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### EVST 594.05: Exploring Place-Based Education

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# SYLLABUS

## EVST 594: Exploring Place-Based Education Spring Semester 2007

Instructor: Steve Archibald

### Text

*Last Child in the Woods*

Richard Louv

### Overview

Place-based education (the term we will use during this course but sometimes called *sense-of-place education*) is a relatively new term within the educational vernacular. Only recently have these terms been applied to a specific educational philosophy and/or approach. It is often confused with environmental education (EE) because of its focus on the natural world. It does, in fact, contain many of the elements familiar to those who participate in EE. However, place-based education contains elements not often associated with mainstream EE. These elements, whether philosophical or practical, are the focus of this course. Are place-based educational approaches new? In this course we will explore the ancient roots that inform and sustain meaningful approaches to an integrated connection of place and education.

The following are some of the main areas of focus for this course:

- Place-based education—an historical perspective
- Various examples of place-based education (with a particular emphasis on Teton Science School's *Journeys* program and a four year implementation of PBE at Two Creeks Community School)
- An exploration of what's being said/written about place-based education
- Applying place-based educational approaches to a real-world project

This course will consist of several components:

- An introduction/overview of place-based, and related, educational efforts.
- Class sessions constructed to inform, inspire and motivate students about place-based education.
- Weekly class meetings intended to increase background knowledge, facilitate the sharing of ideas and project work periods will take place over much of the term.
- Assigned readings (from text and provided materials), group discussions, and individual assignments will help extend the scope of the course. Student participation and quality-of-work will provide the foundation for course grades and personal development.

## Assignments

Each student is required to complete each of the following assignments by the due dates indicated:

### 1. Class Attendance/Participation (Approx 40% of grade)

- In order for this class to have any meaningful impact on students they should plan to attend on-campus class sessions held in the Liberal Arts Building Room 140 (Mondays; 3:40 - 6:30 p.m.).\*
- Students will be expected to participate in assigned readings and related discussions that indicate that readings were completed.
- Students will receive credit for each class period attended.
- Any student who needs to miss a class period should contact the instructor for information related to possible make-up work for the attendance points (not more than two times per term).

\* The students and instructor will discuss, during the first class period, if there is sufficient interest in participating in a one day *Place-Based Education Retreat* on a Saturday early in the semester at the instructor's home along the West Fork of the Bitterroot River. If so, more than half of the class periods will be shortened to 3:40 - 5:40 p.m.

### 2. Weekly Journal Prompt (Approx. 20% of grade)

- Due (via email attachment or personally delivered hard copy) by the beginning of each class period.
- Specific prompts will be given by the instructor(s) during the current class period (i.e. Response due January 29<sup>th</sup> will be handed out during class January 22<sup>nd</sup>).
- Thoughtful and complete responses are required that fully address the prompt given. Creative thinking related to the prompt is encouraged while addressing the specific prompt is important.
- Prompts will most often relate to one or more of the assigned class readings.

### 3. Place-Based Education Project (Approx. 30% of grade)

- Students will be expected to contact a local organization that provides educational experiences and arrange to design and implement a place-based educational experience for their students/clients.
- Course instructor has possible partners with whom students may decide to design/implement their project. However, students should feel free to find their own educational partner and, pending approval of the course instructor, pursue the goals of this assignment.
- These projects can be done individually or in teams of up to three students.

- Written proposals are due at the beginning of the February 26<sup>th</sup> class period.
  - Fifteen minute in-class presentations will be scheduled for the 4/9 and 4/16 class periods.
  - Students are to design a project within the calendar confines of the class. Organizational partners must agree to allow implementation of this project since this is not meant to be a theoretical assignment.
  - Two of the March class periods (3/12 & 3/19) will be used to facilitate individual or team project work sessions. Representatives of organizational partners could certainly be invited to attend all or part of these class periods.
  - A well-written and detailed write-up of this project serves as the class final and is due at the scheduled class finals period.
4. Place-Based Education Filing System (Approx. 10% of grade)
- Place-based educators receive a great deal of printed information. This includes background information, interesting and/or related essays or articles, lesson/activity plans, etc. Dealing with how to organize and access this information becomes important for future retrieval and use.
  - Each student will be expected to plan, organize and be ready to present their system to the instructor.
  - Early in the course, the instructor will show examples of what is expected.
  - Students will sign-up for a 10 minute individual sharing time with the instructor on FINALS DAY (5/7) between 3:40 and 6:30 p.m.

### Grading Criteria

Each assignment will be graded using the following criteria:

Outstanding = 95 - 100% of possible credit

Excellent = 85 - 94% of possible credit

Good = 75 - 84% of possible credit

Needs Work = 65 - 74% of possible credit\*

Lacking = Less than 64% of possible credit\*

\* All assignments will be returned (graded) to students by the class period following the due date. Any student who wants to bring their grade up one category level may do so after consultation with the instructor. Due date for redoing assignments is one week from the time that the assignment is returned the first time.

Final grades will be earned by totaling and valuing all possible credit and comparing to the following list:

90 - 100% of possible credit = A

80 - 89% of possible credit = B

70 - 79% of possible credit = C

60 - 69% of possible credit = D

Less than 60% of possible credit = F

#### Instructor Contact Information

Office hours: By appointment (preferably Mondays before class)

Message phones: Steve (406) 821-0885

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