

MURRAY STATE UNIVERSITY

DEPARTMENT: Early Childhood and Elementary Education

COURSE PREFIX: EDU NUMBER: 669 CREDIT HOURS: 3

I. TITLE:

Investigation and Evaluation of Issues in Environmental Education (3 credit hours)

II. COURSE DESCRIPTION AND PREREQUISITES:

Course focuses on the identification and evaluation of specific environmental issues, leading to possible environmental/service action projects by their K-12 students, with attention to the potential outcomes of such projects on the physical environment, other humans, and other living things. Weekend field experiences are required and include residential, classroom and outdoor experiences at Brandon Spring Group Camp, U.S. Forest Service and Land Between the Lakes.

Prerequisite: None

III. COURSE OBJECTIVES:

The behaviors indicated below are reflective of but not limited to those advocated by the Kentucky Education Reform Act guidelines. Each is connected to the following standards: (1) the Kentucky Teacher Standards (KTS); and, (2) the North American Association for Environmental Education's Standards in "Guidelines for the Initial Preparation of Environmental Educators." (NAAEE)

The student will be able to:

1. Assist school age students in the use of a variety of community inventories designed to assess potential environmental problems. (KTS 1, 2, 3, 10) (NAAEE 1, 2, 3, 5, 6);
2. Guide students in the identification of local, community environmental problems or threats and related community information, including current policies. (KTS 1, 2, 3, 5, 8, 10) (NAAEE 1, 2, 3, 5, 6);
3. Research an issue, narrow and refine its definition. Select an environmental issue for further study from several choices. (KTS 1, 2, 3, 5, 8) (NAAEE 1, 2, 3, 5, 6);
4. Identify and analyze relevant public and private policies and community practices. Examine who makes policy and how. Understand different perspectives on the issue. (KTS 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 10) (NAAEE 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7);
5. Identify possible project options for affecting change in policy or practice in school or community, and select one to pursue. (KTS 2, 3, 6, 8,) (NAAEE 1, 2, 3, 5, 6);
6. Guide students in the development and implementation of the plan of action (i.e. environmental service learning project) for the class to undertake. (KTS 3, 6, 8) (NAAEE 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7);
7. Assess the project and the process. Identify any next steps for addressing the problem. (KTS 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10) (NAAEE 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7).

The COE Theme of Educator as Reflective Decision-Maker is addressed in this course by having students collect data or journal with regard to ecosystems, change over time, or environmental problem solving. They then reflect and formalize this in three formats through the written word that may include poetry, prose, or scientific documenting, and then provide a visual record through photography or other artistic forms to complete the process. The ability to inquire has at its core the need to reflect, make decisions, and then evaluate and take action. This class is ostensibly designed to be a confluence of inquiry that culminates in action through service learning. The EPSB themes that are addressed include "diversity," "literacy," and the "achievement gap." Human diversity is a subset of ecological diversity that states the "health of an ecosystem is directly related to the amount of diversity of species supported by a biome."

Literacy and achievement gaps are all connected to the research in the field and practice students have in the field through hands-on, minds-on activities that show how environmental education as a theme (Environment as an Integrating Context, EIC) impacts in a positive and significant way the outcomes of students in classroom and test score performance. This process also enables students to become civically engaged and connect on a broader and more global basis.

IV. CONTENT OUTLINE

- A. Community environmental inventory
- B. Issue selection by students

- C. Policy and community practice research
- D. Options for influencing policy and practice
- E. Planning and taking civic action
- F. Reflecting and looking ahead

V. INSTRUCTIONAL ACTIVITIES

- A. Activities investigating professional journals and other creative academic media will be utilized.
- B. Student created projects will be shared with the class.
- C. Portions of the instructional time will involve active experience, reflective discussions and mini-lectures.
- D. Guest speakers

VI. FIELD, CLINICAL, AND/OR LABORATORY EXPERIENCES: Classroom and Online activities will be used. Additional field and/or clinical activities will be used depending on the focus of the students' investigations.

