

**COURSE SYLLABUS**  
Lewis & Clark College  
Graduate School of Education and Counseling

**Course Name:** Foundations of Ecopsychology  
**Course Number:** CPSY 528  
**Term:** Fall 2010  
**Department:** Counseling Psychology  
**Faculty Name:** Thomas Joseph Doherty, Psy.D.  
**Faculty Phone/E-mail:** 503-288-1213 / tdoherty@lclark.edu  
**Guest Lecturer** TBD

**Course Calendar & Meeting Times:**

**Days:** (Weekends) September 25-26, November 6-7, 2010  
**Times:** 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.  
**Location:** Rogers Hall 105

**Catalogue Description:**

Ecopsychology is a contemporary movement within psychology that recognizes a connection between mental health and the natural environment and explores ways in which psychology can contribute to the solution of environmental problems. This course provides (1) An introduction to ecopsychology practices in counseling and (2) A survey of related research-based approaches, such as environmental and conservation psychology, that study the restorative effects of natural settings and ways that individuals develop environment identities. Students will be guided toward self-reflection regarding their own environmental identity, their motivations for integrating environmental approaches into counseling, and ways to integrate ecopsychology into their existing theory and practice base. A key outcome will be learning to evaluate diverse knowledge claims that coexist under the ecopsychology paradigm. This course provides a foundation for further study in areas such as the psychology of environmental advocacy and sustainability, eco-therapy, and wilderness therapy.

**Course Details:**

- This is a two credit, semester long course that meets on two weekends and also has self-directed and online activities. Given the weekend format, activities and readings will be scheduled before, during, and after our meetings.
- We will balance didactic presentations with exercises, role plays, outdoor activities, video presentations, and guest speakers from the local community. The course includes readings, written work, online dialog, and in class presentations.
- Each weekend will include classroom time and outdoor activities on campus. Please dress appropriately for the weather.
- All students are required to log in and use the course Moodle page.

**Goals and Objectives:**

For the purposes of this foundation course, the term ecopsychology will be defined as an overarching concept that allows us to explore the work of (1) thinkers and practitioners that adopt

a psychological or psychotherapeutic approach to understand human-nature interactions and address environmental issues and (2) helpful subfields within psychology such as environmental, conservation and critical psychology (e.g., research-based approaches to studying human-nature relationships, behavior change, and the restorative effects of natural environments).

The goals for our course include providing students with:

- (1) An introduction to ecopsychology practices in counseling and a survey of related research-based approaches, such as environmental and conservation psychology
- (2) A personal and experiential sense of how this material relates to their life and identity
- (3) Ways to integrate this work into their academic and professional development.

### **Key values:**

- Academic rigor: Students will be challenged to demonstrate the theoretical and empirical grounding of their work, use discipline in language (e.g., recognizing multiple meanings of commonly used terms such as “nature”), and recognize the opportunities and pitfalls of working in interdisciplinary modes.
- Theoretical and methodological pluralism: Coursework will recognize the value of diverse theoretical and practical applications within counseling psychology and ecologically-focused psychology.
- Self reflection and collaboration: Students will be provided opportunities for examination of personal and professional motivations regarding ecologically-focused psychology and opportunities for collaboration across the value systems.
- Effective application: The importance of practical and measurable outcomes when working with individuals and the local community will be encouraged.
- Ethical thinking: Decision making will recognize the principles of counseling ethics as well as the limitations of existing ethics codes in providing guidance for ecologically- based action.

### **Course Requirements:**

1. Regular class attendance
2. Informed participation in discussion of reading and media assignments
3. Short personal description (50-75 words)
4. Engagement papers x 2
5. Indoor and outdoor exercises (e.g., environmental identity interview of class member)
6. In-class personal reflections on class exercises
7. Moodle journal entries & dialog
8. Final Research / Integration Project

### **Evaluation and Assessment:**

Written and oral presentations will be evaluated on the basis of their clarity, thoughtfulness, and integration of themes and issues discussed in the class. A grade of A will be given to papers and presentations that are clear, thoughtful, and tied to the themes of the course. B papers and presentations will be missing one or more of these elements. C papers and presentations will be returned for revision or a 2<sup>nd</sup> attempt. The course may also be taken as a Credit/No Credit option.

