

BiSci 03 Fall 2017 Syllabus

The purpose of education is not so much to accumulate knowledge as it is to expand awareness.

WHAT ARE YOU GETTING INTO? We want you to know—right from the get-go—that this is not a typical GEN-ED course nor is it a typical SCIENCE course. For example, you have probably heard that there are no tests in BiSci 3 and that’s correct. In our experience, tests often get in the way of learning. Think about it: You cram a lot of information into your head to pass a test and, then, if you are like most people, you forget most of it within a year or two. This is especially true in courses where you are “fed” what the professor believes you should know and then asked to “regurgitate,” on the exam, all that you have “swallowed.” BiSci, by contrast, is based on active learning—i.e., exploring, questioning, reflecting, experiencing—it’s an invitation to actively engage with SCIENCE and with YOUR LIFE! That’s right: This course is primarily about YOU!

THREE IMPORTANT THINGS TO TAKE NOTE OF NOW!

I. Purchase the following THREE supplies at the PSU bookstore in preparation for BiSci 003: 1-**Course Text:** Developing Ecological Consciousness: The End of Separation [Second Edition]; 2-**Course Journal:** BiSci 3 Companion Journal, Fall 2017; 3) **Course Hand Lens**. NOTE: Do **not** purchase the Course Text as an e-book and make sure that the copy of the text that you purchase is clean—i.e., **unmarked**.... More on why later.

II. As soon as you are able, log onto (and *bookmark*) the BiSci 3 Course Website at: <http://www.personal.psu.edu/cfu1> You will need to do this in order to access the two readings for WEEK 1—namely: 1) the FULL BiSci 3 syllabus; and 2) the essay “Is BiSci 3 for you?” Once you are on the course website, just click the first icon, to the right of **Part I** and this will take you to these two readings. After completing these readings, proceed to do your Week 1 Reflection-Action Assignment (See pages 7 thru 10 of your BiSci 3 Course Journal for instructions on this).

III. Your first lab will be held this week, on Thursday *or* Friday. Locate the time and place for this lab meeting by consulting your course schedule for this semester.

Professors in charge:

Dr. Christopher Uhl; 322 Mueller Lab; 863-3893; cfu1@psu.edu

Jen Steigerwalt; 865-4105; jab56@psu.edu

Need to talk? Send one of us an email and we will arrange to talk with you within 48 hours.

Teaching Coordinators:

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Our Overall Objectives in BiSci 03 course are:

- 1-That all of us might think thoughts that we have never had the *awareness* to think;
- 2-That we might write what we have never had the *understanding* to write;
- 3-That we might speak what we have never had the *courage* to speak;
- 4-That we might feel what we have never had the *openness* to feel...
- 5-That, through all of this, we might all come to experience more fully what it means to be an awake, nurturing and generative human being.

What to Expect in BiSci 03?

If you commit to fully engaging with this course you can expect to:

- Discover how questions can be a powerful catalysts for your learning;
- Grow in your ability to see yourself, those around you and especially Planet Earth from new and liberating perspectives;
- Appreciate, anew, that learning can be fun, invigorating and deeply meaningful;
- Realize that you have the ability to play a part in the healing of our world.

The Four Pillars of our BiSci 3 Course Culture

Please know that all 32 of us—i.e., Uhl and Steigerwalt, the 25 TAs and 5 TATAs—stand ready to do everything in our power to offer you a learning experience with the potential to transform your understanding of yourself and the world. To achieve this goal, we ask that you join us in adhering to these Four Pillars of our BiSci culture:

1. Punctuality: That we all arrive on time to all Lectures and Labs and refrain from *packing up* early.
2. Presence: That we all maintain alertness during class time while also refraining from the use of any electronic devices.
3. Openness: That we all exercise an openness to new ideas and novel ways of thinking.
4. Truthspeaking: That we abstain from B-Sing on course assignments for the purpose of discovering what is genuinely true for each of us.

