

**COURSE SYLLABUS**  
Lewis & Clark College  
Graduate School of Education and Counseling

**Course Name:** Foundations of Ecopsychology  
**Course Number:** CPSY 590  
**Term:** Spring 2008  
**Department:** Counseling Psychology  
**Faculty Name:** Thomas Joseph Doherty, Psy.D.  
**Faculty Phone/E-mail:** 503-288-1213 / tdoherty@lclark.edu

**Course Calendar & Meeting Times:**

**Days:** (Weekends) February 9 -10; March 8 - 9; April 12 - 13  
**Times:** 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.  
**Location:** Rodgers Hall Rooms 108

**Catalogue Description:**

Ecopsychology is a contemporary movement within psychology that recognizes a connection between mental health and the natural environment and explores ways in which psychology can contribute to the solution of environmental problems. This course provides an introduction to ecopsychology practices in counseling and surveys related research-based approaches, such as environmental and conservation psychology, that study the restorative effects of natural settings and ways that individuals develop environment identities. Students will be guided toward self-reflection regarding their own environmental identity, their motivations for integrating environmental approaches into counseling, and ways to integrate ecopsychology into their existing theory and practice base. A key outcome will be learning to evaluate diverse knowledge claims that coexist under the ecopsychology paradigm. This course provides a foundation for further study in areas such as the psychology of advocacy and sustainability, eco-therapy, and wilderness therapy.

**Course Description:**

***Spring 2008 Note:** This semester, students will have an option to take individual weekends of the course.*

We will balance didactic presentations with exercises, role plays, outdoor activities, video presentations, and guest speakers from the local community. Written coursework and presentations--outside of readings and online dialog--will take place during our weekend sessions.

**Course Goals and Objectives:**

For the purposes of this foundation course, the term ecopsychology will be used as an overarching concept to allow us to explore the work of thinkers and practitioners that exemplify an ecopsychology approach (i.e., the application of a psychotherapeutic approach to addressing environmental issues) and helpful subfields within psychology such as environmental and conservation psychology (i.e., critical and research-based approaches to studying human-nature relationships, behavior change, and the restorative effects of natural environments).

The goals for our course include providing students with:

- (1) An introduction to ecopsychology practices in counseling and a survey of related research-based approaches, such as environmental and conservation psychology
- (2) A personal and experiential sense of how this material relates to their life and identity
- (3) Ways to integrate this work into their academic and professional development.

Students will be guided toward self reflection regarding their own ecological identity and motivations regarding integrating environmental approaches into counseling psychology. Key outcomes will be learning to evaluate diverse and competing knowledge claims that coexist under the ecopsychology paradigm as well as accepting and learning from different social, political environmental viewpoints. Examples of activities include comparing and contrasting folk wisdom regarding the role of environment in mental health with empirical research on human-nature relationships.

**Key values include:**

- **Academic rigor:** Students will be challenged to demonstrate the theoretical and empirical grounding of their work, use discipline in language (e.g., recognizing multiple meanings of commonly used terms such as “nature”), and recognize the opportunities and pitfalls of working in interdisciplinary modes.
- **Theoretical and methodological pluralism:** Coursework will recognize the value of diverse theoretical and practical applications within counseling psychology and ecologically-focused psychology.
- **Self reflection and collaboration:** Students will be provided opportunities for examination of personal and professional motivations regarding ecologically-focused psychology and opportunities for collaboration across the value systems.
- **Effective application:** The importance of practical and measurable outcomes when working with individuals and the local community will be encouraged.
- **Ethical thinking:** Decision making will recognize the principles of counseling ethics as well as the limitations of existing ethics codes in providing guidance for ecologically-based action.

