

**Carleton University\***  
**Literary Ecological Fieldwork Fall 2020**  
**ENGL 3920 [0.5 credit]**  
**Professor Brenda Vellino**  
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**Tuesdays: 9-12**  
**Blended Synchronous/Asynchronous Course**  
**Synchronous Meetings: 9:30-11:00 A.M.**  
**Prof. will be online by 9:15 to take questions & chat**

Prerequisite(s): third-year standing or permission of the department.

**Cross-listed: Approved Environmental Studies Elective course, for Geography and Environmental Studies**

**\*Situated on unceded Algonquin Anishnaabe territory**

### **Course Description**

This interdisciplinary, experiential fieldwork course brings together literature, culture, and ecology studies through a hybrid model of learning in both the classroom and local urban ecosystems on unceded Algonquin territories where Ottawa is situated or other territories across Turtle Island and beyond (for students not in Ottawa this fall). It will consider local habitats such as watersheds, wetlands, rivers, urban forests and flora and fauna in dialogue with essays, creative non-fiction, fiction, and poetry that convey literary fieldwork as method and practice. Together we will investigate literary and scientific ecological responses to four themed areas of birds, insects, water, and trees. Time will be devoted to student exploratory short field work excursions in the Ottawa region and/or similar local urban or rural ecosystems adjacent to where you live. Student encounters with the more-than-human world will be supported by guidance from local Indigenous knowledge keepers, field naturalists and biologists. These excursions will also be complemented by video link discussion of the creative and scholarly texts. Course readings will be selected from poets, fiction writers, creative non-fiction writers, and knowledge keepers/theorists who themselves mentor close observational engagement with elements of the more-than-human-world. The experiential fieldwork component of the course will foster opportunities for students to create their own forms of creative nonfiction fieldwork documentation through writing, sketching, photo, and audio documentation. We focus on the local to test the bio-regionalist claim that we cannot solve global ecological challenges without understanding and being reflective about our local emplacement in watersheds, ecosystems, and more- than-human kinship connections. These reflections will be further framed by the question: what might it mean to understand our emplacement through the lens of Indigenous teachings on relational responsibility to the more-than-human world?

This class will be presented in a **“blended” synchronous and asynchronous format**, meaning that we will meet for up to 1 ½ hours weekly during our assigned class period for mini-lecture/discussion format classes, as well as having additional forum discussion and experiential fieldwork activities to be completed on each student’s own time. Class engagement opportunities will be offered through a combination of short intro lectures, PowerPoint, zoom discussions of the readings with the whole class and/or in “breakout room” small groups, Guest speaker Q and A sessions with local field naturalists and knowledge keepers, and interactive fieldwork exercise and journal entry work.

**Electronic Equipment Access:** For listening and speaking participation in the video conference component of synchronous class time, students will ideally have access to stable high-speed internet and a computer with a built-in microphone and/or a headset to plug into a computer or cell phone. **If any student anticipates barriers to engagement due to lack of access to the necessary equipment, please be in touch with me for discussion of alternatives.** I recognize that each student will have different experiences in terms of media tools access and quiet study space. I am here to help brainstorm solutions.

### **Fieldwork Journaling: Autumn Transitions in a Local Habitat Project**

#### **Materials/Equipment:**

- Dressing right for all kinds of weather (layers, rain gear etc.)
- 3 x 5 blank page flip notebook for quick jot notes and sketches in field
- 5 x 7 bound blank page notebook for developed fieldwork journals
- retractable lead pencil
- #2B lead pencil
- fine tip black felt pen
- Eraser
- Optional: Coloured pencils or Watercolour Pencils (for those who want to play with colour)
- Optional: Binoculars

**Fieldwork Practice: Two – Four Hours per Week (on location observation, plus writing and sketching)**

### **Course Readings**

Most course reading materials will be drawn from E-books in the Carleton library or scanned articles.

**Students will need to buy four books:**

- Clare Walker Leslie. *The Curious Nature Guide*. (2015): e-book: \$10.69
- Rita Wong and Fred Wah (a map poem): *Beholden: A Poem as Long as a River* (literary fieldwork engagement with a river in BC through poetic and visual collaboration) Paperback: \$21.10
- Rita Wong and Cindy Mochizuki – *Perpetual* (2015) a graphic poem about eco-activism, water stories, Indigenous allyship, and the Tar Sands – Paperback: \$17.06
- Richard Powers – *The Overstory: A Novel* (2018): paperback: \$23.69 This novel about trees has nine narrators whose stories seem independent; by novel’s end, their lives are intertwined. One of the nine is based on a famous B.C. forest biologist, Suzanne Simmard. Her understanding of tree relations and her profound connection with trees is at the centre of the novel. (This is a big book! You should plan on ample time to read it. It is also available as an audio book on Audible Canada).

**Further Resources:**

Clair Walker Leslie. *Keeping a Nature Journal* (2003).

