

LEARNING GOALS (HUNDREDS): KNOWLEDGE, WISDOM, SKILLS FROM CAMPUS ECOLOGY

A few years ago, after a presentation on learning outcomes, I decided to try to list the possible learning outcomes of Campus Ecology. It turned out to be much more extensive than I had originally intended, but wonderfully liberating to name some of the things that matter most to me. Students take this survey before the first day of class, and they tell us if they're sure, or half-sure, or not sure at all that they know or understand the concepts. One side effect of this first survey is that they get excited to be in the course. They take the survey again at the end of the semester, and the difference is, of course, what they learned in the course—or at least what they think they've learned.

Introductions: Wild and Precious Life

- I can explain the meaning of "practical idealism"
- I can explain "the social construction of common sense"
- I can compare and contrast expressed and operative values
- I can describe and appraise my own environmental values
- I can explain the importance of stories in environmental education.
- I know why Mary Oliver's poem "The Summer Day" is important for this course

Writing Workshop

- I know how to write a good exploratory essay.
- I know how to use my connecting mind to develop an idea.
- I know some good questions to ask about the quality of essays, including my own.

This Place on Earth

- I can describe the difference between land and landscape.
- I can explain what Paul Gruchow means by inhabiting a place.
- I can apply Aldo Leopold's "land ethic" to my place on earth, including St. Olaf.
- I understand the benefits of a cattail marsh.
- I can compare the sources of Paul Gruchow's happiness to my own.
- I can define a "land pyramid."

Plotting Our Place on Earth

- I know how to know a place well.
- I know how to see like Annie Dillard.
- I can unpeach a peach and construct "the artificial obvious."
- I can explain the importance of communities of memory and communities of hope.
- I know what Wallace Stegner meant by the "geography of hope."
- I understand the difference between memory and nostalgia.
- I know what wonder is for.

Valentine's Day

In this section

Assignments: What Students Do in This Class

- Annotating the Campus Plot Projects
- Reflective Journals

Campus Ecology and the Nature of College

Evaluations

Learning goals (hundreds): Knowledge, Wisdom, Skills from Campus Ecology

What We Learned 2011

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I know the assumptions of romantic love, and I know the other kinds of love in the world—eros, philia, agape and biophilia

Real World

I can distinguish local knowledge from “ignorant knowledge.”

I understand the cultural construction of realism and idealism.

I can distinguish the hidden curriculum from the official curriculum of the college.

I understand David Orr’s critique of the social construction of success.

I know how to practice empathy as a way of knowing.

I can explain what Bill McKibben means by the “I-dolatrous way of life” in America.

I can explain the difference between “voluntary simplicity” and “involuntary complexity.”

I understand and can apply the concept of cultural work.

I can explain the “cultural work” performed by concepts like “the real world” and “the St. Olaf bubble.”

I know what it really means to “Get real!”

I understand the meaning and implications of my ecological footprint.

I know how to use Thoreau’s “Realometer” on my own life.

Rethinking Education

I know why the liberal arts are liberal.

I know how the liberal arts are conservative.

I can explain the dangers of “ignorant knowledge.”

I understand why St. Olaf includes religion in the curriculum and extra-curriculum of the college.

I can explain the importance of love to a liberal arts education.

I know the difference between know-how and know-why.

I can map out the concept of “moral ecology.”

I can explain the difference between knowledge, understanding and wisdom.

I understand the virtues necessary to a liberal education and a sustainable society.

I can explain the practicality of a liberal arts education.

I can compare and contrast my goals for education with St. Olaf’s goals.

I know how to be a part of a genuine learning community.

Educating for a Sustainable Future

I can explain the costs and benefits of academic professionalization and departmentalization.

I know what a “designing mind” is, and how to use it.

I understand the economic problems with ecological thinking and vice versa.

I can explain why problem-solving is an important teaching tool.

I know how to “go deep” with my environmental learning.

The Nature of Our Rooms

I can explain the concept of Zen affluence.

I understand the meaning of just-in-case consumption.

I can describe the social construction of necessity. [use Pew survey]

I can describe the appeal of “delectable materialism”—to understand why we might have all this stuff.

I can explain Michael Schudson’s critique of the critics of consumption.

I understand the complexity of simplicity.

I understand the environmental importance of limits and restraint.

The Nature of Our Clothes

I know why college students have so many clothes.

I know why my clothes come from so many different countries.

I understand how to use product chains to talk about the out-of-sight environmental impacts of clothes.

