UST259: section 001: Natural History of Cleveland

Instructor: Dan Donaldson
Office Hours: By Appointment and (I’ll be available after class)
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Email: D.L.Donaldson@csuohio.edu
Dates & Times: Fridays from 12:25 PM to 4:25PM beginning January 20, 2017
Classroom: UR 241

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is designed to introduce students to the natural history of the Cleveland metropolitan area. General geology, geography, ecology, flora, and fauna and its relation to the built environment of the Cleveland-Akron-Canton CSA; field trips to parks and museums to study local rock formation, forest types, and plant and animal identification will be included. This course is designed primarily for non-science majors and includes laboratory components.

This course will focus on the characteristics of Ohio land, climate, and water, along with the natural landscapes present within the region, and finally we will examine the impact of humans on the region. We will use an interdisciplinary approach to explore spatial, geological, ecological, and physical aspects of the region.

This course is included in the Sustainability and Stewardship: Protecting the Future of the Planet, along with the Mysteries of the City Learning Communities.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

The primary objective of this course is to improve understanding of Ohio’s unique heritage and the complex factors that have influenced and created its natural history, along with the sustainability measures that are needed to protect the area’s future.

A second objective of this course is to create a participatory environment, through the laboratory component of the course and in-class exercises, where students can experience and see first-hand northeast Ohio’s rich natural and cultural heritage. Both course readings and field trips will encourage greater appreciation and improved conservation/ resource management of our environment for both current and future generations. Students will gain practical experience in use of the scientific method in hypothesis testing and deductive reasoning.
By participating in this course, the student is expected to gain a better understanding of:

- Past and present state of the ecology of Northeast Ohio
- Geological and glacial history of the region
- Relationship between natural cycles and patterns and the influence of humans on the region
- Introduction to the scientific method and its applications

**GENERAL EDUCATION STATEMENT:** This course is approved as a General Education 08 course meeting the requirements for the natural science breath of knowledge. Skill areas for this class include critical thinking, writing to learn and writing to communicate.

**Skill Area: Critical Thinking Criteria**

1. This course requires that at least 15% of the student’s grade in the course is based on an evaluation of critical thinking.

2. This course requires students to attain skills beyond lower-level knowledge, thereby requiring skills that involve the use of content knowledge (e.g. finding information to solve a problem).

**Skill Area of Writing**

1. Designate that at least 15% of the student’s grade in the course is based on an evaluation of writing.

2. Include writing assignments that directly relate to the course goals.

3. Include instruction in writing-to-learn and/or writing-to-communicate. While writing-to-learn emphasizes the student’s experience, writing-to-communicate highlights the reader’s experience. Both are necessary to produce a thoughtful text that observes academic writing’s conventions.

4. Require that students write a total of 2,000 words (8 pages, double-spaced, in 12-point font, with 1” margins) in multiple assignments.

5. Assign writing throughout the semester.
FIELD TRIPS

This course includes field trips to nature centers, parks, and museums over the course of the semester. Portions of this will include outdoor hikes up to a few miles. Please dress appropriately in proper footwear and clothing for the weather!

Students are also responsible for getting to and from the field trip locations and paying entry fees when applicable. I strongly encourage you to carpool to save gas and money. I will help to coordinate this during class. Admission/parking fees may be required to be paid by the student at some locations.

COURSE FORMAT, ASSIGNMENTS, AND GRADING

COURSE FORMAT/ ATTENDANCE

Although this class may include lectures, multi-media presentations, field trips, guest speakers, class discussion, and group exercises, an emphasis will be placed on “active learning” techniques that cultivate a high level of student involvement. As such, regular attendance is required and is essential to success in the course. Unless otherwise specified on the syllabus or assignment sheet, you will need to attend class – and show up on time for the duration of class – to receive full credit for all assignments. Please inform the Instructor in advance of missing a class (by email).

ASSIGNMENTS/GRADING

Satisfactory performance will need to be demonstrated in the writing assignments in order to receive a passing grade for the class. All writing assignments must be submitted double-spaced, using 12 point font and standard 1” margins. Assignments are to be printed out and submitted in class, unless noted otherwise. Note that paper length requirements do NOT include cover page or references.

Students are expected to complete the following assignments:

+ Complete assigned readings each week, attend all class sessions and field trips.
+ Keep & turn in a field notebook, containing notes, sketches, observations, & reflections.
+ Complete written homework assignments as assigned.
+ Complete a final exam
+ NO assignments will be accepted more than one class period past their due date. 5 points will be taken off for assignments submitted one class period late.
+ Students may earn 5 extra credit points, for each assignment by using the Writing Lab at the CSU Library. Documentation required.
Talk to the Instructor as soon as possible if you are having trouble keeping pace with the class.

WRITING ASSIGNMENT NOTES: When using quotations in your writing, always set them off with quotation marks and appropriately cite the author. Also be sure to attribute credit to an author when paraphrasing information from a source. Paraphrasing is the act of restating the author’s words or ideas in your own words. Neglecting to do these things is PLAGIARISM and will result in a grade of ‘F’ for the assignment and potentially the entire course.

When using Internet sources during your research, only choose those that are reputable and scholarly.

If it can’t be found in the CSU library, it probably isn’t a good source.

For example, an online version of an article from the American Planning Association (APA) is a good source, but a citation from www.jennifersthoughts.net is probably a terrible source for research information!

WIKIPEDIA is also NOT an academic source for citations.

