



Canadian Mountain Skills Semester

Clothing and Gear Lists

This is the comprehensive list of all the things you will need to make your experience on the Mountain Skills Semester comfortable and effective. You will no doubt find this list a little overwhelming but do not despair, as there are ways of outfitting yourself without breaking the bank. What we would suggest is that you go through the list and make your own list of everything that you already have and a list of what you don't have. Some of the items you will obviously want to purchase. Others can be rented or bought used. If you are in doubt about what to buy or cannot get to a good mountaineering shop, please feel free to call the Yamnuska office for advice.

Yamnuska has a good selection of clothing that can be purchased and gear that can be rented. Rental equipment includes mountain boots and rock shoes and the selection of clothing for purchase is from Outdoor Research. As well, Canmore and Calgary have several mountain shops, some of which give discounts to semester students. We recommend arriving a couple of days early if you have a lot of gear to purchase. Some gear can be purchased during the course after you have had input from other students and the guides. Once again, feel free to contact the Yamnuska office for advice.

CLOTHING FOR ALL SEASONS

A clothing 'system' is crucial to your enjoyment, learning and potentially, your very survival in the mountains. A clothing system is based on layering different kinds and weights of clothing so that you can easily adjust your body heat - both output and retention - to climatic and activity demands. You will potentially be dealing with temperature variations from +30°C to -30°C.

FABRICS

Look for clothing made with synthetic materials, wool, wool polyester blends and/or fleece. These products retain warmth when wet and dry quickly with body heat. Pants and other outerwear clothing should be polyester, nylon and spandex or Lycra blend (Schoeller or Gore-tex are common).

Your Clothing System should:

- Allow you to trap layers of warm, dry air next to your body.
- Protect you from heat loss caused by wind.
- Control the amount of moisture that gets into this insulation by shedding rain and snow
- Allow for ventilation of body moisture.

CLOTHING LIST

HEAD AND NECK

- FLEECE OR WOOL HAT - Wool or fleece only, should be compact enough to fit under a climbing helmet.
- BALACLAVA - Poly-pro or light fleece balaclavas are good items to use in conjunction with a hat or under a climbing helmet during cold or windy weather.
- BALL CAP or BRIMMED HAT - For protection from the sun.

UPPER BODY

- UNDERWEAR TOP - (2 minimum) Long sleeved medium weight. Synthetic fiber or wool fiber blend.
- MID LAYER - Fleece pullover or jacket.
- HEAVIER WINPROOFJACKET – Soft shell or fleece jacket of 300 weight. Hood is nice but optional.
- WATERPROOF/SNOWPROOF JACKET ('GORE-TEX') - Hard shell jacket with hood. Needs to fit over all of your layers.

- ❑ PARKA - Synthetic or down parka with hood for those chilly winter days. This will greatly enhance your experience.

LOWER BODY

- ❑ LONG UNDERWEAR – (2 pairs) Synthetic fiber or wool fiber blend is best.
- ❑ UNDERWEAR – Several pairs synthetic or silk.
- ❑ INSULATED PANTS – (1 pair) - Full side zippers are useful. Down or synthetic (optional but recommended if you tend to get cold easily).
- ❑ SOFT SHELL CLIMBING PANTS – (1 to 2 pairs) Should be loose fitting and uncoated (breathable).
- ❑ WATERPROOF/SNOWPROOF PANTS (or Bibs) – (1 pair) Should be full zip to fit while boots are on. 'GORE-TEX' (These are optional if you have warm soft shell pants)
- ❑ LIGHTWEIGHT WATERPROOF/SNOWPROOF PANTS – These are great for putting over your soft shell pants if in rains. They should also be full zip. (Gore-tex)
- ❑ SHORTS - For those warm weather occasions early fall and late spring.

HANDS

- ❑ SCHOELLER or FLEECE GLOVES – (2 pairs) One light weight, one heavy weight.
- ❑ SKI/ICE CLIMBING GLOVES – (2 pairs) Examples would be the Black Diamond Guide or Ice gloves.
- ❑ MITTS – (1 pair) Great for people who tend to get cold hands easily. (Optional)

FEET

- ❑ SOCKS – (At least 6 pairs) Wool/nylon blend is the best type to get as the nylon gives strength to the wool. Remember to bring both hiking/mountaineering and ski styles.
- ❑ INSULATED BOOTIES - Excellent for warm feet around camp, huts and in the sleeping bag at night.
- ❑ GAITERS – (1 pair) Essential for keeping snow, dirt and rocks out of your boots. Should be heavy nylon or GORE-TEX with a heavy duty full zipper or Velcro and a strap underneath. Tube style gaiters are O.K. but cannot be taken off or put on without removing your boots.
- ❑ SUPER GAITERS - Expensive insulated gaiters that fit over the entire mountain or ski boot. (optional, but recommended if you suffer from chronic cold feet)

CLOTHING FOR AROUND TOWN

Bring enough clothing for days off and course break.