I can describe the expressed and operative values of the clothes that collegians wear.

I know how to think about the embodied energy in my clothes.

I can describe the values implicit in the American system of fashion.

I can apply the concept of “peer socialization” to my own life.

I understand Erving Goffman’s concept of “the presentation of self in everyday life” well enough to apply it to my own life.

I can describe the environmental costs and benefits of peer socialization.

I know how to analyze a commercial catalogue for its values.

I understand the processes of decontextualization and recontextualization in advertising.

I can describe five different criticisms of the American fashion system.

I understand the costs and benefits of outsourcing textile manufacturing.

I know what it means to go sweatshopping.

I could create a flow chart illustrating the product chain of a T-shirt or a pair of athletic shoes.

The Environmentalist’s New Clothes

I understand why clothes are important in human cultures.

I could explain the extensive pleasures of clothes to my friends.

I can explain to my friends what Juliet Schor means by “clean clothes.”

I understand how more materialism could be a good thing.

If I chose to, I could apply Juliet Schor’s “new clothing ethic” to my own apparel shopping.

When I go shopping for clothes, I know how to evaluate the ethical implications of my choices.

I can explain the problems and the possibilities of peer pressure.

Food

I understand the social construction of “food.” [nature to culture to edibility]

I can explain how the ideology of choice works in the cafeteria, and in other places on campus.

I can explain the social values embodied in a college cafeteria.

I understand the cafeteria’s connection to climate change.

I understand what it means to say that eating is an agricultural act.

I understand the main assumptions and practices of industrial agriculture.

I know why most American farming is in monocultures, and why some critics find that problematic.

I know what Vandana Shiva means by “monocultures of the mind.”

I can explain the environmental thinking of locavores.

I know the difference between vegetarianism and vergetarianism.

I can explain compost as a form of food.

I can describe why American foods are also “fossil foods.”

With the proper information, I could map out my foodshed.

I know why stored sunshine is important to human beings.

I can explain the food ethic of “Lily’s Chickens.”

I understand the pleasures of feeling useful.

I know how to estimate my ecological *foodprint*.

I know what Wendell Berry means by the extensive pleasures of eating.

I understand the poetry of “Rice” and “Oranges.”

I know the difference between the price and cost of food.

I can explain why local food makes sense to many critics of industrial agriculture.

I understand why I eat dirt.

I can create a flow chart of America’s food system.

I know how American politics influences what I eat.

I can trace five different connections between photosynthesis and my life.

I understand the different dimensions of saying grace.

I know how to bake bread.

I know enough to eat well.

The World(s) of Campus Ecology

I understand how Jaime Lerner’s designing mind differs from most politicians’ planning processes.

I understand the rhetorical strategies used by Jaime Lerner—and by Bill McKibben.

I can compare and contrast the standard operating politics of Curitiba and most American cities.

I can apply the strategies of Curitiba to environmental problems that I face in America.

The Nature of Screens

I understand what cultural critics mean when they describe America as a culture of distraction.

I can describe the hidden curriculum of the screens in my life.

I can explain the cultural work of television news and entertainment.

I can explain the costs *and* benefits of the screens in my life.

I can explain the anthropocentrism of Facebook.

I can explain television as a system, not just a technology.

I understand the environmental impacts of electronic waste.

I know how to access some of the benefits of electronic environmentalism.

I know how to evaluate the appropriateness of technologies in my life.

Residence Life in the Biosphere

I know the top 5 environmental impacts of people who live in the residence halls.

(heat, electricity, water, waste and food)

I can explain the hidden curriculum embedded in the standard operating procedures of the residence halls.

I understand what St. Olaf is doing to make its residence halls more sustainable.

I understand the trade-offs involved in those sustainability decisions.

I can list ten concrete steps to make residence halls more sustainable.

I can imagine the culture of a sustainable residence hall.

Garbage In, Garbage Out

I understand the concept of a “retroactive design assignment.”

I can explain the aphorism “Waste is food.”

I understand why college students (and other Americans) waste so much.

I can explain the metaphor of “a boat for Thoreau.”

I can explain how garbage is related to American materialism.

I know why recycling is America’s number one solution for environmental problems, instead of something more substantial.

I know precisely what can (and cannot) be recycled at St. Olaf.

I can give five examples of ecological design reducing waste and garbage.

I can explain extended producer liability laws, and I understand how they inspire designing minds to plan for pre-cycling.

I know how waste is related to “the next industrial revolution.”

I understand the power of secondary markets.

