

COURSE SYLLABUS - UAS PE 193/ODS 193 Introduction to Snow Kiting

Spring Semester, Winter of 2011-12

PE CRN _____ Sec. J01, ODS CRN _____ Sec. J01

Course Dates 20110329 - 20110403, 1 credit.

Begins with planning meeting 7:00 - 9:00 pm Thurs., Mar. 29, JREC 115

Field course departs on Skagway ferry 7am Fri. Mar. 30; returns 12:45 am Tues. Apr. 3

Instructor Bill Glude

Instructor Information

Name:

Bill Glude

UAS office:

I do not have a UAS office, but I am available for a short time immediately after classes to meet with students, or you can contact me directly to set up a time and place to meet.

Home office (mailing) address:

PO Box 22316, Juneau, Alaska 99802

Phones:

586-5606 home office, 523-8900 work office, 206-617-7703 cell.

Personal E-mail:

I will list it in two parts to foil the spammers' web crawlers that automatically harvest e-mail addresses from websites. The username, or first part, is snowcom01, and the name of the server, which follows the conventional symbol for at is me.com. I may not be able to respond immediately, but I do check it daily when I am in town or able to get a decent Internet connection.

Course Website

We will be using the PE section course website on [UAS Online](#) for our announcements, syllabus, and other special items for this UAS course. We will post the course handouts as class time approaches. We usually post updates before each topic is covered during the fall course and as new information or improved presentation comes up during the season. Be sure to check the course site before each session for the latest updates and course announcements.

Go to [UAS Online](#) and search the appropriate semester for "kiting", then go to the PE section.

Course Schedule

NOTE: This is primarily a field course, and is highly dependent on wind and weather conditions, so this is a framework rather than a fixed schedule. We will customize the course to group interests and weather conditions. We will update the syllabus periodically, so check the date at the top to be sure you have the most-current version.

Note that this course begins with an evening planning, paperwork, and gear checkout session, from 7:00 to 9:00 pm the evening before we head to Skagway on the ferry. This first session is strictly required; you must be there if you want to complete the course. Field sessions will begin at 8:00 am and will go to about 5:00 or 6:00 pm, but we may modify that timing to catch the best wind and weather.

Day 1

Evening Planning, Paperwork, and Gear Checkout, 7:00 to 9:00 pm

- Introductions
- Course Format, Liability & Risk, Forms
- Handouts
- Field Trip Logistics
- Gear Checkout

Day 2

Ferry to Skagway, 7:00 am to 1:30 pm

5:00 am UAS Rec Center; meet up for van ride.

Ferry sails 7:00 am; arrives Skagway 1:30 pm.

On the ferry:

Catch up on sleep

9:00 - 10:00 solarium: risk management, etiquette, gear care, practical kite theory

Unload Skagway 2:00 pm, check in at Skagway Hostel. Unload gear; change into kiting clothes.

Kiting Field Session, 3:00 to 6:00 pm

Drive to Summit Lake

Foil trainers

Foil kite setup and packing.

Risk management and gear care review.

Foil trainer exercises: short turns to get the feel of the kite, launching/landing, exploring the edge of the window, move slow/ move fast, untwisting the lines, stop at each "hour", power strokes: shallow "kitty sips" at edge of window, longer strokes deep in window; relaunching; lulls and gusts, walking while flying the kite.

Tube trainers

Tube kite setup, preflight, launching/landing, and packing.

Tube trainer exercises: tube kite feel, using harness and chicken loop, relaunching, generating more power.

Back to hostel; dinner and snowkite video study.

Day 3

Kiting Field Session, 8:00 to 6:00 pm

Drive to Summit lake

Small kites

Control and multiple release systems.

Launching with skis/snowboards.

Launching and landing; anchoring; relaunching; including preflight and post-launch checklists.

Understanding trim system.

Practice using release systems, including setting up to relaunch.

Stopping, turning (ski turns and snowboard sliding transition), and speed control.

Dealing with lulls and gusts.

Begin flying smaller snowkites.

Get everyone comfortable with smaller kites.

Full size kites

Kite sizing.

Superman survival; what to do when kite lifts or drags you.

What to do when overpowered.

Getting up when you fall with kite attached.

Get everyone on larger kites; trade off for lots of practice time.

Review and practice all skills begun with small kites.

Back to hostel; dinner and snowkite video study.

Day 4

Kiting Field Session, 8:00 to 6:00 pm

Drive to Summit lake

Full size kites

Troubleshooting problems.

Powered ski turns; heelside and toeside snowboard turns.

Jumping

Hills

Landing, depowering, and stowing kites in strong winds.

Up and downwind touring; travel techniques.

Go kiting; practice and have fun!

