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| **Department of Curriculum, Culture, and Educational Inquiry (CCEI)** | |

**COURSE NUMBER**: EEC 4237

**COURSE TITLE**: Exploring Natural Habitats As a Curriculum for Young Learners

**CATALOG DESCRIPTION**:

Study of natural habitats as contexts for developing integrated environmental education curriculum appropriate for young children. Participation in field trips and on-site practice of effective teaching approaches are required. 3 credits

**REQUIRED READINGS**:

Alden, Cech, & Nelson (1998). *Field guide to Florida: Birds, animals, trees, wildflowers, insects, weather, nature preserves, and more*. New York: National Audubon Society.

Hoot, J. L. & Szente, J. (Eds.) (2010). *The earth is our home: Children caring for the environment*. Olney, MD: Association for Childhood Education International.

Wilson, R. A. (2012). *Nature and young children: Encouraging creative play in natural environments* (2nd ed.). New York: Routledge

**RECOMMENDED READINGS**:

Louv, R. (2005). *Last child in the woods: Saving our children from nature-deficit disorder.* New York, NY: Workman Publishing.

Mardel, B. (1999). *From basketball to the Beatles: In search of compelling early childhood curriculum.* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

**GUIDELINES USED IN DEVELOPING COURSE OBJECTIVES**:

Common Core State Standards (CCSSO)

Council for Exceptional Children/Division for Early Childhood (CEC/DEC)

Early Childhood Environmental Education Programs: Guidelines for Excellence (NAAEE)

Educator Accomplished Practices for FAU (EAP-FAU)

Florida Educator Accomplished Practices (EAP)

Florida Prekindergarten/Primary Education Specialization Competencies (PK/P)

National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)

NCATE Recommendations for Technology in Teacher Education (NCATE)

**COURSE OBJECTIVES**:

1. Students will identify local natural habitats and the dominant characteristics of the natural areas
2. Students will identify the flora and fauna, and the interdependence among it, at each habitat
3. Students will acquire and apply knowledge in developing in-depth integrated studies of each natural habitat
4. Students will utilize appropriate instructional strategies, materials, and activities in support of in-depth studies
5. Students will identify adaptations and differentiated instruction that may be required for individual children, including children with special needs and children whose command of the English language may be deficient
6. Students will describe cultural, economic, health, and social benefits and issues pertaining to the natural areas, and
7. Students will engage in appropriate advocacy or civic activities related to early childhood environmental education

**CONTENT OUTLINE**:

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| Week: | Topics: | Readings and *Assignments* |
| 1 | Introduction to early childhood environmental education; benefits of place-based education; developmental expectations; developmentally appropriate practices; syllabus review | Environmental awareness and environmental education (Section One, Hoot & Szente, Eds.) |
| 2 | Recommended guidelines in early childhood environmental education; thematic approaches and in-depth studies in children’s curriculum | Supporting curriculum through environmental activities (Section Two, Hoot & Szente, Eds.) |
| 3 | Field trip to a coastal habitat (Atlantic Dunes in Delray Beach); identify flora, fauna, and biological interdependence; discuss effective teaching and learning strategies; participate in beach cleaning and beach art activities; discuss adaptations for individual children | Nature play, natural outdoor playspaces, bringing the outdoors in, and the role of the adult (Chapters 1-4, Wilson) |
| 4 | Linking children’s curriculum/in-depth studies to creative arts (art, dance/movement, music/singing, drama/pretend play) and content area standards; integrating Universal Design for Learning | Holistic child development, and fostering academic goals Chapters 5-6, Wilson) |
| 5 | Field trip to a wetland (Wakodahatchee Wetlands in Delray Beach); identify flora, fauna, and biological interdependence; discuss effective teaching and learning strategies; participate in group reading, singing, and pretending activities; discuss adaptations for individual children | Fostering positive conservation attitudes, special considerations, and special places for young children (Chapters 7-8 and Appendix 1, Wilson) |
| 6 | Early childhood curriculum approaches; integrating place-based education and projects |  |
| 7 | Field trip to a scrub habitat (Yamato Scrub in Boca Raton); identify flora, fauna, and biological interdependence; discuss effective teaching and learning strategies; practice art, reading and other appropriate activities for children; discuss adaptations for individual children |  |
| 8 | Developing and implementing in-depth studies; writing interrelated lesson plans; planning considerations and issues | *Reflections for field trips (coastal habitat, wetland, and scrub habitat)* |
| 9 | Field trip to a flat pinewoods (Pine Jog Environmental Education Center in West Palm Beach); identify flora, fauna, and biological interdependence; discuss effective teaching and learning strategies; practice art, reading and other appropriate activities for children; discuss adaptations for individual children |  |
| 10 | Historical accounts and perspectives; discuss current land and water use, including the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP); discuss cultural, economic, health, and social benefits and issues; discuss mutual impact | Transforming school environments to support environmental awareness and advocacy (Section Three, Hoot & Szente, Eds.) |
| 11 | Field trip to a subtropical hammock (Gumbo Limbo Nature Center in Boca Raton); identify flora, fauna, and biological interdependence; discuss effective teaching and learning strategies; practice art, reading and other appropriate activities for children; discuss adaptations for individual children |  |
| 12 | Resources about natural habitats, reading materials, creative art activities, math and science activities; adapting for developmental/grade levels and individual learning needs | Resources for teachers (Section Four, Hoot & Szente, Eds.)  *Term paper – “Why environmental education is important in children’s lives?”* |
| 13 | Field trip to a mangrove (Rutherford Park in Boca Raton); identify flora, fauna, and biological interdependence; discuss effective teaching and learning strategies; practice art, reading and other appropriate activities for children; discuss adaptations for individual children |  |
| 14 | Student presentations for integrated and interrelated lesson plans | The road ahead (Section Five, Hoot & Szente, Eds.)  *Reflections for field trips (flat pinewoods, subtropical hammock, mangrove);* and *nature education website* |
| 15 | Write action plans; course evaluation; and final exam | *Integrated and interrelated lesson plans* |

