

Encountering the Madawaska

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Due Date: Paper 10/24; Participation before, during, and after trip

This assignment involves participation in and reflection on an excursion to the Madawaska River, where we will learn about the history and geography of the region while camping on the river bank and taking white water skills instruction. **Final dates of the trip have been set for Oct 12-14.**

Please make sure to read and fill out [the trip documents package!](#) You'll want to print pages 11-17 at least. Please note that the "Trip Leader" form on pp.18-19 is provided for information purposes only – I'll be signing that myself :-)

For planning purposes & job signup, please use the [Google Docs Spreadsheet](#) designed for this purpose. We'll also try to do some co-ordination through the Canvas forums.

Requirements

Your mark on this assignment is determined as follows:

- 1/2 participation
- 1/2 written reflection

Let's look at each of these in more detail.

Participation

This is a group activity whose success depends on your active and meaningful participation in preparation, execution, and debriefing.

For our purposes, "active and meaningful participation" includes:

- **Contributing substantively to the pre-trip planning process**, e.g.:
 - filling out the gear and task spreadsheet in a timely fashion
 - executing your logistical tasks in a friendly and effective manner
 - participating in on- and off-line discussions regarding gear, rendezvous points, etc.
- Fulfilling the requirements of **both your trip jobs** ("logistical" and "intellectual")
 - in particular, your "intellectual job" should add substantively to the group's understanding of the Madawaska River and the trip itself
- **Active Listening:** paying attention throughout the trip, asking appropriate questions both

during technical instruction and in group meetings, engaging in discussion, sharing comments, demonstrating interest and enthusiasm (this includes body language), exercising critical thinking, note taking, entertaining contradictory perspectives, engaging and acknowledging hosts' presence.

- **Involvement in Group Discussion:** sharing knowledge and information, challenging yourself to speak up if you usually don't, and allowing others to speak if you are a person who tends to dominate discussions
- **Group Accountability:** participating positively as part of a group during all activities.
- **Respect:** interacting in a culturally appropriate manner with hosts and local communities while traveling.
- **Engagement:** you are expected to work hard at technical skills and follow instruction, and also to participate in camp-making and camp-breaking activities, as well as cooking, dish-washing, etc.
- **Surveys:** completion of pre- and post-trip surveys is mandatory and, while your responses will be anonymized, your response or non-response will be noted.
- **Peer Appreciation:** You'll be asked to highlight one significant contribution made by each member of your group.

Your participation mark is **not** meant to reflect your **technical proficiency** at the end of the whitewater course – though your **effort** in the technical instruction will be taken into account.

Evaluation will be based on instructor notes taken during the excursion.

Reflection Paper

Write a paper of ~1000 words (no more than 1250) in which you take one aspect of your experience on the Madawaska as the starting point for an exploration of themes related to the course.

What is a reflection paper?

By reflection paper, I mean a piece of argumentative writing that takes *thoughtful reflection* on your own experience as the starting point and immediate evidentiary basis for an engagement with course readings and themes. In this case, you might choose any of several lines of inquiry:

- **risk and pedagogy:** Both [Beames & Brown](#) and [Brown](#) discuss the literature on risk in outdoor education (or what Beames & Brown call “adventurous education”). You might take this opportunity to reflect on the sensation of risk (physical, social, emotional, etc.) and how it affected your experience of the trip, and the overall learning outcomes.
- **river histories:** here there are several angles you might take. We've read a little bit about river economies, about cultural practices around rivers, and about experiences of the sacred. Do your experiences on the trip give you insight into any of those questions?

Marking criteria

As with any written assignment, I mark on the basis of the following criteria:

- **Thesis, Argument and Evidence:** Is it clear what you are arguing for? Do your arguments “cohere”, that is, are they self-consistent? Does the evidence you bring forward actually support your claims?

- **Style and Grammar:** Do your phrasing and sentence structure make it easy (even fun) to understand your arguments, or do they get in the way? Do you make frequent grammatical errors?
- **Spelling and Citations:** Do you make frequent typographical errors? Have you used a consistent citation style such as Chicago Manual of Style, MLA, or APA?

For a reflection paper, I add the following:

- does the paper display some sense of the **appropriate scope of arguments from experience**? That is, do you seem to understand both the **limits** of reflection (e.g., the difficulty of generalizing from a single person's experience) and its **specific epistemic virtues** (e.g., the strong power of analogy and empathy to craft meaningful narratives)?

An **A** or excellent paper will be clear, concise, well-organized and thoughtful. It will in general include supporting evidence, be divided logically into paragraphs, have minimal spelling and grammatical errors, and will be of appropriate length. A **B** paper will share those virtues but to a lesser degree. A **C** paper will be missing some of these virtues. A **D** or **F** paper will lack many of them.

Citations

Note on citations: I don't care what citation style you use, but you should use it properly and consistently. I **very strongly recommend** the use of a citation manager, such as [Zotero](#). It will not make much difference for this class, but over the next few years it will save you an **enormous** amount of work. You may in any case want to join the [river project library](#), which will give you access to a large number of sources.

Submission

Please submit your work both by email and by Quercus (this instruction may change if I figure out a better method later in the semester).

- use an editable format, such as .doc, .docx, or .odt. Despite their many limitations, these formats are excellent for review and commenting.
- Include your name somewhere in the file. I need to be able to keep track of which paper is whose!
- Please do **not** include your student number in the paper.