

**Course Syllabus**  
**Lewis & Clark College**  
**Graduate School of Education and Counseling**

**Course Name:** Introduction to Ecopsychology Course Number: ECOT 501-01

**Term:** Spring 2023

**Department:** Counseling, Therapy, & School Psychology

**Faculty Name:** Christopher Russo, MSW, LICSW

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**Office Hours:** Virtual, by appointment

**Note:** *Syllabus and content adapted from previous course content developed by Patricia Hasbach, PhD.*

**Course Calendar & Meeting Times**

**ECOT 501-01**

**Days:** Saturdays, February 4<sup>th</sup> & March 4<sup>th</sup>

**Times:** 9:00am – 5:30 pm

**Location:** York Room 121

**Catalog Description:**

Ecopsychology is the field of inquiry concerned with the human-nature relationship. A basic tenet of ecopsychology is that our inner worlds and the outer world are intimately connected. As a species, we came of age embedded in the natural world, and that need for nature still resides in our bodies, minds, and spirit. A substantial body of scientific evidence demonstrates the physical and psychological benefits of interacting with nature. There is a growing interest in this area of psychology as we recognize the decreased presence of nature in our lives; the exponential growth of technology in daily living; and the awareness of global climate change and the role psychology has to play in addressing it. Ecopsychology recognizes that one of our central challenges of our time is to integrate our connection with nature with our scientific culture and our technological selves. This course guides students toward self-reflection regarding their environmental identity and their “sense of place”; it explores the motivations for integrating ecological perspectives into academic and professional work; and it addresses the interrelationship between human and planetary health and wellbeing.

**Course Description:**

This course guides students toward self-reflection regarding identity and experience related to place, the natural world, and other species; and motivations for integrating ecological perspectives into academic, professional or advocacy work.

**Course Requirements: See Below**

**Course Materials:**

***Required Text***

Kahn, P. H., Jr. & Hasbach, P.H. (2012). *Ecopsychology: Science, Totems, and the Technological Species*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

***Additional readings:*** Made available online during the course

## **Policies**

**Attendance requirements:** Per CTSP Department policy, class attendance is expected and required. Any missed class time will be made up by completing extra assignments designed by the instructor. Missing more than ten percent of class time may result in failure to complete the class. This would be 1.5 hours for a 15 hour class (1 credit), 3.0 hours for a 30 hour class (2 credits) and 4.5 hours of a 45 hour class (3 credits). In case of extreme hardship and also at the discretion of the instructor, a grade of incomplete may be given for an assignment or the entire course. In such cases, the work to be submitted in order to remove the incomplete must be documented appropriately and stated deadlines met. Students are expected to be on time to class and tardiness may be seen as an absence that requires make-up work. Please note that exceptions to these policies may be worked out if you have an illness or family situation related to COVID-19.

**Disability Services Statement:** If you require academic accommodations please contact the Office of Student Accessibility in Albany Quadrangle (503-768-7192 or [access@lclark.edu](mailto:access@lclark.edu)). Once you complete the intake process and the Accommodations Agreement, you may Request to Send your Accommodations Letter. Student Support Services staff will then notify faculty of the accommodations for which you are eligible.

**Lewis & Clark Graduate School Essential Policies:** This course adheres to the general policies outlined in the catalog and student handbook of the Lewis & Clark Graduate School of Education and Counseling. This includes full adherence to the following policies:

- Nondiscrimination: [go.lclark.edu/gsec-nondiscrimination](http://go.lclark.edu/gsec-nondiscrimination);
- Standards for professional student conduct and academic integrity: [go.lclark.edu/gsec-conduct](http://go.lclark.edu/gsec-conduct);
- Sexual misconduct: [go.lclark.edu/titleIX](http://go.lclark.edu/titleIX).

If you have any questions regarding these policies, please speak to your instructor for clarification.

## **Evaluation and Assessment**

Each assignment will be graded via a point system. Generally speaking, the following grades can be associated with the points for each assignment and for the final grade

91% of points possible	A
90% points possible	A-
88 – 89% of points possible	B+
83 - 87% of points possible	B
80 – 82% of points possible	B-
78 – 79% of points possible	C+ (No credit)
73 - 77% of points possible	C (No credit)
Less than 73%	D/F (Fail)

## **Course Structure**

- This one-credit course includes two in-person class sessions that are held on two weekend days one month apart.
- The course includes self-directed activities outside of the meeting.
- During the class meetings, didactic presentations will be balanced by group exercises, outdoor activities, in-class student presentations, and video presentations.
- Course activities include readings from assigned text and articles, written work, reflection exercises, and in-class presentations.
- Each class meeting will include classroom time and outdoor activities on campus. Students should dress appropriately for the weather. I recommend bringing extra layers, a warm drink, and whatever you need to be comfortable.