Back to hostel; dinner and snowkite video study.

Day 5

Kiting Field Session, 8:00 to 3:00 pm

Pack up at Hostel, stow gear

Drive to Summit lake

Go kiting; practice and have fun!

Return in time to grab gear from hostel.

Ferry to Juneau, 3:15 pm to 12:45 am

3:30 pm check in for ferry; check in course gear; collect gear in van.

Ferry departs Skagway 5:15 pm; arrives Juneau late night 12:45 am.

On the ferry:

Course wrapup including gear choices, continuing learning.

Dinner

Get some sleep!

To Rec Center; unload and stow gear so it dries.

Course Requirements

We cross the border into Canada for this course, so you need a current passport or passport card, and a clean record with no DUI's, drug offenses, or violence.

The Canadian border officials are very serious about this; be sure your record is clean! If in doubt, check on your status before the course. Do NOT try to hide anything on your record; even juvenile offenses will turn up on customs' computer searches.

You need to be at least an intermediate-level skier or snowboarder, so you can focus on kite handling and not on how to turn your tools of choice. If all else is equal, it is easier to learn on skis than on a snowboard, though jumping is easier on the snowboard once you have the basics down.

The best thing you can do to prepare for kiting lessons is to buy or borrow a foil trainer kite and put in as much practice time as you can with it beforehand. It will take at least three or four hours to dial in the basic skills, preferably in several sessions so you practice in a variety of conditions.

The more practice time you put in before your lessons, the stronger your kite skills will be and the more benefit you will get out of the lessons. You want to practice your basic kite handling skills into muscle memory, so you don't have to think about them. Work systematically through the trainer kite exercises in the key skills list below.

Trainers with a three or four-line flag-out release system are strongly recommended; if you can only get a two-line kite just be sure it is 2m or less and don't fly it in strong winds.

Kiting is tremendously fun, and can make you feel like you can do anything, but you must always remember that the kite has tremendous power that can easily drag you or lift you and carry you into things you might not want to get dragged through or dropped into. We must strongly emphasize risk management and require that you learn and follow guidelines and practices to minimize risk to yourself and others. If you disregard those protocols, we cannot allow you to continue the course.

In order to pass, you must attend the pre-trip planning session, the on-ferry training sessions, and at least three of the four field sessions, and demonstrate basic skills including proper risk management. You must have the UAS liability release, medical history, and insurance forms filled out before we head into the field, and must have all the required gear to go.

Scope of the Course

This is a field course with some classroom sessions as we travel to and from the field, and in the evenings. We will be primarily learning hands-on, but will also have handouts on risk management and key skills.

Skagway is known for wind, so on the White Pass we have the best odds on suitable wind conditions of any location in the Southeast Alaska region. During windless periods, we will skin and snowshoe for turns while keeping an eye out for kiteable wind.

Personal Field Gear

Clothing

You must have enough clothing to be out in the field all day, regardless of the weather. Kiting is active, but while learning we will have to take time to learn the skills. Wear good windproof pants and shell, and have at least two layers more on hand than you usually wear. Bring chemical heat packs if you have chronically frosty fingers or toes or if it is a cold day.

Do not rely on movement for warmth. We must be able to stop for variable and sometimes long periods in order to teach the course. We cannot move just because you are cold. Your warmth is your responsibility.

If there is wind, we will be busy and active, but there is always windchill to contend with, too. Whenever there is no wind, we will use our skis with skins, splitboards with skins, or snowshoes and snowboards to go for some runs, so you will need the usual backcountry ski/snowboard and avalanche gear.

Required Clothing

- long underwear - synthetic, silk, or wool; NOT cotton!
- shirt or turtleneck - synthetic, silk, or wool; or heavy long underwear
- at least three warm insulating layers, such as: fleece vest, fleece jacket, wool sweater, fiberfill coat or vest, or pile coat or vest
- shell parka - waterproof breathable preferred; NOT cotton!
- pants - shell and insulation, such as: wool pants, warmup bibs, or fleece pants plus
 - waterproof breathable bibs; NOT cotton; no jeans or Carharts!
- gaiters - if they are not built into your pants
- warm boots and socks
- warm hat - like a stocking cap or beanie
- mitts or gloves

Recommended Clothing

neck gaiter or scarf
baseball hat for warm, sunny days
extra set of mitts or gloves

Field Gear

Required Field Gear

Skis or snowboard for kiting, with provision to return when the wind dies, or to travel uphill for turns when there is no wind. If you have skills with both, it is easier to learn to kite on skis, but snowboards are easier to jump and for water kiting skill practice.