**Course Requirements:**

**Spring 2008 Note:** *Requirements will vary depending on the number of weekends the student attends.*

- Regular class attendance
- Informed participation in discussion of reading assignments
- Short personal description (50-75 words)
- Reflection papers x 3 (one per each weekend) -- Two pages maximum (500-1000 words).
- Oral presentation regarding one of the in-class exercises
- Environmental identity interview of class member
- Review of book/movie/art work reflecting ecopsychology principles  
--OR--
- Counseling case presentation
- Student directed project (optional)

**Evaluation and Assessment:**

Written and oral presentations will be evaluated on the basis of their clarity, thoughtfulness, and integration of themes and issues discussed in the class. A grade of A will be given to papers and presentations that are clear, thoughtful, and tied to the themes of the course. B papers and presentations will be missing one or more of these elements. C papers and presentations will be returned for revision or a 2<sup>nd</sup> attempt. The course may also be taken as a Credit/No Credit option.

## **Bibliography:**

The course has (2) required texts (available at the LC bookstore) and additional readings for each weekend available on the Lewis & Clark Moodle Site  
<http://moodle.lclark.edu/course/view.php?id=408>

### **Required texts:**

Winter, Deborah Du Nann & Koger, Sue (2004). *The psychology of environmental problems* (2<sup>nd</sup> Ed.). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum. ISBN: 9780805846317.

T. Roszak, T., Gomes M. E., & Kanner A. (Eds.). *Ecopsychology*. San Francisco: Sierra Club Books.

### **For students that would like more of a background in ecological thought or environmental science, optional texts include:**

Harding, S. (2006) *Animate Earth: Science, Intuition and Gaia*. White River Junction, VT: Chelsea Green Publishing

Orr, D. (1992). *Ecological literacy*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

Snyder, G. (1990). *The practice of the wild*. San Francisco: North Point Press.

Thomashow, M. (2002). *Bringing the biosphere home: Learning to perceive global environmental change*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press

## **Moodle Login Instructions**

*Note: Continuing Studies Students who are not registered Lewis & Clark students will be manually enrolled in the Moodle system.*

1. Go to the Moodle course page at <http://moodle.lclark.edu/course/view.php?id=408>
2. When prompted, login to Moodle using your L&C login and password
3. Next you'll be prompted to enter the enrollment key for the course – use: eco

Once you've enrolled in the class, you can simply go to moodle.lclark.edu and the Foundations of Ecopsychology course will be listed in your My Courses list. You can also find it in the Graduate School - Counseling Psychology section on the LC Moodle web page.

If you have problems enrolling, the IT can help at x7225 (Help Desk), x6195 (Damian Miller, Grad IT consultant) or email [consult@lclark.edu](mailto:consult@lclark.edu).

## Foundations of Ecopsychology Outline of each class weekend

### Weekend # 1      February 9 & 10, 2008

#### Personal aspects of ecopsychology and environmental identity

**Guest Speakers: To be announced.**

**Movie and discussion:** Riedelsheimer, T. (Director) (2001). *Rivers and tides: Andy Goldsworthy working with time*. Germany: Mediopolis Film und Fernsehproduktion. (A portrait of the artist Andy Goldsworthy, whose specialty is sculptures made from elements of nature, *Rivers and tides* provides many examples of restorative natural settings)

#### **Experiential activities:**

- Systems Game
- Mirror exercise
- Self Exploration: Childhood sense of place exercise
- Self Exploration: Eco-genogram
- Self Exploration: Social and cultural influences on environmental identity
- Self Exploration: Students select outdoor retreat locations on Lewis & Clark Campus

**Student Presentations:** Volunteers describe their experiences of in-class exercises

#### **Assignments:**

##### **Personal Description    Due: At first class weekend**

Short personal description (50-75 words): Describe yourself (e.g., age, background, and academic focus), your interests or experiences with ecopsychology or related areas, and any goals you have for this course.

*\*Post by email to the instructor.*

##### **Reflection Papers      Due 2/15/08**

Chose **two** of the readings and (1) briefly summarize each reading, (2) describe your intellectual and emotional responses to each reading, and (3) how the content relates to your personal life and your academic or professional plans. Two pages maximum (500-1000 words).

*\*Post this electronically to the course Moodle Site or email to instructor.*

##### **Readings:                      Due 2/9/08**

#### **Required:**

Summary:

- The Winter & Koger text applies major approaches in psychology and psychotherapy to the solution of environmental problems and will provide a basic groundwork for this course. We will augment this text with a survey or readings from various sources.

