

## **Syllabus: Environmental Identity and Ecological Self -- Fall 2015 v.2**

Lewis & Clark Graduate School of Education and Counseling

**Course Number:** CPSY 501 / CECP 801  
**Term:** Fall 2015  
**Department:** Counseling Psychology / Center for Community Engagement  
**Faculty Name:** Thomas Joseph Doherty, Psy.D.  
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### **Course Calendar & Meeting Times:**

**Days:** Weekly Readings and Online Activities Weeks of 9/14 – 10/28/15  
Class Meetings

- Sat 9/19/15 from 9:00 AM - 5:00PM
- Sat 10/24/15 from 9:00 AM – 5:00 PM

**Location:** York Graduate Center, Room 107

### **Catalogue Description:**

This course guides students toward self-reflection regarding identity and experience related to place, the natural world, and other species; and motivations for integrating ecological perspectives into academic, professional or advocacy work. Readings, exercises, and lectures help students explore personal visions of sustainability, emotional reactions to environmental issues, history of the environmental movement, intersectionality of environmental identity and other aspects of identity and diversity, and the interrelationships between health and wellbeing and social and environmental justice. This course is a required prerequisite for the Ecopsychology Certificate.

Prerequisites: None.

Credits: 1 semester hour

### **Learning Objectives:**

At the completion of the course, participants should be able to:

1. Recognize diverse utopian environmental perspectives and begin to articulate their personal vision for a sustainable society
2. Understand and validate the experience of environmental grief and factors that influence emotional reactions to environmental issues.
3. Identify key turning points in the modern environmental movement
4. Describe the process of environmental identity formation and experiences that promote ecological self
5. Effectively apply principles of environmental justice and multicultural competency in conservation and nature-focused therapy efforts

**Course Details:**

- This is a one-credit course that includes weekly readings, online posting and dialog, and two in-person class sessions.
- Class sessions will balance didactic presentations with exercises, role-plays, outdoor activities, video presentations, and guest speakers.
- All students are required to have a valid email address, and to use the course Moodle page.
- Class meetings or field trips may include outdoor activities. Please dress appropriately for the weather.

**Course Requirements:**

1. Full attendance, including active and informed participation in discussions and class activities
2. Moodle site use and dialog
3. Class participation goals (50-75 words)
4. Weekly Readings and Activities
5. Weekly Blog Posts (1-2 pages, posted to Moodle)
6. Key Concepts Quiz (ungraded, multiple choice and short answer),
7. Environmental Identity Interview Project (3-5 pages, posted to Moodle)

**Evaluation and Assessment:**

Attendance: Full class attendance is required. Since this meetings use group process, there is no effective “make up” or alternative to class attendance. Consult the instructor regarding any absences in advance. Lack of attendance in class sessions may be grounds for an incomplete.

Evaluation: Written and oral presentations will be evaluated on the basis of their clarity, thoughtfulness, and integration of themes and issues of the class. Detailed competency examples are below.

**Competencies Assessed:**

- Scholarly rigor: Demonstrate the theoretical and empirical basis of work and use clarity in language (e.g., recognizing multiple meanings of commonly used terms such as “nature”).
- Theoretical and methodological pluralism: Demonstrate the ability to identify different theoretical and practical applications within ecopsychology
- Self-reflection and collaboration: Articulate personal and professional motivations regarding ecopsychology; demonstrate ability to collaborate with others having differing values

- Effective and equitable application: Demonstrate the ability to describe work in terms of practical and measurable outcomes, at various scales (e.g., for individuals, the local community, and natural systems).
- Ethical thinking: Demonstrate the ability to articulate relevant principles of counseling and educational ethics and use of ethics codes in providing guidance for ecologically-based practice.

Evaluating Blog Posts: As an instructor, Thomas uses the blog posts to track students' progress through the course. He'll be looking for evidence of (1) assimilation-students integrating the material into their existing knowledge base and into lessons learned through the course, (2) accommodation-students describing new insights and new schemas based on novel information, (3) application-students discussing ways to apply and test the course materials in their academic and professional work.

Grading: A grade of A will be reserved for comprehensive and exemplary work that demonstrates emerging mastery or a professional standard. A grade of B+ will be the benchmark for satisfactory completion of assigned tasks. Grades of A-, B, B- will be applied to work that adds to or are missing required aspects. C papers and presentations will be returned for revision. Some course activities will be ungraded and some will be pass/fail. The instructor reserves the right to use subjective judgments regarding grading.

### **Disability, Diversity and Sustainability:**

Disability Services: If you have a disability that may impact your academic performance, you may request accommodations by submitting documentation to the Student Support Services Office in the Albany Quadrangle (x7156). After you have submitted documentation and filled out paperwork there for the current semester requesting accommodations, staff in that office will notify the instructor of the accommodations for which you are eligible.

