



## IDEA 2100

### A collaboration between Arts and Sciences

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### Calendar Description

Students will learn about the interconnected themes of ecology, sustainability, nature experience, creativity, and personal and academic development. They will contextualize their creative and academic inquiries by way of experiences in nature and will broaden their understanding of the relationship between humanity and the natural world.

First offered: Summer 2014 or Fall 2014 (Weather too cold and uncertain in the spring.)

### Learning Objectives and Outcomes

- Read selected cultural, literary, and historical texts and discuss their origin, development, and contemporary relevance
- Interpret interdisciplinary natural, creative, and spiritual traditions within the context of ecology and sustainability
- Describe the role of natural experience as both an ancient and a current mode of knowledge inquiry
- Evaluate diverse perspectives on the relationship between natural experience and creativity

- Create interdisciplinary expressive arts projects using strategies developed through experiences in nature

## Content

- Nature and creativity
- Nature as aesthetic experience
- Creative and spiritual inspiration in nature
- Nature as mentor
- Our relationship and lost connection with nature
- Impermanence and cycles (astronomical, biological, climatic, cultural, geological, mythological)
- Learning to listen in the forest
- Embodiment and spirituality in relationship with nature
- Ancestral and modern meditation and mindfulness practices in nature
- Deep and social ecology
- Community engagement and natural experience
- Sustainable food

## Learning Activities

- Participating in an integrative learning environment that entails a high level of communication, engagement, motivation, and collaboration
- Experiencing nature in multiple locales in the Vancouver area
- Reading materials from a variety of genres and historical periods
- Researching and developing interdisciplinary expressive arts projects
- Collaborating with other students on group projects and presentations

## Assessment

- Engagement, collaboration, and student facilitation (25 percent). (Facilitation activities might include bushcraft, storytelling, sit spot, nature's grocery store, nature's medicine cabinet, the art of animal tracking, mapping, bird language, five-minute fire, nature photography, nutrient cycles, food webs, etc).
- Written reflections (25 percent).
- Semester-long creative project inspired by nature, ecology, or personal journey (two parts, 25 each).

## Proposed Field Sites

### Ecology Around the Campus

Explore the webs of connection and consider human impacts (positive and negative).

Sciences perspective: food webs, invasive species, nutrient cycling, plant ID.

Arts perspective: patterns and symmetry, mindfulness, design systems.

### Boundary Bay (Tides and Transitions)

Explore the in-between places, the estuary and intertidal zones. How do organisms such as the screw snail, lugworm and ghost shrimp survive in this chaotic environment? How do we cope during times of change? Consider the influence of the moon.

Sciences perspective: intertidal zone, biodiversity, tides and lunar cycles.

Arts perspective: process and product, transitions, eco-psychology, dynamical systems.

### Watershed Park (A Walk/Run in the Woods)

Explore the rich tapestry of the forest. Listen for birdsong. Every tree has a story to tell in its rings, leaves and symbolism. What do they tell us? Stand still, meditate, walk slowly, go for a run. Experience yourself in ecological immersion.

Sciences perspective: dendrochronology, bird language, forest ecology (abiotic and biotic factors, indicator species, nurse logs, adaptations, disturbances, etc).

Arts perspective: folklore, mythology, aesthetic experience, creativity.

### Cougar Creek (The River of Time)

Follow the river and be mindful of the Journey. Water is central to life, a simple compound of hydrogen and oxygen and yet amazingly unique in its properties to sustain life.

Sciences perspective: limnology (biological, geological, chemical, and physical characteristics of the river), water cycle, water quality (EPT) index.

Arts perspective: artistic inspiration, reflection, finding purpose.

### Delta Nature Reserve (Bogged Down)

Burns Bog is a globally unique ecosystem, and one of the largest undeveloped urban wilderness areas in North America. An immense amount of carbon dioxide is trapped within this raised peat bog. What happens when we get stuck? How can we shift things?

Sciences perspective: unique flora and fauna, carbon cycle, climate change, sustainability.

Arts perspective: creativity, inspiration, personal growth.

### Tynehead Fish Hatchery (Life and Death)

Understand how a hatchery works. Tynehead is run entirely by volunteers. Perhaps have the opportunity to participate in an egg take.

Sciences perspective: life cycle (fish), fish biology, sustainability.

Arts perspective: life cycle (human), death and birth in art, connection to food, myth, and culture.

### Vancouver Aquarium

Explore the fantastic marine environments at the aquarium.

Sciences perspective: marine biology, oceanography, evolution, sustainability.

Arts perspective: creative inspiration, colour and texture, movement, transformation.

### Other sites to consider

Reifel Bird Sanctuary, Serpentine Fen, Bird Banding at Colony Farm (Saturdays only), Mountain View Conservation Centre (tours only, have unique animals both native and exotic), Campbell Valley Park, Derby Reach Park, Tynehead Park, farmer's market, the power-line trail near Kwantlen. We will also work with students to support their own suggestions about sites to visit.

Backup activities (in case of extreme weather)

Visit the biology lab.

In-class activities (dialogues, reflections, preparing for group presentations, ecology games, meditation, embodiment).

Indoor activities around the campus.

## Readings

Beavington, Lee. *Common Plants of Greater Vancouver*.

Butala, Sharon. *The Perfection of the Morning: an Apprenticeship in Nature*.

Emerson, Ralph Waldo. *Nature*.

Krakauer, Jon. *Into the Wild*.

Kroodsma, Donald. *The Singing Life of Birds: The Art and Science of Listening to Bird Song*.

Laird, Ross. *A Stone's Throw: The Enduring Nature of Myth*.

Louv, Richard. *Last Child in the Woods: Saving Our Children from Nature-Deficit Disorder*.

Pojar, Jim & Mackinnon, Andy. *Plants of Coastal British Columbia*.

Thoreau, Henry David. *Walden*.

Young, Jon, Ellen Haas, & Evan McGown. *Coyote's Guide to Connecting with Nature*.