- Plotkin's prologue describes his personal journey from academia to leading wilderness retreats.
- Macy & Brown provide a catalog of emotional barriers that prevent people from voicing environmental concerns.
- Hillman provides an introduction to an ecopsychology perspective and Roszak's afterword describes the varied responses to the ecopsychology concept.
- Stern provides a useful, science-based examination of some widely held beliefs about environmentally responsible behaviors.
- Clayton & Brook describe the basis for conservation psychology research.

Winter, D. & Koger, S. (2004). *The psychology of environmental problems*. (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Mahwah, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum. -- **Chapters 1 and 2 Overview and Freudian Psychology (pp. 1-54)**

Plotkin, B. (2003). *Soulcraft: crossing into the mysteries of nature and psyche*. Novato, CA: New World Library. – **Prologue (pp.xxi – xxiv)**

Macy, J., & Brown, M.Y. (1998). *Coming back to life: practices to reconnect our lives, our world*. Gabriola Island, BC: New Society Publishers. – **Chapter 2 (pp. 25-37)**

Hillman, J (1995) A psyche the size of the earth: A psychological forward. In T. Roszak, M. E. Gomes & A. Kanner (Eds.). *Ecopsychology*. (pp. xvii-xxiii). San Francisco: Sierra Club Books.

Stern, P. C. (2000). Psychology and the science of human environment interactions. *American Psychologist*, 55, pp. 523-530.

Roszak, T. (2001). *The Voice of the Earth: An Exploration of Ecopsychology*. Grand Rapids, MI: Phanes Press. – **Afterword: Ecopsychology Since 1992 (pp. 323-331)**

Clayton, S. & Brook, A. (2005) Can psychology save the world? *Journal of Social Issues and Public Policy*, 5, pp. 87-102

### **Optional:**

#### Summary:

- Thomashow provides one of the first comprehensive explorations of environmental identity as it is explored with environmental educators.
- Snyder provides a beautiful meditation on the many meanings of "wild" and "wilderness." Collins et al. provide an accessible overview of the science of global climate change while Begley traces ongoing efforts to discredit climate change research.
- Hawken provides an optimistic survey of the global environmental movement.

Thomashow, M. (1995). *Ecological identity: Becoming a reflective environmentalist*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press – **Chapter 1 (pp. 1-24)**

Snyder, G. (1990). *The Practice of the Wild*. San Francisco: North Point Press. -- **Chapter 1: The etiquette of freedom (pp. 3-24)**.

Collins, W. (et al.) (2007, August). The physical science behind climate change. *Scientific American*, 64-73

Begley, S. (2007, August). The truth about denial. *Newsweek*, 20-29

Hawken, P. (2007: May/June). To remake the world. *Orion*, 60-63.

## Foundations of Ecopsychology

### Weekend # 2      March 8-9, 2008

#### **Counseling and Ecotherapy: Working with individuals and groups**

**Main themes:** Ecotherapy approaches for individuals and groups, health benefits of natural settings, empirical basis for human nature relationships and environmental identity

#### **Guest Speakers:**

- Pam Wood, MA, ATR. Portland, OR. Ecotherapy exercises.
  - Biography: Pam Wood, MA, ATR is a registered art therapist and workshop facilitator with 15 years experiencing working with adults and teens. Her workshops and retreats explore the intersection between deep ecology, social justice, creativity and spirituality. Inspired by Joanna Macy's *The Work That Reconnects*, she uses creative and experiential activities in a group context to enhance learning and motivate change. She is the co-author of *Care for Creation: A Franciscan Spirituality of the Earth*, to be released in February 2008 by St. Anthony Messenger Press.
  
- Jeffrey Noethe, Ph.D. Portland, OR. Applying the Transtheoretical model to values and behavior change. <http://www.drnoethe.com/>

#### **Movie and discussion:**

Baichwal, J. (2006) (Director) *Manufactured Landscapes*. Canada: Foundry Films

This documentary view of photographer Edward Burtynsky, who travels the world observing changes in landscapes due to industrial work and manufacturing, contains stunning and thought provoking images of the massive social and ecological changes brought on by globalization.