Diversity, Culture & Accommodations: The instructor will make efforts to recognize diversity, culture and individual differences in the classroom and to create a safe and collegial learning environment for all students. Please contact the instructor regarding any special needs or accommodations required.

Sustainability: We are all encouraged to consider personal and environmental impacts associated with this course. This includes reducing or mitigating high impact behaviors through: efficient with use of energy and resources (e.g., turning off lights, computers and power strips when not in use), using alternate or communal forms of transportation (e.g., carpools, biking; see commuter tips below) and using recycled paper, double-sided printing, or printing on the blank side of previously used papers (clearly draw a line through non-course content).

LC Commuter tips: <http://www.lclark.edu/live/news/22982-top-10-tips-for-lewis-amp-clark-commuters>

Sustainability also has a personal level: pacing yourself and remembering the basics (for you) of healthy diet, adequate rest, vigorous exercise, and nurturing relationships. Be mindful of screen time and immersion in information technology (in terms of time spent and content). Get outdoors and outside of the human sphere and in contact with the rest of nature and other species. Remember why you are in school and what this means for you. Suffering is a part of life and suffering is best met when it has a purpose.

### **Required Texts & Readings:**

The course has required readings and numerous supplemental readings and resources for further study. Required and supplementary readings will typically be available on the Lewis & Clark Moodle Site and/or on reserve at Watzek library.

#### Required Texts

- Callenbach, E. (1975) *Ecoptopia*. Banyan / Bantam ISBN: 978-0-960432-01-1

#### Required Video

- Kitchel, M. (2013). *A Fierce Green Fire* (excerpts shown in class)

#### Examples of Text Excerpts / Web Resources (posted on Moodle)

- Weber-Nicholsen, S. (2001). *The Love of Nature at the End of the World*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press. ISBN: 978-0-262640-51-0
- Clayton & Myers (2009) *Conservation Psychology: Understanding and promoting human care for nature*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press. ISBN: 978-1-405176-78-1
- NY Times Dot Earth Blog: <http://dotearth.blogs.nytimes.com/>
- Surfing and Psychology: <http://vimeo.com/70056620> (password: surfpsy)

### **Written Work:**

**Weekly Moodle Blog Posts - Due Thursday 11:55 PM of each week, from weeks of 9/14/15 – 10/19/15**

A post discussing the week's readings, assignments and activities is due from each student each week on Thursday by midnight. Integrate your thoughts about weekly readings and assignments with current events (e.g., identified from news sources such as the [NY Times Dot Earth Blog](#), from other classes, or your work or play).

- Post length: Compatible with 250-500 words, or 1 double spaced page min, 2 Pages max.
- Post title: "YOUR NAME Weekly Post DATE"
- Beginning week of 9/28/15: Scan classmates' posts and make at least one comment per week. Be respectful and note areas of agreement or difference.

### **Class Participation Goal**

**Due Friday 9/18/15** Post to Moodle\*

Please share a brief description of your self and why you are taking this class. Include goals for class participation (e.g., speaking more or speaking less, trying out new skills, etc.) Please discuss any goals you prefer to keep private directly with the instructor.)

Length 75 – 150 words suggested.

### **Quiz**

**Date: 10/24/15 In Class**

This will be a short answer and multiple-choice exam focused on terms, concepts, and techniques discussed in the class. Exams will be taken individually. Students will be allowed access to books, laptops, and the internet, including the course Moodle page. The quiz is a “learning tool” to improve retention and comprehension of class materials. Students will receive credit for taking and correcting the quiz.

### **Environmental Identity Interview**

- Verbal Summary Due 10/24/15
- Write Up Due 10/30/15

Each student will identify a person outside of the class to interview regarding the person's environmental identity and worldview. Students are encouraged to clearly apply models, research findings and techniques used in the class (e.g., childhood place map, environmental identity timeline, or use of an environmental belief or value questionnaire). Interview questions can include: What are salient experiences, places, relationships (human or with other species), events, emotions(+/-), attitudes, etc. in the person's life? Reflect on diversity and similarities between interviewer and interviewee. Students will then write a brief, anonymous, case study regarding the person they interviewed and their experience as interviewer. The goal is to be curious and practice ecopsychology

interviewing skills and not to move into problem solving, therapy, or an expert stance. We will debrief at the 10/24/15 class meeting.

Length: 3-5 double-spaced pages. Post to Moodle Environmental Identity Interview forum. Post as Word compatible Doc and also paste.