C. Walker Leslie. “Guide to Tree Sketching” PDF:

[http://www.lessonsforhope.org/pdf/Guide\\_To\\_Tree\\_Sketching\\_PDF.pdf](http://www.lessonsforhope.org/pdf/Guide_To_Tree_Sketching_PDF.pdf)

John Muirs Laws, *Opening the World Through Nature Journaling* (2012):

[http://sdchildrenandnature.org/wp/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/CNPS\\_NatureJournaling\\_JMuirLaws\\_96p\\_2012.pdf](http://sdchildrenandnature.org/wp/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/CNPS_NatureJournaling_JMuirLaws_96p_2012.pdf)

**Assignments**

- **5 Fieldwork Practice Exercises** (5 marks each): 25%
- **Participation Grade:** **Total: 25%**
  - **4 weeks of Engaged Reading Questions** 10%  
Posted in **Reading Questions Forum** on CU-learn on alternate weeks, starting in week 3 by members of Group A or Group B.
  - Class discussions, “break out” small group discussions/Cu-learn discussion forums engagement 10%
  - Peer responses to two classmate’s final projects: 5%
- **Autumn Transformations Local Habitat Final Project:** **Total: 50%**
  - All segments to be posted as components of **cuPortfolio Collection**
  - **Oct. 2: Local Habitat Journal 1 & Intro paragraphs: Tab 1** 5%
  - **Part One: Local Habitat Fieldwork Journal (# Journals 1-7)** 20%
  - **Nov. 1: ATLH Journals 1-4: Nov. 22, Journals 1-7: cuPortfolio: Tab 2**
  - **Nov. 22, 9 pm: Proposal: cuPortfolio, Tab 3** 5%
  - **Dec. 6, 9 pm: Part Two: Fieldwork & Research Presentation:** 20%  
**Submitted on cuPortfolio: Tab 4**

- Combining fieldwork insights/questions with research, choose a creative format to showcase your discoveries: Post in cuPortfolio, **Tab 4**  
Choose a Podcast with scripted text and companion images/sounds drawn from autumn fieldwork journal & research (10-15 min.); **or** multi-media **Zine** (12 pages) with text/images drawn from autumn fieldwork journal & research; **or mixed media web presentation** (text, video, images, sound, based on above criteria – may be created through a 2nd cuPortfolio collection)

Standing in a course is determined by the course instructor subject to the approval of the Faculty Dean. This means that grades submitted by the instructor may be subject to revision. No grades are final until they have been approved by the Dean.

**What to Expect: Estimated Weekly Workload:** Week 1 = 5 hours; Weeks 2-7 = 9 hours; Weeks 8 and 9 = 10 hours each; Week 11 = 4 hours; Week 12 = 4 hours = Total: 80 hours coursework + 20-30 hours final project prep = 110 hours

### **A Typical Week:**

- 1.5 hour synchronous in-class time
- 1.5-hour asynchronous participation time (discussion forum, reading questions)
- 2-4 hours of fieldwork exercises and journaling
- 2 hours reading (except for class 8 & 9 – novel weeks: 5 hours reading each)

### **Zoom Session Recording:**

Zoom sessions in this course will be recorded and made available only to those within the class to enable access to students with internet connectivity problems, who are based in a different time zone, and/or who have conflicting commitments.

Please note that recordings are protected by copyright. The recordings are for your own educational use, but you are not permitted to publish to third party sites, such as social media sites and course materials sites.

You will be expected to use the video and/or audio and/or chat during web zoom sessions for participation and collaboration. If you have concerns about being recorded, please email me directly so we can discuss these.

### **Field Journal Sketching Practice:**

This course invites you to take the sketching challenge. Don't let the "but I can't draw" gremlins get in the way. I am taking the challenge with you! (I have hardly done any sketching for the past 30 years of my adult life.)

## Why Sketching?

“Drawing develops skills that are essential to accurate scientific observation. When drawing a subject, one looks again and again at the parts of the object that are least familiar and beyond the gross contours or minimum features needed to identify it. Counterintuitively, this process is often most helpful when we are sketching what we think we already know! . . . We have all looked at poppies and robins, but how many of us have looked long enough and often enough to really know their structures or to have noticed the white pattern around the robin’s eye? By drawing a poppy or a robin, you force yourself to see it in minute detail.” –John Muir Laws

### It’s not about the art:

“The goal of fieldwork drawing is not to make pretty pictures, but to accurately observe and record data. If the goal is to make pretty drawings, the pressure for pretty can get in the way of documenting observations. One becomes hesitant to start a sketch as the views of an inner art critic surface.” Banish the inner art critic!!

## Schedule of Classes

### Week 1/Sept. 15: Grounding Eco-Literary Fieldwork: Cultivating Observation Thru Writing & Drawing Practices

- Deborah Bird Rose and Thom Van Dooren, “Encountering a More-than-Human World: Ethos and the Arts of Witness,” *Routledge Companion to the Environmental Humanities* (2017) – e-book Carl library [9 pages]
- Heather Swan, “Slow Seeing,” *Minding Nature*, 2018 [4 pages]: <https://www.humansandnature.org/slow-seeing>
- Clare Walker Leslie, *Curious Nature Guide*, “Keeping an Observation Journal”: p. 122
- C. Walker Leslie, “Begin Where you Are; “Learning to See in a Different Way”; “Time for a Ramble”: p. 12, p. 16, p. 24-25. [5 pages]

⇒ **Fieldwork Exercise 1:** Create a Neighborhood Nature Map; then create a Sound Map; write 3 paragraphs introducing yourself through your neighborhood; 2 para. summarizing what you observed/learned making a nature/sound map). **See below for further Guidelines.**

- **Post Exercise 1 – all three parts in Cu-learn Neighborhood Nature Map Forum: Sept. 20, 9 pm.** I’ll be doing this alongside you and posting too.
- **Two Peer Response Forum Posts: Sept. 21, 9 p.m.:** I will randomly assign students to review 2 other student’s neighborhood map posts; then you will each post brief responses to those you reviewed in the forum comments section (3-4

sentences). Raise 1 or 2 points of interest or questions; respond to specific aspects of neighborhood or sound maps.