If you need additional guidance regarding how to construct a research paper, please access the resources provided below under Optional Readings and/or contact the CSU Writing Center.

RESEARCH PAPER GUIDELINES

For this assignment, you may select one topic of interest discussed in the text, class, or field trips to explore further. This assignment is purposely open-ended to give you freedom in choosing your topic, but please choose carefully and narrow your topic to a specific subject. Maintaining a narrow focus will greatly improve your ability to comply with the assignment’s length of 2 pages of text, and supporting citations. Research topics are to be approved by the instructor.

Format your research paper using APA guidelines. If you need more information on how this is done, see: http://library.csuohio.edu/research/vrd/citations.html. There is also a sample APA paper posted on Blackboard. Grammar, spelling, and language use will be graded along with content, so be sure to use spell check!

Writing Assistance: For students interested in additional writing assistance, the Writing Center is available and is highly recommended, located in Rhodes Tower Rm.105. Check the writing center website for hours of operation. https://www.csuohio.edu/writing-center/writing-center

There is also an online tutoring available here http://www.csuohio.edu/writing-center/get-writing-help
YOUR FINAL GRADE IS BASED ON THE FOLLOWING ASSIGNMENTS:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignments</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attendance (5 points/class)</td>
<td>80 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>100 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Field Notebook</td>
<td>50 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homework / Writing Assignments</td>
<td>250 points</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total Points Possible: 480 points

Grading scale is as follows:

- **A** 94—100
- **A-** 90—93
- **B+** 87-89
- **B** 83-86
- **B-** 80-82
- **C+** 77-79
- **C** 70-76
- **D** 60-69
- **F** < 60

Grades of “I” and “X”

**X** - The grade of "X" can be assigned by the instructor when an attending/participating student has stopped attending/participating without notification and has not completed all assignments for reasons that cannot be determined by the end of the grading period. An "X" automatically becomes an F if not resolved by the last day of instruction of the following semester. An “X” also will be assigned by the University Registrar when no grade is submitted by an instructor.

**I** - Incomplete. The "I" grade is given when the work in a course has been generally passing, but when some specifically required task has not been completed through no fault of the student. An "I" grade can be assigned by the instructor when all three of the following conditions are met:

1. Student is regularly attending/participating in the class and has the potential to pass the course;
2. Student has not completed all assignments and has stopped attending/participating for reasons deemed justified by the instructor; and

3. Student has notified the instructor prior to the end of the grading period.

*NOTE*: This syllabus, and the course assignment due dates are subject to change at the Instructor’s discretion. You will be notified by a Blackboard Announcement of any changes.

**REQUIRED AND OPTIONAL READING MATERIALS**

Readings from the following required text will be provided on Blackboard. It is also available at the University library or through the Ohiolink library system:

**Ohio’s Natural Heritage. Michael B. Lafferty, Editor. Published by the Ohio Academy of Science, Columbus, OH. ISBN: 0-933128-02-9.**

Students are required to create and turn in a field journal. A small spiral bound notepad will suffice.

There will be nominal admission fees for some locations of field trips. Fees not to exceed $25.00 for the course.

Other required course readings may be found on CSU’s **Electronic Course Reserve (ECR)**, on Blackboard, or on the Internet, as directed by the course schedule below. CSU’s ECR is available at the following website: [http://scholar.csuohio.edu/screens/m_course.html](http://scholar.csuohio.edu/screens/m_course.html)

Optional readings that may help you polish your writing skills are available at CSU’s University library Virtual Reference desk, accessible at: [http://library.csuohio.edu/research/vrd/writing.html](http://library.csuohio.edu/research/vrd/writing.html)

There you will find style guides, writing guides, dictionaries, and thesauri at your fingertips, including several guides on APA formatting style.

**General Format for Classes**

Meet from 12:25pm-4:25pm for lecture, in-class activities, short field trips, projects, discussion.

Major field trip days and outdoor exercises will meet at the particular field location

This format will vary when necessary.

**UNIVERSITY/COLLEGE POLICIES**

- The deadline for dropping this course is January 27, 2017
- The last day to withdraw from this course is March 31, 2017
- Final Exam Week is May 6-12, 2017
COURSE POLICIES

ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT

Cheating or collaborating on assignments, plagiarism (copying others work in any form without proper reference and citation), or any other form of academic misconduct is strictly prohibited and will not be tolerated. Consequences for academic misconduct are based on university regulations, and are grounds for a grade of “F”.

PLAGIARISM

The CSU Student Handbook defines plagiarism as “Stealing and/or using the ideas or writings of another in a paper or report and claiming them as your own. This includes but is not limited to the use, by paraphrase or direct quotation, of the work of another person without full and clear acknowledgement.”

Please refer to the university student handbook for further information, including penalties for plagiarism at http://www.csuohio.edu/studentlife/conduct/acadregs.html.

STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

“Educational access is the provision of classroom accommodations, auxiliary aids and services to ensure equal educational opportunities for all students regardless of their disability. Any student who feels he or she may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact the Office of Disability Services at 216-687-2015. The Office is located in UC304. Accommodations need to be requested in advance and will not be granted retroactively.”

Students should notify the instructor as soon as possible if they have been granted an accommodation through the Office of Disability Services.

ASSIGNMENT SUBMISSION:

Blackboard is used to ensure timely, safe, and loss free submission of all assignments. While students can also email assignments to the instructor, the official and recognized submission is through Blackboard.