

BiSci 03 Spring 2017 Syllabus

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

WHAT ARE YOU GETTING INTO? I want you to know—right from the get-go—that this is not your 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 my 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” all that you “swallowed” on an exam. 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. If you haven’t done so yet, purchase both the Course Text AND the Course Journal from PSU bookstore in the HUB. **Course Text:** Developing Ecological Consciousness: The End of Separation [Second Edition]; **Course Journal:** Companion Journal, Spring 2017. NOTE: Do not purchase the Course Text as an e-book; nor should you rent the Course Text. Finally, 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 this week’s two readings: 1) the BiSci 3 syllabus; and 2) “Is BiSci 3 for you?”. Once you are on the website, just click the first icon, next to **Part I** and this will take you to your Week 1 readings. After completing the Week 1 readings, engage in your Week 1 Reflection-Action Assignment (See Week 1 of your BiSci 3 Course Journal for instructions).

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.

Professor in charge: Dr. C. Uhl; 322 Mueller Lab; 863-3893; cfu1@psu.edu

Need to talk? Simply shoot me an email and I will arrange to talk with you within 48 hours.

Teaching Coordinators: Jeremy Wdowiak (jyw5515@psu.edu); Carly Hunter (cvh5275@psu.edu), Abigail Nelson (amn5418@psu.edu), Morgan Kravarik (mwk5540@psu.edu), and Ann Li

Our Overall Objective in this course is: i- that all of us might think thoughts that we have never had the *awareness* to think; ii-that we might write what we have never had the *understanding* to write; iii-that we might speak what we have never had the *courage* to speak; iv-and that we might feel what we have never had the *openness* to feel... and, through all of this that we might come to experience more fully what it means to be an awake, nurturing and generative human being.

What to Expect?

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

- Discover how questions can be a powerful catalysts for 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;
- Uncover new sources of understanding and wisdom within yourself;
- Realize that you have the ability to assess the *health* of Planet Earth and to take action based on your leadings, insights and passions.

Please know that I—along with the 24 BiSci TAs and five Course Coordinators (aka TATAs)—stand ready to do everything in our power to offer you a learning experience that engages, not just your head, but also your hands and your heart. In return, this is what we ask from you:

- That you arrive on time to all Lectures and Labs, with your Course Journal in hand.
- That you make a commitment to actively participate in all class meetings.
- That you refrain from operating ANY electronic devices during class time.
- That you endeavor to be open-minded.
- That you abstain from BS on course assignments.

We ask these things because thousands of previous BiSci students have observed that what they received from this course was directly proportional to what they gave to it. Seen in this light, our five requests, if honored, should help ensure that you have an extraordinary learning experience in BiSci 3.

TWO SPECIAL MANDATORY LAB DATES— Mark your Calendar!

1- Week 6 (i.e., between 2/15 and 2/19) you will be participating in an **evening ecological meal** with those in your section. Exact day/time will be worked out in your section.
2-Week 14 (weekend of April 22-23) 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.

COURSE OUTLINE

TAKE NOTE: This course draws from many disciplines—e.g., ecology, psychology, biology, sociology, philosophy, geography, anthropology, and history, among others. Why? Because the *environment*, our central focus, is all encompassing. That said, you can be sure that—no matter what the topic—I will always connect it to the Ecology of Planet 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: *Preparation for the Journey*

- Access this Assignment in your Course Journal, Week 1

Lectures:

- 1/9—What’s BiSci 03 About?
- 1/11—What’s an Education for?

Lab 1:

- 1/12-13—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:

- 1/16—MLK Holiday
- 1/18—Questions as a Catalyst for the Heroes Journey

Lab 2:

- 1/19-20—Power of Questions. Note: Turn in Week 1-2 completed Course Journal

<p>NOTE: The WEEK 1 and WEEK 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 (see page vii of this syllabus for instructions). Finally, be forewarned that all late assignments will be penalized (see page ix of this syllabus for details).</p>

WEEK 3: The Challenge of Seeing With New Eyes

Reading:

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

Reflection-Action Assignment 3: *What does it mean to Live in a Universe*

- Access this Assignment in your Course Journal, Week 3

Lectures:

- 1/23—Story of Origins?
- 1/25—Where is Home?

