

Prescott College Orientation FAQ Sheet

- We build foundational communities that help to sustain students throughout their academic journey at Prescott College.
 - Our program is over 50 years-old
- 1st 4 -Credit Class regardless of area of study or credits completed

What are the Orientation course choices?

We have three choices for students: Wilderness, Community-Based Wilderness or “Hybrid,” and Community-Based... read on!

- **Wilderness Orientation**
 - Wilderness Orientation is at its heart a **three-week backpacking expedition** in the remote desert mountains and canyons of Arizona.
 - BEGINNER'S MINDSET approach to curriculum
 - Develop a sense of place through backcountry travel, map and wilderness navigation, and by studying the natural and cultural history of their route.
 - Focus on building a foundational community by honing interpersonal communication skills and practicing compassion and respect for each other and the landscapes we travel through.
 - Engage in individual research projects, a solo experience, and leadership training
 - Additionally, Wilderness Orientation *satisfies the foundational field prerequisite that students will need for field-based courses.*
- **Community-Based Wilderness Orientation**
 - Specifically for students who are new to spending time in the outdoors and/or might be intimidated by the length and/or physicality of the traditional WO course. *You still earn the Wilderness Orientation prerequisite.*
 - BEGINNER'S MINDSET approach to curriculum
 - Students participate in 3 Shorter Expeditions: 1. Canoeing Expedition --- a physically accessible introduction to the backcountry; 2. Community Expedition --- spend time in town working on academic projects; 3. Backcountry Expedition --- choose a backpacking or basecamp option
 - IF you wanted to enroll in this course, but it is full, please note that our traditional wilderness orientation courses use the same “beginner’s mindset” approach but within one longer expedition. You don’t have to have any experience to be successful!
- **Community-Based Orientation**
 - Based in Prescott in a non-expeditionary in-town format.

- Focus on building a foundational community by honing interpersonal communication skills and practicing compassion and respect for each other
- Thematic Curriculum - Dependent on the expertise and interest of the faculty instructor to explore the concept of Community via interdisciplinary lenses. Fall 2021: Food Justice
- Students will develop a sense of place, cultural awareness and critical thinking tools.
- Students will complete individual research projects and other curricular activities.

Who goes on Orientation?

- All incoming resident undergraduate students are required to successfully complete Orientation - this includes transfer students and first-year college students.
- Students may choose to complete Wilderness Orientation or Community-Based Orientation.
- This means that your Orientation course will be made up of a diverse group of students - first-year students, transfer students, students with different academic and extracurricular interests.
- This is the point! We want to build community across the college and we start with Orientation.

Who teaches Orientation?

- Wilderness Orientation Instructors are: WFR certified, alumni with professional experience in outdoor education and/or guiding
- Community-Based Orientation instructors are usually associate or full-faculty or experienced adjunct instructors
- Student instructors are current students, usually seniors or juniors, who are taking an upper-division practicum course as part of their academic work.

What if I have a job?

- Many students have jobs or work-study positions during their time at Prescott College. Orientation is a Block course. Block courses cover the equivalent of a semester-length curriculum in a 3-week intensive. Block courses usually meet 5 days a week, 8 hours a day and if you choose to go on Wilderness Orientation you will need to take that time off from your job. Regardless of the type of Orientation, you are engaged in, successful completion of this intensive experience requires a high degree of commitment.

What if I have kids?

- If you have kids and need to be at home with your family at night, you will need to choose Community-Based Orientation. This course is based in-town and while it meets 5-days a week, it can accommodate parental needs.

What if I have an injury or physical disability?

- If you are concerned about an injury or physical disability and your ability to complete Wilderness Orientation, please contact the Orientation Director, Cecil Goodman at cgoodman@prescott.edu. Community-Based Orientation is designed to accommodate all physical abilities. Additionally, to set up accommodations please contact accommodations@prescott.edu.

Cool ... and how is Orientation an academic class?

Across all Orientations, wilderness, and community-based, students will engage in a variety of learning activities including:

- Researching, lesson-planning, and delivering two presentations:
 - A 10-minute presentation on a topic in which you are an expert
 - 30-minute research-based presentation on a relevant topic e.g. medicinal plants; critical cultural history; maps & navigation
- Building a comprehensive learning portfolio that documents student learning with
 - natural history log
 - written prompted and unprompted reflections
 - class notes
 - lesson plans
 - creative expression
- Engage in critical reading and discussion of a shared text across all Orientation groups

Do I get a grade?

Orientation is a required, 4 credit academic course, but you do not receive a letter grade. Instead, students receive credit or no credit based on their engagement with all aspects of the class. In order to graduate from the On-Campus Undergraduate degree program at Prescott College, you must receive credit for Orientation.

Where do we go?

- Wilderness Orientation routes take you all over Arizona. Depending on the time of year, you might be exploring a series of breathtaking canyons on the Mogollon Rim in Central Arizona, the desert mountains of the Superstitions in the Sonoran Desert, or the rugged beauty of the Grand Canyon. All of our routes are designed to accommodate those new to backpacking. (If you sign up to go canoeing, you'll probably go to the Black Canyon of the Colorado River).
- Community-Based Orientation is town-based; students live in Prescott in their college or off-campus housing. Depending on the thematic curriculum, students engage in local field trips.