

**FALL 2009**  
**GEOG 383.07/703.92**  
**Environmental and Sustainability Education**  
**Monday and Thursday, 9:45 to 11:00 a.m.**  
**Hunter North 1022**

**Instructor**

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**Course consultation:** Wednesdays 2:00-3:00pm, or by appointment ([twarkentin@hunter.cuny.edu](mailto:twarkentin@hunter.cuny.edu))

**Calendar Description**

The course explores concepts and practices in environmental and sustainability education, in broad senses of both terms. With emphasis on learning through direct experience, students will engage in naturalist practices which extend beyond the classroom, and will exercise personal reflection upon their learning experiences. The course takes a critical approach to recognize and negotiate the challenges of teaching environmental and sustainability education within formal education systems. The course also examines diverse informal ways in which people learn about, and relate to, the natural environment, ranging from place-based, indigenous knowledge and storytelling to global technologies and popular culture.

**Course Management**

In this course both the instructor and students are considered teachers and learners actively engaging and interacting with each other through lectures, readings, discussions and activities. Together we will study, critique, remember, imagine and create the learning environment. It is expected that all the course readings will be done and classes actively engaged in through participating fully in the discussions and activities presented. Assignments will ask students to critically consider their role in the relationship created between learner and learning context.

**Purpose & Course Objectives**

The intent of this course is to develop a comprehensive understanding of Environmental and Sustainability Education (E&SE). To do so, we will critically examine contemporary E&SE theories and practices. We will study the field in depth, including definitions of environmental and sustainability education, their underlying assumptions, constraints in the implementation of E&SE, and ideas about possible future directions. This course will draw from the fields of natural history, feminist/ecofeminist education, environmental thought, environmental justice, aboriginal/indigenous education, critical pedagogy, and popular education to explore different ways of learning, teaching and knowledge making. We will attend to how learning and teaching environmentally depends upon: how we situate ourselves in relation to the “natural world,” and the moral and political projects we formulate and pursue. The course asks students to actively engage with the material and activities offered so as to meet the following objectives:

- 1) Active participation of students throughout the course as they contribute their professional and personal experiences.
- 2) Development of an understanding of the breadth of E&SE.
- 3) Critical examination of underlying assumptions of E&SE, including representations of human/environment relationships.
- 4) To review and critique the range of environmental educational practices presently offered in both formal and informal educational settings.
- 5) To envision an environmental education of the future.
- 6) To cultivate a personal pedagogy and articulate an individual teaching philosophy with regard to being an environmental and sustainability educator.

### **Organization of the Course**

This seminar contains a mix of theory, practice and visionary components relevant to the theme studied each week. The course involves formal lectures, personal practices, group activities, and reflections, group discussions and may be enriched with guest speakers, film, videos and outdoor experiences. The required readings are central to the course and readings must be completed before each class.

### **Evaluation**

The grade for the course will be based on the following percentages:

Environmental Autobiography	10%
Nature Journal	20%
Critical Reflection Essay	35%
Naturalist Poster/Presentation	25%
Participation in the Learning Community (includes all in-class & field trip activities)	10%

### **Environmental Autobiography (10%)**

An environmental autobiography is an essay describing aspects of your personal history with ‘environments.’ Various forms of environmental autobiographies exist (oral and written) in many cultures. You are to describe a significant environment and/or experience which you feel influenced your current concern with the natural world and environmental education. It is important to try and remember a childhood environment/experience in particular, and to note positive, negative or conflicted experiences and not to feel limited to “wilderness” settings only. The next step is to examine the extent to which the experience is reflected in your present personal and environmental preferences. When you think back, try and remember the sensory feelings associated with the environmental memory and ask yourself when and where it occurred, with whom (human and nonhuman), what did it smell like, etc. This assignment will be discussed further in class. Due Monday, September 21. Length approximately 2 ½ -3 pages, maximum 1,500 words.