#### **Experiential activities:**

- Return to outdoor retreat locations
- "Stages of change" exercise
- Mindfulness and relaxation exercise using nature imagery
- Cognitive-behavioral "eco-thought record" exercise
- Earth-centered ceremony exercise led by class member Vikki Henico
- Environmental identity interviews

**Student Presentations:** Book and movie reviews (or case presentations) Part 1

#### **Assignments:**

**Reflection Papers**

**Post on class website**

**Due 3/14/08**

Chose **two** of the readings and (1) briefly summarize each reading, (2) describe your intellectual and emotional responses to each reading, and (3) how the content relates to your personal life and your academic or professional plans. Two pages maximum, including both readings (500-1000 words).

#### **In-Class Assignment:**

- Conduct environmental identity interview
- Discuss and critique movie or book (full course students only)

## Readings

### Summary:

- We will return to our Winter & Koger course text to explore health psychology, cognitive, and gestalt psychology from an ecological perspective.
- The key terms glossary provides a quick reference for ecology-rated terms used in this course. We will review the ACA ethics code from the perspective of environmental ethics and advocacy. Doherty describes a model for addressing environmental concerns with counseling clients. Cahalan provides an ecopsychological approach to gestalt therapy.
- The readings from Faber & Kuo, and Kaplan provide an overview of research evidence for the mental health benefits of natural spaces.
- Macy & Brown provide guidelines for group based ecotherapy work.
- The sections from McNair et al. provide useful perspectives on maintaining motivation and avoiding burnout as an advocate for social (and environmental) justice and working with others in advocacy settings.

Foundations of Ecopsychology: Key terms glossary

American Counseling Association 2005 Ethics Code.

Doherty, T. J. (December 2006). Nurturing the Sustainable Self: Talking to clients about environmental issues. *The Oregon Psychologist*, 25.16-20.

Cahalan, William (1995) Ecological groundedness in gestalt therapy. In T. Roszak, M. E. Gomes & A. Kanner (Eds.). *Ecopsychology*. (pp. 216-223). San Francisco: Sierra Club Books.

Faber Taylor, A. & Kuo, F. E. (2006). Is contact with nature important to early child development? State of the evidence. In C. Spencer & M. Blades (Eds.). *Children & their environments*. (pp. 124-140). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Kaplan, S. (1995). The restorative benefits of nature: Toward an integrative framework. *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 15. 169-182

Macy, J., & Brown, M.Y. (1998). *Coming back to life: practices to reconnect our lives, our world*. Gabriola Island, BC: New Society Publishers. – **Chapter 5: Guiding Group Work (pp. 63-78)**

McNair, R. et al. (2006, Eds.) *Working for peace*. Atascadero, CA: Impact Publishers. – **Chapters 5, 6, & 7: Overcoming helplessness and discouragement, Overcoming Burnout, Dealing with the distressed (pp. 36-54)**

Noethe, Jeffrey (June 2007). *Moving Toward Sustainable Values: Adapting and Applying the Transtheoretical Model*. Paper presented at the Psychology-Ecology-Sustainability Conference, Lewis & Clark College, Portland Oregon.

Winter, D. & Kroger, S. (2004). *The psychology of environmental problems*. (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Mahwah, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum. -- **Chapters 3, 5, 6 & 7: Social, Physiological, Cognitive, and Gestalt Psychology (pp. 55-86, 121-210)**

## Weekend Two: Optional Readings

### Summary:

- We will apply Greenberger and Padesky's cognitive behavioral therapy thought record exercise to coping with environmental concerns or anxiety.
- Ray challenges the environmental "choir" to examine their own consumption and travel behaviors and provides a context for discussing stages of behavior change regarding sustainability.
- Louv provides a survey of environmental psychology research and also suggests that attention deficit and other childhood issues can be linked to a more pervasive loss of connection with green spaces.

Greenberger, D. & Padesky, C. A. (1995). *Mind over mood*. New York: Guilford. **Chapter 7: Alternative or balanced thinking (pp. 89-111)**

Ray, Janisse. ["Altar Call for True Believers."](#) Orion. September/October 2007. 58-63.

