and female participants, cabins may be full or not. Cabins have heat, electricity, and very low bandwidth Wi-Fi but no plumbing. Bedding and towel service are not provided. Showers, flush toilets, and coin laundry are available in a nearby building.</p>
(g) Meal plans & food allergies	<p>Breakfast and dinner are prepared for us in a dining hall. At breakfast time, we have access to food to make sandwiches, fruit, and other snacks to pack our own bag lunch. The kitchen will accommodate most dietary restrictions so long as they are informed in advance.</p>
(h) Non-academic responsibilities	<p>We are collectively responsible for keeping our cabins clean and for leaving the facilities in as good condition as we find them.</p> <p>Some students have attempted to take online courses while taking this field course. Depending on the course in question, this may be technically possible. However, I do not recommend it because free time and internet bandwidth are both limited.</p>

(i) Degree of isolation	<p>From the research station, it is a fifteen-minute drive to the nearest town (Long Lake, NY) which offers a limited selection snacks, souvenirs, and supplies you may have forgotten. At the research station, low bandwidth Wi-Fi (i.e. you can email but not stream videos) is available. Cell service is spotty at best.</p> <p>We have first aid supplies on hand and I will bring some common over-the-counter medicines. There is a defibrillator at the dining hall. If further medical attention is required, there is 911 service and a hospital with emergency medical facilities approximately 1 hour's drive from the research station (Saranac Lake, NY).</p>
(j) Alcohol & drugs	<p>Drinking age in the United States is 21 years and cannabis is illegal there. Students are not allowed to bring alcohol or recreational drugs with them. However, once we arrive in the Adirondacks, students who are of legal age in the US can occasionally buy moderate quantities of alcohol (convenience store in town sells beer) to consume during their free time (some evenings), as long as drinking does not interfere with class activities.</p>
(k) Vaccinations/ Insurances	<p>No vaccinations are recommended beyond Ontario's routine vaccination schedule. Supplementary medical insurance is required.</p>
(l) Social Situations	<p>As described above, this course involves living in close quarters with other students, the instructor, and the TA. We work together, sleep in the same cabins, eat together and often recreate together during free time. It is important to be respectful of each other's needs for quiet, personal space, privacy, etc.</p>
(m) Final comments	<p>In ten years of offering this course, almost all students love the experience and the location, and learn a lot. A few make friendships that will last a lifetime or are inspired to change career goals.</p>