We are deeply excited by the opportunity to serve as your guides. But, in the end, the power and potential of this course will depend on each of you—specifically, on your willingness to embrace the Four Pillars of our BiSci Culture. If you do this, you can be assured that you will have a highly rewarding learning experience in this course.

ALERT: TWO MANDATORY LAB DATES—Mark your Calendar!

1-On the weekend of Week 5 (i.e., September 23-24) you will be going on a 4-hour field trip at Walnut Springs Park (1-mile from campus). Day/time will be worked out in your section.

2-Week 12 (sometime between November 8 and 12) you will be participating in an **evening ecological meal** with those in your section. Again, exact day/time will be worked out within your section.

COURSE OUTLINE

TAKE NOTE: This course draws from many disciplines—e.g., ecology, psychology, biology, astronomy, sociology, philosophy, geography, anthropology, history, health and human development, among others. Why? Because the *environment*, our central focus, is all encompassing. That said, you can be sure that—no matter what the topic—we will always connect it to your life and the ecology of Earth.

PART 1: EARTH OUR HOME

WEEK 1: Introduction

Readings:

- Course Syllabus (See BiSci website, Week 1, for link to this reading)
- “Is BiSci for You?” (BiSci website, Week 1, for link)

Reflection-Action Assignment # 1: *Is BiSci for You?*

- Access this Assignment in your Course Journal, pages 7-10

Lectures:

- 8/21—What’s BiSci 03 About?
- 8/23—The Gift of Curiosity

Lab 1:

- 8/24-25—Who is Here? What’s Possible?

WEEK 2: Exploring our Origins

Reading:

- “Questions & the Hero’s Journey” (See BiSci website, Week 2, for link to reading)

Reflection-Action Assignment # 2: *The Power of Questions*

- Access this Assignment in your Course Journal, Week 2

Lecture:

- 8/28—Beyond Dualism: Aerating our Thinking
- 8/30—The Power of Choice

Lab 2:

- 8/31-9/1—Power of Questions.

NOTE: The WEEK 1 and 2 Sections of your journal will be collected by your TA at this Week’s Lab Meeting. Also, by this lab meeting, be sure that you have created a sturdy front and back cover for your Journal (using recycled materials) AND that you have ILLUSTRATED the FRONT COVER ONLY (see back of this syllabus, page ix, for details on this). Finally, be forewarned that ALL Late Assignments will be penalized (see back of this syllabus, page xi, for details).

WEEK 3: The Challenge of Seeing With New Eyes

Reading:

- Uhl Text—Chapter 1: Discovery (pages 5-28)

Reflection-Action Assignment # 3: *Alive in the Universe!*

- Access this Assignment in your Course Journal, Week 3

Lectures:

- 9/4—Labor Day Holiday
- 9/6—Story of Origins

Lab 3:

- 9/7-8—Seeing with New Eyes

WEEK 4: A *Part of*, not *Apart from Earth!*Reading:

--Uhl Text—Chapter 2: Coming to Awareness (pages 29-53)

Reflection-Action Assignment # 4: A *part of*, not *Apart from Earth*

--Access this Assignment in your Course Journal, Week 4

Lectures:

9/11—Where is Home?

9/13—The Cycles of Life

Lab 4:

9/14-15—The Art of Reflection. Note: Hand in Week 3-4 completed journal.

WEEK 5: Relating to the WorldReading:

TruthSpeaking and The Hero's Journey (See BiSci website, Week 5, for link to this reading)

Reflection-Action Assignment # 5: *Relating to the World*

--Access this Assignment in your Course Journal, Week 5

Lectures:

9/18—Humans in the Cycle!?

9/20—Trees r' Us

Lab 5:

9/23-24—Walnut Springs Weekend Field Trip

WEEK 6: Everything Belongs—All Our Relations!Reading:

--Ch. 3: Cultivating Community: Intimacy with Earth's Web of Life (pages 55-84)

Reflection-Action Assignment # 6: *Everything Belongs*

--Access this Assignment in your Course Journal, Week 6

Lectures:

9/25—Humans: Made for Relationship

9/27—What Insects Might Teach us about Ourselves?