Louv, Richard (2005). *Last child in the woods*. Chapel Hill, North Carolina: Algonquin Books of Chapel Hill -- **Chapter 8: Nature deficit disorder and the restorative environment**



## Foundations of Ecopsychology

### Weekend #3      April 12-13, 2008

#### **Ecopsychology Applied: Wilderness therapy, environmental advocacy, and cultural critiques**

Topics include wilderness therapy, environmental advocacy and behavior change, collaborating across differences, Critical psychology, and identifying future action plans for class participants.

#### **Reflection Assignment: Putting personal strengths and values into action** **Due 4/18/08**

For our third weekend, we have a special reflection assignment using a positive psychology perspective, self exploration, and our Foundations of Ecopsychology course materials.

1. Complete the [VIA Signature Strengths Questionnaire](http://www.authentic happiness.sas.upenn.edu/) that measures 24 character strengths available at <http://www.authentic happiness.sas.upenn.edu/>. (The survey is free and requires you to sign in and create a password).
2. Referencing your strengths questionnaire results and Winter and Koger's chapters for this weekend (and other course readings as needed) describe your goals regarding psychology, sustainability, and personal lifestyle in the coming year.
3. In your reflection, utilize a behavioral perspective that describes concrete and measurable behaviors and at least one other psychological perspective (i.e., those identified by Winter & Koger or a critical psychology perspective as described by Andy Fischer or David Kidner).
4. Two pages maximum (500-1000 words).

#### **Guest Speakers:**

- Tod Sloan, Ph.D. Lewis & Clark College. *Critical psychoanalysis on nature and the psyche: Examining the limits and possibilities of a critical psychoanalytic perspective view of the modern human condition.* <http://www.lclark.edu/faculty/sloan/>
- Kevin Riley, LCSW, CADC-III  
Clinical Director, Catherine Freer Wilderness Therapy Programs  
Albany, Oregon  
<http://www.cfreer.com/therapeutic/>

Before joining Catherine Freer in 2000, Kevin worked with adolescents and families for 10 years in many arenas including tutoring and mentoring in Chicago's Uptown neighborhood, adolescent service trips to Nicaragua, and working as a family therapist in Seattle. Kevin worked as a wilderness therapy expedition therapist for two years before taking his current position as a clinical director. He received his MSW from the University of Washington. His clinical areas of interest include group therapy, family systems, and adolescent rites-of-passage.

#### **Movie and discussion:**

Herzog, W. (2005) (Director) *Grizzly Man*. United States: Discovery Docs.

"A devastating and heartrending take on grizzly bear activists Timothy Treadwell and Amie Huguenard, who were killed in October of 2003 while living among grizzlies in Alaska." -- Internet Movie Database. This film illustrates the perils of ungrounded activism.

**Experiential activities:**

- Return to outdoor retreat locations
- “Personal Ecology” exercise
- Outdoor challenge exercise
- Mindfulness and relaxation exercise using restorative natural setting imagery

**In-Class Assignment:**

- Complete environmental identity interviews
- Discuss and critique movie or book

**Readings:**

**Summary:**

- We will complete our Winter & Koger course text with their chapters on Behavioral Psychology and their integrative conclusion.
- Ferdig provides a template for personal leadership on sustainability issues while Fisk describes the complexity inherent in making common consumer choices while valuing sustainability.
- Fisher and Kidner provide examples of ecopsychology conceptualized from a critical psychology perspective—linking environmental issues with more pervasive social and historical factors.
- Greenway, Nadler and Russell & Farnum provide an introduction to therapeutic practices in wild nature, from ecotherapy, adventure therapy, and wilderness therapy perspectives, respectively.
- In an example of conservation psychology, Kempton and Holland describe the identity formation of individuals who identify themselves as environmentalists.
- Opotow and Brook, in another example of conservation psychology, use social psychology methods to illustrate the differences in world views between ranchers and environmentalists, and the phenomenon of moral exclusion as it arises in environmental debates.

Ferdig, M. A. (2007). Sustainability Leadership: Co-Creating a sustainable future. *Journal of Change Management* 7, 25-35.

