

Course discipline/number/title: BIOL 1320: Connect With Nature

A. CATALOG DESCRIPTION

1. Credits: 1
2. Hours/Week: 2
3. Prerequisites (Course discipline/number): None
4. Other requirements: None
5. MnTC Goals (if any): NA

B. COURSE DESCRIPTION: This course is designed to introduce students to the wonders and meditative properties of nature. Students will be introduced to the poetic writings of visionary naturalists Aldo Leopold and Henry David Thoreau. Students will learn to use their sense of sight, sound, touch, and smell to heighten their awareness and appreciation for the natural life that shares the land with them. Students will also learn to identify wildlife species on campus and nearby natural areas and realize that signs of nature can be found in all types of landscapes. This course will primarily meet outdoors.

C. DATE LAST REVISED (Month, year): April, 2024

D. OUTLINE OF MAJOR CONTENT AREAS:

1. What is a naturalist and ways to develop naturalist intelligence, including exploring and observing patterns in nature and the wide variety of interconnected relationships
2. Aldo Leopold, phenology, and the land ethic
3. Henry David Thoreau and mindfulness walking
4. Nature journaling
5. Identification of native and invasive flora and fauna by sight, sound, and/or track
6. Natural history of select organisms
7. Sensory awareness practices

E. LEARNING OUTCOMES (GENERAL): The student will be able to:

1. Explain the meaning of a land ethic
2. Demonstrate the ability to identify native and invasive flora and fauna using various methods
3. Recognize that wild things can be found in unsuspecting places
4. Demonstrate mindfulness walking
5. Create a journal that includes phenological observations and reflections on your experiences with nature

F. LEARNING OUTCOMES (MNTC): NA

G. METHODS FOR EVALUATION OF STUDENT LEARNING: Methods may include, but are not limited to:

1. Participation
2. Reading assignments and/or written responses to readings
3. Nature journal entries
4. Species identification quiz

H. RCTC CORE OUTCOME(S). This course contributes to meeting the following RCTC Core Outcome(s):
Critical Thinking. Students will think systematically and explore information thoroughly before accepting or formulating a position or conclusion.

I. SPECIAL INFORMATION (if any):

1. Course occasionally will meet off campus at a nearby natural area such as Quarry Hill Nature Center – students must arrange individual transportation to these sites.
2. Course primarily meets outside – students must dress for the weather and wear proper protective footwear.
3. Access to smartphone and binoculars is recommended