Lab 6:

9/28—9/29—Meeting the Trees

PART 2: ASSESSING THE HEALTH OF EARTH**WEEK 7: Listening to Earth's *Vital Signs***Reading:

--Ch. 4: Gauging the Health of Earth (pages 89-115)

Reflection-Action Assignment # 7: Aligning Mind & Body

--Access this Assignment in your Course Journal, Week 7

Lectures:

10/2—Unexam I

10/4— What Can Earth's Sky and Land Creatures Teach us about the Health of Earth?

Lab 7:

10/5-6-7—Power of Listening.

WEEK 8: Planetary DestabilizationReading:

--Text, Ch. 5: Courage: Facing Up to the Unraveling of the Biosphere (pages 117-145)

Reflection Action Assignment # 8: A Concept Map

--Access this Assignment in your Course Journal, Week 8

Lectures:

10/9— What Can Earth's Ocean Creatures Teach us about the Health of Earth?

10/11— Climate out of Control!?

Lab 8: 10/12-13—Concept Mapping & Transforming the Ordinary. Hand in Week 7-8 Journal

WEEK 9: Living the Questions: Discovering the Causes of Earth BreakdownReading:

--Text, Ch. 6: Living the Questions (pages 147-171)

Reflection Action Assignment # 9: Living the Questions

--Access this Assignment in your Course Journal, Week 9

Lectures:

10/16—A Giant Experiment!?

10/18—First Person Ecology

Lab 9:

10/19-20—What's in a Footprint?

WEEK 10: SilencingReadings:

--"The Greatest Danger: Apathia" (see BiSci website Week 10 for link to reading)

--"Silencing" (see BiSci website Week 10 for link to reading)

Reflection-Action Assignment # 10: Apathy and Despair

--Access this Assignment in your Course Journal, Week 10

Lectures:

10/23—*Separation* and the Environmental Crisis

10/25—Might it All Come Back to *Story*?

Lab 10: 10/26-27— *Council: To be Human is to Feel*. Note: Hand in Week 9-10 Journal.

PART III: HEALING OURSELVES→HEALING EARTH**WEEK 11: Business as Usual.... But for How Long!?**Reading:

Chapter 7—The Old Story: Economism and Separation (pages 177-203)

Reflection-Action Assignment # 11: The End of Separation

-Access this Assignment in your Course Journal, Week 11

Lectures:

10/30—What's Happiness got to do with it?

11/1—Unexam 2

Lab 11:

11/2-3—Response-Ability

WEEK 12: Re-Thinking the WorldReading:

--“Unhappy Meals” (see BiSci website, Week 12, for link to this reading)

Reflection-Action Assignment # 12: Re-Thinking the World

--Access this Assignment in your Course Journal, Week 12

Lectures:

11/6—Re-Thinking Food

11/8—Re-Thinking Human Shelter

Lab 12:

11/7-12— *Ecological Meal*—date/time arranged in section.

Note: Hand in Completed Week 11-12 Journal

WEEK 13: Birthing a New StoryReading:

--Ch. 8: Birthing a New Story (Pages 205-241)

Reflection-Action Assignment # 13: Birthing a New Story

--Access this Assignment in your Course Journal, Week 13

Lectures:

11/13—A New Story of Transportation

11/15—Slowing Down to Fall Ahead

Lab 13:

11/16-17—Slowing Down Exploration

Thanksgiving Break

Note: There is a wrap-up assignment for our course. It’s called the Ecological Identity Project and it’s due at your final lab meeting. To learn about this assignment go to the “Thanksgiving Break page (just after Week 13) in your Course Journal.

WEEK 14: A Hero’s JourneyReading:

--“A Hero’s Journey” (see BiSci website, Week 14, for link to this reading)

Reflection-Action Assignment #14: Taking Matters into Your Own Hands

--Access this Assignment in your Course Journal

Lectures:

11/27—The Question of Identity

11/29—Weaving the Sacred into Culture & Life

Lab 14:

11/30-12/1—Hero’s Journey. Note: Turn in your completed Week 13-14 Journal.

