

ENVS 015: Nature Rx

Course description

A growing body of research demonstrates the positive effects of nature on mood, cognition, and social behavior. In this course, we will explore current research on these topics and develop nature practices that support individual and community wellbeing. As first year students attending college at an arboretum, incorporating such practices in your everyday life is both much needed *and* readily accessible. This course will include weekly discussions, outdoor activities, and reflections that empower you to care for yourself and your community throughout college and beyond.

Learning goals

Through full engagement in this course, you will

- 1) develop knowledge about
 - a. research-supported benefits of spending time in nature.
 - b. cultural differences in how people relate to nature.
 - c. relationships between spending time in nature, social justice, and environmental stewardship.
- 2) cultivate skills in
 - a. nature practices that support your wellbeing.
 - b. mindful reflection.
 - c. development of nature initiatives that support community wellbeing.
- 3) deepen feelings of
 - a. belonging in nature spaces on campus.
 - b. solidarity among classmates.
 - c. appreciation of the importance of spending time in nature for your academic, professional, and personal pursuits.

Sustainability statement

As you work toward these learning goals, you will

- appreciate the interdependence of self-care, social justice, and environmental stewardship.
- feel comforted by supportive relationships with peers when faced with anxiety about socio-environmental catastrophes.
- attain baseline knowledge, skills, and campus contacts that support future study in fields concerned with environmental sustainability.
- be empowered to care for yourself and your community as you work toward social and environmental justice, strengthening yourself, your community, and your work.