

Close Looking:

*We are nature, long have we been absent, but now we return,
 We become plants, trunks, foliage, roots, bark,
 We are bedded in the ground, we are rocks,
 We are oaks, we grow in the openings side by side...
 We are what the atmosphere is, transparent, receptive, pervious, impervious,
 We are snow, rain, cold, darkness, we are each product and influence of the globe, We have circled and
 circled till we have arrived home again, we two,
 We have voided all the freedom and all but our own joy.*

Walt Whitman, from "We Two"

II. Texts:

A. Required Readings: Your personal library is one of the most important tools of your education and will be part of your life-long learning after you leave Evergreen. We will be supplementing our texts with an anthology. During the class you will be given handouts and other materials will be on reserve the library. Our goal will be to assemble a bibliography of poetry, essays, nature journals and books for lifelong use.

Required Texts: Available in the Bookstore

Chamberlain, Rebecca and Jean MacGregor, *The Earth is Our First Teacher: Program Reader*
 Emerson, Ralph Waldo & Henry David Thoreau, "Nature" & "Walking." (ISBN: 0-8070-1419
 Nabhan and Tremble, *Geography of Childhood*. (ISBN: 0807085251)
 Snyder, Gary, *The Practice of the Wild*. (ISBN: 0-86547-454-0)
 Whybrow, Helen, ed. *The Story Handbook: Language & Storytelling for Land Conservationists*.
 (ISBN: 0-9672806-2-1)

B. Supplemental Readings: The following texts are optional, but will be on reserve in the library. They are wonderful resources to supplement the work of the class. Students taking the class for 8 credits are encouraged to consider reading or buying two additional texts.

Assorted Journals and Natural History Guides

Beck, Larry and Ted Cable, *Interpretation for the 21st Century: Fifteen Guiding Principles for Interpreting Nature and Culture*.

Bly, Robert. *News of the Universe*

Cobb, Edith. *The Ecology of Imagination in Childhood*

Cohen, Michael. *How Nature Works: Regenerating Kinship with Planet Earth*

Cornell, Joseph. *Sharing Nature with Children*.

_____. *Sharing the Joy of Nature*.

Finch, Robert, and John Elder. *The Norton Book of Nature Writing*

Hoff, Benjamin. *Singing Creek Where the Willows Grow: The Mystical Nature Diary of Opal Whitely*.

Hogan, Linda (Editor), Brenda Peterson (Editor). *The Sweet Breathing of Plants : Women Writing on the Green World*. North Point Press, 2001. ISBN: 0865475598

Hogan, Metzger, and Peterson. *Intimate Nature: The Bond Between Women and Animals*.

Kaza, Stephanie. *The Attentive Heart: Conversations with Trees*

Knapp, Clifford. *Lasting Lessons: A Teacher's Guide to Reflecting on Experience*.

_____. *In Accord with Nature: Helping Students Form an Environmental Ethic Using Outdoor Experience and Reflection*.

Knapp, Clifford and Joel Goodman. *Humanizing Environmental Education: A Guide for Leading Nature and Human Nature Activities*.

MacGregor, Jean, *An Environmental Education Reader*

Mellon, Nancy. *The Art of Storytelling*

Metzner, Ralph, *Green Psychology: Transforming Our Relationship to the Earth*

Murray, John. *Writing About Nature*
 Oliver, Mary. *New and Selected Poems*
 Peterson, David. *Writing Naturally: A Down To Earth Guide To Nature Writing*
 Ross, Carolyn. *Writing Nature: An Ecological Reader For Writers*
 Roszak, T., Gomes M.E., and Kanner, A.D. (Eds.) *Ecopsychology: Restoring the Earth, Healing the Mind*
 Sabini, Meredith. ed. *The Earth Has A Soul: The Nature Writings of C.G Jung*
 Snyder, Gary. *A Place in Space: Ethics, Aesthetics, and Watersheds.*
 Strauss, Susan, *The Passionate Fact: Storytelling In Natural History and Cultural Interpretation*
 Suzuki, David, *The Sacred Balance*
 Thomashow, Mitchell. *Ecological Identity: Becoming a Reflective Environmentalist.*
 Williams, Terry Tempest. *Refuge*

Close Listening:

I wonder if the ground has anything to say? I wonder if the ground is listening to what is said? Though I hear what the ground says. The ground says it is the Great Spirit who placed me here. The same way the ground says it was from me human beings were made.

From a speech given by Young Chief of the Cayuse in 1855

III. Course Equivalencies: Students can receive a total of four to eight quarter hours credit for college level work in literature, creative writing, or environmental studies. Graduate students will receive four graduate credits, and may negotiate for additional, independent contract credit.

