

**SW 249 Humans as a Part of Nature,
Interconnected and Woven into Its Biodiversity – Spring 2006**

Instructor: Kurt Leslie

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Course Hours:

10 class meetings will consist of 5 field classes and 5 discussion classes.
*Saturday Morning field class will meet for 4 hours 8am –12pm.
*Saturday Morning discussion class will meet 2 hours 9am –11am

Location: Oak Forest Campus

Course Description: Does all nature, living and non-living have intrinsic value? Does nature possess rights regardless of its value to us? Are humans as a part of nature, interconnected and woven into its biodiversity or do humans see themselves disconnected from nature and utilizing it only as a resource? This course is a study in environmental science, which has its roots in ecology but differs from other disciplines in that it melds both hard science with social science and is mission oriented. This course will examine our connection to nature from a biocentric (life-centered), ecocentric (ecologically centered) approach to an anthropocentric (human centered) approach.

Students will cover basic concepts in ecology, from species to biodiversity. Field investigations, discussion and critical thinking will center on humans as part of nature.

This course is subdivided into four main sections

1. Species to ecosystems: identify function, evolution and connections.
2. Biodiversity.
3. Human population growth and its effects.
4. Sustainability and Earth's resources.

Expected Outcomes:

1. To understand concepts such as biodiversity, biocentrism, ecocentrism, anthropocentrism, sustainability and how they relate to humans and a finite earth.
2. Think critically about the human role past and present in nature.
3. Make inferences concerning the impact of humans on earth.
4. Be able to observe, identify, and explore connections or lack of in various ecosystems in the field.

Competencies Offered: S-4, S-2-A, S-2-D, S-3-C

Required Texts: Can be purchased from most bookstores or online/amazon.com

Leopold, Aldo. A Sand County Almanac. Oxford University Press: New York 1949
Quinn, Daniel. Ishmael- An Adventure of Mind and Spirit. Bantam/Turner: New York 1992

Handouts: Handouts will be provided in class.

Student Evaluation: Attendance and informed participation in discussions and activities in both class and field

1. Field Investigations
2. Class Journal
3. Oral Presentation

1. Attendance and Participation in both Class and Field: Attendance is required in both class and field. This course is field intensive and relies on an understanding and appreciation of the content through experience. Participation in class is important for discussion of assigned readings and critical thinking.

2. Field Investigations: Field investigations reinforce the understanding of concepts and connections between them. In other words, experience the classroom outdoors! Field investigations are defined as observing, experiencing, questioning, making connections, measuring and recording. Each lab experience is related to class competencies. Note: Appropriate clothing is essential for varied weather conditions.

Tentative Field Study locations:

Indiana Dunes
Cook County FPD
Midwin Tall grass Prairie
Lake Calumet Watershed
Black Partridge Forest Preserve

3. Journal: A weekly journal entry is required. One entry per week minimum two pages in length typed. Entries will reflect your understanding of class discussion, readings, and field investigations. Your informed opinion and interpretation are vital to class discussion as well as to your journal entry. Entries should in some way relate to your competencies.

Must cover the following four areas:

Summary /Review: Summarize the class discussion or field experience.

Questions: List and explain 2-3 questions you have pertaining to the topic.

Research: Answers to your question(s). Include sources.

Reflection: Your reaction/reflection, feeling, argument concerning the topic.

4. Oral Presentations: Present one oral report related to your competency. Students should choose a field experience(s) that has influenced and changed their understanding of natural phenomenon and its relationship to humans. Should reflect your competence. Handouts, posters, artifacts, pictures, evidence etc. should be used. Length 10 min. max.

Tentative Class Schedule: Changes to the following schedule will be announced. Expect to go out on all field investigations unless notified.

Week 1. Class Session, Sat. March 25

Introduction of fellow species and connections. Define terms such as; species, abiotic and biotic factors, environmental science, and the scientific method.

Prepare for the first field session next Saturday, April 1 i.e. logistics, maps, carpool, equipment, clothing, etc.

Reading assignment: Leopold p1-54, 66-77,104-107

Week 2. Field Session, Sat. April 1

Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore West Beach. This dune succession lab will consist of observing, questioning, identifying, measuring and discussing connections in relationship to biocentrism to anthropocentrism.

Discuss Leopold.

Reading Assignment: Leopold p. 214-220, 104-119, 129-132.

Week 3. Class Session, Sat. April 8

Discussion of Leopold's 'X' in relation to biodiversity.

Reading Assignment: Ishmael p. 3-122

Class will not meet n Saturday, April 15, Campus closed April 14,15,16

Week 4. Field Session, Sat. April 22

Cook County Forest Preserve District: Mill Creek Woods in Palos.

Stream ecology and limnology lab: ecosystem health, biota, water quality, and morphology.

Discuss Ishmael: Leavers and Takers

Reading Assignment: Ishmael p. 122-184

Week 5. Class Session, Sat. April 29

Discussion continues on: humans as a part of nature with Leaver and Taker species, looking for a deeper connection to

past tribal ancestry and what is a law and the law of competition.

Video: Animal Captivity

Prepare for next the next field session. Binoculars

Reading Assignment: Ishmael p. 187-263

Week 6. Field Session, Sat. April 29

Birding lab: Blue Island / Lake Calumet Watershed: Nature and industry

Discuss the conclusion of Ishmael

Reading Assignment: Define the term Sustainability

Week 7. Class Session, Sat. May 6

Understanding economics, the environment, sustainability, and human population growth as inseparable.

Analyze root causes for population growth.

Video: People Bomb/ Zero Population Growth

Prepare for field session

Week 8. Field Session, Sat. May 13 TBA

Week 9. Field Session, Sat. May 20

Presentation of oral reports. Location Black Partridge FPD

Week 10 Sat. June

Presentation of oral reports