COURSE TITLE: NATURE JOURNALING IN THE CLASSROOM

NO. OF CREDITS: 3 QUARTER CREDITS
[semester equivalent = 2.00 credits]

INSTRUCTOR: Eva Varga
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COURSE DESCRIPTION:
When Lewis and Clark began their journey west in 1804, their most valuable possessions were their journals. Humans may now have explored nearly every inch of our planet, but there is always more to see and describe. A nature journal is your ticket to a deep exploration of the world around you. A nature journal is a place to record your encounters with the natural world - from the everyday to the sublime. Field sketches, regardless of the degree of artistic talent with which they are rendered, force us to look closely and observe nature as it really is.

Simply put, nature journaling is the regular recording of observations, perceptions, and feelings about the natural world around you. The recording can be done in a wide variety of ways, depending on the individual journalist's interests, background, and training. Some people prefer to record in written prose or poetry, some do it through drawing or painting, and others with photographs or tape recordings. Many people use a combination of these techniques. This course will help you to integrate nature journaling into your art and science curriculum.

Appropriate for teachers K-12.

LEARNING OUTCOMES: Upon completion of this course, participants will have:
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1. Have prepared a field journal of observations and discoveries to use as a basis for instructional planning as well as a reflection tool.
2. Have developed 12 drawings and taken photos of at least 12 native species of plants and/or animals. Have talked with resource specialists to learn about the unique ecosystems in their area.
3. Have observed first-hand the biological diversity of their local ecology.
4. Have prepared lesson plans to use this information in classroom instruction.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:
Completion of all specified assignments is required for issuance of hours or credit. The Heritage Institute does not award partial credit.

HOURS EARNED:
Completing the basic assignments (Section A. Information Acquisition) for this course automatically earns participant’s their choice of CEUs (Continuing Education Units), or Washington State Clock Hours or Oregon PDUs. The Heritage Institute offers CEUs and is an approved provider of Washington State Clock Hours and Oregon PDUs.

UNIVERSITY QUARTER CREDIT INFORMATION

REQUIREMENTS FOR UNIVERSITY QUARTER CREDIT
Continuing Education Quarter credits are awarded by Antioch University Seattle (AUS). AUS requires 75% or better for credit at the 400 level and 85% or better to issue credit at the 500 level. These criteria refer both to the amount and quality of work submitted.

1. Completion of Information Acquisition assignments 30%
2. Completion of Learning Application assignments 40%
3. Completion of Integration Paper assignment 30%
CREDIT/NO CREDIT (No Letter Grades or Numeric Equivalents on Transcripts)
Antioch University Seattle (AUS) Continuing Education Quarter credit is offered on a Credit/No Credit basis; neither letter grades nor numeric equivalents are on a transcript. 400 level credit is equal to a "C" or better, 500 level credit is equal to a "B" or better. This information is on the back of the transcript.

AUS Continuing Education quarter credits may or may not be accepted into degree programs. Prior to registering determine with your district personnel, department head or state education office the acceptability of these credits for your purpose.

ADDITIONAL COURSE INFORMATION

REQUIRED TEXT
- **Keeping a Nature Journal: Discover a Whole New Way of Seeing the World Around You**
- **Handbook of Nature Study**
  ISBN# 9780801493843
  by Anna Botsford Comstock
  Cornell University Press
  [Buy from Amazon](https://www.amazon.com/dp/0801493846)
- **Keeping a Nature Journal: Discover a Whole New Way of Seeing the World Around You**
  ISBN# 1580174930
  by Leslie, Clare Walker, Roth, Charles E.
  Storey Publishing, LLC
  [Buy from Amazon](https://www.amazon.com/dp/1580174930)

MATERIALS FEE

ASSIGNMENTS REQUIRED FOR HOURS OR UNIVERSITY QUARTER CREDIT

A. INFORMATION ACQUISITION
Assignments done in a course forum will show responses from all educators active in the course. Feel free to read and respond to others comments.

Assignment #1: COURSE FORUM - Introduce Yourself
Describe in 500+ words your current teaching situation, your background and why you’ve selected this course. What do you hope to gain or learn?
Post response online. Feel free to respond to any other postings from educators who are also taking this course.

Assignment #2: COURSE FORUM - Local Ecosystems & Habitats
Conduct research on the habitats specific to your local area using course bibliography, library, bookstores and the World Wide Web. This research will provide insight into the focus of your project proposal. Record your findings in a journal noting the habitat types, location, and a list of the animal and plants species within each. You should have between 5-10 entries in your journal.
Thereafter, visit and include 2-3 photographs each from at least three distinctly different locations (deciduous forest, coniferous...
forest, riparian area, open meadow or field, farmland, or aquatic habitats).