### **Week 2/Sept. 22: Land Stories on Algonquin Anishnaabe territory**

- **Preview before class: Indigenous Learning Bundle with Dr. Zoe Todd (Metis): “Indigenous Place-Based Learning”**: the link will be on CU-learn for Week 2
- Dr. Vanessa Watts (Anishinaabe), “Indigenous Place-Thought and Agency Among Humans and Non-Humans.” *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education, Society*. 2.1 (2013):20-34 [14 pages]  
<https://jps.library.utoronto.ca/index.php/des/article/view/19145>
- Dr. Robin Wall Kimmerer (Potawatomi/Anishnaabe), “Asters and Goldenrod” (pages 39-47) and “Learning the Grammar of Animacy” (**only read pages 48-50**). In *Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge, and the Teachings of Plants*. (2013): e-book in Carl library. [8 pages]

⇒ **Fieldwork Exercise 2: “Reflective Sit Spot” Practice** by the Rideau River (or other similar location near water - pond, creek, lake, different river)

- **See below for Reflective Sit Spot/Plant Sketching Practice Guidelines**
- **Post Sept. 27, 9 pm in CU-learn assignment tab.**

### **Class 3/Sept. 29: Wild Bees & other Insects: Species at Risk**

⇒ **Sept. 28, 9 pm: Group A: Reading Questions 1 on Reading Questions Forum**

- **In-Class Guest Talk/Q & A**: wild bee naturalist, Dr. Jessica Forrest (U of Ottawa biologist)
- **On Ontario’s wild bees**: <https://www.ontariowoodlot.com/publications-and-links/featured-articles-news/woodlots-a-refuge-for-ontario-s-native-bees>
- **“Highways of Habitat” and Citizen Science**: <https://davidsuzuki.org/take-action/act-locally/butterflyway/>
- Brigit Strawbridge Howard. from “Realisations”: xvii-xviii; “The Honey Trap”: 11-16; “Cabin by the Stream” (Sounds ->Species Loss): 97-101. from *Dancing with Bees- See scanned copy, CU-learn*
- C. Walker Leslie, *Keeping a Nature Journal*, “The Pollen Dance,” “Insect Beauty”: p. 57, 96-97
- **Butterflies/Bees Fieldwork Practice**: Go to Fletcher Wildlife Garden for an observational walk if in Ottawa (or similar natural meadow near you): look for bees, butterflies, and other insects amongst the late-blooming flowers in the flower gardens and wildflower meadow. Find a place to stop, sit, observe, sketch. If you are not in Ottawa, find a backyard garden with late blooming flowers or a

nearby meadow or even some wildflowers along a roadside or parking lot.  
Review Zoom In/Zoom out exercise instructions below before going out.

⇒ **Begin Weekly Autumn Transformations Habitat Fieldwork Journal:**

- **Due: Oct. 2 at 9 p.m. in cuPortfolio – Tab 1**
- Autumn Local Habitat Intro paragraphs, Pages, and Preliminary Species List. (See Guidelines Below).
- **cuPortfolio Intro:** <http://co-opcareercourse.ca/cuportfolio/culearn/story.html>

⇒ **Fieldwork Zoom In/Zoom Out Exercise 3: Oct. 4, 9 pm** in Cu-learn Assignment link.

- **Laws, *Opening the World*, “Zoom In/Zoom Out” Exercise** (p. 36). Try this with a plant or clump of plants that have bee or butterfly visitors: Zoom In for close up on plant/bee or butterfly; Zoom Out to sketch some of the wider habitat for the plant/bees/butterflies. (You may need to photograph bees as a basis for sketching because bees do not hold still very long!)
- **Write Reflection paragraph: prompt from Laws (p. 89):** Examine “Zoom In, Zoom Out” notes and drawings; write down the details you noticed while zooming in and out by making a simple chart and putting zoom in details on one side and zoom out details on the other. What kinds of things did you notice in each scale? What surprised you? What stood out? When might it be helpful to use zoom in technique? When would it be helpful to use zoom out? When would it be a good idea to do both? What sorts of things can you learn by using each technique?

**Class 4/Oct.6: In-Class Guest Talk/Q and A: Birds** - Ottawa Field Naturalists Birding Committee member: Dr. Nicholas von Maltzhan

⇒ **Oct 5, 9 pm: Group B: Reading Questions 1** on Reading Questions Forum

- Pigeon stories, from Chapter 1, **Only pages 15-29**, Donna Haraway – *Staying with the Trouble* (2016): e-book in Carleton library
- Kateri Kosek. “The Cherry Birds.” *Creative Non-Fiction* 69 (Winter 2019): scanned copy posted to CU-learn
- **Walker Leslie, *Curious Nature Guide*: “On the Wing”:** pages 88-91.

⇒ **Birding Fieldwork Practice for Autumn Transformations Journal 2:**

Note birding observations in your local Habitat: Sit quietly for 30 minutes and observe what common birds you can identify: crows, red winged blackbirds, jays, cardinals, chickadees, nuthatches, woodpeckers, ducks, hawks, other? what can you observe about their behaviour, flight pattern, bird song; write up your observations in your field journal & pick one bird to try sketching in the field.