Lab 3:

- 1/26-27—Seeing with New Eyes. Note: Share Week 3 Reflection-Action Assignment

WEEK 4: A Part of, not Apart from!

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:

1/30—The Ecology of *Attention!*

2/1—Paying Attention to How We Participate in the *Cycles of Life*

Lab 4:

2/2-3—The Practice of Reflection. Note: Hand in Week 3-4 completed journal.

WEEK 5: Relating to the World

Reading:

“Truthspeaking as a Foundation for the Hero’s Journey” (See BiSci website, Week 5, for link)

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

- Access this Assignment in your Course Journal, Week 5

Lectures:

2/6—A Birthing Story

2/8— Humans: Built for Relationship!?

Lab 5:

2/9-10—Truthspeaking

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: *What’s Going on Here*

-Access this Assignment in your Course Journal, Week 6

Lectures:

2/13— *Speciesism OR All Our Relations!?*

2/15— Trees ‘R Us!?

Lab 6:

2/15-19— *Ecological Meal*. Note: Hand in completed Week 5-6 Journal

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 and Body*

-Access this Assignment in your Course Journal, Week 7

Lectures:

2/20— Unexam 1

2/22— What can Earth’s Sky and Land Creatures Teach us about the Health of Earth?

Lab 7:

2/23-24—Power of Listening. Note: Share Week 7 Reflection-Action Assignment

WEEK 8: Planetary Destabilization

Reading:

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

Reflection Action Assignment 8: *Connecting the Dots*

-Access this Assignment in your Course Journal, Week 8

Lectures:

2/27— What can Earth's Ocean Creatures Teach us about the Health of Earth?

3/1— Climate Chaos!?

Lab 8 3/2-3—*Concept Mapping & Transforming the Ordinary*. Hand in Weeks 7-8 Journal

Spring Break: March 5-10

Note: There is a wrap-up assignment for our course. To learn about this assignment go to the Spring Break Page in your Course Journal.

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

Reading:

--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:

3/13— Chemical Chaos!?

3/15— Humans—Too Many, Too Much!?

Lab 9: 3/16-17—What's in a Footprint?

WEEK 10: Silencing

Readings:

--“The Greatest Danger: Apathia” (see BiSci website Week 10 for link)

--“Silencing” (see BiSci website Week 10 for link)

Reflection-Action Assignment 10: *Silencing*

-Access this Assignment in your Course Journal, Week 10

Lectures:

3/20—Separation and the Environmental Crisis

3/22—It all Comes Back to Story

Lab 10: 3/23-24— 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:

3/27—What's Happiness got to do with it?

3/29—Unexam 2

Lab 11:

3/30-31—Explore *Response-Ability*.

WEEK 12: Re-Thinking the World

Reading:

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

Reflection-Action Assignment 12: *Rethinking the World*

-Access this Assignment in your Course Journal, Week 12

Lectures:

4/3—A New Story of Food

4/5—A New Story of Shelter

Lab 12:

4/6-7— *Unlearning*. Note: Hand in Week 11-12 Journal

WEEK 13: Birthing a New Story

Reading:

--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:

4/10—A New Story of Transportation!?

4/12—Slowing Down to Fall Ahead

Lab 13:

4/13-14—Slowing Down Exploration; Share your Week 13 Reflection-Action Assignment

WEEK 14: *A Hero’s Journey*

Reading:

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

Reflection-Action Assignment 14: *Taking Matters into your own Hands*

-Access this Assignment in your Course Journal, Week 14

Lectures:

4/17—The Question of Identity

4/19—Creativity & Freedom

Lab 14:

Sat/Sun 4/22-23—Walnut Springs Field Trip. Note: Turn in Week 13-14 Journal

WEEK 15: OPPORTUNITYISNOWHERE

Readings:

--None

Reflection-Action Assignment 15: *Completing BiSci Journal and Journey*

-Complete Back Cover of Your Course Journal [*Access Assignment in Course Journal.*

Week 15]

Lectures:

4/24—Imagination and the Future

4/26—Unexam III

Lab 15:

4/27-28—Present Ecological Identity Project and Back Cover of Course 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 and <u>Preparation</u> for ALL Lecture and Lab Meetings	10 points
		TOTAL: 110 Points

Point-Grade equivalents: 103-110 points = A; 99-102.9 points = A-; 95.5-98.9 =B+; 91.3-95.4 = B; 88-91.2 = B-; 83.6-87.9 = C+; 77-83.5 =C; 66-76.9 = D; Below 66 = 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.