## **Online Moodle System:**

*Note: Continuing Studies Students who are not registered Lewis & Clark students will be manually enrolled in the Moodle system by the IT Dept.*

1. Go to the Moodle course page at: <https://moodle.lclark.edu/course/view.php?id=1512>
2. When prompted, login to Moodle using your L&C login and password
3. Next you'll be prompted to enter the enrollment key for the course – use: eco

Once you've enrolled in the class, you can simply go to [moodle.lclark.edu](http://moodle.lclark.edu) and the Foundations of Ecopsychology course will be listed in your My Courses list. You can also find it in the Graduate School - Counseling Psychology section on the LC Moodle web page.

If you have problems enrolling, the IT can help at x7225 (Help Desk), x6195 (Damian Miller, Grad IT consultant) or email [consult@lclark.edu](mailto:consult@lclark.edu).

## **Course Readings:**

The course has four required texts (available at the LC bookstore). These texts will be used in the other courses in the Eco-Counseling Course sequence.

Additional readings for each weekend will be available on the Lewis & Clark Moodle Site: <https://moodle.lclark.edu/course/view.php?id=733> .

There is also an extensive list of background readings on the Moodle “Ecopsychology and Environmental Psychology Library” for use in students’ projects:

<https://moodle.lclark.edu/course/view.php?id=1275>

### Required texts:

Clayton, S. & Myers, G. (2009). *Conservation Psychology*. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley-Blackwell

Fisher, A. (2002). *Radical Ecopsychology*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press

Koger, S. & Winter, D. D. (2010). *The Psychology of Environmental Problems* (3rd Ed.). New York: Psychology Press

Roszak, T., Gomes M. E., & Kanner A. (Eds.) (1995). *Ecopsychology*. San Francisco: Sierra Club Books.

To approach our texts, I suggest that you begin with the *Ecopsychology reader*. Our other texts may approach the material in more substantive empirical or theoretical ways but the *Reader* provides a broad introduction to the conceptual space. You are free to look at other sections that interest you, but these sections are required:

Roszak, T., Gomes M. E., & Kanner A. (Eds.) (1995). *Ecopsychology*. San Francisco: Sierra Club Books.

- Conn, S.: When the Earth Hurts Who Responds?
- Roszak, T.: When Psyche Meets Gaia.
- Kanner & Gomes: The All-Consuming Self
- Glendinning, C: Technology, trauma and the Wild.
- Barrows, A: The Ecopsychology of Child Development
- Roszak, B. The Spirit of the Goddess

- Anthony, C.: Ecopsychology and the deconstruction of whiteness
- Aizenstat, S.: Jungian psychology and the world unconscious

Fisher, A. (2002). *Radical Ecopsychology*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press

- Chapter 1: The Project of Ecopsychology
- Chapter 2: The Problem with Normal

Koger, S. & Winter, D. D. (2010). *The Psychology of Environmental Problems* (3rd Ed.). New York: Psychology Press

- Chapter 9: Developmental Psychology: Growing Healthy Children in Nature
- Chapter 4: Social Psychology: Under the Influence of Others
- Chapter 7: Cognitive Psychology: Information Processing
- Chapter 3: Psychoanalytic Psychology: Becoming Conscious of the Unconscious
- (Optional: Chapter 2: The Nature of Western Thought)

Clayton, S. & Myers, G. (2009). *Conservation Psychology*. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley-Blackwell

- Chapter 2: Attitudes, values and perceptions
- Chapter 4: Environmental & Identity
- Chapter 5: Theoretical foundations for the human response to nature

## **Written work, feedback, self-observation exercise, and final project**

### **Personal Description**

**Due: Wed 9/29/10** 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.

### **1st Reflection Paper:**

**Due 10/4/10:** Post to Moodle\*

Using the readings assigned for the 1st weekend (see Moodle), compare and contrast different styles of ecopsychology writing. Reference at least 4 readings, using direct quotes from the text.