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS**:

1. Integrated and interrelated lesson plans (15%)

Students will write three integrated and interrelated lesson plans incorporating:

1. developmental and/or educational goals and objectives
2. appropriate teaching strategies for the age of children
3. appropriate activities and instructional materials
4. identification of at least three adaptations to meet several specified individual learning needs, and
5. appropriate plan for assessment of children’s learning
6. Term paper (10%)

Students will write a 3-4 page paper responding to the following: “Why is environmental education important in children’s lives?” Students are expected to incorporate and corroborate compelling evidence based on the required readings; other sources may be included, if appropriate

1. Reflections of field trips (24%)

Students will write a reflection about each field trip; each reflection should include at least two of the following items: a) narratives of actual observations; b) narratives describing the educational experience; c) lyrical thoughts; d) drawings and other art renderings of the place; e) photographs; or f) curriculum ideas for early childhood environmental education

1. Nature education website (10%)

Students will design a website incorporating the following:

1. thoughtful and inviting title and introduction
2. imbed quotations from required readings and other sources as sources of inspiration
3. reflections on field trips, and
4. ideas for advocacy, civic, community, and/or educational engagement
5. Action plans (10%)

Students will write two action plans related to personal and professional development. Each plan should identify the goal to be achieved, steps that will be taken to achieve the goal, and resources or supports that will utilized.

1. Final exam (31%)

The final exam will consist of multiple-choice, true/false, fill-in-the-blank, and short essay questions based on the required readings and classroom and field trip discussions.

**ASSESSMENT PROCEDURES**:

Integrated and interrelated lesson plans (3 lessons@ 5% per lesson; 15% total)

Term paper (10%)

Reflections of field trips (6 reflections @ 4% per reflection; 24% total)

Nature education website (10%)

Action plans (2 plans @ 5% per plan; 10% total)

Final exam (31%)

**GRADING SCALE**:

Assignment scores are cumulative and the following grade scale represents percentage of total points earned:

A = 93-100 A- = 90-92 B+= 87-89 B = 83-86

B-= 80-82 C+= 77-79 C = 73-76 C-= 70-72

D+= 67-69 D = 63-66 D-= 60-62 F = Below 60

All assignments must be completed in order to earn a grade of an “A” in this course.

**ATTENDANCE POLICY:**

According to University policy, “Students are expected to attend all of their scheduled University Classes and to satisfy all academic objectives as outlined by the instructor.” Attendance includes meaningful, active involvement in all class sessions, class discussions, and class activities as well as professional, ethical, conduct in class. Reasonable accommodations are made for religious observances.

**ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:**

Students at Florida Atlantic University are expected to maintain the highest ethical standards. Academic dishonesty, including cheating and plagiarism, is considered a serious breach of these ethical standards, because it interferes with the University mission to provide a high quality education in which no student enjoys an unfair advantage over any other. Academic dishonesty is also destructive of the University community, which is grounded in a system of mutual trust and places high value on personal integrity and individual responsibility.

