

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

Macalester College -- Fall Semester 2019

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

Lab: Fridays 1:10-4:20 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)

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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* (3rd 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=2137>

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 13-15**] at the Katharine Ordway Natural History Study Area (Ordway Field Station). This retreat will provide an in-depth, experiential orientation to Ordway as an outdoor classroom, an introduction to pedagogies from [Pollinate Minnesota](#), and introductions to [Project WILD](#) teaching methods and curricular materials developed by the MN Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies 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.**

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 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 adolescents a significant and challenging environmental theme/issue/concern, incorporating both a sustainability perspective and a significant outdoor education experience.

Your unit will begin with a timely, informative, accessible and compelling description of the unit topic providing the foundational knowledge necessary for effective teaching.

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%
Lesson Planning/Implementation/Evaluation	30%
Curricular Unit Topic Description	10%
Curricular Unit	35%
Concluding Essay	5%

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 procedures and sanctions found at <https://www.macalester.edu/academicprograms/academicpolicies/academicintegrity/>. 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, Melissa Fletcher, 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/

Student Health and Well-being

Here at Macalester, you are encouraged to make your well-being a priority throughout this semester and your career here. Investing time into taking care of yourself will help you engage more fully in your academic experience. Remember that beyond being a student, you are a human being carrying your own experiences, thoughts, emotions, and identities with you. It is important

to acknowledge any stressors you may be facing, which can be mental, emotional, physical, financial, etc., and how they can have an academic impact. We encourage you to remember that you have a body with needs. In the classroom, eat when you are hungry, drink water, use the restroom, and step out if you are upset and need a break. Please do what is necessary so long as it does not impede your or others' ability to be mentally and emotionally present in the course. Outside of the classroom, sleep, moving your body, and connecting with others can be strategies to help you be resilient at Macalester. If you are having difficulties maintaining your well-being, please don't hesitate to contact us and/or find support from other resources found at: <http://bit.ly/2zcyuqU>

Course Overview

- Week 1 (9/4-6)** ***Introduction – Learning Outdoors***
Gilbertson (Chapters 1-3,7)
Lab Session: Introduction to Curricular Planning & Curricular Units
- Week 2 (9/9-13)** ***Designing Outdoor Learning Experiences***
Gilbertson (Chapter 4, 8-10)
Wood (Introduction)
No Lab Session due to Ordway Retreat
Ordway Retreat
Friday evening 9/13 - Sunday noon 9/15
- Week 3 (9/16-20)** ***The Peril and Promise of Experiential Learning***
Roberts (Chapters 1-2)
Wood (chapters on 5-yr-olds and 6-yr-olds)
Lab Session: Curriculum Planning for Ordway
[Please bring course texts and DNR materials to all curricular planning lab sessions]
- Week 4 (9/23-27)** ***Experiential Learning: The Sanctity of the Individual***
Roberts (Chapter 3)
Lab Session: Pine Bend Elementary Kindergarteners at Ordway
- Week 5 (9/30-10/4)** ***Experiential Learning: Social Dimensions***
Roberts (Chapter 4)
Wood (chapters on 8-yr-olds, 9-yr-olds and 10-yr-olds)
Lab Session: Curriculum Planning for Ordway
[Please bring course texts and DNR materials to all curricular planning lab sessions]
- Week 6 (10/7-11)** ***Experiential Learning: Political Dimensions***
Roberts (Chapter 5)
Lab Session: Discovery Charter School at Ordway

Week 7 (10/14-18) *Experiential Learning in a Neoliberal World*
Roberts (Chapter 6)
Wood (chapters on 9-yr-olds and 10-yr-olds)
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 (10/18)

Week 8 (10/21-23) *Curricular Unit Topic Descriptions/Concept Maps*
Topic Descriptions Due in Class, Maps submitted to Moodle for Presentation

Fall Break 10/24-27

Week 9 (10/28-11/1) *Educating for Sustainability: Dimensions/Definitions*
Nolet (Chapters 1-3)
Lab Session: Capitol Hill 4th graders at Ordway

Week 10 (11/4-8) *Educating for Sustainability: Purposes*
Nolet (Chapters 4 & 10)
Lab Session: Curricular Units Workshop I

Week 11 (11/11-15) *Educating for Sustainability: Practices*
Nolet (Chapters 5-7)
Lab Session: Curricular Units Workshops II

Week 12 (11/18-22) *Curricular Unit Preparation*
Drafts Due in Class Monday 11/18
Lab Session: Curricular Unit Conferences

Week 13 (11/25) *Curricular Unit Preparation*

Thanksgiving Break 11/27-12/1

Week 14 (12/2-12/6) *Curricular Units – Peer Review*
Lab Session: [Dodge Nature Center](#)

Reflective Journal Weeks 8-14 Due (12/6)

Week 15 (12/9-11) *Educating for Sustainability: Moving Forward*
Presentation of Curricular Units

Curricular Units Due (12/11)