Note: 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 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! [Be assured that your Journal has been created using 100% recycled paper.]

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

Do NOT buy a binder for your journal. Instead, we ask 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—i.e., the kind of rings that you can easily open and close. 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—i.e., make your cover 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 (January 19-20).

Important: Leave the Back Cover of your Journal BLANK for now. At the end of this course, 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

Don't passively turn the pages of your course text. Instead, 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! Then, 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 to represent your understanding of yourself as an *ecological being* through some sort of creation. Your creation could involve film, 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 "Spring Break" page of your Course Journal.

v. Engagement in Lectures and Lab Meetings (10 points): We ask for your full presence at each lecture and lab meeting. This means that: 1) you are physically present and ready to participate; 2) you have your journal out and use it for note taking, etc.; 3) you approach your Lab activities with openness; 4) you absolutely refrain from using electronic devices during class time; and 5) that you sit with your assigned conversation partner in lecture. If you follow these guidelines, you will be awarded ten points for your consistent engagement. If not you will be penalized.

An Experiment: Forget About Your Grade!

If you participate fully in the various parts of this course, you will receive a good final grade. Having received this reassurance—and assuming that you are ready to seriously dedicate yourself to this course—we invite you, in the spirit of experimentation, to forget about your grade. Why? Because fixating on your grade is likely to generate anxiety and deny you the freedom to explore, expand and grow in understanding, *on your own terms*. At least this has been my experience. You can test it for yourself by going *gradeless* during the last 8 weeks of BiSci. If you choose this option, we will still offer you written feedback and suggestions on your Journal work every two weeks, but you will not receive any letter grades during Weeks 8-14. Of course, at the end of the semester, we will record a final letter grade for you on LionPass.

CLASS ATTENDANCE

Learning in this course involves, first and foremost, your presence. You have to be "on board" or you can't take this *journey*. 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 110 course points). On the bright side, a two points 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--Abigail Nelson (amm5418@psu.edu).

Note: 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 Fall, 2017.

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 COLLECTION DATES

Your Course Journal is to be handed in to your TA at the beginning of lab on the days indicated in the chart below. Note: At each collection date, you will be handing in a two-week section of your journal. Please use a binder clip to secure your journal pages and make sure your name is clearly written at the beginning of each week of your journal

Journal Collection	Date of Collection
Weeks 1-2	Week 2 Lab: Jan. 19-20
Weeks 3-4	Week 4 Lab: Feb 2-3
Weeks 5-6	Week 6 Lab: Feb 15-19 (Eco Meal)
Weeks 7-8	Week 8 Lab: March 2-3
Weeks 9-10	Week 10 Lab: March 23-24
Weeks 11-12	Week 12 Lab: April 6-7
Weeks 13-14	Week 14 Lab: April 22-23 (Walnut Springs)

Late Assignments: Your TA will not accept late journal assignments. Any late assignments **must be** turned in to Doc Uhl. **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. Also, identify ahead of time a friend who can deliver your assignment to your TA or to Doc in the case of unforeseen events.

Budgeting Your Time

IMPORTANT: If you intend to earn a good grade in this course, please anticipate devoting at least 5-6 hours each week on course assignments as follows: i) Careful reading: 1-2 hours/week; ii) Weekly Reflection-Action Assignment: 2.5-3.5 hours/week; ii) Lecture Reflections 1 hour/week.

Extra Credit Opportunities

You can earn as many as 8 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 points possible); See Box (below) and the Appendix of your BiSci Journal for details.
- Posting on BiSci Blog (2 points possible); Four posts gets you one point; eight will get you 2 points. Each post must be >75 words to qualify.
- Perfect attendance (2 points possible); will be awarded for perfect attendance.

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 BiSci website under “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 Journal.

Note: There are no extra credit points possible if you arrive late OR if you leave early.

Academic Integrity

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