This course introduces the concept of scientific inquiry at the early childhood level, and it uses the environment as a context in which to do so. In this course, students will review current research, guidelines and standards, compare different approaches and reflect on the role of environmental education and nature in early childhood. Students will explore, discuss and evaluate the many approaches to presenting environmental education in the early childhood setting, including a review of existing guidelines, standards, and recommendations. Students will evaluate the influence of culture, background, philosophy and ethnicity on children’s understanding of environmental issues. Students will learn how natural settings may be used as a context for introducing science, technology, engineering, art and mathematics (STEAM) to young learners. This course is appropriate for educators, parents, social workers, and anyone who has an interest in STEAM, as well as children’s learning and well-being.

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. Understanding of what environmental education means in the early childhood setting
2. Evaluate existing resources for delivering environmental education and STEAM
3. Articulate the special considerations involved in environmental education for young children
4. Understand and articulate the importance of scientific inquiry and inquiry based teaching in the early childhood setting
5. Compare and contrast nature education and environmental education
6. Describe cultural influences on environmental attitudes and education
7. Demonstrate cultural sensitivity within the context of environmental education
8. Identify and evaluate state, national, or other guidelines, standards, and recommendations about environmental education in the early childhood setting
9. Recognize and articulate the connection between environmental education and STEAM learning in early childhood
10. Develop a series of lessons that use the environment to teach concepts of STEAM in a developmentally appropriate manner

E. Learning Outcomes (MN Transfer Curriculum)

This contains no goal areas.

G. Special Information

None