

Recreation and Humanities Classes

ART IN NATURE

Lesson Overview: Students will explore nature through the lens of an artist. They will learn about nature artists, develop an innovative approach to creating art, and present and share their creative expression. This class will be a unique experience for students to understand that art surrounds them in all places.

Total Time: 1.5 or 3 hours

Hiking Distance: varied, .5 to 1 mile

Activity Level: Can be modified for universal accessibility with notification

Learning Goals: At the end of this session, students will be able to:

1. Create art using natural and/or found elements and materials
2. Learn about nature artists such as Andy Goldsworthy, and understand how their art is an expression of themselves as well as how it affects those that observe what they have created
3. Students will be able to identify how nature art can be used to bring significance to a place, person or experience

CLEAR CREEK HIKE

Lesson Overview: Students hike through the forest on a favorite trail of their instructor's choosing. On the trail, open exploration and inquiry are highly encouraged and students can practice their observation and interpretive skills on plants, animals, insects, and tracks! May include the use of field guides, dichotomous keys, hand lenses, and nature journals.

Total Time: 1.5 or 3 hours

Hiking Distance: varied, usually .75 mile

Activity Level: Can be modified for universal accessibility with notification

Learning Goals: Vary based on chosen theme, but are integrated with those from other classes chosen by the instructor. Each experience is unique and tailored to the interest of the field group.

PEOPLE OF THE EARTH

Lesson Overview: Students will engage with historical and cultural artifact replicas, hike on one of McDowell's many scenic trails and participate in activities and discussions to learn respect for our world's natural resources and different cultures.

Total Time: 3 hours

Hiking Distance: .75 mile

Activity Level: Low to moderate; can be modified for alternate abilities, some experiences require hiking a short hill

Learning Goals: By the end of this session, students will be able to discuss the relationship between humans and the natural environment through the lens of Alabama's indigenous people in the following ways:

1. Investigate replicated artifacts to learn about the indigenous tribes of Alabama through the use of observation and evidence
2. Explain how to respectfully learn about other cultures and why learning about other groups of people is important
3. Understand what happened to the indigenous tribes living in Northern Alabama and the importance of learning about different cultures, religions, and peoples

STEWARDS OF THE FOREST

Lesson Overview: What does it mean to be a steward of the land? How can we take care of the land both here at camp and back home? WHY should we take care of the land? This class is a service based class that aims to answer those questions through a hands-on, service project at McDowell Environmental Center. From pulling invasive plant species to clearing trails, there are always ways we are working to care for our land here at Camp McDowell and we are ready for your help! Projects vary seasonally and by need, if you have an idea let us know and we will tell you if we think it can work!

Total Time: 1.5 hours/3 hours

Activity Level: Moderate: Involves hiking trails, hauling equipment/materials and using tools

Learning Goals: By the end of this class students will be able to:

1. Define what it means to be a steward of the land
2. List ways in which they can practice stewardship while at camp and back home
3. Utilize new skills such as how to maintain trails, identify and remove invasives, and use various tools (varies by season and the needs of MEC at time of trip)

TRAIL OF DISCOVERY

Lesson Overview: Students have an immersive, full day experience in nature. Aspects of MEC courses on forest ecology, geology, and local history as well as those selected by the teacher, are highlighted on a full day hike. Students practice Leave No Trace, enjoy a picnic lunch, and, because of the full day nature of the course, have opportunities to engage more fully with chosen concepts. ***A sack lunch will be provided. All participants need to bring a backpack, 2 water bottles, and comfortable hiking shoes.***

Total Time: Full day (morning and afternoon class session, lunch on trail)

Hiking Distance: ~3 miles

Activity Level: Moderate to strenuous; experience cannot be adapted for all abilities, but modifications can be made to accommodate some different abilities

Learning Goals: Learning goals are dependent, in part, on the content choices of the teacher and other courses taken during the students' trip. In addition to science content, students can expect to become more independent in nature in the following ways:

1. Recognizing the behaviors necessary for thriving long-term in an outdoor situation and the ways humans can protect the environment around them

WELCOME TO THE WOODS

Lesson Overview: Not every person gets outdoor experience from a young age. For some students, this will be their first time out in the woods. This class is a gentle introduction to exploring the outdoors here at McDowell Environmental Center. We will start small and work our way bigger as we practice observational skills, walking on the trails, and experiencing what Camp McDowell has to offer.

Total Time: 1.5 hours or 3 hours

Activity Level: Universally accessible

Learning Goals: By the end of this class students should grow in the following areas:

1. Comfortability in the natural world
2. Know how to prepare for an outdoor adventure
3. Observation skills while out on the trail