



**Course Prefix: BIOL**  
**Course Number: 311**  
**Course Name: Creating a Nature Journal**  
**Instructor Last Name: Antell**  
**Delivery Mode: Weekend College**

## **Course Information: BIOL 311, Creating a nature journal**

**Credits: two**

### **Instructor Information:**

Dr. Karen Antell  
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**Prerequisites: none**

**Catalog/Course Description:** The course provides guided field experiences with instruction in a variety of techniques that may be used for observing, interpreting and documenting living organisms in the natural world.

### **Required texts and other materials:**

Clare Walker Leslie and Charles E. Roth. 2000. Keeping a Nature Journal: discover a whole new way of seeing the world around you; Storey Books

Optional text: Hannah Hinchman. 1997. A Trail Through Leaves: The journal as a path to place; W.W. Norton & Co.

Bring a journal with unlined pages, with either spiral or sewn binding and a durable cover. The journal should be no smaller than 6 X 9 inches. I prefer 9 X 12 inches.

Students should bring something to draw with. Any of the following is fine - bring what you have or what you are comfortable with.

Colored pencils

Student grade watercolor set, either pan or tubes, with brush and mixing pallet  
Felt-tipped pens with either water soluble or non-soluble ink  
Drawing grade pencils ranging in hardness from HB to 6B or 9B

### **Supplemental Reading:**

There are several books available on the topic of journal creation, and many books available with information about nature sketching and writing, as well as examples of published journals. A few good ones are listed at this link - [CLICK HERE](#). Check them out at your local library.

### **Learning Outcomes:**

Upon completion of this course, the student should be able to:

1. Produce a written account of a personal experience in nature with observations about the qualities of the area at the time that it was visited.
2. Interpret the natural history of the area visited, by using guidebooks to learn about environmental qualities and species interactions.
3. Identify organisms encountered, or know how to go about seeking identification of organisms after the trip.
4. Produce sketches of the organisms and landscapes encountered.
5. Clearly explain their personal ways of living in and relating to the natural world around them.

### **Means of Assessment:**

To achieve satisfactory completion of the course, students must produce a field journal with all of the specific, required components. The field journal will constitute the only assignment for the course. The journal will be assessed for content, depth of understanding of the natural world, and effort. It must include all of the following components:

(numbers refer to specific learning outcomes listed above)

Introduction/preface (#1)

Sketching exercises from class - gesture, line, memory (#4)

Ladd Marsh field trip: Landscape sketches (#4)

Organismal sketches (#4)

Written essay responding to the prompt given in class (#1)

Bird/mammal/reptile/amphibian species lists (#2, #3)

Plant species list (#2, #3)

GROWISER, Rebarrow Forest or Morgan Lake field trip:

Landscape sketches (#4)

Organismal sketches (#4)

Written essay responding to the prompt given in class (#1)

Bird/mammal/reptile/amphibian species lists (#2, #3)

Plant species list (#2, #3)

Journal entries for eight weeks following the class dates (#1, #2, #3, #4, #5)

Journal summary and self-evaluation (#5)

**Grading Procedure:**

Field journal evaluation is 100% of the course grade. To obtain a passing grade, all components of the field journal must be completed at a satisfactory level. Students will NOT be graded on artistic ability, so fear of drawing should not inhibit students from enrolling in the course!

Field journals will be evaluated using a scoring rubric similar to that used for assessment of writing samples in Oregon public schools. There are three categories that will be assessed, each with a scale of 1-6. The three areas are 1) depth of interpretation of the natural world, including observations and original thoughts, 2) content, including descriptions of the natural world such as species identifications, and 3) effort. For a copy of the scoring rubric for journal evaluation [CLICK HERE](#). Final grades will be based on the sum of the score in each category. A = 15-18, B = 12-14, C = 9-11, D = 6-8, F = below 6.

**Schedule of assignments, tests, projects:**

The field journal should be photocopied or scanned and printed and mailed to the instructor for evaluation no later than Monday, Nov. 29. This is a firm deadline and I cannot accept journals received after this date. Please be advised that if you send original journals through the mail, I cannot be responsible for loss in the mail.

For a list of specific, weekly journal assignments, [CLICK HERE](#).

**Special instructions:**

There will be two field trips to local natural areas during the day Saturday. Neither trip will require strenuous walking. Participants should, however, be prepared for spending most of the day outdoors. Students should bring insect repellent, sunscreen, hats or long-sleeved clothing, water bottles, and warm clothing and/or rain protection. Hiking boots are not required, but students should not wear sandals, shoes with high heels, or open-toed shoes.

**Computer technology required:** None

**Syllabus prepared by:** Dr. Karen Antell, 17 October 2006

 [Supplemental Reading Selections](#)

 [Course Schedule](#)

 [Field Trip Information](#)