IV. Learning Goals:

1. Explore how we individually and personally encounter and relate to nature, and how nature has been our teacher, all along.
2. Explore and examine how, for all human cultures, nature has inspired curiosity, knowledge, imagination, myth, story and art forms, activism, psychological well-being, and spirituality.
3. Begin to see how we can facilitate "nature as teacher" with others.
4. To gain an understanding, both conceptually and experientially, of the importance of connecting language, perception, and ecological awareness, and of the inseparability of mind and nature. To explore how we communicate and represent the natural world in diverse ways.
5. To gain an exposure to/ our understanding and practice of journaling (formal, informal, creative journaling), and various writing and storytelling techniques.
6. To explore the history of the human experience of nature and creativity, including indigenous animism/shamanism, mythology, and literature, as well as the historical and philosophical roots of our current ecological, social and psychological crises. To gain an understanding of new paradigms in science, philosophy and psychology which may help us resolve the old Western division between mind and world, psyche and nature.
7. To increase our personal awareness of our psychological and spiritual connection with the natural world and what it means to have a sense of the ecological Self. To explore our personal embeddedness in the natural world, increase our sense of interdependence with other beings, both human and non-human, and explore our own boundaries and identifications with the natural world as well as the human world. To be able to draw more deeply from nature as a deep wellspring of wisdom and creativity both within us and around us.

Careful Description

Early in May, the oaks, hickories, maples, and other trees, just putting out amidst the pine woods around the pond, imparted a brightness like sunshine to the landscape, especially in cloudy days, as if the sun were breaking through mists and shining faintly on the hill-sides here and there. On the third or fourth day of May I saw a loon in the pond, and during the first week of the month I heard the whippoorwill, the brown-thrasher, the veery, the wood-pewee, the chewink, and other birds.

Henry David Thoreau, *Walden*

V. Expectations:

- Faithfully attends and fully participates at all meetings, workshops, and seminars.
- Reads and responds to the texts faithfully in seminar papers and discussions.
- Takes notes on class lectures and discussions, and completes all experiential writing, drawing, and journaling workshops and exercises which connect theory to personal experience. These exercises will be done as inner work, writing activities, in dyads or in small groups. Place your notes and handouts for these workshops in your portfolio.
- Maintains a portfolio of class handouts, class notes (on lectures, workshops), papers, and cumulative work. These will be turned in and reviewed at the final evaluation conference.
- Successfully completes all individual or group projects, presentations, workshops, writings, or assignments on time.
- Note that 4 credits in 5 weeks of upper division work should involve 20 hours a week of work (on average), including class time; 8 credits involves 40 hours of work. Since we are meeting in an intensive, you will need to do readings, writings, and projects outside of class time to fulfill your hours.

VI. Assignments:**A. Assignments: (4 & 8 Credits)**

- 1) Reading response papers turned in each day (1-2 pages, typed). These papers will allow you to: 1) comment upon the readings, and 2) summarize, reflect upon, and integrate program topics, themes, and issues.
- 2) A final edited and revised reflective paper (3-5 pages) that synthesizes program readings, topics, themes and issues. Once you have read Emerson's *Nature*, excerpts from Gary Snyder's *The Practice of the Wild*, and have had a chance to reflect on the class and cumulative readings, what is your response? What new learning takes place? How does this reflect one what you want to do next? This should be your personal statement about how you imagine the Earth as our first teacher.
- 3) A final project that can be one of the following:
 - a.) A piece of creative writing; either a personal essay (3-5 pages), or 2) 3-5 poems. These can be developed from writing workshops done in class, or from one of the texts on reserve in the library. You will want to work with others from the class, the writing center or the instructors to edit and revise your work in a series of drafts.
 - b.) An audiotape of an original story, song, or other creative work that you develop in response to the class.
 - c.) A curriculum in some aspect of environmental education or natural history writing.
 - d.) A special project that suits your interests. This could be the outline for a community public program or other event. This is a project that you must clear with the instructors.
- 4) Nature Journal. Make a commitment to maintain a journal for a three-week period that starts on June 30th. This is your chance to develop your personal relationship with nature work, or to work with topics, themes or issues generated by readings and assignments. Choose a special place in a natural setting that you will get to know in depth - ecologically, psychologically and spiritually. Commit to spending at least 60 minutes there a week (this can be done in one 60 minute block, in two 30 minute periods, or so

on.) Each item in this journal must be dated. Keep a journal of your observations and experience. Feel free to use artwork and poetry. You may also use suggestions from our texts to stimulate your writing.

5) Complete all in-class workshops and assignments.

6) Volunteer to bring a favorite quote or passage from the readings to share at the beginning of one of our class meetings.