## Course Outline

### Week of 9/14/15 – *Ecotopia*

#### **Class Session 9/19/15**

**Readings:** Callenbach, E. (1975) *Ecotopia*. Bantam / Bantam ISBN: 978-0-960432-01-1 (Complete novel.)

#### **Optional Supplemental Readings and Resources**

- Scott Timberg (2008, Dec. 14). The Novel That Predicted Portland. *New York Times*.
- Abbot, C. (2012) A Region by Any Name From Ecotopia to Cascadia Megaregion, visions of the Pacific Northwest – *Oregon Humanities*

#### **Assignments Due Friday 9/18/15 @ 11:55 PM**

- Class Participation Goal
- Weekly Blog Post

#### **Prompts for weekly blog post**

The future-focused 1970s novel *Ecotopia* describes the secession of the Northwestern United States and its formation as an ecologically focused society. In your blog post, make sure to demonstrate familiarity with the novel by briefly summarizing the story and making reference to at least two characters. Otherwise, discuss what struck you most about the novel in terms of its description of an ecologically based society and how this compares with your ideas of a just or ecological society?

You may note dated or problematic aspects of the novel from your perspective, but please focus on its useful lessons for modern-day readers.

Optional, for deeper reflection: Look at reporter William Weston's personal journal entries for dates in May, and his reactions to living at "The Cove" or relating to the character Marissa. From a psychological perspective, how are Weston's experiences in Ecotopia different from his life in New York (e.g., personal and social relationships, being in his body, political

empowerment, attitudes toward the present and the future)? What does the novel suggest regarding personal health and identity in an ecologically based society? What are the ramifications for counseling or education? What lessons does this 1970's novel hold about trying to predict the future of ideas and social movements?

### **Week of 9/21/15 – “The Love of Nature and the End of the World”**

#### **Readings**

- Weber-Nicholson (2001) *The Love of Nature at the End of the World*, Chapters 2, pages 35-62
- Scranton 2013 Nov 10 Learning How to Die in the Anthropocene – *NY Times*

#### **Optional Supplemental Readings and Resources**

- Doherty (2009) Shierry Weber Nicholson- The Ecopsychology interview. *Ecopsychology*
- Zalasiewicz, Williams, Haywood & Ellis 2011 The Anthropocene: a new epoch of geological time?
- Video: Welcome to the Anthropocene: <http://vimeo.com/39048998>

#### **Assignments Due Thursday @ 11:55 PM**

- Weekly Blog

#### **Prompt for blog post on NicholSEN's *The Love of Nature...***

If Callenbach's *Ecotopia* described a society in which most people shared ecocentric views and practices, NicholSEN's 2001 *The Love of Nature...* and Scranton's 2013 editorial speak to a world in which ecocentric viewpoints are often denied or unspoken. In your blog post, describe your emotional and intellectual reactions to the writing and the implications you see for counseling, education or other work. Potential prompts include:

- What daily practices would be necessary for you to cultivate the sensibility that Weber-Nicholson is describing in her text? How would they contribute to your health? How could you imagine describing these practices and their benefits to potential clients or future students?
- Are there current news items that relate to Scranton's editorial?

## **Week of 9/28/15 The "Environmental Movement in the United States Readings**

Survey: The Environmental movement in the United States - Wikipedia  
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Environmental\\_movement\\_in\\_the\\_United\\_States](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Environmental_movement_in_the_United_States)

Historical Example: Gene Stratton Porter (1927) The Last Passenger Pigeon. In Bill McKibben (Ed.) *American Earth: Environmental Writing Since Thoreau*. (p. 192-205). Library of America

### **Supplemental Readings and Resources**

"Post-Environmental Discussion": Out of the Wild -- A CONVERSATION BETWEEN WILLIAM CRONON AND MICHAEL POLLAN – Orion.  
<https://orionmagazine.org/article/out-of-the-wild/>

Local Oregon Environmental History: Cizmar (2013) Portland, Pre-pilgrim. *Willamette Week*. [http://www.wweek.com/portland/article-21530-portland\\_pre\\_pilgrim.html](http://www.wweek.com/portland/article-21530-portland_pre_pilgrim.html)

Current Environmental Campaign: Greenpeace Act for the Arctic Campaign <https://greenwire.greenpeace.org/usa/en/node/9293>

Review: Kitchel, M. (2013). *A Fierce Green Fire* (excerpts shown in class 1/7 and 2/7/15)

### **Assignments Due Thursday @ 11:55 PM**

- Weekly Blog

#### **Prompt for blog post ...**

To understand environmental identity and values requires engaging the concept of environmentalism. Read the Wikipedia entry, "Environmental Movement in the United States." In your weekly post, summarize key highlights or turning points in the movement beginning with the late 19th century conservation movement through the present day. What aspects of the environmental movement most inform your personal vision regarding the natural environment (e.g., are their key role models or ideas that motivate you)? How does Gene Stratton-Porter's essay impact you, and how can we read it in the present day, for example, in relation to Weber-Nicholsen's writings?

