

BiSci 03 Fall 2018 Syllabus

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

An Overview of BiSci 03: Over the past half-century environmental scientists have been calling attention to Breakdowns in Earth's atmosphere, Earth's oceans, Earth's forests, Earth's soils and more. The scientific evidence is unequivocal: Planet Earth is becoming sicker and sicker; we, humans, are defiling our home.

Here's the "kicker": Though humankind desperately needs Earth for our survival, Earth does not need us! So, will Earth shake us into oblivion, like some irksome pest? Or will we wake up, before it is too late, and become respectful members of Earth's community of life? This is a critical question for humankind as a whole; and it is the reason that BiSci 003 exists at Penn State. So it is that, in this course, we will explore the root causes of today's environmental havoc and, in so doing, consider scientific, technological, psychological and—most important—personal responses to what is, arguable, the most significant crisis in the history of humankind.

Please note at the get-go that BiSci 03 is based on active learning—it's an invitation to actively engage with the natural world—not as something "out there," APART from us—but, rather, as something that we are, literally, A PART of...

THREE IMPORTANT THINGS TO TAKE NOTE OF NOW!

I. Purchase the following THREE supplies at the PSU bookstore in preparation for BiSci 03: **1-Course Text:** Developing Ecological Consciousness: The End of Separation [Second Edition] 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; **2-Course Journal:** BiSci 3 Companion Journal, Fall 2018; and **3-Course Hand Lens**.

II. As soon as you are able, log onto (and *bookmark*) the BiSci 03 Course Website at: <http://www.personal.psu.edu/cfu1> You will need to do this in order to access the THREE readings for WEEK 1—namely:

- * The FULL BiSci 03 syllabus
- * The essay "Is BiSci 3 for you?"
- * The "Letter from TATA Indigo."

Once you are on the course website, just click the first icon, next to **Part I** and this will take you to these three readings. After completing these readings, engage in your Week 1 Reflection-Action Assignment; see your BiSci 03 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:

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What to Expect in BiSci 3?

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

1. Discover how questions—your questions—can be powerful catalysts for your learning.
2. Grow in your ability to see yourself, those around you and Earth from new and liberating perspectives.
3. Appreciate the tremendous power of Journal Reflections as a means to self-understanding and self-discovery.
4. Realize that you—should you choose—can play a role in the healing of our world.

Our hope for you in BiSci 3 is that: you might think thoughts that you have never before had the awareness to think; that you might write what you have never had the understanding to write; that you might speak what you have never had the courage to speak; that you might feel what you have never had the openness to feel; and that—through all of this—you might come to experience what it means to be fully alive, fully human, fully yourself.

The Four Pillars of BiSci 03 Course Culture

Please know that all 36 of us—i.e., Chris and Jen, the 28 TAs and 6 TATAs—stand ready to do everything in our power to offer you a challenging and transformative learning experience. To achieve this goal, we ask that you join us in honoring four pillars of our BiSci class culture as follows:

1. Punctuality: That you arrive on time to Lectures and Labs and refrain from packing up early.
2. Presence: That you are alert during class time and avoid the use of all electronic devices.
3. Openness: That you exercise openness to new ideas and novel ways of thinking.
4. Truthspeaking: That you avoid BSing on course assignments so that you might discover what's actually TRUE for you.

We are ready to serve as your guides. But, in the end, the power and potential of this course will depend on you—i.e. on your CHOICE to show up with full presence and integrity.

ALERT: TWO MANDATORY LAB DATES—Mark your Calendar!

Week 5 (i.e., September 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.

Week 12 (sometime between November 5 and 11) 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

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 from TATA Indigo”

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

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

Lectures:

8/20—What’s BiSci 03 About?

8/22—The Gift of Curiosity

Lab 1:

8/23 or 24—Who is Here? What’s Possible?

WEEK 2: Tools for the Journey

Reading:

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

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

(Access this Assignment in your Course Journal, Week 2)

Lecture:

8/27—Beyond Dualism: Aerating our Thinking

8/29—The Power of Choice

Lab 2:

8/30 or 31—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).

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:

9/3—Labor Day Holiday [no class]

9/5—Story of Origins

Lab 3:

9/7 or 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:

9/10—Where is Home?

9/12—The Cycles of Life

Lab 4:

9/13 or 14—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:

9/17—Humans in the Cycle!?

9/19—What about Plants?

Lab 5:

9/22 or 23—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* (Accessible in your Course Journal, Week 6)Lectures:

9/24—*Speciesism* **or** *All our Relations?*

9/26—What Insects Might Teach us about Ourselves?

Lab 6:

9/27 or 28—Meeting the Trees **Note:** Hand in Week 5-6 completed 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 & Body* (Accessible in your Course Journal, Week 7)Lectures:

10/1—Unexam I

10/3—What Can Earth's Sky and Land Creatures Teach us about the Health of Earth?

Lab 7:

10/4 or 5—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 (Accessible in Course Journal, Week 8)

Lectures:

10/8— What Can Earth's Ocean Creatures Teach us about the Health of Earth?

10/10— Climate out of Control!?

Lab 8:

10/11 or 12—Concept Mapping & Transforming the Ordinary. _Hand in Week 7-8 completed 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 (Accessible in your Course Journal, Week 9)

Lectures:

10/15—A Giant Experiment!?

10/17—First Person Ecology

Lab 9:

10/18 or 19—What's in a Footprint?

WEEK 10: SilencingReadings:

“The Greatest Danger: Apatheia” (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:

10/22—*Separation* and the Environmental Crisis

10/24—Might it All Come Back to *Story*?

