

# Outdoor Environmental Education in Theory, Policy & Practice (EDUC/ENVI 275)

Macalester College -- Fall Semester 2017

**Times:** Seminar: Mondays & Wednesdays, 2:20 to 3:20 PM

Friday seminar sessions are reserved for individual and group preparation as needed.

Lab: Thursdays 1:20-4:30 PM

**Room:** Olin-Rice 370

**Instructors:**

*Jerald Dosch* (dosch@macalester.edu; 696-6187; Olin-Rice 210; office hours MWF 1:00-2:00 and by appointment)

*Ruthanne Kurth-Schai* (kurthschai@macalester.edu; 696-6035; Humanities 100c; office hours MW 12:30-2:00 and by appointment)

## Course Description

This course provides an introduction to outdoor education as an opportunity to promote social justice and environmental sustainability in a globalized world. Informed by relevant philosophical, psychological, cultural and political-economic frameworks, in addition to critical issues in public education policy and practice, we will explore interdisciplinary approaches to outdoor environmental education appropriate for students across the K-12 continuum. We will utilize the Katharine Ordway Natural History Study Area (Ordway Field Station) as an outdoor classroom and will adapt curriculum from the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and other outdoor education organizations to assist elementary school teachers and students in fulfilling Minnesota K-12 Academic Standards. Early in the semester, all students will participate in a weekend retreat at the Ordway Field Station. Weekly lab sessions will include field days during which course members design and implement educational experiences for elementary school children at Ordway, small group work days for preparing field day lesson plans, trips to local outdoor environmental education sites within the Twin Cities, and other experiential learning opportunities. Weekly seminar sessions incorporating readings, reflective writing, and individual and small group projects complement the experiential aspects of the course. As the semester progresses, each course member will develop a curricular unit aimed at teaching an important environmental issue to diverse adolescents attending urban public schools. The curricular unit is a significant undertaking that provides students with the opportunity to synthesize all aspects of the course material in a creative, pragmatic and integrative manner. Cross-listed with Educational Studies 275. (4 credits).

## Course Readings

Gilbertson, Bates, McLaughlin & Ewert. 2006. *Outdoor Education: Methods & Strategies*.

Nolet. 2015. *Educating for Sustainability: Principles and Practices for Teachers*.

Roberts. 2011. *Beyond Learning by Doing: Theoretical Currents in Experiential Learning*.

Wood. 2007. *Children In The Classroom, Ages 4-14: A Resource For Parents And Teachers* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed).

Books from the Minnesota DNR curriculum projects--these will be provided to you free of charge.

Other scholarly journal and popular press readings may be assigned and linked or posted on Moodle.

We also encourage you to keep up with the latest breaking environmental news. A great place to look is the “Science Times” section in each Tuesday’s *New York Times*.

### **Course Moodle Page**

<https://moodle.macalester.edu/course/view.php?id=926>

Please note that the course Moodle page will be updated on a regular basis during the semester. Be sure to check back periodically for updates and new information.

### **Course Assignments**

**Ordway Retreat:** We will launch our explorations of outdoor environmental education at a required course retreat [Friday evening – Sunday noon, September 15-17] at the Katharine Ordway Natural History Study Area (Ordway Field Station). This retreat will provide an in-depth, experiential orientation to the Ordway as an outdoor classroom, an introduction to pedagogies from Pollinate Minnesota, and introductions to teaching methods and curricular materials developed by the MN Department of Natural Resources (DNR) as well as resources from the Jeffers Foundation.

**Reflective Journal:** Critical and creative reflection is required to effectively integrate theory, research, and policy with principled practice. To this end, you are asked to complete a series of *concise reflective contributions* (75-100 words/assigned chapter) as directed on Moodle. These *time sensitive* contributions should be posted by **9:00 a.m. on Monday of the week during which the Forum is listed on Moodle.**

**Book Review:** You are asked to choose a book related to outdoor environmental education that you have not previously read. It may be related to theory, practice, curriculum, policy, or other angles approved by the instructors. After reading the book you are to write a review (500 words) targeted to an audience of your fellow students and course instructors. This assignment should be posted on in the *Book Review Forum* on Moodle by 1:30 PM on Wednesday, 25 October.

**Peer Teaching:** Once during the semester you will be grouped with other students and asked to *provide pedagogical leadership by deepening understanding and extending class conversation* on a focal topic of concern to experiential/sustainability educators.

**Lesson Planning & Implementation:** Three times during the semester you will be grouped with other students to plan and implement an outdoor learning experience for elementary schools students and their teachers who will join us for an afternoon at the Ordway.

