



Vermont State
University

Center for Schools

Nature Journaling for Educators

Summer 2024

Crow's Path + Vermont State University

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Class day/time: June 24 – July 22, 2024. June 24-28, 2024 9:00am - 3:30pm intensive, in-person work followed by online, independent work until July 22, 2024.

Location: Class meets at the North Alliance Church (901 North Avenue, Burlington, VT 05408). We'll meet in the classroom at 9:00 each day for introductory lessons and then head out into the field.

Graduate Credit: 3 graduate credits available through Vermont State University Center for Schools

Course Code: EDX 5710 S31

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Nature journaling at its most basic is the practice of observing nature and recording those observations. It integrates writing, art, and numbers with observations, curiosity, and research. Nature journaling encourages a connection to nature and place, teaches scientific observational skills, and helps practice mindfulness. In this course we will explore a variety of ways to integrate nature journaling into any educational setting. Students of any age can benefit from nature journaling, and it can be integrated into any subject area and any educational setting.

In this class you will learn the basics of nature journaling experientially by completing nature journaling activities that you can use with your students. We will spend as much time outside as possible and will also experiment with indoor activities for when the weather doesn't cooperate (as we all know how unpredictable Vermont winters can be). In addition to doing a deep dive into science and journaling practices, you will learn how nature journaling can enhance ELA, social studies, and math classes. At the end of the class you will have begun working on a nature journal that you can then carry into your own personal nature journaling practice.

ESSENTIAL OBJECTIVES

1. Explore the scientific, interdisciplinary, and socio-emotional benefits of nature journaling

2. Build comfort with structures for improving observation and data recording skills (words, pictures and numbers; I notice, I wonder, It reminds me of, Could it be?)
3. Brainstorm solutions to common and setting-specific nature education and nature journaling challenges
4. Apply nature journaling skills and techniques in a language arts or social studies setting
5. Build a repertoire of indoor weather-independent nature journaling activities
6. Develop a personal nature journaling practice

REQUIRED TEXTS

There are no required texts for the course. Readings will be made as PDFs. Here are books that I recommend:

- [*The Laws Guide to Nature Drawing and Journaling by John Muir Laws*](#) (\$35)- This book focuses on the observation and art skills of nature journaling.
- [*How to Teach Nature Journaling by John Muir Laws and Emilie Lygren*](#) (downloadable for free)- This book provides a full curriculum of detailed nature journaling lessons. We will sample some of the activities in this book.

HOMEWORK

- **Nature Journal Kit:** Before the course begins I will send out information and resources about what could be included in a nature journal kit and you will assemble your kit before class begins. Your kit can be as complex or as simple as you like, but at minimum should include a notebook, a writing utensil, and some sort of coloring utensils. You will bring this kit with you to each class to experiment and become comfortable with its use, and to understand how it might work for your students.
- **Nature Journal Portfolio:** During each class we will complete 3-4 different nature journaling activities, which will include time for discussion and reflection. We may not always have the time to complete each page to our satisfaction while out in the field. Homework each night will be to complete any unfinished pages from that day. You will then select a method for sharing these journal pages and your educator reflections with me. The method of sharing could be a Google Site, a Google Slideshow, or an Instagram page with separate posts for each journal page.
- **Final Project:** After class, all participants looking for graduate credit will submit a unit plan for how they will implement nature journaling in their educational setting. I will provide a loose template for a unit plan or you can use your own format. You will explain the context for your nature journaling practice, identify structures and techniques you will teach, create a plan for lessons and activities, identify any necessary resources, and anticipate any problems you might encounter. We will work on this unit plan throughout the course and it will be due three weeks after the end of the course.

SCHEDULE

Come prepared to spend 3-4 hours in the field each day. You will need the following for field visits: shoes you can go off trail with, weather appropriate outer-wear, a lightweight foldable chair that you can carry on short hikes (like a folding stool or folding camping chair), and a bag big enough to carry your art kit. Nature journaling involves sitting and stillness, so a light long sleeve and pants will be great to ward off mosquitoes.

Day	Topic + Activity	Field Site	Assignment Due
Pre-class			Assemble your nature journaling kit
Day 1	Nature Journaling Basics Journaling House Plants My Secret Plant Landscapitos Make a Map	Rock Point Park	Finish today's nature journal entries, enter onto portfolio site
Day 2	Exploring Nature Journaling Resources Journaling Produce Nature Journaling Literature Exploration Garden Journaling Journaling Birds	Rock Point Park	Finish today's nature journal entries, enter onto portfolio site
Day 3	Techniques for Collecting Data Stream Analysis Macroinvertebrates Cross Section Maps How to Look at a Tree	Potash Brook	Finish today's nature journal entries, enter onto portfolio site
Day 4 Or any rainy day	Cross-Curricular Connections Literature/Social Studies Journaling Plate Tectonics Map Data Exploration Anticipating Challenges Group brainstorm and discussion Indoor Journaling (seashell comparison) Final Project Work Time	In the Classroom	Finish today's nature journal entries, enter onto portfolio site
Day 5	Final Project Work Group Share Out Final Project Work Time <i>Optional: Sign up to pilot a nature journaling activity</i>	Rock Point Park	Finish today's nature journal entries, enter onto portfolio site
Post-class			Final project due 2 weeks after class ends