B. Assignments: (8 Credits)

1. Complete all of the assignments (above),
2. Review and write a brief response to at least two additional texts that explore the themes of the class. These can be tied into your special project.
3. An expanded special project. The choices laid out below are expansions of the options in number 3, above. Choose one option. **This will have to be arranged through one or both of the instructors.** Remember, you must complete the equivalent of 40 hours a week of work for five weeks, after subtracting the time you spent in class.
 - (a) Write a typed, double-spaced, research paper (5-7 pages). This paper may involve doing research on a particular author or work, or on some aspect of environmental education, nature writing, language and human creativity. You might explore some aspect of storytelling, mythology, a survey of natural history writing, or other areas of interest.
 - (b) A substantial artistic creative, or performance project. This may involve poetry readings, art work, storytelling, theatre, song writing, or a combination of artistic mediums that integrate your learning from the program. You will need to create a video or audio-tape of your production.
 - (c) A substantial creative writing piece (7-10 pages of poetry, short story, or essay) that goes through several drafts and revisions with multiple readers, including work with the writing center and peers. You should be drawing inspiration and quotes from favorite authors, and exploring the genre or style you are working with through readings.
 - (d) A community-oriented project such as connecting storytelling or poetry to environmental /social activism, an ecological restoration project or to an organization where you work.
 - (e) A curriculum project (for teachers). This project should incorporate some aspect of storytelling, literature, cultural studies, environmental education, or other topic, that you can incorporate in your school curriculum. See handout for guidelines in developing your curriculum.
 - (f) Other options can be developed. Please discuss your ideas with the instructors.
4. Maintain your nature journal for five weeks, 60 min. a week.

VII. Assignment Due Dates: See handouts for details.

Days 1-5: Reading responses and assignments are due at the beginning of each class. Assignments will be given each day.

July 20 All work for four-credit students is due.

August 19 All work for eight-credit students is due.

This includes your class portfolio of all written assignments, drafts of writing projects, journals, and examples of any other work that you have completed for your special projects. You will need to schedule a meeting with Rebecca or Jean for a final evaluation conference.

VIII. Class Portfolio:

Each student is required to keep a class portfolio. This will be turned in to be reviewed at evaluation conferences. Include your name and a table of contents. **Record the topic and date of each item** in your portfolio. Each section should be arranged chronologically. The portfolio must be kept in a loose leaf three ring binder with dividers and should contain the following.

1. Syllabus and class handouts.
2. Class notes: lectures, speakers, films, etc.
3. In-class writing workshops. (Date and title each entry)
4. Nature Journal (date each entry) This can be kept separately, but must be turned in with your portfolio.

5. Seminar notes
6. Daily reading responses to required texts.
(A section of reading notes is strongly recommended.)
7. Synthesis paper.
8. Special Project as described above.
9. Self and Faculty evaluations (Three signed copies on official forms.)

(8 credits only)

10. Reading response for two additional texts.
11. Special Project and all notes. This project must be worth 4 additional credits, and must constitute half of your work in the class.

Rebecca Chamberlain is a Northwest writer and storyteller with a background in the arts and environmental education. She believes, as Thoreau says, "in wilderness is the preservation of the world." She currently teaches interdisciplinary programs (storytelling, writing, literature, mythology, cultural and environmental education) at The Evergreen State College and graduate courses (poetry, storytelling) for Lesley University. Rebecca holds a Master of Arts Degree in English Literature from the University of Washington and has over 25 years of experience developing educational programs and curriculum materials in collaboration with Native American cultural leaders, educators and school districts, folklorists, arts, environmental organizations, and museums. She has directed natural history programs for the Pacific Science Center and the Seattle Audubon Society, and has developed Arts-In-Education and Folk-Arts Programs for the Washington State Arts Commission. She has taught courses in Native music, storytelling, cultural and environmental education for Seattle Pacific University and Western Washington University.

Jean MacGregor has taught environmental education in Evergreen's Masters of Environmental Studies program for the last 11 years. She has BS and MS degrees from the University of Michigan in interpretive natural history and resource planning and conservation. She had the privilege of being part the graduate seminar led by William B. Stapp that wrote the first definition of environmental education in 1969 and has worked in various facets of the field ever since. She believes that deep, personal connections with the natural world can lay the foundation for personal wellness, lifelong learning, and environmental care. Her current work involves leading a "Curriculum for the Bioregion" initiative through one of Evergreen's public service centers, The Washington Center for Improving the Quality of Undergraduate Education.

Student: "How do you draw grass?"

Jenny Keller: "You need to ask the grass. Otherwise you miss out on all the things grass is."