I know the 5 R’s of responsible consumption. Reduce, re-use, refuse, recycle, rejoice.

I know how to reduce my waste substantially (whether or not I do it).

The Power of St. Olaf

I can explain the environmental histories/sequences of fossil fuel.

I can explain the different environmental impacts described in “Forecast 2035.”

I can explain 5 different types of solar energy.

I know (approximately) the size of my carbon consumption.

I can compare and contrast American and European policy approaches to power generation.

I can identify and explain 5 different public policy responses to promote more sustainable power.

I know what “clean coal” means.

I know how nuclear power relates to global climate change.

A Sustainable Future of Power

I can explain why compact fluorescent bulbs are more efficient than incandescent bulbs.

I know why St. Olaf has a wind turbine.

I know 10 different ways that I can generate negawatts of electricity in my everyday life.

I can explain carbon offsets and carbon sequestration.

I know how a cap and trade program in carbon emissions would work.

I understand the concept of *phantom load*.

I know how to reduce my carbon consumption two percent this year.

Spring Break

I know how to practice resurrection in my own life.

American Values

I know what's good about "the good life" and what's not-so-good.

I understand why David Orr says that all values are environmental values.

I can describe the costs and benefits of individualism.

I can explain the environmental impacts of "familiarity."

I know why people don't usually talk about their deepest values.

American Environmental Values

I can list 10 operative environmental values in America.

I can compare and contrast America's expressed and operative environmental values.

I can explain how mainstream American values impact the environment.

I can explain two different meanings of materialism.

I could chart the operative environmental values of college students.

I can compare and contrast materialist and post-materialist values.

I know why "Yearning for Balance" says that America is "a society at odds with its values."

I know what it means to say, "The Joneses is killing me." Peer socialization

I know how to be a responsible consumer.

The Spirit of Sustainability

I understand how most college students think about religion—and practice it.

I know why many students say they're spiritual, but not religious.

I understand the etymology (and environmental implications) of the word "religion."

I can explain what major American religious denominations say about environmental issues.

I can explain the religious tradition of sacramentalism.

I can explain the environmental implications of sabbath.

I understand the religious tradition of stewardship.

I know how to think about consumption as vocation.

I understand why asceticism is un-American.

I know a few ways that the prophetic tradition is playing a part in modern environmentalism.

I can explain the two major interpretations of the Genesis story, and their implications for religious values concerning nature in America.

I can explain how religion animates (or not) my own environmental values.

Cars, Colleges and Contentment

I can explain why college students—and other Americans—drive so much.

I know how the Federal CAFÉ standards work, and why some people don't like them.

I understand the environmental advantages—and disadvantages—of hybrid cars.

I know how an internal combustion engine works within the earth's carbon cycle.

I understand how my driving causes global climate change.

I can list ten important costs (not counting purchase and gas and insurance) of cars.

I can explain why “America is addicted to oil.”

I know how to use Mimi Sheller’s conceptual framework to explain my own attachment to cars

I know how to use my knowledge of American automobility to analyze the appeals of a car ad.

I know why SUV ads are often Romantic landscapes.

I know enough to evaluate arguments for building more roads or building more mass transit in America’s metropolitan areas.

I can diagram the different components of America’s car culture.

I know enough to evaluate the costs and benefits of cars at St. Olaf.

New Car Policies

I can explain five important public policy proposals to reduce the environmental impacts of cars.

I can list at least five ways that I can contribute to a world that’s driven less by cars.

I can suggest three ways to improve St. Olaf’s car policy

I understand the concept of full-cost accounting.

Work and Play in College

I know the difference between a job and a career and a vocation.

I know how work is a collaboration with wildness.

I know what work is for.

I can evaluate the environmental impacts of work in America.

I know some important environmental questions to ask about my workplace.

I know five important skills that I can bring to the work of the world.

I understand the appeal of parties to college students.

I can explain the environmental impacts and cultural work of beer.

I can explain the importance of fun-damentalism in college culture.

I know “the great American interdenominational prayer.”

I can explain the cultural work of the American weekend.

I understand the moral ecology of Spring Break.

I can give five examples of “tools for conviviality.”

Love and Sex on Campus

I can explain the common sense of love on a college campus.

I can explain some of the most important ritualized scripts of romantic love.

I know what Arlie Hochschild means by “the commercialization of intimate life.”

I know some of the cultural work that romantic love performs in American culture.

I could also explain some uncommon senses of love that are available to college students.

I can explain college sex as an environmental issue.

I can describe why John Ryan considers the condom one of the seven sustainable wonders of the world.

