

Syllabus: Introduction to Ecopsychology in Counseling **v.1**  
Lewis & Clark Graduate School of Education and Counseling

**Course Number:** CPSY 528  
**Term:** Spring 2013  
**Department:** Counseling Psychology  
**Faculty Name:** Thomas Joseph Doherty, Psy.D.  
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**Course Calendar & Meeting Times:**

**Days:** (3 Weekends) 2/9-10, 3/9-10, 4/13-14, 2013  
**Times:** 9:00 a.m. – 5:30 p.m.  
**Location:** York 107/includes off-campus field trips

**Course Summary:**

Ecopsychology emerged as a late 20th century movement that provided a rationale for the emotional affiliation with nature and other species experienced by individuals in modern industrialized societies. This movement was particularly important for those who believed their emotional connections with nature were denied, ignored, or truncated.

An ecopsychology perspective hypothesized direct and indirect connections between (1) human mental health and wellbeing, (2) the integrity of the natural environment, and (3) contact with natural settings and processes. Ecopsychology also represented an explicit critique of so-called “mainstream” therapeutic and psychiatric approaches, in which more-than-human nature was effectively absent. Along with other environmental psychology approaches, ecopsychology also contended that psychological knowledge and practices could make important contributions to the solution of “environmental” problems.

Ecopsychology has been variously defined. For the purposes of this course, a working definition of ecopsychology is “the study of the psychological interdependence of humans and rest of the natural world.”

This course provides an introduction to ecopsychology that is targeted to the needs of counseling psychology students, and focuses on the implications of ecopsychology for the practice of professional mental health and addictions counseling; and marriage, couples, and family therapy. (The class is also useful to school counselors and educators.) This course serves as the introduction to the Ecopsychology in Counseling Certificate Program at Lewis & Clark, and provides a foundation for study of ecotherapy, wilderness therapy, and counseling psychology approaches to environmental advocacy, sustainability, and environmental justice.

Ecopsychology, as a worldview and social movement, transcends the academy and professional practice. Given some ecopsychology writer's critiques of research and academia, ecopsychology can be seen as transdisciplinary and even anti-disciplinary. In this course, we'll approach the topic from a scholarly perspective, informed by empiricism, that is open to others ways of knowing, attentive to diversity and social justice, and aware of popular culture.

Self-reflection is a big part of this course. Students will be guided toward understanding their own environmental identity, their motivations for taking an environmental approach, and ways to integrate ecopsychology into their existing theory and practice base.

Ecopsychology is diverse and we will explore different approaches: Those that promote a deep ecology / environmentalist view; those that promote embodied, totemic relationships with the natural world and other species; those that focus on the therapeutic aspects of humanity's interrelationship with the natural environment; those that promote social and political change; those that find common ground with indigenous worldviews; those that integrate scientific research methods, and those that highlight the spiritual and transpersonal dimensions of interdependence with nature.

There are a number of perspectives and traditions in psychology and other academic fields that also explore humanity's relationships with nature and the natural world. We will reference a number of these in the course of our work. For example, we will survey research-findings in environmental and conservation psychology that explore the health benefits of natural settings, the development of environmental identities, and promotion of conservation behaviors.

A key outcome will be learning to recognize and honor the diversity of environmental worldviews-- and to thoughtfully evaluate the practical benefits of diverse knowledge claims that coexist under the ecopsychology paradigm. The perspective proposed by this course is that conventional approaches to ecopsychology (e.g., integrating a nature-based approach to current practice) and radical approaches (i.e., those envisioning fundamental changes to society and the counseling enterprise) can co-exist, and in fact support each other.