### **Nature Journal (20%)**

Each student will keep an individual Nature Journal throughout the course. To focus the learning experience, students will be organized into pairs, who will choose a place within Central Park that they will visit during the scheduled fieldtrips. In these pairs, you will engage in learning through direct observation and respectful attentiveness to your chosen place. Record your detailed observations of plants, animals, weather, topography and more, and your relationship to this place through writing and drawing, and other forms of documentation, in your ongoing Nature Journal. Your observations and insights are to be recorded in your own journal, though you are encouraged to talk about your observations and share your thoughts with each other regularly. The detail, intimacy, sensory and

sensual awareness you bring to this assignment is critical. It is about intimate, sustained engagement with a place and the others who inhabit and traverse it. You will hand-in your journal for evaluation in the final class on Thursday, December 10. Evaluation will be based upon the quality of your observations rather than quantity and your attention to detail.

### **Critical Reflection Essay (35%)**

Critical reflection is an important process in both learning and teaching. Each student will think very deeply about the learning experience they have engaged in through their Nature Journal and their naturalist activities of observing their chosen place. You are expected to use course materials, such as readings, lectures and videos, to support and illuminate your essay. Proper referencing of materials is required. Due Monday, November 23. UNDERGRADUATE: Length approximately 5-6 pages, 3,500 words maximum. GRADUATE: Length approximately 10-12 pages, 8,000 words maximum.

### **Poster & Presentation (25%)**

Near the end of the term, each pair will communicate what they have learned about their chosen place within Central Park, as well as their critical reflections upon the learning experience itself, by creating a poster and presenting it to the class. Pairs will be assigned a time and date for their presentations in one of the following classes: Monday, November 30; Thursday, December 3; or, Monday, December 7.

### **Participation in the Learning Community (10%)**

As a seminar course, a substantial proportion of your mark will be based on your interaction with your peers as well as your instructor. The goal of this course is to encourage a collaborative and creative working and learning environment—your engaged participation is therefore a vital component to its success. Class sessions will be a combination of several kinds of activity in which everyone's full participation is vital. These include lectures, discussions, activities, guests, and field trips large or small. If you miss these, you may miss irreplaceable and non-substitutable chances to learn and contribute. Please come prepared to participate, for example, by having done the readings, and by having a positive attitude to engage with others. *As a group of interdependent learners, attendance is not an elective choice, but rather a community responsibility.* Fairness requires that I count this in grading. Participation grades will be based on regular attendance, ongoing contribution to class discussion, awareness of issues in required readings, a demonstrated ability to relate issues from lectures, readings and videos to the course objectives, and a co-operative and engaged commitment to the success of the course. This includes a participation in all peer-assessment activities, and an active attentiveness to fellow classmates during all of the presentations.

### **Required Texts**

- 1) Ecological Education in Action: On Weaving Education, Culture and the Environment, by Gregory A. Smith and Dilafuz R. Williams. (Noted as *EEIA* in schedule of topics and readings).
- 2) Keeping a Nature Journal: Discover a Whole New Way of Seeing the World Around You, by Clare Walker Leslie and Charles E. Roth.

### **Additional Required Text for GRADUATE STUDENTS**

- 3) Williams, Terry Tempest. *Refuge*. 1992. New York: Vintage Books.

### Schedule of Topics and Readings

The following list of lecture topics and readings is subject to change. Remember that the readings listed under each date are assigned for that week and will be discussed in the seminar both days.

MONDAYS	THURSDAYS
<b>Introduction to Environmental and Sustainability Education</b>	
August 31	September 3
Required Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gregory A. Smith and Dilafruz R. Williams, Introduction: Re-engaging Culture and Ecology (<i>EEIA</i>)</li> </ul>	
<b>Childhood, Imagination, and Experiences with Nature</b>	
September 7 – Labor Day, College Closed	September 10
Required Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Peter Blaze Corcoran, Environmental Autobiography in Undergraduate Educational Studies (<i>EEIA</i>)</li> <li>Preface, Keeping a Nature Journal (KANJ), pp. viii-ix</li> <li>David Sobel, Children and Nature Design Principles</li> </ul> Graduate Additional Reading: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gary Paul Nabhan, Children in Touch, Creatures in Story, <i>Cultures of Habitat</i></li> </ul> Instructions for Environmental Autobiography Assignment	
<b>Nurturing Naturalists: Learning through Direct Experience &amp; Nature Journaling</b>	
September 14	September 17 Field Trip – Be prepared to go outside; bring your journal and a black felt-tip pen or a pencil
Required Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Part I Getting Started, <i>Keeping a Nature Journal</i>, pp. 3-62</li> <li>Gregory Cajete, Reclaiming Biophilia: Lessons from Indigenous Peoples (<i>EEIA</i>)</li> </ul> Instructions for Nature Journal Assignment & Poster Presentation	
<b>Nurturing Naturalists: Learning through Direct Experience &amp; Nature Journaling</b>	
September 21	September 24 Field Trip - Be prepared to go outside; bring your journal and a black felt-tip pen or a pencil
ASSIGNMENT DUE: Environmental Autobiography Required Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Ongoing Journal &amp; The Autumn Journal, <i>Keeping a Nature Journal</i>, pp. 63-87</li> <li>Gary Paul Nabhan, Finding the Wild Thread: the evolution of a naturalist, <i>Cultures of Habitat</i></li> </ul>	

