



## Winter Mountaineering Semester

### Course Details

This condensed, high end semester program has been designed for those who cannot take three months off for a regular semester. It focuses on the skills required of the winter mountaineer ... ice and mixed climbing, advanced avalanche training, back country skiing at a fly-in ski lodge and glacier ski mountaineering.

#### Dates

2007: February 15 - March 17

#### Price

\$7,500 CDN, cancellation insurance \$477

Price includes instruction, technical gear, group camping gear, most meals, Canmore lodge accommodation, back country ski lodge accommodation, alpine hut fees, local transportation including helicopter to ski lodge, park passes. GST is extra (this is a federal sales tax, for residents of Canada it is 6%, for non-residents it is 3%).

#### Program Objectives

To train you to become an independent and fully self sufficient winter mountaineer. To develop your all round competence to an advanced intermediate level across the spectrum of winter mountaineering skills. This in tandem with the development of individual and group leadership skills.

#### Instructor Ratios and Group Size

The instructor ratio (number of students per instructor) has a very large impact on the quality of the program. Ratios are selected based upon the difficulty and hazard associated with the teaching terrain. On most sections the maximum ratio is 1:6 which is fine for single pitch ice climbing, ski mountaineering and avalanche safety training. Because the maximum group size is 8 it is likely that the ratio will often be 1:4. As the program progresses students will lead more and more and instructors will often be relegated to an advisory and coaching role. On multi-pitch climbs the ratio will be as low as 1:2.

#### Course Location

The course is based in Canmore, Alberta in the Front Range of the Rocky Mountains just minutes from Banff National Park. Section locations will vary according to conditions. Expect to be on skis in Banff National Park and in the Selkirk Mountains of British Columbia. Ice and mixed climbing tends to happen along the famous Banff-Jasper Parkway leading up to the Columbia Icefields.

#### Climate

We are in a continental or inland climate that varies greatly in temperatures and weather. Winter weather in the Rockies ranges from mild (as high as 0C to extremely cold reaching -30C on rare occasions. Just a little to the west in the Esplanades, temperatures can be a little warmer and moister conditions prevail giving a much deeper snowpack.

## Curriculum

- **Ice Climbing:** Students commonly climb grade 5 ice.
- **Mixed Climbing:** M4 and above, 'dry tooling', advanced movement techniques.
- **Avalanche Safety Training:** Canadian Avalanche Assn. 'Advanced Recreational Avalanche Course' certificate.
- **Backcountry Skiing:** In Banff National Park and in the Esplanade Range of British Columbia's Selkirk Mountains. Develop winter route finding and hazard assessment. Ski (or board) great powder! Winter camping skills.
- **Ski Mountaineering:** Combine ski skills with mountaineering on the Wapta Icefields.
- **Mountain Navigation:** Route finding in whiteouts using compass and GPS.
- **Trip Logistics:** Planning, menus, gear, safety, emergency response.

## Agenda

**Day 1:** Welcome, Introductions, Dinner, Course Agenda and Goals, Prepare ski gear.

### **Introduction to Back Country Skiing (Boarding)**

#### **Day 2: Avalanche Awareness and prep Ski Tour.**

You need to get a grip on avalanche knowledge right at the beginning of the program as you'll be able to apply this knowledge throughout the rest of the program. This is held in the Yamnuska classroom covering avalanche theory, route finding, stability assessment and rescue techniques. Following this you will spend the rest of the day putting group gear in order and planning for a 3-day ski tour.

During the ski (or should we also say 'boarding') sections we work with telemark, alpine touring gear and snowboards. We suggest you use Alpine Touring gear and not use telemark gear unless you are already an expert skier in powder and crud conditions (on alpine or telemark gear). Split snow boards are an alternative for experienced boarders.

It is on this section that you will first learn the skills of outdoor living and traveling in winter. This will be done on skis, though mainly on easy terrain. You will learn winter camping and shelter building skills, travel techniques, navigation, 'Leave No Trace' environmental ethics, the basics of avalanche awareness and review simple ski and board skills (telemark or alpine touring skis or split board).

#### **Day 3 - 5: Three-day backcountry ski tour in Banff National Park.**

#### **Day 6: Day off in Canmore**

A well-earned rest and the chance to catch up on some personal maintenance. You will be staying in the very comfortable Georgetown Inn, a mountain hotel with a mountaineering theme. The Georgetown and is a favorite with our clientele and a popular hangout for the local mountain community.

#### **Ice Climbing & Mixed Climbing**

This section is broken into 2 segments, both to be based from a hostel on the Banff-Jasper Parkway. There is a huge variety of climbing areas, suitable for all abilities, within easy driving distance. Ice climbing starts with the five-day Ice Evolution program and continues later in the semester with a three-day advanced section.

#### **Day 7 - 11: Ice Evolution**

Ice Evolution mirrors development of the sport of ice climbing. You will learn to use modern curved tools properly. With instruction and coaching your movement skills will quickly improve enabling you to climb steeper and steeper ice. You'll also experience the excitement of climbing classic multi-pitch routes. Ultimately you will finish where the sport is now ... mixed climbing on rock and ice, using 'leashless' tools.