This course is grounded in a system of mutual trust and places high value on personal integrity and individual responsibility. Violations of academic integrity, including cheating and plagiarism, are considered a serious breach of these ethical standards. Academic dishonesty will result in disciplinary action which may include a 0 on the assignment, an “F” in the course, or even removal from the degree program. All assignments must be written by you. Papers cannot be ones that have already been submitted for another course nor will be submitted to another course. Students are required to submit their final draft of their competency assessments electronically through Bb/TurnItIn (for possible plagiarism detection). Failure to adhere to these guidelines may result in a zero (0) for the project. TurnItIn resources, including documentation and video tutorials, can be found online at: [http://www.turnitin.com/en\_us/training/instructor-training](http://www.turnitin.com/en_us/training/instructor-training#_blank)

Standards of academic conduct are set forth in the University’s and College of Education Policies and Procedures Manual. Students at FAU are expected to maintain the highest ethical standards. For more information, on what constitutes plagiarism, cheating and other violations of academic integrity, see <http://wise.fau.edu/regulations/chapter4/4.001_Code_of_Academic_Integrity.pdf>

**ACADEMIC HONESTY**

All university students are held to high levels of integrity. One mark of that is academic honesty, which includes plagiarism. On page 349 of the *Publication Manual* of the American Psychological Association (APA), plagiarism is defined as:  
  
”*Plagiarism (Principle 6.22). Psychologists do not claim the words and ideas of another as their own; they give credit where credit is due. Quotation marks should be used to indicate the exact words of another. Each time you paraphrase another author (i.e., summarize a passage or rearrange the order of a sentence and change some of the words), you will need to credit the source in the text.”*

Florida Atlantic University Regulation 4.001, “Code of Academic Integrity,” is strictly adhered to in this course. The regulation states:

(1) Purpose. Students at Florida Atlantic University are expected to maintain the highest ethical standards. Dishonesty is considered a serious breach of these ethical standards, because it interferes with the University mission to provide a high quality education in which no student enjoys an unfair advantage over any other. Dishonesty is also destructive of the University community, which is grounded in a system of mutual trust and places high value on personal integrity and individual responsibility.

(2) Definitions. The FAU Code of Academic Integrity prohibits dishonesty and requires a faculty member, student, or staff member to notify an instructor when there is reason to believe dishonesty has occurred in a course/program requirement. The instructor must pursue any reasonable allegation, taking action where appropriate. Examples of academic dishonesty include, but are not limited to, the following:

(A) Cheating

1. The unauthorized use of notes, books, electronic devices, or other study aids while taking an examination or working on an assignment.

2. Providing unauthorized assistance to or receiving assistance from another student during an examination or while working on an assignment.

3. Having someone take an exam or complete an assignment in one’s place.

4. Securing an exam, receiving an unauthorized copy of an exam, or sharing a copy of an exam.

(B) Plagiarism

1. The presentation of words from any other source or another person as one’s own without proper quotation and citation.

2. Putting someone else’s ideas or facts into your own words (paraphrasing) without proper citation.

3. Turning in someone else’s work as one’s own, including the buying and selling of term papers or assignments.

(C) Other Forms of Dishonesty

1. Falsifying or inventing information, data, or citations.

2. Failing to comply with examination regulations or failing to obey the instructions of an examination proctor.

3. Submitting the same paper or assignment, or part thereof, in more than one class without the written consent of both instructors.

4. Any other form of academic cheating, plagiarism, or dishonesty.

(3) Procedures.

(A) If the instructor determines that there is sufficient evidence to believe that a student engaged in dishonesty, the instructor will meet with the student at the earliest possible opportunity and provide notice to the student of the instructor’s perception of the facts, the charges against the student, and the sanction. The instructor may not remove the student from the course until the appeal process has come to a conclusion.

(B) If, after this meeting, the instructor continues to believe that the student engaged in dishonesty, the instructor will provide the student written notice of the charges and the penalty. A copy of this statement shall be sent to the chair of the department or director of the school/program administering the course.

(C) The student is entitled to an opportunity to be heard at a meeting with the instructor and chair/director to review and discuss the instructor’s charges/statement. Such request for a meeting must be made in writing and received by the chair/director within five (5) business days of receipt of the instructor’s charges/statement. The purpose of the meeting is to discuss the facts and to advise the student of the appeal process. The chair/director will provide the student, the instructor, and the dean of the college administering the course a summary of both the student’s position and the instructor’s position.

(D) The student may appeal in writing to the dean of the college administering the course. The appeal must be received by the dean within five (5) business days of receipt of the chair/director’s summary from the review meeting. The dean will convene a Faculty-Student Council (“Council”), which will be composed of the dean (or designee), two faculty members, and two students. The dean (or designee) will act as chair of the Council, direct the hearing, and maintain the minutes and all records of the appeal hearing, which will not be transcribed or recorded. The hearing is an educational activity subject to student privacy laws/regulations, and the strict rules of evidence do not apply. The student may choose to be accompanied by a single advisor, but only the student may speak on her/his own behalf. The student and instructor may present testimony and documents on his/her behalf. Additional witnesses may be permitted to speak at the dean’s (or designee’s) discretion and only if relevant and helpful to the Council. The Council will deliberate and make a recommendation to the dean to affirm or void the instructor’s findings of academic dishonesty. The dean (or designee) will inform the student and instructor in writing of his/her findings of academic dishonesty after receipt of the Council’s recommendation.