FOOTWEAR

- ❑ RUNNING or APPROACH SHOES – (1 pair) For wear around town, camp, and use on the rock climbing section.
- ❑ SANDELS – Nice for around town and for the rock section.
- ❑ MOUNTAIN BOOTS - This will be the most important piece of equipment for the course. We highly recommend purchasing your own boots! They should be minimum of 3/4 shank. Take the time and care to insure that you have a comfortable fit before purchasing. Double plastic boots are warm and durable; however, most people are now using leather/synthetic boots. Kayland, Koflach, La Sportiva, Lowa, and Scarpa all make good boots. Examples of appropriate boots would be: La Sportiva Nepal Evo, La Sportiva Trango Extreme or Scarpa Summit. Wear them as much as possible before the course so that they are broken in.

****We have plastic mountaineering boots (Koflach and Scarpa) for rent - let us know as soon as possible if you want to rent****

- ❑ HIKING BOOTS - A light weight hiking boot. (Optional for the Spring Semester)
- ❑ ROCK CLIMBING SHOES - Well worth the investment. There are many brands on the market with a broad range of prices. Best to buy a non specialized shoe. Buy your rock shoe to fit snug but comfortable as you will be wearing them for extended periods. ****These can also be rented from Yamnuska.**
- ❑ WINTER BOOTS – Comfortable high top winter boots for around town. (Optional)

PACKS

- ❑ EXPEDITION BACK PACK - This should be a sturdy, well constructed pack with at least 70 liter carrying capacity. A simple well fitting pack is best. Try on the pack and load it with weight (20 Kilos or more) to see how comfortable it will be. The pack should have a wide comfortable hip belt which sits on the top of the hips. Shoulder straps should also be well padded and comfortable. Key words here are comfort, durability and simplicity.
- ❑ DAY PACK - Used on day hikes, rock, ice and alpine climbs. Should be sturdy and durable with ice axe attachments and large enough to fit all your gear for the day. Size should be about 35 to 40 liters.

SLEEPING BAG AND PADS

- ❑ SLEEPING BAG - A great deal of time will be spent in your sleeping bag and the majority of this will be in winter conditions. The big question is whether to go with down or synthetic fill in your bag. Both have advantages and disadvantages. Down filled bags are light and compress easily into a small space and the insulation will have a longer life span than a synthetic bag. However, they are expensive and don't work well if they get wet. Synthetic bags keep you warm when they are wet but are bulkier and heavier than down. For trips on the semester most people would prefer a down sleeping bag with a gore-tex outer shell. The bag should have a four season rating and a minimum of 2.5 to 3 lbs. of fill. Rating at least -20c.
- ❑ SLEEPING BAG LINER – Polyester or silk liner to keep the bag clean. (Optional)
- ❑ SLEEPING PAD - 'Therma-Rest' inflatable pad or 'Ex-ped' down mat are the standard. Other less expensive options include closed cell foam pads such as polyethylene or Evazote that need to be at the very least 10-15mm thick, however, you will appreciate spending the extra money on an inflatable mat.
- ❑ BIVI-SACK/OVER BAG - Adds warmth and protects your sleeping bag from dirt and moisture. Gore-tex is the best material for this. (optional)
- ❑ STUFF SACKS – Several coated nylon bags with draw string. For carrying and storing your gear. Good to have a few so that you may also store your clothing and extras.

SKIING & SPLIT BOARDING GEAR

The two ski choices are Telemark or Alpine Touring (Randonnee). Most people use Alpine Touring equipment as it tends to be equal in weight but be more durable with better release for safety and easier to use. If you are in any doubt as to which system to use you MUST consult us.

