

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

MES/MPA ELECTIVE, SUMMER SESSION – A, 2014
JEAN MACGREGOR

Course description: It is widely agreed that an environmentally literate and concerned citizenry is crucial to environmental quality and long-term sustainability --but how and where is environmental and sustainability literacy fostered? And where “environmental education” occurs, is it effective? This class will explore the history, philosophical underpinnings, and current trends in environmental education for both youth and adults, in both formal sectors (schools and colleges) and non-formal ones.

This class will provide a theoretical and practical introduction to the field of environmental education and interpretation. It will be useful to those of you who are interested in environmental teaching as a career, or to those whose environmental work might involve education or outreach components. This course is open to MES/MPA students and, if there is space, selected upper division undergraduates with a faculty signature.

Meeting Times: Summer Quarter, First session. Tuesday and Thursday evenings 6-10 p.m. beginning June 24. There will be an all-day field trip on Saturday, July 12.

OUTCOMES: AT THE END OF THIS COURSE, YOU SHOULD HAVE:

- A theoretical grounding in environmental education (EE): its precursors and history, its various rationales, and the working principles to which EE professionals aspire.
- An introductory understanding of learning theory, and of educational settings which foster meaningful, lasting learning as well as personal engagement.
- A working knowledge of several arenas in which environmental education and interpretation are practiced, with attention to both the opportunities and challenges for volunteer and professional environmental educators.
- A framework for evaluation of environmental education programs.
- An understanding of the increasingly politically charged nature of environmental education and implications for professional practice.
- Your own construction of the promise of environmental education as well as some of its shortcomings and tensions----and a more complex "concept map" of the field.
- A heightened awareness of the importance and urgency of fostering environmental literacy.

READING

AT THE EVERGREEN BOOKSTORE

- John Dewey, *Experience and Education*. Collier Macmillan, 1938.
- Richard Louv, *Last Child in the Woods*. Algonquin Chapel Hill, 2006.
- Smith and Sobel, *Place- and Community-Based Education in Schools*, Routledge, 2010.

ON THE WEB

- “Environmental Literacy in America: What Ten Years of NEETF/Roper Research and Related Studies Say about Environmental Literacy in the U.S.” This report can be found as a PDF file on the home page of the National Environmental Education Foundation. Search on “neefusa Environmental Literacy in America” for the 2005 report. It will also be posted on Moodle.
- Introductory chapters of the Linking Thinking Curriculum, produced by World Wildlife Fund-Scotland. Search on “WWF Linking Thinking.” It will also be posted on Moodle.

ON THE EVERGREEN MOODLE SITE

- The rest of the course reading will be posted on the college’s Moodle site for you to download. The full listing of assignments and readings will be available on the first night of class.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Date	Topic
June 24	Opening class, introductions. The precursor fields to EE
June 26	The multiple strands of environmental and sustainability education
July 1	The learning process and what fosters significant learning
July 3	No class tonight
July 8	Our relationships to place and the living world
July 10	History, principles, and practices of environmental interpretation
July 12	All-day field trip to Northwest Trek Wildlife Park in Eatonville
July 15	Case Study: NW Trek’s interpretative practice
July 17	Environmental education in formal K-12 education
July 22	Engaging adults – citizen science
July 24	Engaging adults – social marketing strategies
July 28	Portfolios due

WRITING ASSIGNMENTS

1. Reflection on an experience of significant learning and how it relates to John Dewey’s philosophy of learning.
2. Reflection on a personally significant experience of place and how it relates to Richard Louv’s perspectives on “nature deficit disorder” and other assigned reading.
3. Analysis of and response to the interpretive approaches at Northwest Trek in the context of principles of effective interpretation.
4. Mini-research presentation on strategies for adult environmental education or social marketing, on a topic of your own choosing.
5. Synthesis and self-evaluation.