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. 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, 4) (NAAEE 1, 2, 3, 4, 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, 4, 6,  
8) (NAAEE 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6)  
3. Research an issue, narrow and refine its definition. Select an environmental issue for  
   further study from several choices. (KTS 2, 3, 4, 6, 8) (NAAEE 1, 2, 3, 4, 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, 6, 8) (NAAEE 1, 2, 3, 4, 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 3, 4, 8, 10) (NAAEE 1, 2, 3, 4, 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 4, 8, 10)  
   (NAAEE 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7)  
7. Assess the project and the process. Identify any next steps for addressing the problem.  
   (KTS 1, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10) (NAAEE 1, 2, 3, 4, 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. Assignments in the Earth Force CAPS Manual, professional journals and media will be utilized.
B. Students will complete the Earth Force Six Step service learning process.
C. Student created projects will be shared with the class.
D. Portions of the instructional time will involve active experience, reflective discussions and mini-lectures.
E. Guest speakers

VI. FIELD, CLINICAL, AND/OR LABORATORY EXPERIENCES: Weekend, residential, classroom and outdoor experiences at Brandon Spring Group Camp, U.S. Forest Service, Land Between the Lakes.

VII. TEXTS AND RESOURCES:


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:** Grading is dependent on achievement in three components: (1) Positive and active participation; (2) interaction with colleagues and instructor; and (3) completion of a class project. All assignments are due on the date and time given in class or identified in the syllabus. Late work must be preapproved for credit. In case of extenuating circumstances it is your responsibility to contact the instructor prior to the due date and arrange for a conference. During this conference a mutually agreed upon due date will be negotiated. Work submitted for any other class will not be accepted and assignments that have been plagiarized will be assigned a grade of "E" and could result in the student failing the course. Neatness, use of correct grammar, proper format, etc. will be considered in the evaluation of activities and projects; unless otherwise stated, all assignments must be word-processed.

The following are assignments and their percentage values for the purpose of assessment and grading:

A. Earth Force Service Learning Project = 50%
B. Readings and Reflections = 25%
C. Active Participation in Classroom Discussion = 25%

A= 90-100%
B= 80-89%
C= 75-79%
D= 70-74%
E= Below 70%

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

**X. ACADEMIC HONESTY POLICY:** Cheating, plagiarism (submitting another person’s material as one’s own), or doing work for another person which will receive academic credit are all impermissible. This includes the use of unauthorized books, notebooks, or other sources in order to secure or give help during an examination, the unauthorized copying of examinations, assignments, reports, or term papers, or the presentation of unacknowledged material as if it were the student’s own work. Disciplinary action may be taken beyond the academic discipline administered by the faculty member who teaches the course in which the cheating took place. Note: Faculty reserve the right to invalidate any examination or other evaluative measures if substantial evidence exists that the integrity of the examination has been compromised.
XI. NON-DISCRIMINATION 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 Director of Equal Opportunity, 103 Wells Hall. 270-809-3155 (voice), 270-809-3361 (TDD).