Course Name: Topics in Applied Ecopsychology: Nature and Child Development
Course Number: CPSY 590-51
Term: Summer 2011
Department: Graduate School of Counseling
Faculty Name: Thomas Joseph Doherty, Psy.D.
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Course Calendar & Meeting Times:

Days: 6/11-12/2011 (Weekend)
Times: 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. (with breaks)
Location: South Campus Conference Center 101

Description:

The focus of the Topics in Applied Ecopsychology course will vary by year, and provide opportunities to explore the role of a counseling psychologist as an ecopsychology advocate, consultant, or researcher, (e.g., the course may focus on topics such as social and environmental justice, diversity issues in ecotherapy and environmentalism, designing effective conservation programs, the needs of special populations such as children, etc.).

The 2011 class focuses broadly on children and nature will present up-to-date research on topics such as one (1) how contact with natural settings, such as parks, gardens or wilderness-like settings; animals, and other natural objects or phenomena influence the development, identity, and well-being of children, (2) how nature experiences or ecotherapy can alleviate emotional or behavioral disorders (e.g., reduce attention-deficit disorder symptoms), and (3) developmentally appropriate ways to address environmental interests or concerns with children. We will focus on cultural beliefs regarding children and nature as well as empirical findings, and situate the discussion in the ongoing evolution of ecopsychology and other environmental psychology work. The coursework will also draw attention to various forms of diversity, socioeconomic class and culture as they relate to the social construction of, and access to, nature and green settings.

Course Activities:

The course is highly experiential. We will balance didactic classroom presentations with opportunities for self-reflection, discussion, outdoor activities, video presentations, and guest speaker(s) from the local community. Examples
of activities include: Students will explore how children interact with the natural world by creating maps of their own childhood neighborhoods and play ranges.

**Course Goals and Objectives:**

The goals for our course include providing students with:

1. An introduction to psychology and related research and findings on children and nature
2. An experiential sense of how this material relates to their life and identity
3. Ways to integrate this information into their academic and professional development as counselors.

**Course Requirements:**

- Attendance and active participation in class and field experiences
- Use of Class Moodle page and forums
- 75 word personal description statement
- Informed participation in discussion of reading & assignments
- Brief engagement paper (1 - 2 pages)
- Informal oral presentation regarding one of the in-class topics or exercises
- Research & reflection paper demonstrating integration of course information with references (4-6 pages)

**Related Event: Film Screening & Panel Discussion**

The course will include a public film screening and panel discussion of the documentary on children & nature [Play Again](#) on Saturday June 11.

**Panelists**

- Tony Deis, Director, Trackers NW, Portland, OR
- Thomas Doherty, Psy.D., Coordinator of Ecopsychology Studies, Lewis & Clark Graduate School of Education and Counseling, Portland, OR
- Susan Koger, Ph.D. Willamette University, Co-author of The Psychology of Environmental Problems, (3rd Ed.), Salem, OR
- Greg Lemieux, Outreach Coordinator, Ground Productions, Portland, OR
- Peter Mortola, Ph.D. Lewis & Clark Graduate School of Education and Counseling, Portland, OR
- Tiffany Sauls, MD, Chair - Children & Nature Network Health Care Providers Work Group, Old Mill Center for Children and Families, Corvallis, OR
Evaluation and Assessment:

Course evaluation is based on written papers, class participation and activities, and optional online Moodle dialog. In this course, the final grade will be based on a weighted average of the course assignment and activity grades: For example, 20% personal description and engagement paper, 30% class participation, and 50% final paper.

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 written, oral and class participation work that is clear, thoughtful, and tied to the themes of the course. B+ or B work will be missing one or more of these elements. C work will be returned for revision or a 2nd attempt. The course may also be taken as a Credit/No Credit option (advisor or instructor approval may be needed).

Assignments

(1) Personal Description -- Due: 6/10/11 (the Friday BEFORE the class meets)

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

• Email to instructor and post this electronically to the course Moodle Site “Personal Description” forum.

(3) Short Engagement Paper -- Due: Sunday June 12, 2011 9 AM (2nd day of class)

Comment on responses and insights from the 1st day, including reference to (1) an in-class activity, (2) a reading or research finding, (3) a take-away from the film screening or panel, and (4) one personal (or family/community) connection to the material.

Length: Minimum of 1 and maximum of 2 double spaced pages.

• Be prepared to discuss in class and post this electronically to the course Moodle Site “Short Engagement Paper ” forum.

(4) Class Participation / In Class Oral Presentation

There will be multiple opportunities for participation and oral presentations during our class weekend. These will be primarily informal, including personal responses as we discuss course topics and debrief course activities. Students
will also have an opportunity to discuss or present a topic of their choice (optional).

(5) Research / Reflection Paper Due 2 weeks following the class

Discuss at least three (3) interacting cultural and/or therapeutic factors at work in the function of restorative natural settings and how these interact with at least one (1) aspect of children’s psychological development and at least one (1) aspect of children’s mental health or well-being. In your paper, reference at least 3 course readings, 1 class field activity or lecture, and 1 aspect of your personal or cultural experience. Length 4-6 pages, double-spaced, APA style.

Course Readings

The syllabus contains required and suggested readings. For students who have not taken the Foundations of Ecopsychology class or who are interested in background materials for the Ecopsychology Course Sequence, additional references are available from the instructor.

Texts (Note: These texts are also used in all of the other Ecopsychology sequence courses):


- Chapter 6: Domestic nature: Cohabiting with Animals and Plants.
- Chapter 7: Managed Nature: Zoos, Aquariums, and Public Parks.

Optional: Chapter 11: Environmental Education.


- Barrows – The Ecopsychology of Child Development
- Sewall – The Skill of Ecological Perception

Optional: Shapiro – Restoring Habitats, Communities and Souls


Optional: Chapter 6: Neurotoxicity of Toxic Exposures
**Other Required Readings (To be available on Moodle)**


**Online Resources**

Branching Out Program. Forestry Commission Scotland: [www.forestry.gov.uk/branchingout](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/branchingout)


*The* Landscape and Human Health Laboratory (LHHL). University of Illinois. [http://lhhl.illinois.edu/](http://lhhl.illinois.edu/)

Additional Optional Readings Available on Moodle (In Process)

AMERICAN’S PARTICIPATION IN OUTDOOR RECREATION: Results From NSRE.


Dickerman 2011 Hiking With a Child (and Tricks) in Tow


Hartig, T (    ). Toward Understanding the Restorative Environment as a Health Resource


Kahn & Hasbach (2011) Rewilding Natural History. ____.


Louv, R. (    ). Pending


Supporting Texts (optional, not required)