**Curricular Unit:** Throughout the semester we will work to challenge and support each other’s efforts to develop a significant piece of *public scholarship*, in this case a *curricular unit* [20 hours of instructional time] aimed at teaching a significant and challenging environmental theme/issue, to adolescents, incorporating a sustainability perspective and a significant outdoor education component. Your unit will begin with a timely, informative, accessible and compelling summary of background knowledge necessary for effective teaching of your selected theme.

You will then develop a formal unit plan devoting careful attention to:

- Statement of Purpose: Teaching Goals/Learner Outcomes
- Statement of Purpose: Content Objectives (focal concepts/themes/questions)
- Description of Target Audience and Learning Context
- Primary Resources and Materials
- Instructional Methods (presentation/processing/assessment)
- Annotated Bibliography

Each unit should be formatted in a manner appropriate for *Internet posting*, and incorporate several *alternative modes of representation* (visual aides, poetry, music, information sheets, tutorial, PowerPoint, etc.) to reinforce thoughts communicated through the traditional verbal/linguistic formats.

**Concluding Reflections Essay:** Upon completion of the semester, you will complete a reflective essay (500 words) synthesizing insights gained (5 most important concepts) through your active engagement in all dimensions of the course.

### **Grading**

This course is structured to encourage all students to demonstrate a high quality of performance. Self, peer, and faculty evaluation are incorporated. Because effective learning requires active participation and cooperative exchange, attendance and full participation in all seminar and lab sessions, including the Ordway retreat, is required. Final grades are assigned upon completion of *all course components* and based upon the following guidelines:

Reflective Journal	20%
Book Review	10%
Lesson Planning/Implementation/Evaluation	30%
Peer Teaching	5%
Curricular Unit	35%

### **Academic Integrity**

All students will be required to abide by the Macalester College academic integrity guidelines found at <http://www.macalester.edu/academicprograms/academicpolicies/academicintegrity/>. Instances of suspected academic dishonesty (cheating, plagiarism, using the same paper in more than one course, etc.) will be handled as outlined in the College guidelines found at <http://www.macalester.edu/studentaffairs/studenthandbook/03academicpolicies/03-05academicintegrity.html>. Plagiarism is one of the most common breaches of academic integrity. Please note that information about ways to avoid plagiarism can be found at <http://www.macalester.edu/library/instruction/academicintegrity/>.

### **Accommodations and Disabilities**

We are committed to providing assistance to help you be successful in this course. Reasonable accommodations are available for students with documented disabilities. If you think you need an accommodation, please contact the Office of Student Affairs at your earliest convenience. The Director of Disability Services, Allie Quinn, coordinates services for any student in need of accommodations. You may schedule an appointment by calling the Disability Services Office, 651-696-6874. Additional

information regarding the accommodations process for students with disabilities can be found at:  
[www.macalester.edu/studentaffairs/disabilityservices/](http://www.macalester.edu/studentaffairs/disabilityservices/)

## ***Course Overview***

- Week 1 (9/6)**                    ***Introduction – Learning Outdoors***  
Gilbertson (Chapters 1-3,7)  
*No Lab Session 9/1*
- Week 2 (9/11-17)**                ***Designing Outdoor Learning Experiences***  
Gilbertson (Chapter 4, 8-10)  
Wood (Introduction)  
*No Lab Session 9/8*
- Ordway Retreat***  
Friday evening 9/15 - Sunday noon 9/17
- Week 3 (9/18-22)**                ***The Peril and Promise of Experiential Learning***  
Roberts (Chapters 1-2)  
*Lab Session: Curriculum Planning for Ordway*  
[Please bring course texts and DNR materials to all curricular planning lab sessions]
- Week 4 (9/25-29)**                ***Experiential Learning: The Sanctity of the Individual***  
Roberts (Chapter 3)  
*Lab Session: Curriculum Planning for Ordway*  
[Please bring course texts and DNR materials to all curricular planning lab sessions]
- Week 5 (10/2-6)**                 ***Experiential Learning: Social Dimensions***  
Roberts (Chapter 4)  
*Lab Session: Pine Bend Elementary Kindergarteners at Ordway*
- Week 6 (10/9-13)**                ***Experiential Learning: Political Dimensions***  
Roberts (Chapter 5)  
*Lab Session: Salem Hills 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> graders at Ordway*
- Week 7 (10/16-20)**               ***Experiential Learning in a Neoliberal World***  
Roberts (Chapter 6)  
*Lab Session: Curriculum Planning for Ordway*  
[Please bring course texts and DNR materials to all curricular planning lab sessions]  
Reflective Journal Weeks 1-7 Due (10/19)
- Week 8 (10/23-25)**               ***Book Reviews - Introduction to Curricular Units***  
Book Review Due in Class for Presentation (10/25)

***Fall Break 10/26-29***