WEEK 15: OPPORTUNITYISNOWHEREReadings:

--Optional E.C. Reading: “Awaken” by Christy Carfagno

Reflection-Action Assignment # 15: Complete Back Cover of Your Course Journal

-Access Assignment in your Course Journal, Week 15

Lectures:

12/4—Unexam 3

12/6—Making Sense of it All?

Lab 15:

12/7-8—Present Ecological Identity Project and completed Back Cover of your Journal

COURSE PERFORMANCE

i.	Construction of a Sturdy, Creative Front & Back Cover for Journal	4 points
ii.	Reflection-Action Assignments	70 points
iii.	Lecture Reflection Questions	20 points
iv.	Ecological Identity Project	6 points
v.	Full Engagement with Lecture, Lab and Walnut Springs	20 points
TOTAL:		120 Points

Point-Grade equivalents: 112-120 points = A; 108-111.9 points = A-; 104-107.9 = B+; 99-103.9 = B; 96-98.9 = B-; 91-95.6 = C+; 84-90.9 = C; 72-83.9 = D; Below 72 = F

The Special Role of Your BiSci Course Journal!

ALL your written work in this course—namely: Your weekly Reflection-Action Assignments and weekly responses to Lecture Reflection Questions, as well as any Extra-Credit Work—goes in your Course Journal. Your Journal will be collected **every two weeks** throughout the semester. Given the importance of your Journal, it is essential that you keep it up-to-date and that you bring it to ALL lecture and lab meetings.

IMPORTANT: We recognize, of course, that your Course Journal reflections could be done electronically (e.g., via Canvas submissions) but there is something very special about having the physical experience of SLOWLY composing your thoughts in a Course Journal free of electronic interference. In so doing, you will be actually shaping letters with your own hands on paper (a substance with a physical existence), rather than clacking keys into hyperspace while contending with miscellaneous electronic stimuli from the Internet. Said differently: Using a Journal that has an actual “physical body” will allow your reflection process to work more naturally with your own body. And, it is our hope that, when BiSci 03 is over, you will want to hold onto your Journal as a *physical memoir* that documents the person you are at this time of your life!

i. Construction of Sturdy & Creative Cover for your Companion Journal (4 points):

Do NOT buy a binder for your journal. Instead, we require that you create a sturdy front and back cover that will protect your Journal pages. Use recycled materials (e.g., discarded cardboard) for this cover. Then, to bind your journal together, purchase or scavenge three 1.5-inch metal rings that can be easily opened and closed. This will ensure that you can easily add, as well as remove, items from your Journal.

Important: Once, you have your cover attached to your journal, design and illustrate the Front Cover in a way that tells a story about you. In other words, make your cover be a reflection of who you are, your likes, personality, hopes, passions, personal history, quirks, etc. Devote some time to this creation process. After all, this is your ‘journal’... the place where you will be telling the story of your BiSci 3 Journey. Note: Complete your Front Cover by your Week 2 Lab Meeting (8/31—9/1).

Important: Leave the Back Cover of your Journal BLANK for now. At the end of this course (Week 15), we will ask you to illustrate your back cover in a way that tells the Story of your BiSci Journey.

ii. Reflection-Action Assignments (70 points): There are Reflection-Action Assignments for Week’s 1→14 of this course. These assignments are presented in your Course Journal each week. Each of your 14 Reflection-Action Assignments is worth 5 points (5 points x 14 weeks = 70 points total). Please complete each of your weekly Reflection-Action assignments by the time of your weekly lab meeting.