When complete, transfer your notes and photos to a digital report and share what you discovered about your local area in the course forum. Read the comments from others, and respond to at least two posts.

Assignment #3: Handbook of Nature Study Book Review
Read Part I and 2 additional sections (Birds, Mammals, Fish, Reptiles, Amphibians, Insect, Other Invertebrates, Wild Flowers, Garden Flowers, Crop Plants, etc.) of the Anna Botsford Comstock’s book, Handbook of Nature Study, and write a 2-3 page reaction paper in which you describe what aspects of your reading may be applicable to your professional situation.
Post your paper in the online response box to share with your instructor.

Assignment #4: Keeping a Nature Journal Book Review
Read Clare Walker Leslie’s book Keeping a Nature Journal: Discover a Whole New Way of Seeing the World Around You, and write a 2-3 page reaction paper in which you describe what aspects of your reading may be applicable to your professional situation.
Post your paper in the online response box to share with your instructor.

Assignment #5: Your Own Nature Journal
Visit 3 distinctly different local habitats (e.g. open meadow or field, coniferous forest, deciduous forest, riparian area, stream, etc.) and make observations of the vegetation and animals. Maintain a journal of your observations. This will provide you with a detailed record of your experiences.

Your journal should include a variety recording styles and/or art media such as watercolor, pencil, charcoal, pastels, pen & ink drawings, facts, poetry and personal reactions. You need a minimum of four (4) sketches for each of the three (3) habitats you select for a minimum of 12 sketches total. Photographs are not applicable to this assignment.

When complete, you may scan or take a digital photo of your journal pages, sketches and field notes to a digital report to share with your instructor.

Assignment #6: Implementing Nature Journaling Reflection Paper
Write a 2-3 page paper which reflects your views on implementing nature journaling in your classroom and its role in your future nature based instruction.
Consider its values, as well as its possible roadblocks and how you might overcome them.
Post your paper in the online response box to share with your instructor.

Assignment #7: COURSE FORUM - Nature Study Quiz
Take this online quiz. Create one for your students and share the link in the online forums. Take two additional quizzes posted in the forums and provide feedback.

ADDITIONAL ASSIGNMENTS REQUIRED FOR UNIVERSITY QUARTER CREDIT

B. LEARNING APPLICATION
In this section you will apply your learning to your professional situation. This course assumes that most participants are classroom teachers who have access to students. If you do not have a classroom available to you, please contact the instructor for course modifications. Assignments done in a course forum will show responses from all educators active in the course. Feel free to read and respond to others comments.

Assignment #8: Additional Book Review or Online Resources
Review 3 websites and/or blogs OR an additional book (different than the titles used for Assignments #2 and #3) listed in the bibliography.
• Websites should emphasize doing nature study with children; several good examples are cited in the bibliography.
• Write a 2-3 page paper in which you summarize the main points of the sites you have selected and indicate what ideas, resources and statistics cited could be useful in your classroom.

Post your paper in the online response box to share with your instructor.

Assignment #9: Unit Study for the Classroom
Using either the Lesson Plan Template or your district’s lesson plan format, prepare three (3) lesson plans on any aspect that integrates what you’ve learned in this course with your teaching situation. As you formulate your lessons, identify the standards (specifically in art and science) you intend to meet with your unit.

If this course is being completed during the school year, teachers should implement one or more of the lessons and include a summary of the results (what went well, what could be improved) and share some student work, or anecdotes about the results with students. If teachers don’t have access to students (summertime), they could work with children in their neighborhood, their own children, or summer school students and include a summary of the results as described above.

Once your unit is done, upload it into The Heritage Institute Lesson Library following the correct methods to properly classify it.

Assignment #10: (500 Level ONLY) Supplemental Teaching Materials
In addition to the 400 level assignments, complete one of the following:

Option A)
Create a scoring guide or rubric by which you help guide and assess the work of 2-3 students (identify by “Student A”, “Student B”, etc.), which showcases their own nature journal. Submit the rubric, student work samples as well as a one to two (1-2) page paper explaining how you scored each and what you and the students gained from the use of this rubric. Please select students of varying abilities and backgrounds. Post your paper in the online response box to share with your instructor.

OR

Option B)
As a teacher we often need the support of our students’ parents and administrators. Construct a newsletter which enlightens these key supporters of the importance of nature education and your desire/plans for implementing/expanding nature education in the curriculum. Post your paper in the online response box to share with your instructor.

