Outdoor Education, continuation course, 15 ECTS Credits, 2013–2014
(Utomhuspedagogisk fördjupningskurs med didaktisk inriktning)

Welcome to the Outdoor education and didactics course, as a part of the second year Master programme in Outdoor education at Linköping University. This course will be running from September 2013 (week 37) to May 2014 (week 21), with two campus week meetings. As a part of these two weeks, there will be two short field trips (2–3 days) in the natural and cultural landscape. Otherwise the course is administrated via the web-based platform. The first part of the course starts on Monday 9th and finishes 12th September 2013, with the first week in the outdoors around Linköping University and then in the county of Östergötland. The second week is between 19th and 23rd May 2014. The course ends 22rd–23rd May with outdoor filed activities and the final examination (the place for this is not decided yet).

Course contents
The course is organised as two full time campus and field weeks and 16 weeks off campus. During the two campus/field weeks you will take part in outdoor education in practice, seminars and lectures. In between you are working individually and in groups with a web-based platform.

Obligatory Literature

* Articles available on line from Liu University Library see below.

You can also read on the National Centre for Outdoor Education website, before the summer vacation and collect four scientific papers that you need and read them before we meet in September. Look at the National Centre for Outdoor Education website: www.liu.se/ikk/ncu. I also add a leaflet of empirical arguments (55).

Recommended literature
Recommended literature for Swedish speaking students

Assignments
There are three assigned aspects designed to support your learning. The first relates to your participation throughout the course, comprising postings, reflections, comments and interaction. You need to be active and visit the course platform. All participants need to be contributing to the group discussions.

The second and third are written assignments; a presentation of an academic work in this field and a course report. The second assignment should also be presented orally.

Do not view them as separate tasks as they are all related. The reading and discussing you do in assignment 1 help you manage writing assignment 3. The dissertation you need to read and present in assignment 2 could of course be part of you reference list in assignment 3.

Assignment 1
Group discussions on the web-based platform
The course is partly distance based with 3 tasks. Each task requires reparation by reading literature and participation in group discussions on line. You are most welcome to introduce other relevant readings to your peers. The lists are just suggestions of readings.

Week 38 to week 41
Task 1 – The diversity of outdoor education.
In this task you are asked to reflect on historical and cultural aspects on outdoor education. You are also asked to try to define outdoor education as a pedagogical tradition in relation to other nearby traditions as place-based education and education for sustainable development.

- What does outdoor education mean to you, in your particular context?
- Do you use the outdoors as a learning environment? If so, in what ways and what are your objectives?
- How do you understand the concept of place in outdoor education?
- What are your “critical issues” in the field?

Step 1: Write down your initial understanding of what role outdoor education plays in your own practice or from a more theoretical point of view. You do not need to post this text but should post some reflections or questions you want elaborate further during this course in the group discussion forum on the web-based platform. Due 11th October.

Step 2: Read the literature with the aforementioned questions in mind. Is there something from the literature you particularly want to discuss? Has your initial understanding been challenged in any way? Do you agree or disagree with the authors? Do you see cultural differences in the use of the outdoors as a learning environment? How would you describe the relation between outdoor education, place-based education and education for sustainable development?

Post your reflections and continue to discuss on the web-based platform.


Week 45 to 47

Task 2 – What role does nature play in education and identity formation?
Our relation to nature can be viewed from a social constructivist perspective (e.g Halldén and Gullesstad) or from a more evolutionary psychological perspective (e.g Kahn & Kellert). How
do you view human relationships with nature? What is your rationale for bringing children/students outdoors?

Read the literature and use also your own experiences and understanding to answer the questions. Write a short paragraph and post in Task 2 forum on the web-based platform. Due 22nd November. Read each others texts and discuss for example if nature plays different roles in different outdoor education contexts.


Recommended literature


**Week 48 to 50**

**Task 3 – Outdoor education and health aspects**

What does research say about the outdoors and health aspects? Use the literature below and/or other relevant articles. Are there any obvious results? Are there findings that are more ambiguous? What are your experiences?

Discuss your reading and questions that come to mind when reading the articles. What is your conclusion about the health effects of outdoor education?


Nature Assisted Health Care: [www.nahc.se](http://www.nahc.se)


**Recommended literature**


**Before week 21, 2013**

*Learning at zoos, botanical gardens, museums and other out-of-school settings.*

Read the literature (before week 21) and use your own experiences and reflections to answer the questions below.

Questions to discuss in your study group:

1) How do you value different out-of-school environments in relation to outdoor education tradition, are some better than others? In what way?

2) What opportunities for interplay between sensory experiences and reflection do they provide?

3) What are the benefits and pitfalls with out-of-school experiences in supporting learning?


**Assignment 2**

Choose a doctoral/licentiate dissertation or three peer reviewed papers in the field, apart from the literature list, and prepare an oral individual presentation/summary, duration 15-20 minutes, to present 22nd–23rd May 2014.

**Some suggestions of dissertations**


Stigsdotter, U. 2005. *Landscape Architecture and Health: Evidence-Based Health-Promoting*
Assignment 3

In the final course report you are asked to write down your understanding of the specific nature of outdoor education and how it is identified in the literature. Are there different rationales in different contexts/cultures? How is human relation with the natural and cultural landscape discussed in the literature? What is the relation between outdoor education and education for sustainable development? What are the arguments from a health perspective in going outdoors? Are they clear-cut or ambiguous? What do you think are the pros and cons with outdoor education? These are some questions you could discuss but you are welcome to discuss others as well.

A final version is to be handed in at latest 1st March 2014.

Post at assignment forum due 1st April 2014. The two first authors posting their assignments read each other’s text and prepare feedback to be presented in the seminar week 21 2014. The second pair of authors does the same etcetera. If there are an uneven number of students the course manager read the last submitted text. Each student needs to prepare a 15–20 minutes opposition and question(s) to discuss.

Use APA or Harvard referencing formats. Line spacing 1.5 line, page length about 10 pages. Assume no common knowledge between reader and writer and make everything transparent and explicit.

Teachers on the course:
Anders Szczepanski, Director NCU ass prof, Fil lic Outdoor education
Lars Björklund PhD in Pedagogy Thematic Didactic research school
Other teachers will be involved as a part of the programme.

Welcome to the course!

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