I understand the pleasures of sex, including the extensive pleasures.

Designing Minds: Architecture as Pedagogy

I can list the lessons that St. Olaf's buildings are teaching me.

I can explain why architecture is especially important to sustainability.

I understand the ecological designs of St. Olaf's new Science Complex.

I know how to use my designing mind.

I know how to annotate the environmental implications of a place.

I can explain William Stafford's allegiances—and my own.

I know how to express my spirituality in public.

Designing Minds, Designing Cities

I understand why the United States has become a suburban nation.

I can explain the environmental costs and benefits of sprawl.

I understand the main principles of New Urbanism.

I can explain the policies that comprise smart growth.

Designing Minds, Designing Our Lives

I know how to think about beauty as resonance.

I understand the beauty of what Buddhists call "right relation to the world."

I understand the difference between doing things right, and doing the right things.

I can explain the relationship between the extravagant gesture and regenerative design.

I know how to think about my life as a design, as a story that I get to shape.

The Nature of Natural Lands

I understand the difference between wildness and wilderness.

I can explain why Scott Russell Sanders loves wildness.

I know why college students talk about "getting back to nature."

I know what the prairie teaches us.

I could give a decent tour of St. Olaf's natural lands.

If I wanted to, I could explain the benefits of biodiversity to my parents.

I understand some of the ecosystem services provided by St. Olaf's natural lands.

I can name ten native plants on the St. Olaf campus.

I know how to think about landscaping as an aesthetic art and as an ethical art.

I know how to make sense out of any plot of land I find.

The Business of Environmentalism

I can explain the environmental impacts of American business.

I know why many American businesses have opposed environmental regulation.

I can explain the tenets of free market environmentalism.

I can describe the recent greening of American business.

I know why several major corporations are asking for Congress to pass legislation with carbon caps.

I know the history of incorporation and why that matters today.

I understand the difference between a boycott and a buycott.

The Politics of Everyday Life

I can explain why so many college students aren't involved in politics.

I understand how politics impacts the everyday environmental life of college.

I understand the difference between a political system and political culture.

I can explain 5 reasons why many Americans say they're not political.

I understand the problem with "the perfect standard."

I'm embracing my "usable past," my histories of hope.

I can explain Michael Maniates' critique of consumer environmentalism.

I can explain the difference between citizenship and sitizenship.

I know how to increase my repertoire of political activity.

Even though it's taboo, I know how to talk about values and politics.

Environmental Politics

I understand the perspectives that liberals and conservatives bring to environmental issues.

I can explain the merits of a "green" tax shift.

I can explain the costs and benefits of a carbon tax.

I can explain the operation of a "cap and trade" system.

I can list at least five "perverse subsidies" in American politics.

I can list at least 5 environmental policy successes since the first Earth Day.

I know how to evaluate the environmental positions of the 2008 Presidential candidates.

I can sympathetically explain the Bush Administration's environmental policy

I can explain the politics of a fast-food hamburger.

Getting Political: Getting Justice

I can explain justice as an environmental issue and vice versa.

I can explain the triple bottom line of environmentalism.

I understand how politics helps citizens institutionalize their values.

I understand some effective ways that I can help move the political process.

I understand the disparities of environmental opportunity—why some people get the opportunity to live by the garbage dump, and others don't.

I understand how politics is the practice of loving all the children all the time.

I could explain the precautionary principle to my friends.

I see how "going green" can be as much about saving capitalism as saving the earth.

St. Olaf and the New World

I understand how local action changes the world.

I understand "the tyranny of small decisions," and the hope of small decisions.

I can imagine the contours of a sustainable society—political, economic, cultural, psychological and spiritual.

I understand the importance of "possidiction."

I know some good ways to get from this world to that new world.

I understand the different rhetorical strategies of environmentalists, the ways that people use words to shape our worlds—past, present and future.

I appreciate “the slow and difficulty trick of living,” and finding it where I am.

Campus Ecology: Grounds for Hope

I know the difference between hope and optimism.

I know why Derrick Jensen wants to go “beyond hope.”

I know what hope is good for.

I know how to put hope to work.

I have the skills to do a plot project anywhere.

I know what David Orr means when he says that all education is environmental education.

I know how to be a hoping mechanism for people in my life.

If I had time, I could name 50 things that make me environmentally hopeful.

I understand that students are professors too.

I know how to become native to a place.

I know how to use my designing mind to change the world.

I know, more or less, what I intend to do with my one wild and precious life.