



ATBO-107 – Natural Interpretation

Business

Effective Term & Year: Fall 2025
Course Outline Review Date: 2030-04-01

Program Area: Tourism, Recreation, & Hospitality

Description:

This course is an introduction to the natural history of the Rockies and Columbia Mountains of BC: the landscape, geology, flora and fauna, species identification, ecosystem relationships and biogeoclimatic zones of the interior mountain environment. Aligning with UN Sustainable Development Goal #15—Life on Land, students will develop knowledge and skills in the interpretation of natural landscapes through place-based experiences, writing, and peer-group presentations. The course promotes an understanding of natural ecosystems, and the protection and sustainable use of terrestrial landscapes by the tourism industry.

Program Information:

This is a required course in Adventure Tourism Business Operations.

Delivery Methods: On-campus (Face-to-Face)

Credit Type: College of the Rockies Credits

Credits: 3

Instructional Activity and Hours:

Activity	Hours
Classroom, Directed Studies or Online Instruction	21
Seminar/Tutorials	
Laboratory/Studio	

Practicum/Field Experience	24
Co-op/Work Experience	
Other	
Total	45

Course Requisites:

- Enrollment in the Adventure Tourism Business Operations Program

Prior Learning and Recognition: Yes

Students are able to request formal recognition of their prior learning or experience outside the classroom. Challenge examination, portfolio-assisted assessment, work-based assessment or a combination of assessments that is appropriate to identify, assess, and recognize prior skills, competencies, and knowledge to achieve course credit. Tuition fees apply, refer to Policy 2.5.5 [Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition \(PLAR\)](#) or contact an education advisor for more information.

Course Transfer Credit:

For information about receiving transfer credit for courses taken at either British Columbia or Alberta institutions, please see <https://www.bctransferguide.ca/> or <https://transferalberta.alberta.ca> . For more transfer credit information, please visit <https://www.cotr.bc.ca/Transfer>

All requests for course transfer credit from institutions in British Columbia or elsewhere should go to the College of the Rockies Enrolment Services office.

Textbook Resources:

Textbook selection varies by instructor and may change from year to year. At the Course Outline Effective Date the following textbooks were in use:

Ben Gadd, *Handbook of the Canadian Rockies* (2nd edition, 2016 printing), Alpine Book Peddlers, Dead Man's Flats, Alberta

and/or

Dan Clark, ed., *Ecology, Geology and History Handbook for the Canadian Rockies*, (digital edition), The Interpretive Guides Association, Canmore, Alberta

Learning Outcomes:

Upon the successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- explain the role and value of natural history interpretation in guiding and outdoor recreation;
- identify and describe the geological processes that created the mountain landscape of the Canadian Rockies and Columbia Mountains;
- describe and differentiate the biogeoclimatic zones that occur in the Rockies and Columbia Mountains, and identify species characteristic of each zone;
- develop interpretive techniques based on the fundamental principles of interpretation;
- apply communication strategies that present a clear, concise message in written, spoken, and visual forms;
- practice communication techniques that build confidence, demonstrate knowledge, and meet the needs of natural interpretation audiences

Course Topics:

- Flora and fauna of the Canadian mountain environment
- Species identification and the binomial nomenclature of species
- Climate's impact on the Canadian mountain environment and biogeoclimatic zonation
- Ecological systems and relationships
- Plate tectonics and mountain building
- Geology and physiography of the Rockies and Columbias
- Human history in the Rockies and Columbias
- Indigenous Peoples' presence, practices, and patterns of land use
- Presentation skills
- Interpretive writing skills
- Field trips to varied mountain environments

See instructor's syllabus for the detailed outline of weekly readings, activities and assignments.

Evaluation and Assessments

Assessment Type: On-Campus (face-to-face)

Assessment Type	% of Total Grade
Presentation	20%
Field trip homework assignments	30%
Writing assignments	20%
Final Exam	30%

Total	100%
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Grade Scheme

A+	A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D	F
>=90	89-85	84-80	79-76	75-72	71-68	67-64	63-60	59-55	54-50	<50

Evaluation Notes: A grade of “D” grants credit, but may not be sufficient as a prerequisite for sequential courses.

Evaluation Notes Comments:

Please see the instructor syllabus for specific classroom policies related to this course, such as details of evaluation, penalties for late assignments, and use of electronic aids.

Exam Attendance:

Students must attend all scheduled exams at the appointed time and place. Instructors may approve an alternate exam to accommodate an illness or personal crisis. Department heads will consider other written requests. Any student who misses a scheduled exam without prior approval will receive a “0” on the exam.

Academic Policies:

College of the Rockies policies related to courses can be found at <https://cotr.bc.ca/about-us/college-policies/> and include the following:

- Policy 2.1.4 Course Audit
- Policy 2.4.1 Credential Framework
- Policy 2.4.3 Students with Documented Disabilities
- Policy 2.4.4 Student Rights, Responsibilities and Conduct
- Policy 2.4.8 Academic Performance
- Policy 2.4.9 Student Feedback and Concerns
- Policy 2.4.11 Storage of Academic Works
- Policy 2.5.3 Student Appeal
- Policy 2.5.5 Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR)

Equivalent Course(s) and Course Code Changes

Equivalent Course: Students who have received COTR credit for ATBO 107 may not receive additional credit for MAST 114.

Course Changes:

The College of the Rockies updates course outlines regularly to meet changing educational, employment and marketing needs. The instructor will notify students in writing of any updates to this outline during the semester. The instructor reserves the right to revise, add or delete material while meeting the learning outcomes of this course outline.