GRADES + GRADING CRITERIA

Assignment	Due Date
Participation (20%)	
Nature Journal Portfolio (40%)	Last day of class
Final Project (40%)	2 weeks after class
Total	

Grade	Percentage	Grade	Percentage
A+	>97%	C+	77-80%
A	93-97%	C	73-77%
A-	90-93%	C-	70-73%
B+	87-90%	D+	67-70%
B	83-87%	D	63-67%
B-	80-83%	D-	60-63%
		F	<60%

Vermont State University (VTSU) Policies

Grading Policy:

Grades are indicated by letters with a designated “quality point” value assigned to each as follows:

A	4.0
A-	3.7
B+	3.3
B	3.0
B-	2.7
C+	2.3

A grade of **B- or better** must be achieved to count this course toward a graduate degree at VTSU. For questions on transfer pathways, please contact your contact within VTSU’s Department of Education. Additional grading information can be found in the VTSU Graduate Catalog under Academic Policies, Credits & Grading: <https://catalog.vermontstate.edu/content.php?catoid=8&navoid=119>

Expectation: Students enrolled in this course will complete a series of activities, readings, and reflections before, during and/or after any scheduled face-to-face or synchronous sessions. This will assure that Carnegie expectations for a credited course, both new learning and hours of outside preparation, are sufficiently met.

These course requirements can be met through a combination of Academic Engagement and Academic Preparation.

Academic Engagement is instructor-led instruction and may include but is not limited to: participating in synchronous class activities, listening to class lectures or webinars (synchronous or asynchronous), taking an exam, participating in an interactive tutorial, conducting instructor-led laboratory experiments, contributing to an academic discussion (online, virtual, or in-person), submitting an academic assignment, initiating contact with an instructor to ask a question about the academic subject studied in the course, or similar academic activity.

Academic Preparation is independently conducted by the student and may include but is not limited to: research, reading, rehearsing, study time, and completing assignments and projects.

Academic Honesty Policy

Vermont State University upholds high standards of academic integrity from all community members. Academic integrity encompasses honesty, trust, fairness, respect, responsibility, and the courage to act on these fundamental values (International Center for Academic Integrity [ICAI], 2021; The Fundamental Values of Academic Integrity, 3rd ed.). A student who fails to uphold these values may experience academic consequences including a grade of F, indicating no credit, for assignments or courses, or dismissal from the University. Examples of failure to uphold academic integrity may include using unauthorized aids to complete or enhance academic work, copying another person's work on exams, quizzes, or assignments, or engaging in other forms of plagiarism. To plagiarize is to use someone else's words or ideas without full and proper citation and to present them as one's own. The sharing of VTSU password and login credentials to misrepresent oneself in online learning is a violation of academic integrity. Violations need not be intentional in nature. All members of the VTSU community are expected to investigate and understand their responsibility to act with integrity, and to seek assistance when uncertain. For more information, please see the VTSU Graduate Catalog Academic Integrity Policy: <https://catalog.vermontstate.edu/content.php?catoid=8&navoid=119#academic-integrity>

Use and Ownership of Copyrighted Materials

For information and guidance, faculty and students are referred to the Vermont State Colleges Manual of Policy and Procedures annual disclosure regarding illegal file sharing and the Higher Education Opportunity Act, accessible online at the following address:

<https://www.vsc.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/VSC-Annual-Notice.pdf>

Accommodations

VTSU is committed to providing reasonable accommodations to qualified students with disabilities so that no such student shall, by reason of a disability, be excluded from participating in, or be denied the benefits of, the services, programs or activities of VTSU. If you have questions about these services, please email disabilityservices@vermontstate.edu or request appointments through the Portal or on the [Disability Services web page](#).

Course Drop & Withdrawal Policies

Vermont State University (VTSU) Center for Schools offers courses to educators with the expectation that registrants will complete the course. However, the university realizes circumstances arise in one's personal life that may cause disruptions. Please review the course drop and withdrawal policies detailed below very carefully.

Drop Policy

For a course that is **8 weeks or less** in duration, a student can **drop** the course **within the first 7 days** for any reason. For a course that is **more than 8 weeks** in duration, a student can drop the course **within the first 14 days** for any reason. The course **will NOT appear on a transcript** and the student (or school/district) can expect a full refund for any tuition paid.

The student must email a drop notification to the instructor *and* submit a Center for Schools drop request form at this [link](#).

Once the applicable drop period detailed above has passed, drop requests will no longer be

honored.

Withdrawal Policy

After the initial drop period has passed, but ***before 60%*** of the course has taken place, a student can ***withdraw*** from a course. The course **will appear on the student transcript with a “W”** in the grading column and NO refund can be issued. The student must email a ***withdrawal*** request to the instructor and complete the withdrawal request form at this [link](#).

Again, this form must be submitted before 60% of the course has taken place.

After 60% of the course has been completed, withdrawals are NO longer permitted. At this point, a student has 3 options:

1. Complete the course as originally planned.
2. Request a formal extension from the instructor and the university, which, if granted, would allow up to an additional 7 weeks to complete the coursework.
3. Accept a final grade based on the work completed to date, even if it means a failing grade.

Those who withdraw without adhering to the policies described above may receive a failing grade on their transcript and/or be liable for associated course costs. Please direct any questions to your instructor and to cfs@vermontstate.edu

Transcript Request:

www.vermontstate.edu/transcripts

Please direct transcript request questions to registrar@vermontstate.edu.