<b>Nurturing Naturalists: <i>Teaching</i> through Direct Experience &amp; Nature Journaling</b>	
TUESDAY, September 29	October 1
Field Trip – Be prepared to go outside; bring your journal and a black felt-tip pen or a pencil	
<p>Required Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Part 4 Learning &amp; Teaching Nature Journaling, <i>Keeping a Nature Journal</i>, pp. 171-203 (plus page 114)</li> <li>Constance Russell (1999) Problematizing Nature Experience in Environmental Education. <i>Journal of Experiential Education</i>, v22 n3 p123-28,137 (Hunter Library Electronic Access)</li> </ul> <p>Instructions for Critical Reflection Essay</p>	
<b>Place-based Environmental Education &amp; Narratives of Self and Place</b>	
October 5	October 8
Field Trip – Be prepared to go outside; bring your journal and a black felt-tip pen or a pencil	
<p>Required Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Elain G. Schwartz, Exploring Children’s Picture Books through Ecofeminist Literacy (<i>EEIA</i>)</li> <li>Angayuqaq Oscar Kawagley &amp; Ray Barnhardt, Education Indigenous to Place: Western science meets native reality (<i>EEIA</i>)</li> </ul> <p>Graduate Additional Reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lesley Curthoys, Finding a Place of One’s Own: Reflections on teaching in and with place (2007, <i>Canadian Journal of Environmental Education</i>, v12 n1 pp. 68-79)</li> </ul>	
<b>Issues-based Education, Global Learning, and Education for Sustainability</b>	
WEDNESDAY October 14	October 15
Field Trip – Be prepared to go outside; bring your journal and a black felt-tip pen or a pencil	
<p>Required Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Joseph Kiefer &amp; Martin Kemple, Stories from our Common Roots: Strategies for Building an Ecologically Sustainable Way of Learning (<i>EEIA</i>)</li> <li>David Sobel, Global Climate Change meets Ecophobia</li> </ul> <p>Graduate Supplemental Reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Arjen Wals and Bob Jickling (2002) Sustainability in Higher Education. <i>International Journal of Sustainability in Higher Education</i>, vol 3 no 3, pp. 221-232. (<a href="http://www.scribd.com/doc/7892643/Sustainability-in-Higher-Education-From-Double-Think-and-Newspeak-to-Critical-Thinking-and-Meaningful-Learning">http://www.scribd.com/doc/7892643/Sustainability-in-Higher-Education-From-Double-Think-and-Newspeak-to-Critical-Thinking-and-Meaningful-Learning</a>)</li> </ul>	
<b>The Outdoor Classroom &amp; School-yard Enhanced Learning Part 1</b>	
October 19	October 22
<p>Required Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Herbert Broda, Ch1 School-yard Enhanced Learning: A change of pace and place &amp;</li> <li>Herbert Broda, Ch5 Teaching Content Area Concepts Outdoors</li> </ul>	