OR

Option C)
Choose another application assignment of your own with the instructor’s prior approval.

C. INTEGRATION PAPER
Assignment #11: (Required for 400 and 500 Level)

SELF REFLECTION & INTEGRATION PAPER
(Please do not write this paper until you’ve completed all of your other assignments)

Write a 350-500 word Integration Paper answering these 5 questions:

1. What did you learn vs. what you expected to learn from this course?
2. What aspects of the course were most helpful and why?
3. What further knowledge and skills in this general area do you feel you need?
4. How, when and where will you use what you have learned?
5. How and with what other school or community members might you share what you learned?

INSTRUCTOR COMMENTS ON YOUR WORK:
Please indicate by email to the instructor if you would like to receive comments on your assignments.

QUALIFICATIONS FOR TEACHING THIS COURSE:
Eva Varga, M.A., born and raised in Oregon, has a deep respect for history and nature. Her father instilled the knowledge of tree identification and an appreciation for geography and natural resources at an early age. As an undergraduate, she pursued a dual
degree in General Science and International Studies. During this time, she spent a summer abroad in San Miguel de Allende, Mexico. Thereafter, she began graduate work at Oregon State University in Elementary Education, earning a Master of Arts in Teaching degree. She taught for six years in the public schools (four as an elementary science specialist and two as a fifth grade classroom teacher) and has received numerous awards and grant honors for the development and integration of non-native species curriculum. In 2002, she was selected as an Oregon state finalist for the Presidential Award of Excellence for Math and Science Teaching. She has also volunteered with an Earthwatch team studying parasitism of rainforest caterpillars in Ecuador.

**BIBLIOGRAPHY**

**NATURE JOURNALING IN THE CLASSROOM**

**PRINT RESOURCES**


Comstock, Anna Botsford. *Handbook of Nature Study*. Comstock Publishing Associates / Cornell University, 1986, paperback, 887 pages, ISBN-10: 0801493846. Also available as a free e-book download at Internet Archive http://www.archive.org/details/handbookofnature002506mbp This is a GREAT book! Originally published in 1911 to fit in with a Charlotte Mason philosophy, it is geared towards elementary grades and complete with lessons, questions, projects, etc. Over 800 pages of easily understood information. The photos are not as clear as modern field guides but the author’s awe of the world around us is contagious.


Leslie, Clare Walker. *Keeping a Nature Journal: Discover a Whole New Way of Seeing the World Around You*. Storey Publishing, 2003, paperback, 224 pages, ISBN-10: 1580174930. This book is partially a nature journal itself, yet it is full of real ideas for your notebooks. The authors' drawings and comments guide the reader through small exercises. Sidebars are included with anecdotes of teaching approaches. Suggestions are provided to make the journal more personal, more reflective, and to make it more scientific, too!


Tomlinson, Susan Leigh. *How to Keep a Naturalist's Notebook*. Stackpole Books, 2010. This is an art-filled how-to guide geared to wildlife students and naturalists, based on the author’s college course. Pages from actual field notebooks clearly illustrate what works and why.

**ONLINE MEDIA**

*Drawing With Children: Nature Journal Style with Printable Lesson Plans*  
http://hubpages.com/education/drawingwithchildren

This Squidoo Lens Hub Page will help you gather the supplies needed to use the book Drawing With Children by Mona Brookes with your children students. The author shares some easy to use lessons to go along with the book that will help you and your children students practice your skills in your nature journal. I have made all the lessons printable so see the end of each lesson for a button to print the information out to use with your children.

*Handbook of Nature Study*  
http://handbookofnaturestudy.blogspot.com/  
One family's online nature journal using Anna Comstock's book Handbook of Nature Study as their textbook and the great outdoors as their classroom. Home of the Outdoor Hour Challenges whereby families can receive weekly challenges and share their discoveries with others.

*Jim Arnosky’s Wildlife Journal*  
http://www.jimarnosky.com/  
Jim Arnosky is a fabulous children’s book author and illustrator. Visit his website to meet Crinkleroot and explore how his books can enhance your nature study.

*John Muir Laws: Nature Stewardship Through Science, Education, and Art*  
http://www.johnmuirlaws.com
An extensive collection of lesson plans, tutorials, and resources for teaching nature journaling with people of all ages.

This family studies nature through a loupe and draws what they see; comparing and contrasting, making analogies, and considering why things are structured as they are. This simple process opens the door to scientific investigation, richer writing, and creative art.