- Laws, *Opening the World, Drawing Birds*: pages 24-27; Bird postures/gestures: p. 53; you will need to take photos of your focus bird and practice sketching, trying out Law's exercises for your field journal.
- **Bird identification**: Getting Started with Birds: <http://www.ofo.ca/site/page/view/articles.getting-started-with-birds>
- Cornell U "All About Birds": <https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/>
- Birds Canada: <https://www.birdscanada.org/apps/checklist/index.jsp>
- Audubon Bird Guide, Free AP: <https://www.audubon.org/app>

### **Class 5/Oct 13: Watersheds & Wetlands: Restoration & Sustainability**

⇒ **Oct 12, 9 pm: Group A: Reading Questions 2** on Reading Questions Forum

- **Guest Talk/Q & A: Jennifer Lamoureux, Rideau Valley Conservation Authority**
- <https://www.rvca.ca/about-us/rvca-corporate-services/the-rideau-watershed>
- Brewer Pond Restoration: <https://www.rvca.ca/brewer-park-pond-restoration-project>
- Dorothy Christian (Secwepemc) and Rita Wong, "Untapping Watershed Mind" (pages 232-253) - *Thinking with Water* (2013): e-book in the Carleton library
- Barbara Hurd: Chapter 1: "Marginalia" (pages 1-14): *Stirring the Mud: On Swamps, Bogs, and Human Imagination* (2008) – scanned copy of essay in CU-learn.
- **C. Walker Leslie**, *The Curious Nature Guide*, "Your Watershed" & "Water Cycle": pages 108-110

⇒ **Wetlands Fieldwork Practice**: Find a bog, swamp, marshy area or wetland near you to walk alongside and observe the plant life, trees, creatures such as turtles, frogs, marsh birds (suggested spots: Brewer Pond in Brewer Park across from Carleton's campus; Stoney Swamp, Mair Bleu Bog, Mud Lake/Britannia Conservation Area); Identify your bioregional address by the watersheds and wetlands that surround you. Learn the names of rivers, creeks, lakes, ponds, marshes.

- **Laws**, *Opening the World*, Mapping Vegetation Edge Zones (at Water's Edge), pages 42-43. (Review before going into the field)
- **Fieldwork Exercise 4**: Base this on your wetlands fieldwork & Laws mapping vegetation zone edges exercise; writing and sketching write 1 reflection paragraph on where this wetland fits into the broader regional watersheds you are located within.
- **Due: Oct. 18, 9 pm**: Post to Assignment Tab, Cu-learn.

**Week 6/Oct. 20: Rivers: The Kitchissippi/Ottawa River: Local Water Stories on Algonquin Anishnaabe Terms**



⇒ **Oct 19, 9pm: Group B: Post Reading Questions 2** to Reading Questions Forum

- **Guest talk/Q & A:** Algonquin Anishnaabe Knowledge Keeper: Barbara Dumont Hill (Kitiganzibi)
- Lynn Gehl (Algonquin Anishnaabe): “Chaudière Falls: Creator’s First Pipe”: <https://www.lynngehl.com/black-face-blogging/chaudiere-falls-creators-sacred-pipe>
- Albert Dumont (Algonquin Anishnaabe, Kitiganzibi): <http://albertdumont.com/the-kettle-of-boiling-waters-chaudiere-falls-algonquin-territory/>

⇒ **Kitchissippi Fieldwork Practice:**

Follow the bike path from behind Parliament, walking West to Chaudière Falls (behind the Canadian War Museum) & Hydro Generating Station #2). (If you are not in Ottawa, find a place to walk along your local river) Is there an Indigenous history of this river? What cultural stories can you discover about it? How does this river contribute to the regional watershed and ecosystem? What is its cultural, regional significance? What are some typical plants, trees, birds, fish, amphibians in or near the river?

<https://chaudierefalls.com/>

⇒ **Fieldwork Exercise 5:** find a place to sit along the river, note your observations in writing & sketching; attach 2 reflection paragraphs engaging what you learned from Elder Barbara and the readings.

**Due: Oct. 25, 9 pm:** Post to Assignment Tab, cuLearn.

**Reading Week: Oct. 26-30:** keep up your Autumn Transformations local habitat fieldwork practice!

⇒ **Nov. 1, 9 pm: Autumn Transformations Field Journals 1-4 Due: cuPortfolio, Tab 2.** This will include Journal 1 already submitted for your introduction assignment, Journal 2 on Birds, plus 2 more journals (see prompts below in ATLH guidelines).

**Week 7/Nov. 3: River Relations**

⇒ **Nov. 2, 9 pm: Group A: Reading Questions 3** to Reading Questions Forum

- Rita Wong and Fred Wah (map poem): *Beholden: A Poem as Long as a River* (you need to buy a print copy of this book)

⇒ **Autumn Transformations Fieldwork Journal 5: Landscape Sketch:**

- **Zoom out:** Draw a small landscape from your local habitat, showing several kinds of tree shapes and colour changes
- Resource: **C. Walker Leslie, Scanned pages on CU-learn: “Drawing Landscapes” (*Keeping a Nature Journal*), p. 180-181.**

**Week 8/Nov. 10: Trees: Interconnected Systems**

⇒ **Nov. 9, 9 pm: Group B: Reading Questions 3** to Reading Questions Forum

- Richard Powers - *Overstory* – read 1st half of novel (you need to buy a print or e-book copy of this book, read first 250 pages)
- Dr. Suzanne Simard, “How Trees talk to One Another” (Ted Talk Short):  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Un2yBgIAxYs>
- Identifying Trees: <https://www.ontario.ca/environment-and-energy/tree-atlas/ontario-southeast/>

⇒ **Trees Fieldwork Practice for Autumn Transformations Journal 6:**

Identify three different species of trees in your local habitat (identify at least one deciduous, one coniferous); sketch and explore the life story of one of them? Are they local species? Imported? Invasive? What do they contribute to the ecosystem?