Fisher, A. (2002). *Radical ecopsychology: Psychology in the service of life*. New York: State University of New York Press. **(Foreword and Chapter 1. The project of ecopsychology -- p.p. ix-xi, 3-28).**

Fisk, Umbra (2007, Sept 19) *You are what you buy: On the impact of food purchases* *Grist* <http://www.grist.org/advice/ask/2007/09/19/> (Retrieved 11/14/07).

Greenway, R. (1995). The wilderness effect and ecopsychology. In T Roszak, M. E Gomes, & A. D. Kanner, (Eds.) *Eco-psychology: Restoring the earth, healing the mind*. San Francisco: Sierra Club books

Kempton & Holland (2003) Identity and sustained environmental practice. In S. Clayton & S. Opotow (Eds.). *Identity and the natural environment: The psychological significance of nature*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press. 317-341.

Kidner, D. (2007) Depression and the natural world: Towards a critical ecology of psychological distress. *The International Journal of Critical Psychology*, 19. 123-146.

- Nadler, R. S. (1993) Therapeutic process of change. In M. Gass (ed.) *Adventure Therapy: Therapeutic applications of adventure programming*. Dubuque, IA: Kendall Hunt.
- Opatow, S. & Brook, A. (2003). Identity and exclusion in rangeland conflict in S. Clayton & S. Opatow (Eds.). *Identity and the natural environment: The psychological significance of nature*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press. 249-271.
- Russell, K. C., & Farnum, J. (2004). [A concurrent model of wilderness therapy process](#). *Journal of Adventure Education and Outdoor Learning*, 4. 39-55.
- Winter, D. & Koger, S. (2004). *The psychology of environmental problems*. (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Mahwah, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum. -- **Chapters 4 and 8: Behavioral Psychology (p. 87-120) and Putting it all together: Using psychology to build a sustainable world. and Freudian Psychology (pp. 211-234)**

### Weekend Three: Optional Readings:

#### Summary:

- Lertzman provides an introduction to ecopsychology and its strengths and shortcomings (and is a useful companion to Roszak's *Afterward* covered in weekend #1). Lertzman also discusses Andy Fisher's work and ways that a critical psychology perspective can provide theoretical underpinning for ecopsychology.
- Kanner provides a critique of commercialization and advertising aimed at children. Fisk provides additional examples of systematic and ethical consumer choices, in this case regarding eating meat.
- Clark provides an example of research using traditional psychological assessment measures (i.e., the MMPI-A) with adolescent wilderness therapy clients and evidence of positive personality changes associated with wilderness therapy experiences.
- Revkin discusses recent works addressing the economic and social aspects of climate change that may signal a potentially centrist or moderate position in the ongoing climate debate.
- Bailey and the "Planet Gore" blog writers provide an example of conservative and "doubting" views on climate change and liberal/progressive approaches to environmental issues. These authors' strong opinions may prompt anger or dismissal from environmental advocates and provide an opportunity to experience a pull toward moral exclusion as described by Opatow and Brook, above.

Bailey, R. (1993) *Eco Scam: The false prophets of the ecological apocalypse*. New York: St. Martin's Press. (Selections).

Clark, J. et al. (2004). The effects of wilderness therapy on the clinical concerns (on Axes I, II, and IV) of troubled adolescents. *Journal of Experiential Education*, 27. 213-232

Fisk, Umbra (2007, Sept 17) Not so fast: On meat eating and global warming. *Grist* <http://www.grist.org/advice/ask/2007/09/17/>. (Retrieved 11/14/07).

- Kanner, A. D. (1995) Globalization and the commercialization of childhood. *Tikkun* 20. 49-51.
- Lertzman, R. (2004). Ecopsychological theory and critical intervention. *Organization and Environment*, 17. 1-6.
- Revkin, A. (11/13/07) Challenges to Both Left and Right on Global Warming. The New York Times.  
[http://www.nytimes.com/2007/11/13/science/earth/13book.html?\\_r=1&oref=slogin](http://www.nytimes.com/2007/11/13/science/earth/13book.html?_r=1&oref=slogin)  
(Retrieved 11/14/07)
- Various. *Planet Gore*: <http://planetgore.nationalreview.com/>. (Retrieved 11/14/07)