



SYLLABUS FORM

CHILDREN AND LEARNING IN NATURE

Basic course information	
Academic unit:	University of Prizren "Ukshin Hoti", Faculty of Education
Course title:	Children and Learning in Nature
Level:	Bachelor
Course status:	Elective
Year of study:	4th year, 7th semester
Number of hours per week:	2+1
Credit value – ECTS:	5
Time / location:	Faculty of Education
Course instructor:	Assoc. Prof. Dr. Rifat Morina
Contact details:	rifat.morina@uni-prizren.com
Course description	
	Course description: This course addresses the pedagogical, psychological and environmental importance of learning in nature as a contemporary approach to children's education. It analyzes the impact of direct experiences in the environment on children's cognitive, emotional, social and physical development. The course is grounded in theories of experiential education, environmental education and nature pedagogy, integrating interdisciplinary approaches from developmental psychology, ecology, didactics and education for sustainability. Students will explore international models of forest schools and outdoor learning, as well as the relationship between contact with nature and children's well-being. The course also examines the ethical and social dimension of environmental education in the context of global challenges such as climate change and environmental degradation.
Course aim	The aim of this course is to develop students' in-depth theoretical and practical understanding of the role of nature in the learning process and child development, and to equip them with skills to

	design, implement and evaluate educational activities in natural environments. The course aims to: • Deepen understanding of the link between nature and child development. • Encourage pedagogical approaches that promote learning through experience. • Strengthen awareness of the importance of environmental education in early childhood. • Develop competencies for organizing learning activities outside the classroom.
Expected learning outcomes:	1. Knowledge The student will be able to: • Explain the main theories of experiential learning and outdoor education. • Analyze the impact of the natural environment on children's cognitive and emotional development. • Identify contemporary models of outdoor education. • Describe the role of environmental education in the development of ecological citizenship. 2. Skills The student will be able to: • Design lesson plans that integrate outdoor activities. • Adapt curricular content for delivery in outdoor spaces. • Apply active and exploratory methods in natural environments. • Assess the impact of outdoor activities on the learning process. 3. Competencies The student will be able to: • Demonstrate professional responsibility in organizing outdoor learning. • Promote sustainable behavior and environmental ethics among children. • Act as a mediator between the child and the natural environment. • Integrate environmental education as an essential part of pedagogical practice.

Contribution to student workload (should correspond to the student’s learning outcomes)			
Activity	Hours	Days/week	Total
Lectures	2	15	30
Theoretical/laboratory exercises	1	15	15
Practical work			
Instructor contact/consultations	1	5	5
Field exercises	0	0	0
Midterms, seminars	2	2	4
Homework	1	13	13
Independent study time (in the library or at home)	2	15	30
Final exam preparation	5	5	25
Time spent in assessment (tests, quizzes, final exam)	1	3	3
Projects, presentations, etc.	1	1	1
Total			126
Teaching methodology:			
	Teaching in this course is based on active and experiential approaches, integrating theory with practice in natural environments. The process is carried out through interactive lectures and critical discussions, practical outdoor activities, group work and applied projects, and pedagogical reflection on field experiences.		
Assessment methods:			
	a) Attendance and engagement in lectures.....5% b) Attendance and engagement in exercises.....5% c) Individual work5% d) Seminar paper5% e) Midterm I.....20% c) Midterm II.....20% d) Final exam.....40%		
Literature			
Core literature:	Handout: Nature and Humans		
Additional literature:	Beames, S., Higgins, P., & Nicol, R. (2012). Learning Outside the Classroom: Theory and Guidelines for Practice.		
Course plan:			

Week	Lecture to be delivered	Exercises
Week 1:	Basic knowledge about nature	Practical identification of natural elements (plants, soil, water, insects), field observation and keeping a nature journal.
Week 2:	Theoretical foundations of outdoor education	Group discussion on pedagogical models, case analysis, and drafting a short outdoor activity plan.
Week 3:	Learning through experience in nature	Implementation of a practical activity outside the classroom and structured reflection on the experience according to the experiential learning cycle.
Week 4:	Safety and risk management in outdoor activities	Simulation of potential risk situations, drafting a safety plan and identifying preventive measures.
Week 5:	Project presentations	Presentation and critical discussion of individual or group projects on educational outdoor activities.
Week 6:	First midterm test	Review and consolidation of the content covered during the course.
Week 7:	The impact of outdoor education on environmental awareness	Analysis of concrete examples and drafting a mini awareness campaign for children.
Week 8:	Humans and their impact on environmental pollution	Field observation to identify forms of pollution and discussion of practical solutions.
Week 9:	Project presentations	Project presentations
Week 10:	Assessment of learning in natural environments	Developing simple assessment instruments (rubrics, checklists, reflections).
Week 11:	Project presentations	Project presentations
Week 12:	Outdoor activity	Organizing a school day outside the classroom with

		exploratory and collaborative activities.
Week 13:	The role of nature in the child's cognitive and emotional development	Analysis of case studies and reflection on the emotional effects of spending time in nature.
Week 14:	Outdoor education and the development of competencies	Designing a lesson plan that integrates key competencies (collaboration, problem solving, critical thinking) through outdoor activities.
Week 15:	Second midterm test	Review and consolidation of the content covered during the course.

Academic policies and rules of conduct:
Regular attendance in lectures and exercises is mandatory. Compliance with rules of conduct such as maintaining quiet during class, switching off mobile phones, respecting the schedule, etc., is required.