## **Day 12: Day off in Canmore**

### **Advanced Avalanche Safety, Backcountry Skiing (Boarding)**

#### **Day 13 - 17: 5-day fly-in trip**

We drive to the Golden Alpine Holidays helicopter staging area near Golden B.C. and fly to one of their ski lodges in the Esplanade Range. This is the first time on a Semester that we will be running a section from a helicopter accessed ski lodge. The lodge is near treeline and is surrounded by a vast area of alpine bowls, glades and gullies. The powder skiing there is world-famous. Whilst this segment is primarily focused on avalanche awareness and route finding skills there will be ample opportunity to enjoy, often fantastic powder skiing. We look at practical application of recognizing, evaluating and avoiding avalanche hazard. Integral to this component are route finding and track setting skills. At the end of this segment you will have completed the fieldwork necessary to qualify for the CAA Advanced Recreational Avalanche Certificate.

#### **Day 18 - 19: Two days off in Canmore**

#### **Day 20 - 22: Advanced Ice Climbing, Mixed Climbing.**

Again we head up the Banff-Jasper Parkway to some of Canada's most famous frozen waterfalls. This will be an intensive three days of advanced training where the pace is stepped up according to individual abilities. To intensify the training and to better accommodate individual abilities and learning progressions we will offer days with a 1:2 instructor ratio to allow for more multi-pitch climbs.

Mixed Climbing, the latest climbing wave ... combining rock and ice skills is an integral part of the program. In no time at all you will find yourself high up on a frozen thread of ice looking out at some of the most spectacular mountain scenery in the world.

#### **Day 23: Morning off in Canmore, prep ski mountaineering in afternoon.**

#### **Glacier Ski Mountaineering**

The final winter skills section is the ski mountaineering trip is where you begin on the high-altitude mountaineering skills common to both summer and winter. These include glacier travel and crevasse rescue as well as advanced navigation. Glacier skiing is unforgettable, as you ski in amazing surroundings on the top of the Rockies.

#### **Day 24 - 29: Ski mountaineering on the Wapta Icefields.**

This area is famous for its beautiful Icefields and summits which can be reached on skis. There's an excellent system of huts which can be joined to make a great traverse. We may also use snow shelters or camp. This will be a great finale to a very intensive month of winter mountaineering.

#### **Day 30: Debrief day in Canmore culminating in a graduation dinner.**

#### **Day 31: Head home or to new adventures after breakfast.**

### **Accommodation & Meals**

All accommodation costs are included in the course price.

When in Canmore the group will be based at the Georgetown Inn which is an extremely comfortable hotel not far from the downtown area. Rooms will be mostly double occupancy. The Georgetown has an excellent restaurant and a pub that is the local mountaineer's favorite.

During training segments the group will be based in a range of accommodations that start with camping or snow shelters after which comfort increases at rustic hostels whilst ice climbing to the comfort of a backcountry ski lodge before mixing Alpine Club mountain huts and tent camps on the Wapta Icefields.

Since this program is about developing all - round mountain skills, you will be involved in menu planning, food packing and food preparation for out trips. During training you and the other course members will be

responsible for cooking for the group. The food supplied will be healthy and nutritious with emphasis on simplicity. Do not expect a lavish menu, but also do not expect to starve, you will eat well.

On the evenings you get back to Canmore from a training section the evening meal is provided at the Georgetown Inn. Breakfast at the Georgetown is always supplied.

Lunches and dinners on days off (including Day 23) are not included. The Georgetown has an excellent restaurant and there are many other restaurants and grocery stores within easy walking distance.

PLEASE NOTE: If you are a regular vegetarian (no meat but dairy and eggs OK) and wish to remain so please let us know when you book. We can not cater to more specialized diets ('vegan', 'wheat free', 'no fat', etc.) If you follow such a diet, bring extra money to buy supplementary foods.

### **Transportation**

During the program all transportation is supplied. The group has a passenger van that is used to reach program areas. During evenings and on free days, transportation is not supplied.

### **Gear and Clothing**

All group camping and all technical gear is supplied with the exception of ski gear and climbing boots. Reasonably priced climbing boot rentals can be arranged during the course but you must let us know in advance if you require ski gear. You will need to bring your own outdoor clothing and footwear, backpack, sleeping bag and ski gear.

A full gear and clothing list is available on the Winter Mountaineering Semester webpage.

### **Booking Information**

You can apply for this semester on line by visiting the Mountaineering Semester webpage and using the booking link.

We will also need you to confirm your booking by downloading the Winter Semester Application Form, complete it after reading the conditions of registration and mail or fax to Yamnuska. Alternatively you can call to book by phone.

Along with all relevant receipts we will send you a full trip logistical kit (containing meeting times, a list of what to bring and info on how to get here) and a sample copy of our waiver which we will ask you to sign when you meet us.

Following interim acceptance of your application you will also need to download the applicant questionnaire for you to fill in and our medical form which we will need your physician to complete. Return both by fax or mail. Both are available on the Winter Mountaineering Semester webpage