

**San José State University
Department of Kinesiology
Fall 2025, KIN 63A, Beginning Hiking and Backpacking**

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Office Hours:	By appointment
Class Days/Time:	Select Fridays (see schedule)
Classroom:	SPX 163

Course Description

An introductory course designed to impart skills such as topographical map reading, navigation and hiking. The emphases are on logistics and operations of adventure excursions and fitness in various wilderness environments.

Web Resource

Course materials may be found on the e-campus [Canvas learning management system](http://www.sjsu.edu/at/ec/canvas/) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/at/ec/canvas/>. You are responsible for regularly checking the Canvas discussion board and email for information and messages. Login using your mysjsu username and password.

Course Goals and Student Learning Objectives

Following activities and assigned reading, students will be able to demonstrate through class activities/assignments, skill tests, and written exams:

- Knowledge of and proficiency in fundamental skills (both mental and motor) and techniques of basic outdoor skills, to be able to safely navigate back country conditions
- An ability to hike increased distances with better cardiovascular endurance and muscular endurance

- An understanding of the history, etiquette, strategies, current research and safety associated with hiking and backpacking
- An ability to evaluate the conditions necessary for safe wilderness preparedness, choose appropriate equipment, and plan a hiking trip
- Ways to minimize the impact on the natural environment while hiking and understand and articulate the concepts of sustainability
- An understanding of the mental and physical health benefits to be derived from hiking and backpacking

Activity Program Learning Outcomes (APLO)

After completion of the physical activity graduation requirement, students shall be able to:

- Demonstrate proficiency in the execution of the motor/sport skills appropriate to the specific activities completed.
- Identify and/or explain the applicable history, rules, strategies, current research, safety, and etiquette related to the specific activities completed.
- Identify and/or explain the benefits of physical activity as related to physical and mental health.

Text/Readings

Course materials may be found on the e-campus [Canvas learning management system](http://www.sjsu.edu/at/ec/canvas/) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/at/ec/canvas/>. You are responsible for regularly checking the Canvas discussion board and email for information and messages. Login using your mysjsu username and password.

Course Notes

- Class protocol: Students are expected to arrive on time and participate fully in all activities throughout the class period. Regular active participation is essential to acquiring the course objectives. Turn cell phone (and any other electronic devices) off and put away for the duration of the class. Interactions with classmates and the instructor are expected to be respectful at all times.
- Making up a missed hike: Students may, upon approval only, make up an organized hike within one week of the hike with a written paper and photo of the hike logistics.
- Report any accidents to the instructor immediately.
- Exams/(ungraded) quizzes cannot be made up (serious and compelling problems considered).

- Drop requests will not be accepted after the SJSU drop deadline.
- Course grades will be posted on Canvas by the end of finals week. No incomplete grades or extra credit will be provided.
- Instruction may not be recorded. If classmates ask you to record their performance for later review make sure it is done before or after class meetings rather than during class meetings. Do not post or otherwise share the recording.
- Intellectual property: Course materials developed by the instructor (e.g., exam/quiz items, videos, lecture notes), are the instructor's intellectual property and cannot be shared or uploaded in any form publicly without the instructor's approval.
- Guests are only allowed on the day hikes upon instructor approval. Dogs as well must be approved by the instructors based on location.

Important: If you have pre-existing medical or physical problem you should consult your physician before participating in this class and alert the instructor to any required limitations.

Grading Plan

60% Hiking/backpacking skills on hikes and overnight backpack (APLO 1)

20% Final Paper (APLO 2 and 3)

20% Cumulative Final Exam (APLO 2 and 3)

Grading Scale used to determine final grade for the course.

