

# OUTDOOR AND ADVENTURE LEADERSHIP, M.A.

Director, Assistant Professor Rob Ribbe

The purpose of the Master of Arts degree program in Outdoor and Adventure Leadership (OAL) is to build Christ's church and benefit society worldwide by fostering the development of spiritually maturing, thoughtfully grounded, and practically skilled outdoor ministry professionals.

This degree is offered through HoneyRock, Wheaton College's Outdoor Center for Leadership Development in the Northwoods of Wisconsin. Since 1951, HoneyRock has operated as an experiential leadership development laboratory that integrates leadership of camp programs with liberal arts training and coursework to develop leaders for Christ's church worldwide. HoneyRock operates as a fully functioning camp year-round, providing a variety of youth focused camp and undergraduate programs as the context for graduate student learning. Our faculty are fully engaged practitioner-scholars, simultaneously leading a camp while they study and teach in the field.

A Masters degree in Outdoor and Adventure Leadership seeks to apply the biblically grounded, historic principles of whole person development and formation to leadership in the Christian camp, outdoor, and adventure ministry movement worldwide. Throughout human history, God has used temporary community experiences and engagement with creation to equip leaders for His mission of calling people to Himself, building Christ's church, and benefiting society worldwide. This program is designed for current ministry professionals, as well as those looking for excellent training to launch them into the field. Students pursuing a degree in Outdoor and Adventure Leadership will pursue development of the following competencies for effectiveness in the field of outdoor and adventure ministries. This degree is applicable to those in the fields of Christian camping, outdoor education, challenge course facilitation, wilderness ministry, and outdoor related programming in college, church, or other organizational settings.

We hope that our graduates will be characterized as academically grounded, spiritually maturing and practically skilled leaders who humbly, compassionately, and wisely minister the Gospel and build up God's people in a constantly changing world.

By the end of their program, OAL students will have

**Academically grounded** in that they will have...

- Articulated a biblical, theological, historical, and philosophical perspective of formation and ministry, in light of contemporary global realities.
- Identified the role of creation, temporary community and organizational dynamics as context for fostering encounters with God and holistic growth.
- Demonstrated an understanding of the spiritual formation and experiential education practices by applying them in outdoor ministry contexts.

**Spiritually Maturing (Whole People)**

- Demonstrated ownership of their personal faith formation and holistic growth within Christian community, embracing creation as a context for transformation.

- Discerned their strengths, calling, limits, and passions for serving the needs of the church and the world.
- Engaged in authentic Christian community, valuing the diversity of cultures, ethnicities, traditions and individuals and effectively contributing as a member of Body of Christ.

**Practically skilled (Transformation Outdoor Experiences)**

- Designed and facilitated effective outdoor and adventure-based experiences that foster personal and group development.
- Exercised leadership by effectively collaborating within an organization to accomplish shared goals, foster organizational health and facilitate leadership development.
- Demonstrated the necessary curiosity and skills of a practitioner/scholar: critical analysis, oral and written communication, and program evaluation.

## Delivery Options

It is expected that all OAL students have an active role in an outdoor related ministry while completing the degree so that coursework is immediately integrated with ministry practice. As a result, students have two options for completing the degree.

First, students can apply to live, work and study full-time at HoneyRock. Students complete all courses as a cohort by taking modular intensive courses with faculty at HoneyRock, combined with a few tele-conferenced, online or hybrid courses with faculty from the Wheaton Graduate School campus in Illinois. All students at HoneyRock will also have a role as a graduate assistant, coordinating some aspect of HoneyRock's ministry as the hands-on laboratory for ministry practice and collaboration. An employment application process is required in addition to the graduate school application.

The second option is for students to participate from a distance while maintaining their role as an employee or graduate assistant in another camp or outdoor ministry related organization. In this model, students take some courses in an online or hybrid format and others by attending modular intensive courses at HoneyRock or at one of our remotely located partner organizations for approximately 1-2 weeks per semester while enrolled in the program.

## Accelerated Degree Option

Wheaton undergraduate students have the option to take graduate classes in OAL during their junior and senior years as part of their block tuition. These courses cannot count towards both their bachelor's and master's degrees. If done wisely, students can complete the MA in one additional year. Contact the OAL faculty for more information.

## Requirements

**Requirements for the Outdoor and Adventure Leadership MA**, students will complete 6 hours of credit in the MML Ethos Core, 26 hours of credit in OAL core courses and 8 hours of credit in approved elective courses.

Code	Title	Credits
<b>MML ETHOS Core</b>		<b>6</b>
MML 503	Cultural Engagement	
MML 512	Leadership and Spiritual Formation	
<b>OAL Core Courses</b>		
BITH 565	Christian Theology (online or intensive format)	4
OAL 518	Research Methods for Ministry	2
OAL 534	Care and Counsel in Ministry	2

OAL 549	Program Philosophy and Planning	4	HESD 614	Diversity and Student Development: Building Communities of Shalom	2
OAL 595	Foundations of Experiential Education	2			
OAL 662	Theology and Practice of Outdoor Ministry	4	HESD 636	Leadership in Higher Education	2
OAL 663	Organizational Leadership and Staff Development in Outdoor Ministry	4	HESD 639	Legal Issues in Higher Education	2
OAL 682	Integrative Seminar	2			
OAL 692	Creative Project	2			
or OAL 698	Thesis/Applied Thesis				
<i>Elective Courses</i>		<b>8</b>			
<p>The elective options allow students to specialize in an area related to their context and calling in outdoor ministry. Students will propose their elective courses for approval as part of their candidacy application. They may choose from one of the OAL specializations or develop their own by selecting from available and accessible courses in the Wheaton College Graduate School or at another college (with approval of OAL faculty).</p>					
<b>Total Credits</b>		<b>40</b>			

As part of this 40-credit program, all graduate students are required to complete a theological studies requirement of 6 semester hours. For OAL students, this consists of OAL 662 and BITH 565 (<https://catalog.wheaton.edu/search/?P=BITH%20565>) Christian Theology.

#### Requirements for the Outdoor and Adventure Leadership - Higher Education Concentration M.A.

To complete the HESD concentration, students must complete at least 12 hours of HESD courses, either by taking HESD 546 and HESD 634 in place of OAL 595 and OAL 534 or by taking their 4 hour elective in HESD. Students may do both of these and take up to 16 hours in HESD if desired.

Code	Title	Credits
<b>Required Courses:</b>		
MML 512	Leadership and Spiritual Formation	4
MML 503	Cultural Engagement	2
BITH 565	Christian Theology	4
or BITH 566	Foundations for Biblical Interpretation	
or BITH 576	History of Christianity to 1900	
OAL 518	Research Methods for Ministry	2
OAL 549	Program Philosophy and Planning	4
OAL 662	Theology and Practice of Outdoor Ministry	4
OAL 692	Creative Project	2
or OAL 698	Thesis/Applied Thesis	
OAL 682	Integrative Seminar	2
HESD 595	Introduction to Higher Education	4
HESD 641	Emerging Adult Development	4
<i>Choose 4 hours from the following two options:</i>		<b>4</b>
OAL 595	Foundations of Experiential Education	
or HESD 546	Facilitating Collegiate Learning	
OAL 534	Care and Counsel in Ministry	
or HESD 634	Well-Being in Higher Education	

#### Electives:

Choose from OAL Electives list or HESD list below as needed to reach a minimum of 12 hours in HESD. HESD concentration students can take up to 16 hours in HESD if desired.