How to Read the Course Text

We ask that you actively engage with each chapter, literally writing down in the margins your thoughts, questions, doubts, uncertainties, musings, insights and anything else that comes up for you. In short, enter into a dialogue with each of your readings, literally putting something of yourself in the margins! The rationale for this is that when it comes time for you to formulate your weekly reflections in your Journal, you will already have a foundation to work from.

iii. Reflections on Lecture Questions (20 points): Twenty times during the semester you will be asked to reflect on a question given to you during lecture. Your reflections will go in your Course Journal on specially-designated pages. Each lecture reflection is worth 1 point.

iv. Ecological Identity Project (6 points): As a culminating action for this course, we will ask you create something that represents your understanding of yourself as an *ecological being*. Your creation could involve drawing, sculpture, music, dance, or a combination of these or any other media. NOTE: You will find further instructions on how to approach your Ecological Identity Project on the “Thanksgiving Break” page of your Course Journal.

v. Participation (20 points): To earn Participation Points, you must: 1) be fully present and ready to participate (with your Journal in hand) during all LECTURE and LAB meetings; 2) have your weekly Lecture-Reflection and Reading-Reflection Assignments **COMPLETED** before the beginning of each week’s Lab Meeting; 3) refrain from using any electronic devices during class time; 4) attend the mandatory Walnut Springs and Ecological Meal Labs. If you meet these expectations, you will be awarded 20 points for your consistent engagement. If not, you will be penalized accordingly.

The Importance of REFLECTION in Determining Your Course Grade

Three-quarters of your course grade will be determined by written assignments that you will be completing in your Course Journal. These assignments will be calling on you to REFLECT on the course lectures and course readings. Usually, at the beginning of an assignment, we will ask you to offer your personal opinion and feelings surrounding a certain question or topic. But just expressing your opinions and feelings, no matter how sincere you are, will not mean that you have completed the assignment. Why? Because your personal opinions and feelings are simply the gateway into personal REFLECTION and it will be your capacity for deep REFLECTION that will determine your Journal Grade in this course.

REFLECTION, in the context of BiSci 03, means thinking hard about WHY you think and feel the way that you do around the questions and topics raised in the course Journal! To successfully engage in REFLECTION will require that you ask yourself questions like the following: i-How did I come to have my opinion/belief/view on this issue? ii-How does my opinion/belief/view on this matter benefit me? iii-How does it limit me, hold me back, reduce my freedom? iv-What’s another way that I could choose to see this question/issue? v-What keeps me from being more curious, open-minded, vulnerable around this question/issue?

Suggestion: Review the above questions if/when your Journal scores are lower than expected.

CLASS ATTENDANCE

Learning in this course involves, first and foremost, your presence. Attendance will be taken at each lecture and lab meeting. Here are the rules: You are allowed two unexcused absences without penalty. After that, each unexcused absence will result in a 2-point deduction (out of a total of 120 course points). On the bright side, a two-point bonus will be given to your total score if you achieve perfect attendance.

What is an excused absence? It's an absence due to a documentable medical/health problem, a documentable death, a documentable and required University or military activity, or a documentable job interview or professional conference. All other absences are considered unexcused, and only two such absences are permitted before points will be deducted. Please report all documented absences to the BiSci Course Administrator—Liz Karcewski (evk5228@psu.edu).

IMPORTANT: If you miss more than ten classes--whether excused or unexcused--you will be dismissed from BiSci 03 class with an 'F' and given the opportunity to change your grade by taking this class again during Spring, 2018 semester.

LATENESS: We will only excuse TWO late arrivals to lecture/lab. You will be penalized one point for each late arrival beyond two.

Make-up Work for Missed Lectures

Any time you miss lecture, you are still required to respond to that day's Lecture-Reflection Question in your Course Journal. Go to the "Lecture Recordings" tab of the BiSci website to access recordings and lecture questions.

JOURNAL REVIEW AND COLLECTION DATES

Your response to each week's Lecture Reflection Question(s) and Reading-Reflection Prompt must be completed and ready for review at the beginning each Lab meeting. Your Course Journal will be collected at the beginning of lab on the days indicated in the chart below.

