UST 259 – Natural History of Cleveland  
Spring 2017, Section 471  
Classroom: UR 241  
Class Meeting Time: Alternating Saturdays from 9-5

Maxine Goodman Levin College of Urban Affairs  
Department of Urban Studies  
Professor: Dr. Crystal Taylor  
Campus email: c.j.taylor20@csuohio.edu  
Office Hours: By appointment, Tuesdays 3 p.m. to 5 p.m.  
(Also, directly after the morning section of your class on Saturdays.)  
Office Location: UR 363  
Phone: (216) 687-6895

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.

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 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.

*Hint: 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

**Required Textbook**

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

(This is available at the University library or through the Ohiolink library system.)

*Other course readings or materials will be made available on blackboard or distributed in class.*

**Course Requirements**

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.)
Saturday Meeting Dates:
1. January 21
2. February 4
3. February 18
4. March 4\textsuperscript{th}
5. April 1
6. April 15
7. April 29\textsuperscript{th}
- No class on March 18\textsuperscript{th} due to Spring Break.
- No in person meeting on final’s week. Instead, you will have something to turn in electronically.

General Format for Classes
- Meet from 9am - 12noon for lecture, in-class activities, group projects, discussion.
- 12 (noon) - 1pm lunch and travel to field location
- 1pm - 5pm Participatory presentation, hike, nature tour at field location
- This format will vary when necessary.

Grading Scale
\begin{tabular}{|c|c|}
  \hline
  Grade & Score Range  \\
  \hline
  A & 940.0 – 1,000.0 \\
  A- & 900.0 – 939.9 \\
  B+ & 870.0 – 899.9 \\
  B & 830.0 – 869.9 \\
  B- & 800.0 – 829.9 \\
  C+ & 770.0 – 799.9 \\
  C & 730.0 – 769.9 \\
  C- & 700.0 – 729.9 \\
  D+ & 670.0 – 699.9 \\
  D & 630.0 – 669.9 \\
  D- & 600.0 – 629.9 \\
  F & 599.9 or less  \\
  \hline
\end{tabular}

*Please note that the grading scale is to .9; this indicates a policy of no automatic rounding

Course Assignments and Grading
\begin{tabular}{|l|c|}
  \hline
  Category & Points  \\
  \hline
  Activities/Participation & 150 points  \\
  Discussion Board/Field Notebook & 200 points  \\
  Green Space Planning Leader & 75 points  \\
  Exercises & 250 points  \\
  Project Proposal & 50 points  \\
  Video & 200 points  \\
  Script & 75 points  \\
  \hline
  Total: & 1,000 points  \\
  \hline
\end{tabular}
Activities/Participation

Attendance

Attendance will be taken every class. Students are responsible for everything that takes place during each class. Failure to attend class will affect adversely your participation grade. You may miss one class without impacting your attendance grade. For every additional class missed, your participation grade will be lowered by 20 points. For example, if you miss two classes, your grade will be reduced by 20 points. If you miss three classes, your attendance grade will be reduced by 40 points. To be counted as attending class, you must be present the duration of the class period. In other words, arriving late or leaving early will adversely affect your grade. Please contact the instructor ahead of time, if you will miss a class.

Participation in Activities

Students are expected to complete the required readings and come to class prepared to discuss them. A series of in-class group activities will take place during the course of the semester. The group activities are based on that day’s readings. Students must be present and participate in these activities to receive credit.

Discussion Board/Field Notebook and Green Space Planning Leader

Much like a scientist conducts experiments in a lab, you will have an opportunity to conduct site visits in an effort to apply your knowledge gained by observing and analyzing locations around Cleveland. These exercises allow you the opportunity to reflect on the assigned readings, conduct observations in these natural areas, and draw from outside related academic sources.

In this class, we will use the Discussion Board as a way for you to share your field notes. Each discussion board (related to a fieldtrip/topic of the day) will have Green Space Planning Leaders who will be responsible for asking a few questions during the fieldtrip to our experts, posting a picture(s)/and or video clips of the outing, and giving an oral report at the start of the following class.
Project: Proposal, Video, and Script

For your project “Cleveland’s Green Space: Past, Present, and Potential Future”, you should prepare a video for one green space in or near Cleveland, Ohio. Please note that you are allowed and encouraged to reuse any information that you gather for the proposal and incorporate it into your project. In your project, you should clearly discuss what community need(s) the green space or proposed green space addresses or will address in the future. Additional, project details will be posted on blackboard.

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.

**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 MC 147. 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.**

**Grade of “I”**

"I"
The "I" (or Incomplete) 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.