- **Drawing Trees: Walker Leslie: *Curious Nature Guide*, “Who Lives in the Trees Around You?” (p. 82)**
  - **Tree Shapes: p. 68-69**
  - **Tree Kinds: Deciduous: p. 70-71; Evergreens: 76-77**
  - **Zoom in:** Observe and sketch two different kinds of autumn leaves after colour change:
  - Also see C. Walker Leslie:  
[http://www.lessonsforhope.org/pdf/Guide To Tree Sketching PDF.pdf](http://www.lessonsforhope.org/pdf/Guide%20To%20Tree%20Sketching%20PDF.pdf)

**Week 9/Nov. 17: Trees Continued:** Richard Powers – *Overstory* – read second half of the novel (last 250 pages)

⇒ **Nov. 16, 9 pm: Group A: Reading Questions 4** to Reading Questions Forum

- Robin Wall Kimmerer, “Maple Nation: A Citizenship Guide.” *Braiding Sweetgrass*: pages 167-74. E-book, Carleton library

⇒ **Autumn Transformations Fieldwork Practice Journal 7:**

**Your Personal Response:** How has spending time with one habitat affected you? What new things have you learned about the place, about spending quiet time in nature, about yourself? See “Solace and Connection,” Walker Leslie, *The Curious Nature Guide*, p. 130. Write a one-page journal personal reflection response to your habitat. Add a sketch of a seed pod, leaf, or branch from one of your field outings.

**Week 10/Nov. 24: Connections: writer-activists, eco-justice, and climate change**

⇒ **Nov. 23, 9 pm: Group B: Reading Questions 4** to Reading Questions Forum

- Rita Wong and Cindy Mochizuki - visual poem – *perpetual* (2015) (book for purchase)

⇒ **Autumn Transformations Local Habitat Fieldwork & Research Proposals due Nov. 22, 9pm – cuPortfolio, Tab 3.**

### **Week 11/Dec. 1: Indigenous and Planetary Futurisms**

- **View before Class:** Christi Belcourt (Metis), “Uprising: The Power of Mother Earth,” Virtual Tour with Danielle Printup (Algonquin Anishnaabe) – Carleton U Art Gallery (CUAG) – the link is posted on CU-learn under Week 11
- Kyle Whyte (Potawatomi), “Our Ancestor’s Dystopia Now: Indigenous Conservation and the Anthropocene,” *Routledge Companion to the Environmental Humanities* – e-book in Carleton library

⇒ **Final Projects Due for “Gallery Tour” Review: Dec. 6, 9 pm, cuPortfolio, Tab 4; Also upload to Final Projects Forum in CU-learn.**

⇒ **2 Peer Responses to Classmate’s Final Projects on Final Project Forum in CU-learn: Dec. 7<sup>th</sup>, 9 pm.**

**Week 12/Dec. 8:** Unpacking Final Projects Discussion: Take up responses and questions from cuPortfolio “Gallery Tour” of Final Project

### **5 Fieldwork Exercises Guidelines:**

- Follow the writing/sketching exercises posted weekly in the class schedule
- After your outdoor field observation, sketching and writing in your journal
- (1-3 pages), write two summative paragraphs about what you learned from each field encounter with birds, trees, plants, insects, waterways. (you may choose to write these in a creative form such as a poem or short fiction piece)
- Post to CU-learn Assignment Tab: Scan or take a photo of your journal pages turned into a JPEG file.

#### **Fieldwork Exercise 1 Guidelines**

(“Wherever you are, look for nature around you.”)

- C. Walker Leslie, *Curious Nature Guide*, “Mapping your Neighborhood”: p. 30-31: Draw a nature map of a small section of your neighborhood (2-3 square blocks) based on Walker Leslie’s map; noting natural spaces and elements like gardens, shrubs, trees, clumps of plants, weeds, birds, animals, birdfeeders, as well as houses, streets, other buildings etc.
- Remember rough sketching is fine, don’t listen to the “I can’t draw” gremlins!

- **Intro paragraph:** introduce your neighborhood and region to us. Tell us what town/city/region your neighborhood is in, what natural features are around and close by. What is your favourite natural spot in your neighborhood (a special tree, a garden, a walking path) and why?
- **Exercise 2:** John Muir Laws, *Opening the World* PDF: “Creating a Visual Sound Map” (p. 64-65):
- [http://sdchildrenandnature.org/wp/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/CNPS\\_NatureJournaling\\_JMuirLaws\\_96p\\_2012.pdf](http://sdchildrenandnature.org/wp/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/CNPS_NatureJournaling_JMuirLaws_96p_2012.pdf)
- Choose a place to sit within the area of your neighborhood map; close your eyes for 5 minutes and sit quietly, take in the sounds, jot down everything you hear for 10 minutes; create a “sound map” of this smaller section of your neighborhood using John Laws’ model on page 65.
- **Summary Two Paragraphs:** What did you learn/discover from creating your neighborhood natural spaces and sound map?
- Post your neighborhood and sound maps (scanned), your intro and summary paragraphs to CU-learn Forum.

### Fieldwork Exercise 2: Reflective Sit Spot Guidelines

I am introducing a simple mindfulness practice of sitting in one spot for 15 minutes as a method of deepening your observation abilities while in nature as a foundation of developing your own fieldwork practice. You may experience an added benefit of finding this practice to be calming and stress relieving.

Find a comfortable spot off the beaten path by the water and sit down. You may want to bring a towel or small blanket to sit on. Try to put aside stress and worries for this period (just tell them you will get back to them soon!). Spend at least 15 minutes quietly observing (turn your cell phone notifications off).

Pay attention to ambient sound. You may hear nearby birds, wind, rushing water, and also city and human noise nearby. It all belongs. Close your eyes if you are comfortable to do so. Focus your attention on your in-breath and your out-breath. This may enable you to pay attention to the sounds around you more fully.

After 5 minutes, open your eyes. Pay attention to any insects or birds or other creatures in this environment. Pay attention to any plant and tree species. What do you notice about each of them? Use Laws’ “I Notice/I Wonder” Exercise from *Opening the World* to get your writing started (p. 5). [http://sdchildrenandnature.org/wp/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/CNPS\\_NatureJournaling\\_JMuirLaws\\_96p\\_2012.pdf](http://sdchildrenandnature.org/wp/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/CNPS_NatureJournaling_JMuirLaws_96p_2012.pdf)

What changes in 15 minutes? What stays the same? How do you feel after 15 minutes of quiet observation? After observing, jot down journal notes about what you saw and heard. Attentiveness to nature is the basis for scientific observation, as well as for connecting with the local ecosystems we live within.