(E) The student may request an appeal in writing of the dean’s findings of academic dishonesty to the University Provost (or designee) and include relevant documentation in support of such appeal. The University Provost (or designee) will notify the student, dean, and instructor of his/her decision in writing. This decision by the Provost (or designee) constitutes final University action.

(F) If there is a finding that the Code of Academic Integrity has been violated, the chair will notify the University Registrar that the following notation be included on both the student’s official transcript and on the student’s internal record: “Violation of Code of Academic Integrity, University Regulations 4.001.” If such violation is appealed and overturned, the dean or University Provost (or their designees) will notify the University Registrar that such notation should be removed from the student’s transcript and internal record.

(4) Penalties.

(A) The instructor will determine the penalty to be administered to the student in the course. Penalty grades cannot be removed by drop, withdrawal, or forgiveness policy. Students should be aware that, in some Colleges/programs, failure in a course or a finding of dishonesty may result in other penalties, including expulsion or suspension from the College/program.

(B) In the case of a first offense, the student may elect to complete a peer counseling program administered by the Division of Student Affairs by the end of the semester following the semester in which the dishonesty occurred. Upon successful completion of this program, the notation regarding violation of the Code of Academic Integrity will be expunged from the student’s official transcript. The grade, however, will remain unchanged and cannot be removed by drop or forgiveness policy. Also, the notation will remain in internal University student records.

(C) In the case of a repeat offense, even if the notation of violation of the Code of Academic Integrity from the first offense had been expunged from the official transcript as a result of successful completion of the peer counseling program, the student will be expelled from the University.

*Specific Authority: Article IX of the Florida Constitution, 1001.706, 1001.74 F.S., Board of Governors Regulations 1.001, 6.010, and 6.0105. History–New 10-1-75, Amended 12-17-78, 3-28-84, Formerly 6C5-4.01, Amended 11-11-87. Formerly 6C5-4.001. Amended 5-26-10.*

Be especially careful about cutting and pasting text from websites. You may not do so without using quotation marks for the text and citing the source, and you should be sparing in your use of online quotes. There are severe academic penalties for plagiarism, and it is your obligation to remain honest in your use of others’ writing.

**STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), students who require special accommodations, due to a disability, to properly execute coursework must register with the Office for Students with Disabilities (OSD) located in Boca Raton in the Student Support Service Building SU 80, Room 133 (561-297-3880); in Davie - MOD I (954-236-1222); or in Jupiter SR 117 (561-799-8585) and follow all OSD procedures.

**BIBLIOGRAPHY**:

Bhagwanji, Y. (2011). *Early childhood environmental education rating scale: A formative evaluation tool to help programs improve nature education for young children.* Washington, DC: North American Association for Environmental Education.

Banning, W. & Sullivan, G. (2011). *Lens on outdoor learning*. St. Paul, MN: Redleaf Press.

Boise, P. (2010). *Go green rating scale for early childhood settings*. St. Paul, MN: Redleaf Press.

Hoot, J. L. & Szente, J. (Eds.) (2010). *The earth is our home: Children caring for the environment*. Olney, MD: Association for Childhood Education International.

Mardel, B. (1999). *From basketball to the Beatles: In search of compelling early childhood curriculum.* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Rezba, R. J., Sprague, C. R., McDonnough, J. T., & Matkins, J. J. (2007). *Learning and assessing science process skills* (5th ed.). Dubuque, IA: Kendall/Hunt Pub. Co.

Rosenow, N. (2011). *Growing with nature: Supporting whole-child learning in outdoor classrooms.* Lincoln, NE: Dimensions Educational Research Foundation.

Wilson, R. A. (2012). *Nature and young children: Encouraging creative play in natural environments* (2nd ed.). New York: Routledge.

World Forum Foundation & Community Playthings. (2010). *The Wisdom of nature: Out my back door.* Community Products, LLC.

| Suggested Lesson Plan Format | |
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| Theme: | |
| Subtheme: | Level: Novice, Intermediate, Advanced (select the most appropriate one) |
| Title of activity: | Age Group: |
| Objective(s): | VPK, Sunshine State or Common Core Standards: |
| Materials: | |
| Procedures: | |
| Vocabulary: | |
| Adaptations/Accommodations: | |
| Extend the learning/content areas: | |