Examples of attributes to discuss:

- Does the reading illustrate a well-known theoretical perspective in counseling or psychology (e.g., cognitive, psychodynamic, humanistic, systemic)?
- Nature / Sustainability: Is the concept of "nature" defined (explicitly or implicitly)?
- What is the role of science or empiricism in the text?
- What is the role of art or personal experience?
- Culture: Does the work contain a critique (explicit or implicit) of mainstream culture?
- How does the selected reading inform counseling theory or practice?

Length: 2 Pages, Double Spaced. Post to Moodle: (1) Paste your paper into your Moodle post and (2) attach your paper in Word-compatible document. Use the following form for the title of the document "yourlastnameref1.doc" (e.g., "dohertyref1.doc").

**Mid-course Moodle Journal Due Mondays 10/11, 10/18, 10/25, 11/15, 11/22, 11/29, 12/13**

Short journal-style post to Moodle.

Examples: (1) Make a note about how the course material is being integrating into your academic/professional work or your personal life and goals (2) Review and make a short comment on at least one classmate's post or assignment, (3) Share a new reading, media item, or local topic of interest.

Required: Reference at least one of the course readings in your entry. Length: 50 words

**Movie Assignment:**

**Due by 2<sup>nd</sup> Weekend**

Redford, R. (1992) *A River Runs Through It*.

Be prepared to discuss this movie from a developmental / family systems / ecopsychology perspective in class during second weekend. No writing required.

**2<sup>nd</sup> Reflection Paper: Primary Texts**

**Due Thursday 11/1/09**

Reflect on the foundations of an ecological perspective in counseling psychology using primary source materials on ecopsychology and other environmental, conservation and health endeavors.

1. Describe key assumptions, findings and practices that contribute to an ecological perspective in counseling
2. Describe potential limitations, challenges or pitfalls
3. Integrate at least **six** of the 2<sup>nd</sup> weekend readings, including one chapter from Winter & Koger, one chapter from *Ecopsychology*, one from *Conservation Psychology* and one article or reading posted on Moodle.
4. Use direct quotes from readings to back up your points.

Length: 2 pages, single double space. (1) Paste your paper into your Moodle post and (2) attach your paper in Word-compatible document. Use the following form for the title of the document "yourlastnameref2.doc" (e.g., "dohertyref2.doc").

**Self Observation Exercise**

**Week of 11/15/10**

Students will conduct a self-study or behavior change project for one week. Focus will be decided on second weekend. Examples can include adopting a conservation or sustainable behavior, engaging in a regular outdoor restoration exercise or ritual, undertaking a media or other type of "fast." Students will post a journal entry clearly describing (1) their project and (2) its outcomes and lessons.

**Research / Integration Project**

**Due 12/6/09**

The final research/integration project will allow students to explore a self-selected topic related to ecopsychology.

Format: Students will create an informational handout or flyer on a topic in ecopsychology that is useful for counseling practice. (See examples discussed in class and online.) The handout must draw from at least ten (10) references from our course materials. You may also integrate references from outside sources.

Topics can include: The history and development of ecopsychology, environmental psychology, conservation psychology, child development, climate change, environmental grief, behavior change, spirituality, theoretical perspectives within (e.g., cognitive, gestalt, jungian, etc.). See the special topic areas on the Moodle page and our texts for additional examples.

Post as an attachment on Moodle. Microsoft Word documents or compatible word processing documents are required.

