

**COURSE TITLE:** NATURE JOURNALING IN THE CLASSROOM

**WA CLOCK HRS:** 30

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

**OREGON PDUs:** 30

**PENNSYLVANIA ACT 48:** 30

**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.

The use of artificial intelligence is not permitted. Assignment responses found to be generated by AI will not be accepted.

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**HOURS EARNED:**

Completing the basic assignments (Section A. Information Acquisition) for this course automatically earns participants their choice of CEUs (Continuing Education Units), Washington State Clock Hours, Oregon PDUs, or Pennsylvania ACT 48 Hours. The Heritage Institute offers CEUs and is an approved provider of Washington State Clock Hours, Oregon PDUs, and Pennsylvania ACT 48 Hours.

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**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%
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### **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**

- *Handbook of Nature Study* by Anna Botsford Comstock. 1986. ISBN-10: 0801493846. Alternatively, available as a free e-book download at Internet Archive <http://www.archive.org/details/handbookofnature002506mbp>
- *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](#)

- ***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](#)

#### **MATERIALS FEE**

Texts, *Handbook of Nature Study* by Anna Botsford Comstock. 1986. ISBN-10: 0801493846. Available used on Amazon for \$11.95. Alternatively, available as a free e-book download at Internet Archive <http://www.archive.org/details/handbookofnature002506mbp>  
*Keeping a Nature Journal: Discover a Whole New Way of Seeing the World Around You* by Clare Walker Leslie, 2003. ISBN-10: 1580174930. Available used on Amazon for \$9.00.

### **ASSIGNMENTS REQUIRED FOR HOURS OR UNIVERSITY QUARTER CREDIT**

#### **A. INFORMATION ACQUISITION**

Assignments done in a course forum will show responses from all educators who have or are taking the course independently. Feel free to read and respond to others' comments.

Group participants can only view and respond to their group members in the Forum.

#### **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 who have or are taking the course independently. ?Feel free to read and respond to others' comments. Group participants can only view and respond to their group members in the Forum.

### 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 400-500 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?
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#### INSTRUCTOR COMMENTS ON YOUR WORK:

Instructors will comment on each assignment. If you do not hear from the instructor within a few days of posting your assignment, please get in touch with them immediately.

## QUALIFICATIONS FOR TEACHING THIS COURSE:

**Eva Vargas**, was born and raised in Oregon and has been associated with K-12 education since 1990, most recently in her role as an English Language Development specialist. Previously, she taught fifth grade in a self-contained classroom and served as an elementary science specialist. She has received numerous awards and grant honors and was selected as an Oregon state finalist for the *Presidential Award of Excellence for Math and Science Teaching* in 2002. She homeschooled her children through elementary and secondary grade levels whereupon she published curriculum, coordinated numerous science co-ops, and taught online English and science courses. She has also served as a Solar System Ambassador for NASA and was selected as an Earthwatch Teacher Fellow in Ecuador. With a special interest in hands-on, service learning experiences, Eva has been an avid volunteer at local museums and nature centers. As an undergraduate, she pursued a dual degree in General Science and International Studies during which time she spent a summer teaching abroad in San Miguel de Allende, Guanajuato, Mexico. Thereafter, she began graduate work at Oregon State University in Elementary Education, earning a Master of Arts in Teaching degree and most recently an ESOL certification.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

### NATURE JOURNALING IN THE CLASSROOM

#### PRINT RESOURCES

**Arnosky, Jim.** *Drawing from Nature*. Lothrop, Lee & Shepard Books, 1987, hardcover, 80 pages. ISBN-10: 0688070752. Arnosky is a wonderful children's author and illustrator. With *Drawing from Nature*, he has produced a valuable beginning drawing book. A simple flip through the pages shows many treasures that will inspire beginning students of drawing. No other beginning drawing book is quite like this.

**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.

**Cornell, Joseph.** *Sharing Nature with Children*, Nevada City, CA: Dawn Publications, 1998.

This is a classic in nature education. This revised 20th anniversary edition offers even greater wealth of ideas for working with children in nature. Includes natural history study and games in ecology education.

**Laws, John Muir.** *The Laws Guide to Nature Drawing and Journaling*, Heyday Publications, 2016.

A spectacular how-to guide for becoming a better artist and a more attentive naturalist. It is a colorfully illustrated guide to most everything you might want to learn how to illustrate when observing the natural world. Available in paperback, 368 pages.

**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!

**Louv, Richard.** *Last Child in the Woods: Saving Our Children from Nature-Deficit Disorder*. North Carolina: Algonquin Books, 2008, paperback, 390 pages, ISBN-10: 156512605X.

This is a thoughtful, well-researched presentation of our children's increasing distance from the natural world. It includes practical advice for parents, educators and urban planners. The updated edition includes 100 actions for families and communities, along with 35 discussion points.

**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/drawingwithchildrenature>

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.

**A Private Eye Nature** <http://aprivateeyenature.blogspot.com/>

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.