Adapted from the following article: <https://www.deceptionpassfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/Reflective-Sit-Spots.pdf>

**Plant Sketching Practice as part of Sit Spot Practice:** Preview these prompts and examples before going out into the field. After quiet observation and writing notes based on “I Notice/I Wonder,” make several quick sketches in the field; Review the examples below again when you return, then try drawing again. This is to warm you up to sketching as a journal practice.

- C. Walker Leslie, See plant pencil sketch examples: “Weeds in a Vacant Lot”/”Grasses”: p. 59-60
- Laws, *Opening the World* Exercises:
  - Drawing Guidelines: Shape, Sketch, Gesture: 14-15
  - Pick a plant to sketch: see Drawing Plants and Flowers, pages 16-22;
  - Add Plant Diagram: p. 27; See Botany 101 Refresher, p. 13
  - [http://sdchildrenandnature.org/wp/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/CNPS\\_NatureJournaling\\_JMuirLaws\\_96p\\_2012.pdf](http://sdchildrenandnature.org/wp/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/CNPS_NatureJournaling_JMuirLaws_96p_2012.pdf)

### **Participation Grade**

While attendance is required, it constitutes only a small proportion of your participation mark. You will be assessed on the basis of the sharpness, relevance, and open-endedness of questions posted on the CU-learn “Reading Questions Forum” prior to the weekly class meeting, and on your contribution to the exchange of ideas in the class discussions or break-out groups. Tracking both your initial responses to the readings through your questions and your participation in group discussions enables me to see how your understanding of the course materials evolves over time.

Formulate your contributions as strong, focused responses and open-ended questions that invite the participation of your peers. We will often take up your reading questions in class.

### **Autumn Transformations Local Habitat Field Research Final Project**

The final project assignment will invite each student to adopt a local (to you) water, field, forest, or park habitat as an observation focal point to sit with, walk with, listen to, write and sketch with, and learn alongside. All the fieldwork writing and drawing exercises, along with the creative non-fiction and creative literary fieldwork readings and guest speakers throughout the whole course will prepare you for this work and serve as mentors

and models. We have a unique opportunity to observe our adopted habitat go through seasonal transformations from early autumn to late autumn. These transformations will form part of our investigation and inquiry.

⇒ **Your Local Habitat Intro: 2-page Field Journal 1, Species List, Intro paragraphs: Due Oct. 2, 9 pm, cuPortfolio, Tab 1**

You will choose your focus habitat by the third week of class and by the end of that week. See Clare Walker Leslie's, "A Place to Observe through the Seasons," *The Curious Nature Guide*, page 120-121. Build your Habitat intro in three parts:

- **"Initial Exercise for an Autumn Journal" (C. Walker Leslie):** Walk around your habitat and then sit in one spot, "observe, draw and write about signs of fall. Create a **two-page spread**, letting images flow one after another" (*Keeping A Nature Journal*, p. 73).
- **The Species List:** C. Walker Leslie also suggests listing plant, tree and wildlife species that you can already identify and keeping it on a wall or on the fridge so you can add to it as you deepen your observation skills.
- **Two Intro Paragraphs:** Just like you introduced your neighborhood, introduce your habitat: what kind of habitat is it? (wetland, forest, urban park, garden, river path etc.)? Where is it located? Is it on Indigenous territory? Which one? What if anything do you already know about it? What are the interesting features that attracted you to it? What do you hope to learn about and from it?

⇒ **Part One: Autumn Transformations Local Habitat Fieldwork Journal Practice:** From weeks 3 -10, in addition to your other fieldwork practice exercises in response to bees, bogs, and rivers, you will add an extra **1 hour fieldwork practice encounter** with your focus habitat, where you will walk and sit to observe, write jot notes and draw quick sketches in your field notebook; outdoor time will be followed by **1 hour of practice at home** to write journals up and finish/revise the sketches. This fieldwork practice where you observe the seasonal changes from early autumn to late autumn will be built sequentially across the course and provide the foundation of your field research.

⇒ **Nov. 1, 9 pm: Autumn Transformations Field Journals 1-4: cuPortfolio, Tab 2**  
This will include Journal 1 already submitted for your introduction assignment, Journal 2 on Birds, plus 2 more journals (see prompts below).

⇒ **Nov. 22, 9 p.m.: Complete Field Work Journals 1-7, cuPortfolio, Tab**

**Autumn Transformations Journal Practice Prompts**

In *Keeping a Nature Journal (KNJ)*, Clare Walker Leslie provides these prompts to consider autumn changes we can observe, write about, sketch, and learn from: (pp. 68-69). You may use these as angles into your weekly fieldwork journaling from weeks 3-10.