TELEMARKING

- Suitable for advanced intermediate/expert skiers only
- SKIS: - (1 pair) - We recommend **mid-fat** to **fat** skis sold as backcountry or all mountain skis. No longer than 180cm, shorter if you are less than 180cm tall.
- BINDINGS – Sturdy telemark bindings with cable. No pin bindings.
- BOOTS: - (1 pair) - Plastic, these need to be sturdy, warm and have good ankle support. Scarpa and Garmont make good boots.
- SKINS: - A must have item. **Stick on** climbing skins for skis. Synthetic or mohair, Sized to fit ski.
- POLES – Fixed length or Telescoping.
- AVALANCHE SHOVEL - A small collapsible shovel with a metal blade. Voile, Lifelink, Ortovox all make good shovels.
- SKI Straps – (2) Straps for securing skis together

ALPINE TOURING (also referred to as “randonnee” in Europe)

Alpine Touring is touring on downhill type skis and ski mountaineering boots. The technique is entirely different from telemark skiing. It is more of the classic downhill style. Unless you are already an advanced skier you MUST be on alpine touring gear.

- SKIS – (1 pair) We recommend **mid-fat** to **fat** skis sold as a backcountry or mountain ski. No longer than 180cm, shorter if you are less than 180cm tall.

- BINDINGS – For a beginner the Fritschi bindings (Free Ride, Diamir etc) are easiest to use. The Dynafit systems are very good and very light but more difficult to use. Silveretta also make good bindings. Most guides on your course will be on Dynafit bindings.
- SKINS: - **Stick on** climbing skins for skis. Synthetic or mohair, Sized to fit ski.
- POLES – Fixed length or telescoping.
- BOOTS - Comfort is the important factor here. Most ski mountaineering boots available are good. We do not recommend using downhill boots and mountaineering boots are not appropriate. Scarpa and Garmont make good boots.
- AVALANCHE SHOVEL - A small collapsible shovel with a metal blade. Voile, Lifelink, Ortovox all make good shovels
- SKI Straps – (2) Straps for securing skis together

SNOW BOARDS (Split Boards only)

Snowboarding on the semester will require more effort and skill on your part. You will need a “Split Board” and you MUST be familiar with how to use the skins that come with them and to make fast transitions between up and downhill modes. We do not recommend using a snowboard if you are an inexperienced boarder.

- SNOW BOARD – Split Board with touring bindings. Prior and Voile make good boards.
- SKI POLES – YES! You will need these. Telescoping poles will be necessary.
- SKINS: - **Stick on** climbing skins for fitted to your board.
- AVALANCHE SHOVEL - A small collapsible shovel with a metal blade. Voile, Lifelink, Ortovox all make good shovels

Choosing this gear can be difficult. If you are uncertain as to which type of gear you would like to use, please contact us and we can help you make the decision.

OPTIONAL SKI SECTION GEAR

We can supply the following gear, however, if you own any of these items, please bring them to the course.

- Avalanche Transceiver (digital or analogue)
- Avalanche Probe (240 cm minimum length)
- Snow saw
- Snow profile kit

SKI GEAR RENTAL INFORMATION

Rentals can be arranged during the course if on the Fall Semester but need to be arranged before if you are on the Spring Semester.

SKIS, SKI BOOTS, CLIMBING SKINS, POLES & BOARDS can be rented from the following: (snowboards are only available from MEC)

- Canmore: Gear Up - (403 678-1636) Offers a Semester Course member discount.
- Banff: Mountain Magic - 224 Bear St. (Tel: 403 762-2591)
- Calgary: Campus Recreation, University of Calgary - Phys-Ed Building (Tel: 403 220-5038)
Calgary: M.E.C. - 830-10 Ave. S.W. Calgary (Tel: 403 363-0122)

You are responsible for arranging your own rentals and payment as well as returning any rentals at the end of the course. Please have your gear arranged prior to the spring course. You can arrange rentals during course break on the fall course.

MOUNTAINEERING, ROCK AND ICE CLIMBING SECTION GEAR

Yamnuska provides all of the following gear. If you have any of these items please bring them along.

- SIT HARNESS
- CLIMBING HELMET
- CARABINERS
- BELAY DEVICE
- SLINGS
- HARDWARE (RACK)
- PRUSSIKS

- ICE AXE
- CRAMPONS with anti-balling plates
- ICE TOOLS
- ICE SCREWS

CAMPING GEAR

Yamnuska supplies all of the following gear. If you have any of these items you may wish to bring them.