Lab 10:

10/25 or 26— *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 (Accessible in your Course Journal, Week 11)

Lectures:

10/29—What's Happiness got to do with it?

10/31—Unexam 2

Lab 11:

11/1 or 2—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* (Accessible in Journal, Week 12)

Lectures:

11/5—Re-Thinking Food

11/7—Re-Thinking Human Shelter

Lab 12:

11/5 - 11—*Ecological Meal*—exact 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:

11/12—Rethinking Transportation

11/14—Slowing Down to Fall Ahead

Lab 13:

11/15 or 16—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* (See Course Journal)

Lectures:

11/26—The Question of Identity

11/28—Creativity & Freedom

Lab 14:

11/29 or 30—Hero’s Journey. **Note:** Turn in your completed Week 13-14 Journal.

WEEK 15: OPPORTUNITYISNOWHEREReadings:

“Awakening” by past BiSci TA, Christy Carfagno

Reflection-Action Assignment # 15: *Complete Back Cover of Journal* (See Journal, Week 15)

Lectures:

12/3—Unexam 3

12/5—Making Sense of it All?

Lab 15:

12/6 or 7—Present your Eco-ID Project and the completed Back Cover of your Journal

COURSE PERFORMANCE

CENTRAL ROLE of Your BiSci 3 Course Journal: Roughly 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: i- the course lectures; ii- the course readings; and iii- the course ‘action’ assignments.

Your Course Journal will be collected at **two-week intervals** 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 we have discovered that 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 actually be 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 physical body. Also, it’s worth mentioning that at the conclusion of their BiSci experience, many past BiSci students have kept their Journals as a physical memoir to remind them of the person they were becoming at this time of their lives.

Final Grade in BiSci 03:

| | |
|---|-------------------|
| i. Construction of a Sturdy/Creative Front & Back Cover for Journal | 4 points |
| ii. Reflection-Action Assignments | 70 points |
| iii. Lecture-Reflection Questions | 18 points |
| iv. Ecological Identity Project | 5 points |
| v. Full Engagement with Lecture, and Lab | 13 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

i. Construction of Sturdy & Creative Covers for your Course 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. **INSTEAD:** We ask that you use recycled materials (e.g. discarded cardboard works well) to create a sturdy front and back cover for your Journal. Then, to bind your journal together, purchase or scavenge two or three 1.5-inch metal rings or the spine of an old binder. 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 constructed a front and back cover for your Journal, proceed to illustrate *just the Front Cover* in a way that reflects **who you are**—e.g. your personality quirks, interests, values, goals, 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 03 Journey. Note: Complete your Front Cover by your Week 2 Lab Meeting (8/30 or 31). As for the Back Cover, **leave it BLANK until the end of the semester** at which time we will ask you to illustrate it in a way that tells the Story of your BiSci Journey.

ii. Reflection-Action Assignments (70 points): There are Reflection-Action Assignments for Weeks 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 make it a point to complete your weekly Reading Reflection assignments prior to each of your weekly lab meetings.

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 you read along. The idea is for you to enter into a **dialogue** with the book, putting something of yourself in the margins!

iii. Reflections on Lecture Questions (18 points): Eighteen 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 will be worth a maximum of 1 point.

iv. Ecological Identity Project (5 points): As a culminating action for this course, we 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 “Thanksgiving Break” page of your Course Journal.

v. Participation (13 points): To earn all 13 Participation Points, you must: 1) be fully present (wide awake/free of electronics) and ready to engage during ALL LECTURE and LAB meetings (**6 points**); 2) Come to the odd-numbered Labs (i.e., Labs 1, 3, 5, etc.) with both your Journal Reading Reflection and your Lecture Reflection assignments completed for those weeks (**2 points**). 3) Participate in the mandatory Eco-Meal (**2 points**) and the mandatory Walnut Springs Trip (**3 points**). If you meet these expectations, you will be awarded 13 points for your consistent engagement. If not, you will be penalized accordingly.

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, you will receive two-points of 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 email all information pertaining to a documented absence to: bisciattendance@gmail.com This must be done within 5 days of any absence.

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 a 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 Lecture Recordings. The lectures will be posted within 48 hours of class.

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 2019 semester.

Journal 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. 30-31 |
| Weeks 3-4 | Week 4 Lab: Sept. 13-14 |
| Weeks 5-6 | Week 6 Lab: Sept. 27-28 |
| Weeks 7-8 | Week 8 Lab: Oct. 11-12 |
| Weeks 9-10 | Week 10 Lab: Oct. 25-26 |
| Weeks 11-12 | Week 12 Lab: Nov. 8-9 |
| Weeks 13-14 | Week 14 Lab: Nov. 29-30 |

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

Coaching: To avoid losing points for lateness, make it 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 study of readings: 1.5-2 hours/week; ii) Weekly Reflection-Action Assignment in your Journal: 2.5-3.5 hours/week; ii) Lecture Reflections in your Journal: 1 hour/week.

Extra Credit Opportunities

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

- Resolve a Nature Mystery (1 point possible); see Week 4 of your Course Journal for details.
- Attend BiSci 03 evening films. Up to 4 points of extra credit possible. See Box (below) for details.
- Posting on BiSci 03 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, extra credit "Awaken" reading: 1 point

Extra Credit for Films

On six evenings during the semester we will show a film that relates to BiSci 03 course themes. See Film times and locations, along with Trailers, on our BiSci 03 website under the "Film Fest" tab. You can earn one extra-credit point for each film you attend. Clarification: One-half point of each extra credit point 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 Course Journal.

Note: There will be a short (10-15 minute) discussion following each film.

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 03 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, call Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) at 814-863-0395.