## **Classroom Sessions**

### **Weekend # 1      September 25-26**

#### **Topics:**

- Ecopsychology: History and Context
- Personal Aspects of Ecopsychology and Environmental Identity
- Restorative Natural Environments
- Promoting Conservation Behaviors
- Diversity, Equity & Social Justice in a Natural Environmental Context

#### **Experiential activities:**

- Self Exploration: Childhood sense of place exercise
- Self Exploration: Eco-Genogram
- Indoor Exercise: Stages of Change Exercise
- Outdoor Exercise: Students select outdoor retreat locations on Lewis & Clark Campus

**Student Presentations:** Students describe their experiences of in-class exercises

#### **Readings on Moodle (Examples):**

Be prepared to discuss the readings in class (either through a discussion or a short answer quiz). The readings illustrate different ways of thinking about the psychology of human-nature relationships. Questions to keep in mind:

- What are your emotional reactions to the reading?
- How does the reading correspond with your understanding of psychology and environmental issues?
- What is the main point(s) that the writer is trying to convey?
- What did you learn from the reading?

Attari, et al. (2010) Public perceptions of energy consumption and savings

Bragg, E. (1996). Towards Ecological self

Clayton, S. & Brook, A. (2005) Can psychology save the world? *Journal of Social Issues and Public Policy*, 5. 87-102

Crompton, T. & Kasser, T. (2010). *Meeting Environmental Challenges: The Role of Human Identity*. WWF-UK

Doherty, T. J. (2009) A peer-reviewed journal for Ecopsychology. *Ecopsychology*, 1, 1-7.

Kidner, D. (2007) Depression and the natural world: Towards a critical ecology of psychological distress. *The International Journal of Critical Psychology*, 19, 123-146

MSU 2010 Study-Women more likely than men to accept global warming

Stern, P. (1999) Value belief norm theory of support for social movements

Swaisgood & Sheppard (2010) Hope in Conservation Biology

Be prepared to discuss the readings in class (either through a discussion or a short answer quiz). The readings illustrate different ways of thinking about the psychology of human-nature relationships. Questions to keep in mind:

- What are your emotional reactions to the reading?
- How does the reading correspond with your understanding of psychology and environmental issues?
- What is the main point(s) that the writer is trying to convey?
- What did you learn from the reading?

## **Weekend # 2      November 7-8, 2009**

Topics:

- Models of Human - Nature Interrelationships
- Psychology & Climate Change
- Ecopsychology in Counseling Practice
- Diversity & Social Justice Issues

**Guest Speaker: To Be announced**

### **Experiential activities:**

- Movie & Discussion: *A river runs through it*.
- Indoor Exercise: Environmental Identity Interviews
- Outdoor Exercise: Systems Game
- Outdoor Exercise: Outdoor retreat locations on Lewis & Clark Campus
- Self Exploration: Personal Sustainability Exercise
- Self Exploration: Climate Change "Interpretive Community" Role Plays

**Student Presentations:** Students describe their experiences of in-class exercises and preview final project topics

### **Readings on Moodle (Examples):**

Kempton & Holland (2003) Identity and sustained environmental practice. In S. Clayton & S. Opatow (Eds.). *Identity and the natural environment: The psychological significance of nature*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press. 317-341.

Proctor, J. D. (2009). Environment after nature: Time for a new vision. In J. D. Proctor (Ed.). *Envisioning nature, science, and religion*, pp. 293-311. West Conshohocken, PA: Templeton Foundation Press.

Randall, R. (2009) Loss and climate change: The cost of parallel narratives.  
*Ecopsychology, 1*, 118-129.

## **Addendum**

Optional background texts in environmental psychology, ecological thought, and environmental science:

Bechtel R. B. & Churchman, A. (Eds.) (2002) *Handbook of environmental psychology*.  
New York: Wiley.

Callenbach, E. (2008). *Ecology: A pocket guide*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Gardner, P. & Stern, P. C. (2002). *Environmental problems and human behavior* (2<sup>nd</sup> Ed.). Boston: Pearson Custom Publishing.

Harding, S. (2006) *Animate Earth: Science, Intuition and Gaia*. White River Junction, VT: Chelsea Green Publishing

Lundberg, A. (1998). *The environment and mental health: A guide for clinicians*. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Orr, D. (1992). *Ecological literacy*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

Snyder, G. (1990). *The practice of the wild*. San Francisco: North Point Press.

Thomashow, M. (2002). *Bringing the biosphere home: Learning to perceive global environmental change*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press