Optional: Discuss the present day examples, the Greenpeace video, the dialog between William Cronon and Michael Pollan, Cizmar's invocation of Portland



"pre-pilgrim." How do these illustrate the current environmental thinking, debate, and strategy? How do you expect the Wikipedia "Environmental Movement" entry to read in the next 2 to 3 decades?

## **Week of 10/5/15 Environmental Identity, beliefs and discourses**

### **Readings**

- Clayton & Myers (2009) *Conservation Psychology*
  - Chapter 2: Attitudes, values, and perceptions
  - Chapter 4: Environment and identity
- Macy, J. (1990) The greening of the self. *Dharma Gaia*

### **Optional Supplemental Readings and Resources**

- Ramsey (2014). My environmentalism will be intersectional or it will be bullshit
  - <https://www.opendemocracy.net/ourkingdom/adam-ramsay/my-environmentalism-will-be-intersectional-or-it-will-be-bullshit>

### **Assignments Due Thursday @ 11:55 PM**

- Weekly Blog

### **Prompt for blog post**

An understanding of people's values, beliefs, and worldviews regarding the natural environment is essential when working in an ecopsychology framework. This promotes more effective relationships, communication and collaboration. Understanding environmental identity can also help predict and explain why someone could be aligned with an ecopsychology perspective or find it alien or off-putting.

Summarize key findings in readings and use these to describe:

- Your own values (i.e., using Kellert's typography of wildlife values)
- The typical environmental discourse framework you work from (e.g., using Dryzek's or Merchant's model)
- Key determinants of your own environmental identity and timeline (e.g., using developmental research by Chawla)
- Your experience of ecological self (using Macy's transpersonal perspective).

Using Ramsey as a guide, discuss how environmental identity can be viewed in terms of social justice or a Feminist / Intersectionality perspective.

## **Week of 10/12/15: Environmental Diversity**

### **Readings / Videos**

- Miniature Earth Project: What is the (human) population of the earth world was reduced to a community of 100 people? (video)
  - <http://www.miniature-earth.com/>
- Majora Carter: Greening the Ghetto (video)
  - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gQ-cZRmHfs4>
- The Black Hiker (video)
  - <http://www.funnyordie.com/videos/24b56caf3e/black-hiker-with-blair-underwood>
- Bullard, R. D. and Johnson, G. S. (2000) Environmental Justice- Grassroots activism and its impact on public policy decision making. *Journal of Social Issues*, 56, 555 – 578
- Urban League of Portland (2010). Environmental Justice. In *The State of Black Oregon*. pp. 77-86.
  - [www.doj.state.or.us/victims/pdf/the\\_state\\_of\\_black\\_oregon.pdf](http://www.doj.state.or.us/victims/pdf/the_state_of_black_oregon.pdf)

### **Supplemental Readings and Resources**

#### Race-Environment

- Keith H, J. I (2014). Desegregating Wilderness. *Orion*.  
<http://www.orionmagazine.org/index.php/articles/article/8275>

#### LGBTQ - Environment

- Shepard 2012 An inclusive natural world EJE
- Shepard 2013 The Nature Within (video): <http://vimeo.com/67029940>

#### Native American Perspectives – Environment

- Asking the Right Questions - Larry Mercurieff (Aleut)
- Shared Responsibility - Roberta "Bobbie" Conner (Cayuse)
  - <http://www.nativeperspectives.net/Videos.php>

#### Social Justice Theory - Environment

- Opatow\_1994\_green\_justice\_conceptions\_of\_fairness

**Assignments Due Thursday 11:55 PM**

- Weekly Blog

**Prompt for blog post**

What was your your subjective, emotional experience of moving from world-size scale (e.g., in the Miniature Earth Project) to that of community environments (e.g., Majora Carter's talk or the State of Black Oregon report)? How would you define “environmental justice” and “environmental diversity”? How does class, racial, ethnic, gender, sexual orientation or other forms of diversity inform discussions of environmental identity, self, and consciousness?

For further reflection: How would you prioritize issues of social justice for humans versus animal or other species' rights? How can your practice honor multiple views on these issues?

**Week of 10/19/15: Catch up on Readings and Posts / Prepare for Class Session / Interview Verbal Presentation Due in Class**

**\*\*\* Note Class Weekend 10/24/15 \*\*\***

**Week of 10/26/15: Interview Write Up Due****Assignment Due Friday 10/30/15 @ 5 PM**

- Environmental Identity Interview Write Up (Post to Moodle)

**Course Follow Up**

This syllabus is continued in the 2-credit course CPSY 528 “Theoretical & Empirical Basis of Ecopsychology” that will be offered in Spring 2016.