

BiSci 03 Spring 2018 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 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 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. 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 the following three items from PSU Bookstore in the HUB: 1- Course Text—Developing Ecological Consciousness: The End of Separation, Second Edition; 2- BiSci 3 Companion Journal/Spring 2018; and 3—BiSci 3 Hand Lens.

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 on to (and *bookmark*) the BiSci 3 Course Website at: <http://www.personal.psu.edu/cfu1> You will need to log on to access this week’s three readings: 1) the BiSci 3 syllabus; and 2) the essay “Is BiSci 3 for you?”; and 3) the “Letter from TATA Indigo”. Once you are on the website, just click the first icon, next to **Part I** and this will take you to these three Week 1 readings. After completing these readings, engage in your Week 1 Reflection-Action Assignment; see your BiSci 3 Course Journal, pages 7-10, 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.

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 (also known as TATAs):

Jordan Blaschak (jdb5590@psu.edu)

Indigo Murray (ism5039@psu.edu)

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Our Overall Objectives in BiSci 3 are:

- 1-That all of us might think thoughts that we have never before 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-And that, through all of this, we might come to experience what it means to be FULLY alive.

What to Expect in BiSci 03?

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

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

The Four Pillars of BiSci 3 Course Culture

Please know that all 36 of us—i.e., Uhl and Steigerwalt, the 28 TAs and 6 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 honoring the Four Pillars of BiSci culture as follows:

1. Punctuality: That you arrive on time to all Lectures and Labs and refrain from *packing up* early.
2. Presence: That you maintain alertness during class time while also avoiding the use of electronic devices.
3. Openness: That you exercise an openness to new ideas and novel ways of thinking.
4. Truthspeaking: That you avoid B-S-ing on course assignments so that you might discover what's true... for yourself.

We are ready to serve as your guides. But, in the end, the power and potential of this course will depend on you.

TWO SPECIAL MANDATORY LAB DATES—Mark your Calendar!

- 1- Week 6 (i.e., between 2/13 and 2/18) 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: On Sunday, April 22nd you will be participating in a 4-hour field trip at Walnut Springs Park (1-mile from campus). Time 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 the topic—we 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)
- “Letter to You from TATA Indigo”

Reflection-Action Assignment 1: Preparation for the Journey

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

Lectures:

- 1/8—What’s BiSci 03 About?
- 1/10—The Gift of Curiosity?

Lab 1:

- 1/11-12—Who is Here? What’s Possible?

WEEK 2: EXPLORING OUR ORIGINS

Reading:

- “Questions as a Catalyst for 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:

- 1/15—MLK Holiday
- 1/17—Beyond Dualism

Lab 2:

- 1/18-19: Power of Questions. Note: Turn in Week 1-2 Course Journal Today

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 as explained on page ix of this syllabus.

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:

- 1/22—Power of Choice
- 1/24—Story of Origins?

Lab 3:

- 1/25-26—Seeing with New Eyes.

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:

1/29—Where is Home?

1/31—The *Cycles of Life*

Lab 4:

2/1-2—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 website, Week 5, for link)

Reflection-Action Assignment 5: Relating to the World

- Access this Assignment in your Course Journal, Week 5

Lectures:

2/5—Humans in the Cycle

2/7— Trees ‘R Us!?

Lab 5:

2/8-9—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: Everything Belongs

-Access this Assignment in your Course Journal, Week 6

Lectures:

2/12— *Speciesism OR All Our Relations!?*

2/14— What Insects Might Teach Us?

Lab 6:

2/13-18—*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:

2/19— Unexam 1

2/21— What can Earth’s Sky and Land Creatures Teach us about the Health of Earth?

Lab 7:

2/22-23—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:

2/26— What can Earth's Ocean Creatures Teach us about the Health of Earth?

2/28— Climate Change?

Lab 8 3/1-2—*Concept Mapping & Transforming the Ordinary*. Hand in Weeks 7-8 Journal

Spring Break: March 4-11

Note: There is a wrap-up assignment for our course called "Ecological Identity". 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:

3/12— Chemical Chaos!?

3/14— First-Person Ecology

Lab 9: 3/15-16—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: *Apathy and Despair*

-Access this Assignment in your Course Journal, Week 10

Lectures:

3/19—*Separation* and the Environmental Crisis

3/21—It all Comes Back to *Story*

Lab 10: 3/22-23—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:

3/26—What's Happiness got to do with it?