VII. TEXTS AND RESOURCES:

Hungerford, H.R., Volk, T. L., Ramsey, J. M., Litherland, R. A., & Peyton, R. B.. (2003). *Investigating and Evaluating Environmental Issues and Actions: Skill Development Program*. Champaign, IL: Stipes Publishing.

Fowler, Jr., F. J. (2014). *Survey Research Methods* (5th ed.).Los Angeles: Sage.

Resources:

Kentucky Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Cabinet, Center for Environmental Education, Murray State University, U.S. Forest Service Land Between the Lakes, West Kentucky Environmental Education Consortium.

VIII. EVALUATION AND GRADING PROCEDURES:

Presentation on Plagiarism	5%
Identification of Research Topic and/or Question(s)	5%
Research Paper First Draft	20%
Presentation of Research	30%
Final Research Paper	40%

- A= 90-100%
- B= 80-89%
- C= 70-79%
- D= 60-69%
- E= Below 60%

IX. ATTENDANCE POLICY: Students are expected to adhere to the MSU Attendance Policy outlined in the current *MSU Bulletin*.

X. ACADEMIC HONESTY POLICY: *This must appear in its entirety in all syllabi.*

Murray State University takes seriously its moral and educational obligation to maintain high standards of academic honesty and ethical behavior. Instructors are expected to evaluate students' academic achievements accurately, as well as ascertain that work submitted by students is authentic and the result of their own efforts, and consistent with established academic standards. Students are obligated to respect and abide by the basic standards of personal and professional integrity.

Violations of Academic Honesty include:

Cheating - Intentionally using or attempting to use unauthorized information such as books, notes, study aids, or other electronic, online, or digital devices in any academic exercise; as well as unauthorized communication of information by any means to or from others during any academic exercise.

Fabrication and Falsification - Intentional alteration or invention of any information or citation in an academic exercise. Falsification involves changing information whereas fabrication involves inventing or counterfeiting information.

Multiple Submission - The submission of substantial portions of the same academic work, including oral reports, for credit more than once without authorization from the instructor.

Plagiarism - Intentionally or knowingly representing the words, ideas, creative work, or data of someone else as one's own in any academic exercise, without due and proper acknowledgement.

Instructors should outline their expectations that may go beyond the scope of this policy at the beginning of each course and identify such expectations and restrictions in the course syllabus. When an instructor receives evidence, either directly or indirectly, of academic dishonesty, he or she should investigate the instance. The faculty member should then take appropriate disciplinary action.

Disciplinary action may include, but is not limited to the following:

- 1) Requiring the student(s) to repeat the exercise or do additional related exercise(s).
- 2) Lowering the grade or failing the student(s) on the particular exercise(s) involved.
- 3) Lowering the grade or failing the student(s) in the course.

If the disciplinary action results in the awarding of a grade of E in the course, the student(s) may not drop the course.

Faculty reserve the right to invalidate any exercise or other evaluative measures if substantial evidence exists that the integrity of the exercise has been compromised. Faculty also reserve the right to document in the course syllabi further academic honesty policy elements related to the individual disciplines.

A student may appeal the decision of the faculty member with the department chair in writing within five working days. Note: If, at any point in this process, the student alleges that actions have taken place that may be in violation of the Murray State University Non-Discrimination Statement, this process must be suspended and the matter be directed to the Office of Institutional Diversity, Equity and Access. Any appeal will be forwarded to the appropriate university committee as determined by the Provost.

XI. NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY AND STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES:

Policy Statement

Murray State University endorses the intent of all federal and state laws created to prohibit discrimination. Murray State University does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, religion, age, veteran status, or disability in employment, admissions, or the provision of services and provides, upon request, reasonable accommodation including auxiliary aids and services necessary to afford individuals with disabilities equal access to participate in all programs and activities. For more information, contact the Executive Director of Institutional Diversity, Equity and Access, 103 Wells Hall, (270) 809-3155 (voice), (270) 809-3361 (TDD).

Students with Disabilities

Students requiring special assistance due to a disability should visit the Office of Student Disability Services immediately for assistance with accommodations. For more information, students should contact the Office of Student Disability Services, 423 Wells Hall, Murray, KY 42071. 270-809-2018 (voice) 270-809-5889(TDD).