UST259: section 471: Natural History of Cleveland

Instructor: Gregory SJ Soltis  
Office Hours: By Appointment (I'll be available after class on Saturdays)  
Email: g.s.soltis@csuohio.edu  
Dates & Times: Alternating Saturdays from 9-5 beginning January 14, 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 a laboratory component.

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.

GENERAL EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS

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

UST 259

General Education Statement: This course is approved as a General Education 08 course meeting the requirements for the natural science breadth 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.

**COURSE GOALS**

A 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.

*Talk to the Instructor as soon as possible if you are having trouble keeping pace with the class.*

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

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 – to receive full credit for all assignments. Please inform the Instructor in advance of missing a class (by phone or 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 submitted online on Blackboard. Note that paper length requirements do NOT include cover page, references or images.

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 visiting the Writing Lab at the CSU Library.

FIELD TRIPS

This course does include field trips to nature centers, parks, and museums over the course of the semester. A part 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. I strongly encourage you to carpool to save gas and money. I will help to coordinate this during class. For many trips we will take public transit which is a greener way to travel so be sure to get your UPass.

ASSIGNMENTS

NOTE: 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.jenniferstthoughts.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.

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!
For students interested in additional writing assistance, the Writing Center is available and is highly recommended, located in Rhodes Tower Rm.105. The hours are M-W 9:30-6:30 and Thurs 9-6.

There is also an online tutoring available here [http://www.csuohio.edu/writing-center/get-writing-help](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 (10 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 Assignments</td>
<td>250 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Points Possible:</td>
<td>450 points</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Grading scale is as follows:

A   92.51—100
A-  89.51—92.50
B+  87.51—89.50
B   82.51—87.50
B-  79.51—82.50
C+  77.51—79.50
C   69.51—77.50
D   60—69.50
F   < 60

*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 and/or in class of any changes.
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”.

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.

REQUIRED AND OPTIONAL READING MATERIALS

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.
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

**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

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

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**General Format for Classes**

Meet from 9am-12noon for lecture, in-class activities, group projects, discussion.

12noon-1pm lunch and travel to field location

1pm-5pm Participatory presentation, hike, nature tour at field location

This format will vary when necessary.

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**Tentative Course Schedule and Weekly Reading Assignments**

**WEEK 1. Meeting September 3**

Reading: APA Sample Paper for Students
Lecture: Course Introduction + Critical Thinking and the Scientific Method
          *Guest Lecturers:* 10:30 am How to Research and APA Format with CSU Librarians Diane Kolosionek + Mary McDonald
Lab: Save Fred
Field Trip: 1:00pm Cleveland Main Public Library (Main Library) Visit
          *Docent:* Pam Eyerdam

**WEEK 2. Meeting September 17**

Assignment 1 DUE: The Parks Paper
Readings: *An Analysis of Urban Greenspace by Jared Robbins*
          *Chapter 1_ The Ohio Country*
          *Chapter 4_ Today’s Landscape*
Lecture: Settlement of Ohio and its Geology and Geography
Lab: Memory Maps
Video:  *Frederick Law Olmsted: Designing America*

**Field Trip:** 1:30pm The Cleveland History Center of The Western Reserve  
  *Docent:* Chad Malkamaki  
  *Field Trip Fee:* $10

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**WEEK 3. Meeting October 1**

**Assignment 2 DUE:** The Western Reserve Paper  
**Readings:** *Chapter 5_Climate and Weather*  
**Lecture:** 10:30am - Macro and Micro Geography of Northeast Ohio  
  *Guest Lecturer:* Bill Barrow  
  **Field Trip:** 1:30 The Cleveland Museum of Art + The Cultural Gardens Hike  
  *Docent:* Pete

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**WEEK 4. Meeting October 15**

**Assignment 3 DUE:** Cultural Gardens Photo Essay  
**Readings:** *Chapter 2_Written in the Rocks*  
  *Chapter 3_The Ice Over*  
  *Chapter 9_Relics of the Past*  
**Lecture:** Geology + The Ice Age  
**Lab:** Geology Jenga  
  **Field Trip:** 1:30pm Cleveland Metroparks Rocky River Reservation  
  *Naturalist:* Marty Calabrese

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**WEEK 5. Meeting October 29**

**Assignment 4 Due:** The Ice Age Paper  
**Reading:** *Chapter 6_The Cradle of Life*  
  *Chapter 7_Ohio Forests*  
**Lecture:** Flora + Fauna of Oho  
**Lab:** Flora + Fauna Memory Card Game  
  **Field Trip:** Lake View Cemetery

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**WEEK 6. Meeting November 12**

**Assignment 5 DUE:** The Cemetery Paper  
**Reading:** *Chapter 16_The First Ohioans*  
**Lecture:** The Native Peoples of Ohio  
**Field Trips:** 10:30am The Natural History Museum  
  *Docents:* Brian Larson + Bill Urbanski  
  *Field Trip Fee:* $10  
  1:30pm Cleveland Metroparks Brecksville Reservation  
  *Naturalist:* Jenny McClain
WEEK 7. Meeting November 26
No class Thanksgiving Holiday

WEEK 8. Meeting December 10
Mini Assignment 6 DUE: Carbon Footprint Analysis
Lecture:  Watersheds
Video:  Return of the Cuyahoga
Field Trip: 11:00am – 12:30pm Cleveland Metroparks Watershed Stewardship Center at West Creek Reservation
Naturalists: Mark Warman + Matt Knittel
Final Exam