1. Mountain skis, telemark or alpine touring, with skins and telescoping poles. (+ Alpine Trekker touring adapters and skins for your alpine ski gear are available through ODS, but you need to arrange to fit them in advance.)
2. OR splitboard with skins and telescoping poles.
3. OR snowboard with +snowshoes - you will need the snowshoes; don't rely on postholing!; telescoping poles are useful for uphill travel.

+ helmet - strictly required for kiting! A ski/snowboard helmet is best, but the ODS program climbing helmets will also work.

+ harness - snowkite harness, or a standard climbing harness with one large locking carabiner to clip to the kite with.

* day rucksack - a good rucksack with straps or pockets for all your gear, including shovel and boards

+ beacon

+ probe

+shovel - sturdy, lightweight avalanche shovel

pocket knife

lunch

insulated water bottle or thermos - at least one liter of fluids

sun glasses

sun screen and lip protection

* head lamp

toilet paper and lighter

blister kit and band aids

Recommended Field Gear

ski poles - essential for ski and splitboard travel; optional for snowshoe/snowboarders. The best ones for kiting are the ones that telescope in three sections so they are easy to carry on or in a rucksack while kiting.

Two-section poles stick out and can catch in the snow or on lines, but will work is used with caution. Non-telescoping poles really get in the way when kiting and are not recommended.
goggles - strongly recommended for kiting
emergency medical kit - strongly recommended
camera (still or video) with memory cards and spare batteries
map and compass
spare headlamp and beacon batteries

* Items available for checkout at the Student Activity Center; must be picked up ahead of course, during normal SAC hours. Adjust snowshoe straps to your boots before the field trip, it is much easier indoors.

+ Items available for checkout from the ODS program. Skins and Alpine trekkers must be fitted ahead of time. We will check out the other ODS gear on the first night.

TEST NEW OR BORROWED GEAR BEFORE THE COURSE!

Group Gear

Required Group Gear

group emergency medical kit
maps
fire starters
radio or phone
foil trainer kites
tube trainer kites
snow kites

Optional Group Gear

foam pad
bivvy sack or tarp
wax

Video DVD

How to Snowkite, Vol. 1 DVD, by Morten Gjerstad. We will bring a copy to Skagway for the course. Also available online for \$35 plus shipping here http://sideoff.com/videos/snowkite/how_to_snowkite.html

Grading

PE Requirements for Pass Grade:

In order to pass the course, you must be there and actively participating for the pre-course meeting and at least three of the four field sessions, fly trainer kites, and be able to move, stop, and turn on a full-size snow kite.

There is no written exam.

Additional Requirements for Outdoor Studies Students:

We have to give a letter grade for the ODS students. We will grade with equal weighting on

1. Knowledge of key risk management considerations; we may use a written quiz for this so study the handouts.
2. Ability to preflight check, rig, and launch a snowkite.
3. Ability to stop and land a snowkite.
4. Ability to turn with good control and precision.
5. Ability to kite upwind.
6. Ability to kite downwind.

Conferences

If you have anything to discuss, grab me after class, or give me a call, or send me an e-mail, and we can set up a time.

Late Assignment Policy

There will be no assignments.

Registration and Withdrawal Policy

Those who show up for the first class session will be given a place in the class, up to our limit. If there are people on the wait list who show up and you are registered but are not there, they will get your spot. You may withdraw anytime before the last official withdraw date for this semester without penalty.

Student Rating of Instruction

During the last three weeks of the semester, you can rate courses online. Notification is sent to your UAS e-mail account when the questionnaires become available. Please help us improve our courses by taking a few minutes to fill out the rating forms!

Course Outcomes

When you finish this course, you should:

1. Know the essentials of snowkiting risk management, including choosing good terrain, wind and weather evaluation, kite setup and preflight checks, harness use, launching and landing including signals, speed control, stopping, courtesy to other users and kites, and the control and release systems.
2. Understand the wind window and be able to fly a trainer kite without having to think about which way to turn it, be able to stop and hold the kite at any point on the front of the wind window, deal with lulls and gusts, moving the kite slowly or rapidly, short and long power strokes, power strokes at the edge of and deep into the window.
3. Understand the right-of-way practices for riding with other kites and snow travelers.
4. Be able to fly a tube trainer kite off a regular harness and line set with good control of kite power, position, and speed.
5. Be able to choose appropriate gear and size it for the conditions.
6. Be able to set up, preflight check, launch, and land both small and full-sized snowkites, including knowing how to anchor a kite in both deep and shallow snow, and how to land and stow a kite in strong wind.
7. Be able to travel upwind and downwind and turn with good control of speed and course.
8. Be able to do functional turns or transitions.
9. Be able to negotiate simple uphill and downhill terrain while kiting.