**Writing Assistance**

Students with difficulty writing may contact the Writing Center located in Main Classroom 321 for assistance. Students should use the American Psychological Association (APA) format for citations and reference pages.
**Plagiarism**

Plagiarism is stealing and/or using the ideas or writings of another in a paper or report and claiming them as one’s 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 acknowledgment. The penalties for plagiarism are found in full in the Student Handbook under Academic Regulations (Policy on Academic Misconduct) at the following link: https://www.csuohio.edu/studentlife/student-conduct.

If you require additional information regarding plagiarism you may also refer to the Writing Centers page on plagiarism, which can be accessed at the following link: https://www.csuohio.edu/writing-center/writing-center-2.

**Paraphrasing**

Paraphrasing should be used to support student’s thinking and should form the bulk of their evidence. A paraphrase is a restatement of the author’s words or ideas. Paraphrasing adds weight to the argument presented. Where possible maintain the Intent of the original passage, or if synthesizing the work of several authors use the style indicated above.

**Communication Policy**

**How to Communicate with Classmates**

Please be professional and courteous in you verbal interaction with your classmates. In this class, you will have an opportunity to do activities so you will spend time in class brainstorming with your peers. A good communicator understands what the other person is conveying and can explain a contrasting point of view to their own. If you want someone to understand your ideas, it is a good idea to give them an indication that you are listening to them.
How to Communicate with Your Instructor

As wonderful practice for engaging with colleagues as a professional, your emails should always address your instructor in a courteous and professional tone. Remember that you are sending a formal professional note and not an informal text message to a friend.

- Address your emails to Dr. Taylor
- Use a short, but descriptive subject line
- Strive to be clear and professional in your tone
- Try, whenever possible, to focus your email to one particular topic
- Your emails should conclude with your full name. You may want to consider putting your major on the bottom of your email so I can learn more about your academic endeavors.

If you do not follow these guidelines, you may be asked to resubmit your email to me before I respond to your question or comment.

Policies

- For class cancellations due to weather, call CSU information (687-2000) before class, or access the Cleveland State University home page at www.csuohio.edu.
- Academic misconduct: plagiarism or cheating will result in an “F” for the assignment and possibly an “F” for the course.
- Late assignments are accepted at the discretion of the instructor.
- Make-ups assignments are at the discretion of the instructor and require valid written documentation (for example, written doctor’s excuse).

Attendance Policy

For missing deadlines, excused absences for the online class include documented illness, deaths in the family and other documented crises, call to active military duty or jury duty, religious holy days, and official University activities. Upon requesting an excused absence, you should be prepared to provide proper documentation along with your email stating the assignment
missed and a brief description for the request. These absences will be accommodated in a way that does not arbitrarily penalize students who have a valid excuse.

**Fairness**

It is unfair to other students in the class for you to ask for a deadline extension except when justified by extenuating circumstances. Competing pressures from other courses, job requirements, or computing problems do not qualify as extenuating circumstances. Students must provide the instructor with documentation that explains their absence (doctor’s note, obituary, etc.). Extensions for individual assignments or a grade of incomplete in the course will only be granted for severe hardship or extenuating circumstances.

Make-up exams or assignment extensions will not be given unless justified by extenuating circumstances (such as: an illness or family emergency) and without prior consent from the instructor. Submitting a request for an early or late exam does not guarantee that the instructor will grant the request. Missing an exam or assignment without a valid excuse may result in a zero grade for the exam or assignment (unless a late penalty is specified on the assignment).

If late assignments will be accepted (as specified on the instructions), the following are the general late penalties.

- 10% deduction for turning in the assignment one day late on or before 11:59 p.m. ET.
- 20% deduction for turning in the assignment two days late on or before 11:59 p.m. ET.

The instructor does not generally accept assignments past two days late. Unlike the weekdays, please note that the weekend of Saturday and Sunday will only count as one day.

**American Psychological Association (APA) Citation and Formatting Style**

APA is the citation and formatting style used by planners and it is very common in the social sciences. APA is the style used in this class. Before engaging in your discussion posts, please follow website links by Purdue Owl (2015) to learn about how to use American Psychological Association (APA) in-text citations.
What kinds of references should I include?
You can give a reference from the course materials provided this week as well as from an outside source(s). You should properly cite any sources that you use. As this is a learning environment, we want you to include sources so that others can follow-up on your ideas by looking up what kinds of academic resources inspire or support your thinking.

**Syllabus Change Policy**

"Except for changes that substantially affect implementation of the evaluation (grading) statement, this syllabus is a guide for the course and is subject to change with advance notice."

- [https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/02/](https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/02/)
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