- Look for signs of winter preparations, including butterfly and bird migration, red, black, or grey squirrel, chipmunk nut gathering etc.
- What sounds in nature change from early to late fall?
- Observe which birds have left and which birds are still around in late autumn
- If you have access, observe the habits of feeder birds like chickadees, sparrows, cardinals, nuthatches, mourning doves, jays, finches, crows (I love the feeders at Fletcher Wildlife Garden)
- If there is water in your habitat, observe habits of any water birds: geese, herons, gulls, ducks, loons (who leaves, who stays? What do they eat?)
- Are there any signs of wilder birds in your habitat? Hawks, owls, turkeys?
- What insects are still around in the early fall (bees, butterflies, spiders, others?); when do they leave? Are they still insects in late fall?
- Which animals stay active in your habitat? Observe their behaviours? Can you tell what they are eating?
- Watch for weather changes: length of days, temperature changes, amount of sunlight, amount of rain, cloud: how does this affect the habitat?
- Consider which plants are blooming the latest, like asters, marigolds, goldenrod, chicory, others?
- Which trees and shrubs turn colours first, lose their leaves first?
- Which trees are native to your area? Which are imported? What are the tree roles in the local ecosystem?
- In late fall, draw a silhouette of a winter tree: **C. Walker Leslie, See “Guide to sketching trees” resource:**  
[http://www.lessonsforhope.org/pdf/Guide\\_To\\_Tree\\_Sketching\\_PDF.pdf](http://www.lessonsforhope.org/pdf/Guide_To_Tree_Sketching_PDF.pdf)
- **Zoom in:** Observe and draw four different kinds of autumn leaves after colour change: See Walker Leslie, Curious Nature Guide, Fall Leaves, p. 72-73.
- **Also, “Guide to sketching trees”**
- **Zoom in:** Collect objects for indoor observation on rainy, cold days: leaves, seed pods, small branches. Observe and sketch shapes, patterns, textures.
- Observe and draw several varieties of tree seeds, nuts, and fruits.

⇒ **Autumn Transformations Local Habitat Project Proposal: Due Nov. 22, 9 pm – cuPortfolio, Tab 3**

- Attach JPEGs of two different Autumn Local Habitat fieldwork journal pages from early and late fall (Sept. and Nov.)
- Write two paragraphs previewing what aspects of your adopted habitat interest you, what you have noticed about changes in your habitat from early to late fall,
- Identify possible research questions/interventions you want to pursue related to your habitat from possible ecosystem, watershed, species at risk, sustainability, Indigenous traditional ecological knowledge perspectives . . .

- Preview which focus species you will conduct in-depth research on and what your preliminary research investigations/questions for this will be.
- Provide list of Proposed Research Resources you will consult both online and from library articles/e-books (6 Sources)
- Annotate three sources, noting how they will enrich your inquiry, research questions, interventions

**Part Two A: Research Practice Preparation for Proposal and Presentation:** Your goal in this stage of your project is to deepen your understanding of your local habitat through several different possible research lenses. Use online field guides for plant, tree, wildlife identification, growing or behavior habits.

- Pick a single focus plant, tree, bird, insect, or animal species from your habitat to learn more about its life cycles, behaviors, role in the ecosystem, challenges due to human activity, climate change etc. “When a particular plant, animal species captures your imagination, stay with it . . . make as many field observations about it as possible in your journal . . . research its nature, origins, unique characteristics and habits. . . . See how much you can learn and observe by staying with this focus for an extended period.” (Walker Leslie, *KNJ*, p. 81)
- Develop a research question or set of linked questions arising from your field observations and through considering land stories from several possible perspectives of local Indigenous knowledge, biology, climate change impacts, sustainability questions, Indigenous and human restoration initiatives.

**Part Two B: Presentation Practice: Load and save in cuPortfolio, Dec. 6, 9 pm, Tab 4: Share in CuLearn Final Projects Forum**

Building from your Autumn Transformations fieldwork and your Research, choose a creative format to introduce the transformations in your local habitat and present your research findings to your classmates in a podcast, zine, or multi-media website format (can be in a secondary cuPortfolio collections format which allows for multi-media building).

⇒ You will submit links to your zine, web platform, or podcast in CuPortfolio;

⇒ You will also need to upload a text file that includes the following if you have not included directly in your presentations:

- Key pages/images/notations from your fieldwork journal that have been instrumental to your observational learning (perhaps relevant to incorporate into zine or web platform especially)
- Material from your introducing your habitat from Tab 1 (Incorporate?)
- Intro to what your focus habitat means to you or has come to mean to you on this learning journey (incorporate into presentations?)
- cameo on your focus species and why you chose it
- brief summaries of key research questions and findings for your habitat and key species
- Any environmental challenges for your habitat or to your key species in terms of climate change, toxins in the environment, sustainability



- Info on restoration or sustainability initiatives if any related to your habit or key species
- Info on any Indigenous knowledge and priorities available on your habit, the land, the key species, as well as reflection on what if anything you have taken away from engaging the natural world from an Indigenous knowledges lens
- a final reflection on your key takeaways during this learning journey alongside and with this habitat
- A List of Resources Consulted and Cited Page.

**An Intro to Zines** (in Zine booklet format): <https://wemakezines.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/DIY-No2-Zines-2.pdf>

**Intro to Podcasts** (Usually a series of spoken word/audio episodes focused on a topic or theme in a digital audio file format such as SoundCloud or YouTube; you can create a single episode podcast in audio storytelling format to introduce your key questions and observations arising from your Autumn Transformations Local Habitat Journal and Research.)