- TENT
- STOVE
- COOKSET
- FUEL BOTTLES

ESSENTIAL ITEMS

- HEADLAMP - (w/ spare batteries) We recommend Petzl headlamps.
- WATER BOTTLE - One liter capacity, wide mouthed plastic or metal with a screw lid. Nalgene and Sigg brand bottles are good. Having an insulated cover helps keep your drinks from freezing but is optional.
- THERMOS – 500ml or 1 litre bottle. Stainless steel only.
- SPOON - Lexan spoon or titanium spoons are perfect
- BOWL - Made of unbreakable plastic. A 2 or 3 cup plastic measuring cup is perfect.
- MUG – Insulated plastic mug with a lid is ideal.
- POCKET KNIFE - The 'Swiss Army' Knife or 'Leatherman' Tool is best. At a minimum a blade, can opener and screw driver will be useful. You don't need all the gadgets and attachments if price is a limiting factor.
- COMPASS – Mirror sighting and the ability to set the declination on your compass is recommended. Suunto, Brunton and Silva are all recommended brands.
- SUN or GLACIER GLASSES - A mandatory item to have as your eyes can burn easily from the intense glare of sun and snow. Eye shields or glasses that let minimal light in the sides work well. Glasses should cut out 100% of UVA and UVB rays. If you wear prescription glasses make sure you have a good pair of prescription sunglasses for the course. Have a good storage case for your sunglasses.
- SKI GOGGLES - If you have these bring them. Be prepared to spend some money on getting a pair with durable lenses that won't fog up.
- NOTEBOOK and PENCIL – We recommend 'Rite in the Rain' all weather Level No. 311 notebook.
- PERSONAL 1ST AID KIT – Band aids, blister tape, moleskin, 2nd Skin etc.
- SUNSCREEN - at least 35 SPF rating or zinc oxide (total block). Sunburn is a very real and potentially serious problem on the course.
- LIP CREAM – At least 35 SPF.
- GARBAGE BAGS – Several for lining your pack and stuff sacks.
- SEWING AND REPAIR KIT - Should contain needle, thread, wire, tape, safety pins, - anything which you think may come in handy.
- LIGHTERS - 2 or 3 disposable types.
- TOILET KIT – Toothbrush, toothpaste, floss, shampoo, foot powder, skin cream, nail clippers...
- HAND SANITIZER – Bring a small bottle (approx 50ml bottle).
- WATERPROOF WATCH - One with an altimeter is useful but optional.

OPTIONAL

- Personal music player, small games, hacky-sac, musical instrument.
- Books to read
- Journal or diary
- Camera with good protective case
- Umbrella – Small folding type
- 'Crazy Creek' type folding camp chair
- Backpack cover
- Bathing suit – For use in the Canmore public pool

STORAGE SPACE WILL BE LIMITED SO CHOOSE AND PACK CAREFULLY.

LEARN ABOUT GEAR

During the Semester you will have the opportunity to learn about different gear and the proper use of the items. You will probably be much better informed after the course than you are now, hence you will be in a much better position to judge what you need and where to get it. That is why we urge you not to go out and wildly purchase everything on this list but to be creative in securing what you can from friends, relatives or garage sales. Renting gear that you may never use again is a great way of saving. As an outdoor recreation professional it is important to select the proper gear so that you may depend on it. We suggest taking the time to talk to your local gear shop and learn as much as possible about items you would like to purchase. Manufacturer's websites are also a great place to learn about the equipment that you are interested in. Feel free to call or email the Yamnuska office and we will do our best to answer any questions that you have concerning gear selection or sizing.

As a participant in the Semester courses we feel that you are entitled to all the help we can give you. We want this course to be one of the best experiences possible. So do give us a call if you have any questions.

MARK YOUR GEAR!

Please mark all of your personal gear so that it can be easily identified as your own. Mark with permanent ink or with an engraver.

YAMNUSKA RENTAL GEAR

- **MOUNTAINEERING BOOTS:** The mountaineering boots that we rent are double plastic Koflach and Scarpa boots. The \$90.00 rental fee will allow you to use the boots for the glacier, ice climbing, and final expedition. The boot rentals are not for use during the entire course. They must be returned after each section of use.
- **ROCK SHOES:** Rock shoe rentals are \$40.00 for the rock section.

Please let us know as soon as possible if you need to rent the mountaineering and/or rock shoes so that we may reserve them for you.

DAMAGE DEPOSIT FOR YAMNUSKA GEAR

A damage deposit of \$100.00 is required from each participant prior to course start. This deposit will be used to repair or replace any gear that is damaged or lost through student misuse or inattention. Normal wear and tear is expected on our equipment and damage deposits will be returned under these circumstances at the end of the semester.