**Catalogue Description:**

See website

## Course Topics and Outline:

### Part I: Ecopsychology in Context

#### The Ecopsychology Project: Then and Now

- Cultural origins: Callenbach's *Ecotopia*
- On humans' psychological interdependence with nature:
  - Weber-Nicholson (2001)– *The Love of Nature at the End of the World*
    - Chapters 1-3, pages 1-95
- 1<sup>st</sup> Generation Ecopsychology
  - Original Ecopsychology Newsletter, Issues 1-5 (1994-1996).
  - *Ecopsychology* video
  - Early Critiques of Ecopsychology
    - White (1998), Reser (1995)
  - Early Empirical Ecopsychology
    - Bragg (1996)
- 2nd Generation Ecopsychology
  - Selections from *Ecopsychology* Journal:
    - Inaugural Editorial
    - Reser (2009) interview
  - Kahn & Hasbach (2012). *Ecopsychology: Science, Totems, and the Technological species*
    - Introduction
    - Chapter 1
    - Chapter 8
- **Research on Environmental Identity, Diversity, and Expression**
  - Clayton & Myers (2009) *Conservation Psychology*
    - Chapter 2: Attitudes, values, and perceptions
    - Chapter 4: Environment and identity

#### Guest Speakers:

- Greg Smith, Lewis & Clark Graduate School of Education
- Gabe Bishop, Lewis & Clark College Grounds Supervisor

#### Field Trips

- Behind the Scenes on the Lewis & Clark Campus Tour with Gabe Bishop
- Tryon Creek Ramble (TBD)

### Part II: Ecological Therapeutics (Details TBD)

### Part III: Ecopsychology Practice & Praxis (Details TBD)

### **Course Details:**

- This is a three credit, semester long course that meets on three weekends and includes self-directed and online activities, and short field trips. Given the weekend format, required activities and readings will be scheduled outside of class meetings.
- Class sessions will balance didactic presentations with exercises, role-plays, outdoor activities, video presentations, and guest speakers.
- The course includes required written work, online dialog, and in class presentations. Supplemental readings, resources and activities will also be provided.
- All students are required to have a valid email address, and to use the course Moodle page: Passcode = eco)
- Each weekend will include outdoor activities. Please dress appropriately for the weather.

### **Key Competencies:**

- Academic rigor: Students will demonstrate the theoretical and empirical grounding of their work, and clarity and discipline in their language (e.g., recognizing multiple meanings of commonly used terms such as “nature”).
- Theoretical and methodological pluralism: Students will demonstrate the ability to describe diverse theoretical and practical applications within ecopsychology and how these correspond to theories and practices in counseling psychology.
- Self reflection and collaboration: Students will describe their personal and professional motivations regarding ecopsychology and demonstrate the ability to collaborate across value systems.
- Effective and equitable application: Students will demonstrate the ability to describe their work in terms of practical and measurable outcomes (at various scales) for individuals, the local community, and natural systems.
- Ethical thinking: Students will demonstrate the ability to articulate the principles of counseling ethics as well as the strengths and weaknesses of existing ethics codes in providing guidance for novel interventions or ecologically-based practice.

### **Course Requirements:**

1. Full class attendance
2. Active and informed participation in discussion of readings and assignments
3. Short personal description (50-75 words)
4. Class participation goals (50-75 words)
5. Weekly Engagement Papers - Details TBD
6. Key Words and Concepts Quizzes - TBD
7. Indoor and outdoor exercises
8. Moodle entries & dialog
9. Portfolio of Class Activities and Integration Project – Details TBD

### **Evaluation and Assessment:**

Grading: Written and oral presentations will be evaluated on the basis of their clarity, thoughtfulness, and integration of themes and issues of the class. A grade of A will be reserved for comprehensive, exemplary work that demonstrates emerging mastery or a professional standard. A grade of B+ will be the benchmark for satisfactory completion of assigned tasks. Grades of A-, B, B- will be applied to work that adds to or are missing required aspects. C papers and presentations will be returned for revision. Some course activities will be ungraded or pass/fail. The instructor reserves the right to use subjective judgments regarding grading.

Attendance: Full class attendance is required. Lack of attendance in class sessions is grounds for an incomplete. There is no “make up” or alternative to class attendance.

### **Course Readings:**

The course has four required texts (available at the LC bookstore, locally, online, and some in e-book format). Used versions are fine. The instructor will place these on reserve at Watzek Library. These texts are used for other courses in the Ecopsychology Course sequence. Required and supplementary readings will be available on the Moodle Site. A reference bibliography will be provided.