**How to Produce Your Own Podcast** (this NYTimes article has lots of great tips, though it is geared to teaching a class to do this, but it gives lots of examples of audio storytelling and tips on how to put it all together):

<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/04/19/learning/lesson-plans/project-audio-teaching-students-how-to-produce-their-own-podcasts.html>

**Further Resources:**

Ontario Wildflowers: <https://www.ontariowildflowers.com/>

Ontario Trees: <https://www.ontariotrees.com/>

Ontario Mammals: <https://www.inaturalist.org/guides/1327>

Mammals of Ontario Atlas: [https://view.publitas.com/on-nature/mammal\\_atlas-38jjdao7azjw/page/4-5](https://view.publitas.com/on-nature/mammal_atlas-38jjdao7azjw/page/4-5)

Getting Started with Birds: <http://www.ofo.ca/site/page/view/articles.getting-started-with-birds>

Cornell U “All About Birds”: <https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/>

Birds Canada: <https://www.birdscanada.org/apps/checklist/index.jsp>

Audubon Bird Guide, Free AP: <https://www.audubon.org/app>

Bugguide: <https://bugguide.net/node/view/15740>

Ontario Reptiles and Amphibians: <https://ontarionature.org/programs/citizen-science/reptile-amphibian-atlas/species/>

Ontario Endangered Species: <https://ontarionature.org/programs/endangered-species/>

Opinicon Natural History (a well vetted word press site with some specific species stories): <https://opinicon.wordpress.com/species-accounts/chickadee/>

Deep Time Natural History of Ontario: <https://opinicon.wordpress.com/physical-environment/quaternary/>

**Two Participation Peer Responses to Final Projects: Due Dec. 7, 9 p.m.: CuLearn Final Projects Forum**

- Using a name draw from a hat, I will randomly assign each of you 2 other students whom you will offer peer responses to on their Autumn Transitions Local Habitat Projects
- You will write 2-3 paragraphs of responses and questions for each.
- You may consider what the most interesting or surprising takeaways from your classmate's projects are, as well as what you learned from these habitat encounters and what questions remain.

## **COURSE POLICIES**

**Attendance and Participation:** Class works when you do. Active participation is essential. I define class participation as both physical and mental presence during synchronous learning sessions, as well as keen engagement with the course readings, class discussions, and fieldwork exercises. Students are required to attend all synchronous sessions and contribute to class discussion in a variety of formats through spoken and written engagement (informal writing, student blog feedback). **You may have two grace absences from the synchronous learning sessions for sickness, emergencies or appointments.** Extend me the courtesy of letting me know when you will need to be absent. Life is especially unpredictable right now, so if you do have difficulties of any kind, please keep me in the loop and let me know how I may be of help.

**Synchronous Learning Sessions & Distractions:** In order to give ourselves the gift of being as distraction free as possible, and to offer our best attention to each other in the times when we are meeting synchronously in person on Zoom, I ask that each student turn off notifications on cell phones, email, and close social media screens on your computer, so you are not tempted to flip between screens during class time. This way we can focus on the readings and discussion.

**Synchronous Learning Access:** For students who may be unavoidably absent or in another time zone internationally, I will be recording Zoom in-person sessions for the purposes of access to course material and uploading weekly to CU-learn. I will also be providing some power point slides for preview before/or after weekly classes.

**Late Assignment Policy: The expectation is that assignments will come in on time, but life happens.** Extensions must be arranged in person with me (for illness or other difficult circumstances) in advance of the due date.

### **Course Communications:**

If you need to communicate with the prof, please use the Carleton e-mail address provided at the top of the syllabus. You can expect responses within 24 hours.

## **PLAGIARISM**

The University Senate defines plagiarism as “presenting, whether intentionally or not, the ideas, expression of ideas or work of others as one’s own.” This can include:

- reproducing or paraphrasing portions of someone else’s published or unpublished material, regardless of the source, and presenting these as one’s own without proper citation or reference to the original source;
- submitting a take-home examination, essay, laboratory report or other assignment written, in whole or in part, by someone else;
- using ideas or direct, verbatim quotations, or paraphrased material, concepts or ideas without appropriate acknowledgment in any academic assignment;
- using another’s data or research findings;
- failing to acknowledge sources through the use of proper citations when using another’s works and/or failing to use quotation marks;
- handing in substantially the same piece of work for academic credit more than once without prior written permission of the course instructor in which the submission occurs.

Plagiarism is a form of intellectual theft. It is a serious offence that cannot be resolved directly with the course’s instructor. The Associate Deans of the Faculty conduct a rigorous investigation, including an interview with the student, when an instructor suspects a piece of work has been plagiarized. Penalties are not trivial. They can include failure of the assignment, failure of the entire course, or suspension from a program. For more information please go to: <https://carleton.ca/registrar/academic-integrity/>

**Academic Accommodation:**

You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term. For an accommodation request, the processes are as follows:

**Pregnancy obligation:** write to me with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details click [here](#).

**Religious obligation:** write to me with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details click [here](#).

**Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities:** The Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities (PMC) provides services to students with Learning Disabilities (LD), psychiatric/mental health disabilities, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD), chronic medical conditions, and impairments in mobility, hearing, and vision. If you have a disability requiring academic accommodations in this course, please contact PMC at 613-520- 6608 or [pmc@carleton.ca](mailto:pmc@carleton.ca) for a formal evaluation. If you are already registered with the PMC, contact your PMC coordinator to send me your Letter of Accommodation at the beginning of the term, and no later than two weeks before the first in-class scheduled test or exam requiring accommodation (if applicable). After requesting accommodation from PMC, meet with me to ensure accommodation arrangements are made. Please consult the PMC website for the deadline to request accommodations for the formally-scheduled exam (if applicable).

**Survivors of Sexual Violence**

As a community, Carleton University is committed to maintaining a positive learning, working and living environment where sexual violence will not be tolerated, and where survivors are supported through academic accommodations as per Carleton's Sexual Violence Policy. For more information about the services available at the university and to obtain information about sexual violence and/or support, visit: <https://carleton.ca/equity/sexual-assault-support-services>

**Accommodation for Student Activities**

Carleton University recognizes the substantial benefits, both to the individual student and for the university, that result from a student participating in activities beyond the classroom experience. Reasonable accommodation must be provided to students who compete or perform at the national or international level. Write to me with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. <https://carleton.ca/senate/wp-content/uploads/Accommodation-for-Student-Activities-1.pdf>