Journal Collection	Date of Collection
Weeks 1-2	Week 2 Lab: Aug. 31-Sept. 1
Weeks 3-4	Week 4 Lab: Sept. 14-15
Weeks 5-6	Week 6 Lab: Sept. 28-29
Weeks 7-8	Week 8 Lab: Oct. 12-13
Weeks 9-10	Week 10 Lab: Oct. 26-27
Weeks 11-12	Week 12 Lab: Nov. 9-10
Weeks 13-14	Week 14 Lab: Nov. 30-Dec. 1

Late Assignments: Your TA will NOT accept late journal assignments. Any late assignments **must be** turned in to Uhl or Steigerwalt. **Note:** Journal assignments that aren't turned in until the Monday after their due date will be penalized 2 letter grades; assignments that aren't turned in until the Wednesday after the due date will be penalized 3 letter grades; no Journal assignments will be accepted beyond this point.

Coaching: To avoid losing points for lateness, make a point to stay ahead of your weekly Journal Assignments, completing them early in the week.

Budgeting Your Time

IMPORTANT: If you intend to earn a good grade in this course, please anticipate devoting at least 5-7 hours each week on course assignments as follows: i) Careful reading: 1.5-2 hours/week; ii) Weekly Reflection-Action Assignment: 2.5-3.5 hours/week; iii) Lecture Reflections 1 hour/week.

Extra Credit Opportunities

You can earn as many as 10 extra credit points in this class. That could be the difference between a C and a B! Extra credit opportunities come in three categories:

- Resolve a Nature Mystery (1 points possible); See your Course Journal for details.
- Attend one or more BiSci evening films (3-4 points possible); See Box (below) and the Appendix of your BiSci Journal for details.
- Posting on BiSci Blog (2 points possible); Three posts gets you one point; six will get you 2 points. Each post must be >75 words to qualify.
- Perfect attendance (2 points possible); will be awarded for perfect attendance.
- Reflection on Week 15 “Awaken” reading (1 point possible)

Extra Credit for Films

On six evenings during the semester we will show a film that relates to BiSci course themes. See Film times and locations, along with Trailers, on our BiSci website under the “Film Fest” tab. In addition to taking in some powerful films, you can earn one extra-credit point for each film you attend. One-half point of extra credit will be awarded for simply attending a film, PLUS an additional 1/2 point if you place a reflection (150-word minimum) on the pages designated for Film Reflections in the Appendix of your BiSci Course Journal. Note: There are no extra credit points possible if you arrive late OR if you leave early.

Academic Integrity Statement: All University policies regarding academic integrity apply to this course. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarizing, fabricating of information or citations, facilitating acts of academic dishonesty by others, having unauthorized possession of examinations, submitting work of another person or work previously used without informing the instructor, or tampering with the academic work of other students. For any material or ideas obtained from other sources, such as the text or things you see on the web, in the library, etc., a source reference must be given. Direct quotes from any source must be identified as such. All test answers must be your own, and you must not provide any assistance to other students during tests. Any instances of academic dishonesty WILL be pursued under the [University](#) and [Eberly College of Science](#) regulations concerning academic integrity. In sum, all assignments must be your own work. Consequences for cheating will be in accord with Penn State policy. We value honesty and believe that no one else's work can compare to what you alone can accomplish.

Plagiarism Defined: A piece of writing that has been copied from someone else and is presented as being your own work. The act of taking the writings of another person and passing them off as one's own. Plagiarism occurs when a writer duplicates another writer's language or ideas and then calls the work his or her own. To avoid the charge of plagiarism, writers take care to credit those from whom they borrow and quote. Students have been dismissed from BiSci 3 with an “F” course grade for acts of plagiarism.

Student Disability Accommodation Statement: PSU welcomes students with disabilities. The Student Disability website at <http://equity.psu.edu/student-disability-resources> provides contact information and resources.

Education Equity/report bias statement: Consistent with University Policy AD29, students who believe they have experienced or observed a hate crime, an act of intolerance, discrimination, or harassment that occurs at Penn state are urged to report such incidents as outlined on the University's Report Bias webpage (<http://equity.psu.edu/reportbias>).

Counseling and Psychological Services: Many students at PSU face personal challenges or have psychological needs that may interfere with their academic progress, social development or emotional wellbeing. The University offers a variety of confidential services to help you through difficult times including counseling, crisis intervention, mental health screenings and more. To pursue help in these areas call Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) at 814-863-0395.