<b>The Outdoor Classroom &amp; School-yard Enhanced Learning Part 2</b>	
October 26	October 29
Field Trip – Be prepared to go outside; bring your journal and a black felt-tip pen or a pencil	
<p>Required Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Paul Krapfel, Deepening Children’s Participation through Local Ecological Investigations (<i>EEIA</i>)</li> <li>• Randy Haluza-DeLay Remystifying The City: Reawakening the sense of wonder in our own backyards. (at <a href="http://www.greenteacher.com/articles/mystifyingeng.html">http://www.greenteacher.com/articles/mystifyingeng.html</a> )</li> </ul>	
<b>Humane Education, Peace and Environmental Justice</b>	
November 2	November 5
Field Trip – Be prepared to go outside; bring your journal and a black felt-tip pen or a pencil	
<p>Required Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stephanie Kaza, Liberation and Compassion in Environmental Studies (<i>EEIA</i>)</li> <li>• David Selby, Humane Education: Widening the circle of compassion and justice</li> </ul> <p>Graduate Additional Reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Toh Swee-Hin &amp; Virginia Floresca-Cawagas, Educating towards a Culture of Peace</li> </ul>	
<b>Diverse Ways of Knowing and Learning</b>	
November 9	November 12
*Graduate Students will lead an activity and facilitate a discussion.	
<p>Required Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dilafuz R. Williams and Sarah Taylor, From Margin to Centre: Initiation and development of an environmental school from the ground up (<i>EEIA</i>)</li> <li>• Gregory Smith: Creating a Public of Environmentalists (<i>EEIA</i>)</li> <li>• James Overboe (2001) Creating a Space for Embodied Wisdom Through Teaching. <i>Encounter: Education for Meaning and Social Justice</i>, 14(3). (Hunter Library Electronic Access)</li> </ul>	
<b>Environmental Thought, Technology and Critical Pedagogy</b>	
November 16	November 19
Field Trip – Be prepared to go outside; bring your journal and a black felt-tip pen or a pencil	
<p>Required Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• C.A. Bowers, Changing the Dominant Cultural Perspective in Education (<i>EEIA</i>)</li> <li>• Philip Payne (2006) The Technics of Environmental Education. <i>Environmental Education Research</i>, v12 pp. 487-502. (Hunter Library Electronic Access)</li> </ul> <p>Graduate Additional Reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• C.A. Bowers (2001) How Language Limits our Understanding of Environmental Education. <i>Environmental Education Research</i>, v7 n2 pp. 141-51. (Hunter Library Electronic Access)</li> </ul>	

<p>November 23</p> <p>In-class Learning Activity</p> <p>Pairs will meet to prepare poster and presentation</p> <p>ASSIGNMENT DUE: Critical Reflection Essay</p>	<p>November 26 - Thanksgiving, College Closed</p>
<p>November 30</p> <p><b>Poster Presentations</b></p>	<p>December 3</p> <p><b>Poster Presentations</b></p>
<p>December 7</p> <p><b>Poster Presentations</b></p>	<p>December 10</p> <p><b>Poster Exhibition and Course Wrap-Up</b></p> <p>ASSIGNMENT DUE: Nature Journal</p>

**NOTE: Additions for Graduate Syllabus GEOG 703.92**

Additional required readings are assigned for graduate students throughout the course, as well as the novel, *Refuge*, by Terry Tempest Williams.

Graduate students are expected to write a more in-depth and longer Critical Reflection Essay and to draw upon the additional required readings as references.

On November 12, graduate students will lead an activity and facilitate a discussion on the theme of Diverse Ways of Knowing & Learning. As a group, you will develop a creative learning activity to conduct with the class. After the activity, the group will lead and facilitate a discussion about the activity.

**Attendance, Grading and Lateness Policies:**

As stated earlier, the participation of each student is vital to the whole learning community. Students must be present to participate, thus attendance will be taken for every class and fieldtrip. Consideration on compassionate grounds will be given to students who must miss a class due to extenuating, personal circumstances and/or medical reasons.

Proper academic performance depends on students doing their work not only well, but on time. Accordingly, the assignments must be received by the Instructor on the due date specified for the assignment. Assignments must be handed in directly to the Instructor.

In the interests of fairness, scores will drop **5%** for each day after the due date that an assignment is turned in, except for excused medical reasons when supported by written documentation (e.g., a doctor's letter). **No late assignments will be accepted more than one week late.**

**Academic Honesty:**

Hunter College regards acts of academic dishonesty (e.g., plagiarism, cheating on examinations, obtaining unfair advantage, and falsification of records and official documents) as serious offenses against the values of intellectual honesty. The College is committed to enforcing CUNY Policy on Academic Integrity and will pursue cases of academic dishonesty according to the Hunter College Academic Integrity Procedures. Plagiarism, dishonest, or cheating in any portion of the work required for this course will be punished to the full extent allowed according to Hunter College regulations.