#### Required texts:

Callenbach, E. (1975) *Ecoptopia*. Banyan / Bantam ISBN: 978-0-960432-01-1

Clayton & Myers (2009) *Conservation Psychology: Understanding and promoting human care for nature*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press. ISBN: 978-1-405176-78-1

Kahn, P. H. & Hasbach, P. H. (2012). *Ecopsychology: Science, Totems, and the Technological species*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press. ISBN: 978-0-262517-78-2

Weber-Nicholsen, S. (2001). *The Love of Nature at the End of the World*.  
Cambridge, MA: MIT Press. ISBN: 978-0-262640-51-0

**Written work, feedback, exercises, and final project...**

**Personal Description**

**Due: Thursday 1/10/13** Post to Moodle\*

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

\*Post this electronically to the course Moodle Site on the personal description forum.

**Class Participation Goal**

**Due Thursday 1/17/13** Post to Moodle\*

Each student is required to formulate a personal class participation goal for this course and share it with the instructor by the end of week 2.

For example, in terms of class interactions, some students may seek to increase their comfort and assertiveness with public speaking, others may want to work on formulating concise comments, others on giving feedback to others, while still others may want to work on being comfortable with silence and speaking less than is their norm. Other goals may focus on writing or Moodle communication. Others may focus on self-care, balance and a sense of personal sustainability while engaged in academic work and life tasks.

Length 75 – 150 words. Due by Thursday 1/17/13.

**Weekly Moodle Journal - Due Thursday 11:55 PM of each week, beginning 1/10/13**

Post a short reflection paper or blog-style post to Moodle Weekly Forum. Details and prompts will be provided. Length 1 double spaced page (min). These will be gathered into students' Course Portfolio. Details TBD.

**Other assignments TBD**

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See syllabus version # 2 for more details.  
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## **Ecopsychology Reading and Written Assignments\***

- Through Week of 2/4/13 and First Class Meeting

### Winter Break 2012

Getting started on reading over the break is strongly encouraged. This will help you keep pace early in the semester.

- Callenbach, E. (1975) *Ecotopia*.
- Scott Timberg (2008, Dec. 14). The Novel That Predicted Portland. *New York Times*.
  - [http://www.nytimes.com/2008/12/14/fashion/14ecotopia.html?\\_r=1&](http://www.nytimes.com/2008/12/14/fashion/14ecotopia.html?_r=1&)
- Weber-Nicholsen, S. (2001)– *The Love of Nature at the End of the World*
  - Chapters 1-3, pages 1-94

## **Part I**

### Week of 1/7/13

#### Readings

- Callenbach (1975) *Ecotopia*. (Complete novel.)
- Scott Timberg (2008, Dec. 14). The Novel That Predicted Portland. *New York Times*.
- [http://www.nytimes.com/2008/12/14/fashion/14ecotopia.html?\\_r=1&](http://www.nytimes.com/2008/12/14/fashion/14ecotopia.html?_r=1&)

#### Assignments Due

- Bio Statement
- Engagement Paper – Thursday 11:55 PM

### Week of 1/14/13

#### Readings:

- Weber-Nicholson (2001)– *The Love of Nature at the End of the World*
- Chapters 1-3, pages 1-94

#### Assignments Due

- Engagement Paper –
- Class Participation Goals – (Both) Thursday 11:55 PM

### Week of 1/21/13

#### Readings:

- Original Ecopsychology Newsletter, Issues 1-5 (1994-1996).
- Early Critiques of Ecopsychology: White (1998), Reser (1995) and interview

- Early Empirical Ecopsychology: Bragg (1996)

Assignments Due

- Engagement Paper – – Thursday 11:55 PM

Week of 1/28

Readings:

- Kahn & Hasbach (2012). *Ecopsychology: Science, Totems, and the Technological species*
  - Introduction
  - Chapter 1
  - Chapter 8

Assignments Due

- Engagement Paper – – Thursday 11:55 PM

Week of 2/4/13 (Class Weekend 2/9-10)

Readings:

- Clayton & Myers (2009) *Conservation Psychology*
  - Chapter 2: Attitudes, values, and perceptions
  - Chapter 4: Environment and identity

Assignments Due

- Engagement Paper – – Thursday 11:55 PM

**Course Part II PENDING**