### **Preparing for Class**

- This course will be partially inside and partially outside. We will be outside if it is 65 and sunny. We will also be outside if it is 38 and rainy. Please check the forecast before class and bring the clothing you will need to remain comfortable.
- Be prepared to sit or stand outdoors. I recommend bringing a sit pad or blanket to keep your butt warm if the weather is unpleasant.
- EVERYONE MUST FOLLOW COVID SAFETY GUIDELINES. Please consult [Lewis & Clark COVID protocols](#) along with guidelines issued by the CDC if you have any questions on how to follow these guidelines. If students refuse to follow appropriate guidelines, they will be asked to leave the class to maintain safety for the other students and the instructor.
- This is a long day, bring snacks and drinks to consume as needed. Please consume these things in a fashion that follows COVID guidelines. If you need to leave class to have a drink or snack, that is okay! Take care of yourself in a way that takes care of others.
- Take care of yourself! If you need to get up and stretch, use the restroom, or take care of personal needs, please do.
- Think about leaving cell phones in cars, backpacks, or other places that they will not distract you. A component of this class is exploring how the digital world disconnects us from the natural world. Please do not let your digital distraction become a teaching moment for the class as a whole. Having said this, I understand that many of us are parents, caretakers, and have other roles that require us to respond to emergencies. So, if you must have your phone on you, please be respectful.

### **Course Goals:**

1. Gain a comprehensive understanding of Ecopsychology and be able to identify, articulate, and critique the leading theories, concepts, and issues within the field.
2. Develop an understanding of the impact of one's environmental identity on one's worldview and recognize how one's worldview influences their vision for a sustainable society.
3. Develop a deeper understanding of the influence of the human-nature relationship on our mental health and physical well-being.
4. Gain a deeper understanding of various methods and practices of ecopsychology and begin to identify ways to integrate this work into one's academic and professional development.

### **Course Requirements:**

1. Full class attendance is required. Since class sessions are experiential and involve group process, there is no effective "make up" to class attendance.
2. Since this course is designed to be an interactive experiential exploration of Ecopsychology, students' participation in class discussions and activities are essential. If there are any questions or concerns regarding participation in any particular experiential exercise, please notify the instructor. Class participation includes:
  - a. Informed discussion of reading assignments
  - b. Engagement in class activities and exercises
  - c. Personal reflections regarding in-class activities
  - d. Respectful and constructive feedback on peers oral and/or written work
3. Personal description paper
4. Reflection/process paper (max 3 pages of text, double-spaced, plus references)
5. Self-directed exercises and journal entries during the mid-course month including:
  - a. Place Bonding Exercise and sharing of journal entries in some creative way
  - b. Screen Time/ Nature Time log and sharing summary with class
6. Final Assignment: Course Integration Paper or Creative Project

## Course Schedule

The following schedule will help you organize your reading assignments for this course. Please come to class meetings prepared to discuss the readings assigned. Additional readings may be added by the instructor during the course.

### Prior to the First Weekend Meeting:

Introduction: Ecopsychology: Science, totems, and the technological species      Kahn & Hasbach  
 Ch. 1 The topophilia hypothesis: Ecopsychology Meets Evolutionary Psychology      Sampson, S.  
 Ch. 3 What is Ecopsychology? A Radical View      Fisher, A.

#### Articles: (see Moodle)

Pavel, M.P., & Anthony, C., (2015) Building just and resilient communities:  
 New foundations for ecopsychology  
 Pedretti-Burls (2007), Ecotherapy: A therapeutic and educative model  
 Buzzell & Chalquist (2017) Twenty principles of ecoresilience  
 Brown, A. (2018) How the wonder of nature can inspire social justice activism

### Prior to the Second Weekend Meeting:

Ch. 10 Beauty and the brain      Sewall, L.  
 Ch. 11 Sacred geography      Davis, W.

#### Articles: (see Moodle)

Richtel, M. (2010) Outdoors and out of reach, studying the brain  
 Sturm & Echterling (2017) Preparing for the mental health impact of climate change  
 Davis (2011), Ecopsychology, transpersonal psychology and nonduality  
 Necefer, L. (2018) Wired

**Additional readings may be posted for each meeting as supplemental readings.**

### 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. To receive an A grade, papers must follow APA formatting. B+ and B papers and presentations will be missing some of these elements. Course participation grading will also follow this format.

