A. Course Description

Credits: 4

Lab Hours/ Weeks: Corequisites: None

Lecture Hours/ Week :

MnTC Goals: None

In this course, students will review current research on children and nature, evaluate the benefits of nature experiences in early childhood, and identify ways that nature supports children's development. Students will explore, discuss, and evaluate the different approaches to nature experiences that are becoming common practices in early childhood settings. The class will investigate and examine issues around risk and reward. The class also covers developmental stages, learning styles, and health, behavioral, and social-emotional concerns in early childhood and explores how they can be supported through the creation of nature-based play settings. Finally, we view nature experiences as an issue of "white privilege" and equity, and create a plan to make nature opportunities accessible and available to all children.

B. Course Effective Dates: 08/22/2015 - Present

C. Outline of Major Content Areas:

See Course Description for major content areas.

D. Learning Outcomes (General)

1. Demonstrate an understanding of current research on nature in early childhood
2. Reflect on own practices as an educator or other practitioner and the impact of participation in this course
3. Identify and evaluate barriers and impediments concerning children and nature
4. Synthesize research in the area of children and nature using a variety of sources including online media, books, journal articles and one area of personal/professional interest
5. Identify the physical, social-emotional, cognitive, and behavioral benefits of nature experiences in early childhood, as well as the impacts on those areas created by separation from nature
6. Identify and compare and critically evaluate different opportunities and approaches to providing nature experiences in early childhood settings
7. Understand and articulate rules and regulations around nature play in early childhood settings, in keeping with local and state safety codes and licensing requirements
8. Understand the developmental stages of young children, and articulate how the impact of nature-experiences during and on those stages
9. Identify other issues important to children's well-being such as physical fitness, social barriers, family circumstances, universal accessibility and others and articulate ways that nature experiences respond to these issues
10. Reflect critically on the opportunities for nature experiences in urban, suburban, and rural settings, and evaluate nature experiences as an issue of equity

E. Learning Outcomes (MN Transfer Curriculum)

This contains no goal areas.

G. Special Information

None