3/28—Unexam 2

Lab 11:

3/29-30—*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:

4/2—Re-Thinking Food

4/4—Re-Thinking Shelter

Lab 12:

4/5-6— *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:

4/9—Re-Thinking Transportation

4/11—Slowing Down to Fall Ahead

Lab 13:

4/12-13—Slowing Down Exploration

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:

4/16—The Question of Identity

4/18—Creativity & Freedom

Lab 14:

4/22-SUNDAY: Walnut Springs Field Trip. Note: Turn in Week 13-14 Journal

WEEK 15: OPPORTUNITYISNOWHERE

Readings:

--Inspiring Reading on “Awakening” by past BiSci TA, C. Carfagno (See Week 15 for link)

Reflection-Action Assignment: Complete Back Cover of Your Course Journal [Access Assignment in Course Journal, Week 15]

Lectures:

4/23—Unexam III

4/25—Making Sense of it all...

Lab 15:

4/26-27—Present *Ecological Identity Project* and Back Cover of Course Journal

COURSE ENGAGEMENT

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 Participation 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

i. Construction of Sturdy & Creative Covers 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 works well) for this cover. Then, to bind your journal together, purchase or scavenge two or three 1.5-inch metal rings. This will ensure that you can easily add, as well as remove, items from your Journal... as will be necessary as the semester goes along.

Important: Once, you have a front and back cover for your Journal, illustrate just the Front Cover in a way that reflects who you are—e.g., your past, personality quirks, hopes, passions, 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 (1/18-19).

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 endeavor to complete your weekly Reading Reflection assignments prior to the time of your weekly lab meeting.

How to Read the Course Text

We ask that you ACTIVELY engage with the course text, Developing Ecological Consciousness. This means **literally writing down in the margins of the book** your thoughts, questions, doubts, uncertainties, musings, insights and anything else that comes up for you as your read along. The idea is for you to literally enter into a **dialogue** with the book, putting something of yourself in the margins! **Note:** Five of the twenty course participation points will depend on your willingness to engage in this way.

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 response is worth a maximum of 1 point.

iv. Ecological Identity Project (6 points): As a culminating action for this course, we will ask you to 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 “Spring Break” page of your Course Journal.

v. Participation (20 points): To earn Participation Points, you must: 1) be fully present (wide awake) and ready to participate (with your Journal in hand) during all LECTURE and LAB meetings (5 points); 2) Engage in an ACTIVE DIALOGUE with the course text as specified in the above box (5 points); 3) attend the mandatory Eco-Meal (5 points) and mandatory Walnut Springs Trip (5 points). 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 doing in your Course Journal. These assignments will call on you to REFLECT on the course lectures and course readings and course ‘action’ assignments. 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 REFLECTION and it will be your capacity for deep REFLECTION that will be the major determinate of your Journal Grade. For a full elaboration of what we mean by “reflection,” carefully read “TATA Indigo’s Letter” (accessible under Week 1 icon on the BiSci website).

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-points of deduction (out of a total of 120 course points). On the bright side, you will receive two-point extra credit 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, again, only two such absences are permitted before points will be deducted. Please report all documented absences to the BiSci Course Administrator—Katie Walter (kjlw5525@psu.edu).

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. They will be posted within 48 hours of each lecture.

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 Fall, 2018 semester.

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: Jan. 18-19
Weeks 3-4	Week 4 Lab: Feb. 1-2
Weeks 5-6	Week 6 Lab: Feb 15-16
Weeks 7-8	Week 8 Lab: March 1-2
Weeks 9-10	Week 10 Lab: March 22-23
Weeks 11-12	Week 12 Lab: April 5-6
Weeks 13-14	Week 14 Lab: April 19-20

Late Assignments: Your TA will NOT accept late journal assignments. 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 late assignments, 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; ii) Lecture Reflections 1-2 hours/week.

Extra Credit Opportunities

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

- Resolve a Nature Mystery (1 points possible); see Week 4 of your Course Journal for details.
- Attend BiSci evening films. Up to 4 points of extra credit possible. See Box (below) for details.
- Posting on BiSci Blog (2 points possible); three posts will earn you one point; five, two points. Each post must be >75 words to qualify.
- Perfect attendance: 2 points will be awarded for perfect attendance.
- Reflection of Week 15, “Awaken” reading: 1 point

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. Clarification: One-half point of extra credit will be awarded for simply attending a film, PLUS an additional 1/2 point for offering a brief post-film reflection 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 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 w 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.