### Assignments & Grading

Final Grades will be based on a 100 point total with points distributed as follows:

Class Participation	10 pts
Personal Description Paper	5 pts
Reflection/Process Paper	20 pts
Place Bonding Activity	15 pts
Screen Time/Nature Time Log	10 pts
Course Integration Paper or Creative Project	40 pts

**Late Assignment Policy:** Late assignments will be accepted up to a week past the original due date. There will be a 10% grade penalty for assignments submitted up to three days late and a 20% grade penalty on days 4-7. I may make exceptions to these penalties on a case-by-base situation. I recognize that all sorts of things come up in life and am happy to support to the best of my ability. I request that students communicate with me *pro-actively* about needs related to assignments (i.e. date extension). This means requesting an extension with more than a day's notice before an assignment is due, outside of any emergency situation. If you have any questions about this, please reach out.

### **Description of Course Assignments**

#### **Personal Description Paper – Due 2/1/2023 by 11:59PM**

Short personal description (2-3 paragraphs, 1-2 pages maximum) of yourself (e.g., background and academic focus), your interest in and/or experiences with ecopsychology or related areas, and any goals you have for this course. Also, include any questions you have about ecopsychology and how you might imagine integrating these concepts into your life and professional goals.

*Your paper must be turned in on Moodle, if technical issues happen, an emailed copy to the instructor is acceptable.*

#### **Reflection/Process Paper – Due 2/26/2023 by 11:59PM**

Students will submit a reflection/process paper (3pg maximum) following the first-weekend meeting. In this paper, you should engage with and reflect upon the main ideas from any of the assigned readings for this course (paper should include references to at least 3 readings). Reflect upon how you perceive these concepts affecting yourself, your communities, or those you interact with in your professional life. You may also integrate any class exercises or discussions from our first meeting. Please quote or paraphrase critical passages in the articles/chapters to develop your ideas. Papers should be submitted in APA 7 format, with a cover page and references. Good grammar, spelling, and polished writing are important! *Your paper must be turned into Moodle, if technical issues happen, an emailed copy to the instructor is acceptable.*

### **Grading Rubric**

Mechanics (spelling, grammar, syntax,, etc.)	5 pts
Content/Organization (engaging and thoughtful analysis of course materials, clear flow of ideas, use of references, etc.)	10 pts
Format (accurately and consistently follows APA formatting)	5 pts

#### **Mid-course Exercise: Place Bonding – Due 3/4/2023 by 11:59PM**

(Khan & Hasbach, 2012)

During the three weeks between our class meetings, I would like you to explore a relationship with some special place in nature near you. This place may be a site in wild nature, in a local park, on campus, or any outdoor space you are drawn to. If you have a place you frequently visit, this is a great start. This assignment is encouraging you to go deeper. Although this is considered an “assignment”, my hope is that each student enter this as a willing opportunity as opposed to an obligation.

Visit this place at least twice a week for the next several weeks (minimum 6 visits). Visit at various times of the day and in different weather conditions. Don't be afraid to sit in the rain, wind, or cold. Please create a journal entry each time you visit your special place. You can create these journal entries while you are there or as reflections once you return home (there is preferred). Here are a few suggestions for things to reflect on through your journaling:

1. How do you feel in this place? What state of mind arises in you here?
2. What is the nature of your relationship with this place?
3. What relationship do you perceive your community has with this place?
4. How do you experience, if at all, healing in this place?
5. What are some of the relationships you observe in this place?
6. What sensations do you notice when you are here?
7. What do you feel compelled to write about when you are in this special place?

The intent for this assignment is to offer this opportunity to further explore relationship with place. You are not obligated to share your journal beyond what you are comfortable with, so no need to worry about someone reading your journal. What is requested is that you submit an “artifact” from these reflections to Moodle, some form of documentation from this experience (i.e. a handful of quotes, or a few excerpts from your journal, a passage, a photo of a drawing done during a visit, etc.). If you have any questions, please feel free to reach out.

Please bring your journal entries with you to our second weekend class meeting as there will be an opportunity to discuss this with your peers.

### **Mid-course Exercise: Screen Time/Nature Time Log – Due 3/4/2023 by 11:59PM**

(Khan & Hasbach, 2012)

During the period between our weekend meetings, I would like you to choose at least one week (7 days or more) and log the time you spend interacting with digital technology and interacting with nature. Please log time you spent in front of a technological screen (TV, movie, computer, cell phone, iPad, tablet, etc.) Record date, type of technology, activity, amount of time spent. For the same period, please record the time you spend outdoors in nature, noting date, location, activity, amount of time spent. I want you to consider the effect that logging this behavior has had on your behavior and spend some time looking over this log; we will spend time discussing this during our second meeting.