Percentage Earned	Equivalent Grade
97% - 100%	A plus
93% - 96%	A
90% - 92%	A minus
87% - 89%	B plus
83% - 86%	B
80% - 82%	B minus
77% - 79%	C plus
73% - 76%	C
70% - 72%	C minus

67% - 69%	D plus
63% - 66%	D
60% - 62%	D minus
below 60%	F

Campus Resources

Per University Policy S16-9 (<http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S16-9.pdf>), relevant university policy concerning all courses, such as student responsibilities, academic integrity, accommodations, dropping and adding, consent for recording of class, etc. and available student services (e.g. learning assistance, counseling, and other resources) are listed on the Syllabus Information web page (<https://www.sjsu.edu/curriculum/courses/syllabus-info.php>). Make sure to visit this page to review and be aware of these university policies and resources

SJSU Technical Support:

Email: itservicedesk@sjsu.edu

Phone: (408) 924-1530

Web: <https://www.sjsu.edu/it/support/service-desk/index.php>

Exam:

Written exam will cover

- Techniques related to all hiking/backpacking skills covered
- Mental and physical health benefits to be derived from hiking/backpacking
- Proper care of equipment
- History, current research, principles, terminology, and exercises related to hiking/backpacking
- Etiquette and safety in hiking/backpacking environments
- Injury prevention
- Logistics and safety of hiking and backpacking

Hiking/backpacking Skills Assessment will cover:

- Appropriate and safe movement in wilderness surroundings
- Natural etiquette as related to front country and back country settings
- Equipment preparation, utilization, and maintenance
- Hiking competence for three miles and three hours

- Appropriate method of packing a pack, pitching a tent and water filtration

Paper:

Papers should be between 3 and 5 double-spaced pages with at least two peer reviewed references. APA style is required. After viewing one of the following movies/documentaries (or one approved by the instructor), write a critical analysis of one of the following films:

- Wild
- Mile, Mile and a Half
- 180 Degrees South
- Gringo Trails

In this paper, develop a connection of backpacking/hiking to individual development as well as a personal reflection of what you have learned about experiential education/experience in the natural environment. Grading will be based upon content of material as related to hiking and backpacking and in reference to the peer-reviewed research. Students will also be expected to use proper APA style as well as appropriate grammar and punctuation.

Success in this course is based on the expectation that students will spend, for each unit of credit, a minimum of forty-five hours over the length of the course. This would include preparing for class, participating in course activities, and preparation for exams.

Kinesiology 63A: Beginning Hiking and Backpacking

Course Calendar (subject to change with fair notice by announcement on Canvas or email)

Week	Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines
1	8/22 1300-1400 APLO 1	Introduction Kin 63a: overview and skills (1 hour), SPX 163 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Course review • Ethics and caring for the land • Carrying a 35 pound load for an overnight backpack • Trip planning • Outline of assessment
2	8/29 1300-1400 APLO 1	Basics of Wilderness First Aid and Medicine (1 hour), SPX 163 Prerequisite assessment, Wilderness worksheet
3	9/19	Hiking skills: Hike at TBD (2.5 hours) FEE DUE

Week	Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines
	1300-1530 APLO 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Front country hiking assessment • How to pack for a day hike • Basic compass skills • Day hike information • Basic map navigation
6	9/26 1300-1400 APLO 1	History of Mountaineering, Conservation and Preservation (1 hour) Leave No Trace worksheet SPX 163
7	10/3 1400-1600	Equipment Pick up Rental Center at Spartan Recreation and Aquatic Center 2pm-4pm
8	10/10 1330-2000 APLO 1 10/11 700-1100	Overnight Backpack Location TBD Overnight skills review <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gear orientation for backcountry • How to pack a pack • How to light a stove safely with fuel • Compass use • Topography and map use • How to filter water
10	10/24 1300-1530 APLO 1	Gear Orientation and the Wilderness: Hike at TBD Hiking Skills: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First aid in the wilderness and different climates • Emergency shelters • Topography • Gear orientation for day hike Preservation and conservation LNT principles on trail
11	10/31	Class Meeting, Compass and Topography Compass Worksheet
12	11/7 1300-1530 APLO 1	Class Hike: Location TBD Review of class skills <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ecopsychology and benefits of health and wellness • Review LNT and compass • Review map reading and topography • Putting it all together: review of all skills learned

Week	Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines
13	11/14	Class Paper Due to Canvas
15	11/21 1300-1530 APLO 1	Map reading and Topography: Hike, TBD (2.5 hours) Location TBD Skills: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ecopsychology and benefits of health and wellness • Review LNT and compass • Review map reading and topography • Putting it all together: review of all skills learned
17	12/5 1300-1400	Class meeting SPX 163 U R Done, now get outside •