

Glacial assault

Class offers instruction in climbing techniques

By TOM SOMERS
Of the Emerald

How far can a college course be removed from the classroom?

"Snow and Ice," CPE 199, was scheduled to meet in 105 Esslinger until Nov. 3, but on two weekends this term, the class has met on a glacier at 7,000 feet on Mt. Hood.

While most traditional courses promote a campus-based experience in a familiar atmosphere, "Snow and Ice" encourages students to learn outdoors where few people have ventured. The purpose of the course is to instruct students in ice and snow climbing.

"Snow and Ice" still has classroom ties. Preparation for the field trip is done during the five two-hour lectures. Instructor Steve Guthrie led discussions on frostbite, hypothermia, map and compass, equipment, avalanches, altitude sickness and the Chouinard technique of ice climbing. Most students in the class had previous experience or knowledge of mountain climbing.

Because the ice axe and ropes are an ice climber's most important instruments, instruction included the various techniques of foot and ice axe positioning.

Guthrie chose Eliot glacier, on Mt. Hood's north side, for the students' fieldwork. The glacier is a popular practice area for ice climbers and is easily accessible.

"Fall is the most ideal season for ice climbing because the snow has melted and the ice is exposed and hard on top," Guthrie says. "As the winter snow arrives, there is a problem with accessibility and the threat of avalanches."

Ice climbing is growing in popularity. Climbers enjoy the excitement of traveling to places where few people have ventured before.

The factors involved in a climb present an exciting



Photo by Martin Mulholland

Physical education students tackle a glacier in their outdoors classroom on Mt. Hood. Techniques in the challenge to the climber, Guthrie says.

Aimee Yogi, manager of Oregon Wilderness Supply, took the class to become more familiar with the equipment she handles.

"There are many risks involved in ice climbing," she says. "You have to know the history of the surface and environment you're dealing with and the climber must learn how to deal with the effects of the weather."

Stephan Shaw, another student, says that "just being outside is attractive to many people." He adds that there is always "the thrill of high places" that excites participants and "the scenic beauty of the environment is also a major attraction of the ice climbing experience."

Shaw feels that the goals of mountain climbing have changed. "Reaching the summit is no longer the focus of the climber," he says. "Style and form have become most important to the climber. This involves decisions, moves and adjustments made by the climber, as well as

use of ropes and ice axes are taught along with lectures on survival and weather conditions.

other factors including technique, equipment, weather conditions and time of year." The reward, Shaw says, is now "the pleasure of performance."

Oregon does not have good ice climbing conditions. According to Guthrie, the weather in Oregon is too warm and climbing is limited to the few glaciers found in Oregon.

However, there are good practice areas that are necessary for developing good technique.

Shaw says that "next to Alaska, which has the potential for very exciting climbing, the Canadian Rockies offer some of the best climbing in North America."

Guthrie adds that "there is excellent climbing in Colorado, New England, Utah and the California Sierras. Around the world, Scotland is regarded by many as having the greatest potential for "pure" ice climbing.

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