*Please upload a copy of your screen time/nature time logs to Moodle. If you experience technical issues, you may submit a copy via email to the instructor.*

### **Final Assignment: Course Integration Paper OR Creative Project – Due 3/19/2023 by 11:59PM**

Students will choose **one option** for their final assignment: either the course integration paper or final project. Descriptions of the two options are as follows:

#### **Option 1: Course Integration Paper**

The final paper for this course is an integration of the projects you have done throughout this class. It will have three main sections: 1) A personal ecopsychology reflection; 2) A place bonding journal summary & 3) A screen/nature log reflection. This paper should use 7<sup>th</sup> ed. APA format for a student paper. This paper is an integration of all course materials. **Please turn this paper into Moodle by 11:59PM on 3/19/2023.**

For your personal ecopsychology reflection: Rework your personal description and reflection/process papers. Replace your goals for this course with learnings that you have had during this course. Write a summary of how you are going to implement these learnings into your personal and professional life moving forward. It is okay to take the original papers and update them to show your learning at the conclusion of this course.

For your place bonding summary, I want you to write a narrative that summarizes your relationship development with the place that you spent time in. This should be authentic. If you had a magical experience with a deep connection, share that. If you had a frustrating connection where you were plagued with freeway noise and littered Cheetos bags, that is okay too. This is about exploring the relationships that we developed and our perceptions related to these relationships.

For your screen/nature log reflection: Reflection on the data you collected through your screen/nature log. Include your log (in chart form or however you prefer). Reflect on interesting thoughts to ponder, a comparison between screen time and time in nature, consider overlap, screen time in nature, the relationship between the two, course discussion, etc.

Finish the paper with a short conclusion that ties the 3 sections together.

### **Grading Rubric**

Mechanics (spelling, grammar, syntax,, etc.)	5 pts
Content/Organization (engaging and thoughtful analysis of course materials, clear flow of ideas, use of references, etc.)	30 pts
Format (accurately and consistently follows APA formatting)	5 pts

### **Option 2: Creative Project**

The purpose of this assignment is to explore your relationship with the natural world through a creative and meaningful endeavor. This can be done through further exploring your relationship with a specific location, such as the one you used in your place bonding assignment, or through an artistic exploration of your relationship with the natural world as a whole. There is a great deal of flexibility in how this assignment is completed. If you have any questions about this assignment and what you are planning for this project, please do not hesitate to reach out. This project includes three major components:

(1) Submission of a project proposal. Describe the project you are planning for your final assignment. This does not need to be longer than a paragraph. I recognize this project may change/morph as time goes on; this is simply to get a sense of what a student is planning. The instructor will provide any feedback/guidance. The intent is not to micromanage this project; I really want students to have ownership of the creativity of this project. **Please submit this no later than 11:59PM on 2/26/2023 (early submissions encouraged).**

(2) A concept paper describing your project. This will be a short paper (max 3pgs) to include with the submission of your final project on 3/19/2023. Include how you integrated course concepts into your work and reflections on these concepts. (Cover page, 1-3 pages of content, reference page, double spaced; No paper abstract is needed.)

(3) Your project itself or a documentation of the project. This can be uploaded to Moodle as video, images, journal, or however you decide. If for some reason uploading to Moodle is not possible, please reach out to me with advanced notice to coordinate submission. Documentation must be thorough! **Please submit final documentation into Moodle by 11:59PM on 3/19/23.**

For example, a project where a student builds a photo journal over the course of several weeks documenting the environmental changes in a location will likely receive a better grade than a student who takes 3 pictures in a local park with their phone and applies a filter to them. Some other ideas that have been used: Depiction of how nature helps you cope, paintings, dance, a song, photo log, sculpture with natural materials, an artistic garden project, or a work of fiction about an area.

Examples of students who have done well on this project in the past include those who have turned in a series of watercolor paintings of an area at different times of the day, one who wrote a series of poems describing their experiences in a location, one who shared multiple images of temporary sculptures that they crafted out of natural items they found in a local park near their home, and one who created a zine of local medicinal plants as a resource for others in their community. This project is intentionally created with a lot of flexibility to allow your own creativity and interests to come through.

Grading: This is not a formal art class, and you will not be graded on artistic ability. Grading will be based on a student's demonstration and engagement of course concepts with their project. I will be looking for thoughtful reflection in the accompanying paper on the exploration of one's relationship with the environment and/or content discussed throughout this course.

### Grading Rubric

Project Proposal	5 pts
Project Description/Reflection Paper	
Mechanics (spelling, grammar, syntax,, etc.)	5 pts
Content/Organization (engaging and thoughtful analysis of course materials, clear flow of ideas, use of references, etc.)	10 pts
Format (accurately and consistently follows APA formatting)	5 pts
Project Documentation	15 pts