

COURSE OUTLINE

Spring Wildflower and Weed Identification

Course Description: BI 218. Spring Wildflower and Weed Identification. 2 hours credit. This course will enable the student to recognize and identify by common and scientific name many local species of "wildflowers and weeds" that only bloom during the spring season. The student will accomplish this by sensorial observation of each plant's unique physical appearance, habitat, and range, and using appropriate field guides and dichotomous identification keys. The student will also learn the ecological role various spring wildflowers and weeds play in their local biome and how native and pioneer Americans used these spring wildflowers and weeds as sources of food, medicines, fabrics, building materials, etc.

Course Relevance: The principles learned in this course will allow the student to effectively seek out and find specific spring wildflowers and weeds in their natural habitats. Once found these spring wildflowers and weeds may be simply enjoyed aesthetically or used for food, medicine, or various other purposes. The natural world is quickly eroding due to human impact. By experiencing this portion of our natural environment, the student may gain a greater appreciation of the natural beauty and complexity of the "real world" and help to preserve it for future generations to enjoy.

Required Materials:

Text: Freeman, C. C. & Schofield, E. K. (1991). *Roadside wildflowers of the southern great plains*. Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas.

Text: Peterson, R. T. & McKenny, M. (1968). *Peterson field guides: Wildflowers of northeastern/northcentral North America*. New York, NY: Houghton Mifflin Co.

Text: Water, M. T. (1955). *Flower finder: Spring wild flowers and flower families*. New York, NY: Nature Study Guild Rochester.

Learning Outcomes:

The intention is for the student to be able to:

1. Recognize, identify, and enjoy certain species of spring wildflowers and weeds
2. Possibly use some of these spring wildflowers and weeds as food, medicine, garden plants, etc.
3. Appreciate the natural beauty of spring wildflowers and weeds and help preserve their natural environment that we are dependent on for our survival

Primary Learning PACT Skills that will be DEVELOPED and/or documented in this course:

Through the student involvement in this course, he/she will develop his/her ability in the following PACT skill areas:

1. Critical Thinking:

- Through direct sensorial scrutiny of spring wildflowers and weeds in their natural habitats the student will be able to identify by common and scientific name certain species of wildflowers and weeds that only bloom during the spring season.

2. Writing

- The student will effectively record all field-related observations of spring wildflowers and weeds, habitats, locations, etc., in a bound field journal.

Secondary skills (developed but not documented):

Aesthetic response - By using many physical senses the student will identify and enjoy the natural beauty of many species of wildflowers and weeds that only bloom during the spring season.

Field-Related Technology - The student will understand that many currently used medicines, foods, building materials, and fabrics have their origins in certain locally observed spring wildflowers and weeds.

Major Summative Assessment Task(s):

These learning outcomes and primary Learning PACT skills will be demonstrated by:

1. The student recording all daily field observations in a bound field journal
2. The student taking oral and written identification quizzes
3. Individual discussions with the student and instructor

Course Content:

- I. Themes - Key recurring concepts that run throughout this course:
 - A. Identification of spring wildflowers and weeds by physical appearance
 - B. Habitats, soils, and locations where each spring wildflower or weed is found
 - C. Ethnobotanical uses of spring wildflowers and weeds
- II. Issues - Key issues that will be addressed in this course: areas of conflict that must be understood in order to achieve the intended outcome:
 - A. Focusing on each spring wildflower or weed one at a time
 - B. Not all academic knowledge is learned in an indoor classroom or lab
- III. Concepts – Key concepts that must be understood to address the issues:
 - A. Using senses, identification keys, and field guides to identify specific spring wildflowers and weeds
 - B. Experiencing spring wildflowers and weeds in natural habitats
- IV. Skills - Actions that are essential to achieve the course outcomes:
 - A. Mental and sensorial observations to identify spring wildflowers and weeds
 - B. Vocabulary skills to pronounce common and scientific names of spring wildflowers and weeds
 - C. Writing and organizational skills to record field observations in a field journal

Learning Units:

- I. Describe ecological roles on planet earth for spring wildflowers and weeds
 - A. Describe how spring wildflowers and weeds are autotrophs or primary producers in the first trophic level of food chains or food webs
 - B. Write the overall balanced chemical equation for photosynthesis
 - C. Describe how spring wildflowers and weeds help recycle nutrients in biogeochemical cycles
 - D. Understand the commercial roles played by spring wildflowers and weeds

- II. Recognize and identify physical structures of spring wildflowers and weeds
 - A. Recognize and name the major structures and different types of flowers
 - B. Recognize and name the major structures and different types of leaves
 - C. Recognize and name the major types of stems and roots

- III. Compare taxonomic relationships among spring wildflowers and weeds
 - A. For each specifically encountered spring wildflower or weed know at least one common name and understand the origin and/or meaning behind these localized names
 - B. For each specifically encountered spring wildflower or weed know the species name and understand the origin and/or meaning behind these scientific names
 - C. For each specifically encountered spring wildflower or weed know within which taxonomic family it is classified

- IV. Explain how knowing the uniqueness of a spring wildflower or weed's flowers and/or leaves help identify a specific spring wildflower or weed
 - A. Recognize and name a specific encountered spring wildflower or weed by visually examining the color, shape, structure, position, and/or arrangement of its flower(s)
 - B. Recognize and name a specifically encountered spring wildflower or weed by visually and/or tactilely examining the color, shape, structure, position, and/or arrangement of its leaves

- V. Explain how knowing the time of year a wildflower or weed's leaves and/or flowers become visible and recognizable can help identify a specific spring wildflower or weed
 - A. Apply the time of year a specific encountered wildflower or weed's flowers bloom to help differentiate it from similar species of wild plants
 - B. Apply the time of year a specific encountered wild plant's leaves begin to grow and develop to help differentiate it from similar species of wild plants

- VI. Describe how knowing the unique habitat and/or range of a spring wildflower or weed can help identify that specific wildflower or weed
 - A. Apply the typical habitat of a specific encountered spring wildflower or weed to help differentiate it from similar spring wildflowers or weeds
 - B. Apply the typical range of a specific encountered spring wildflower or

weed to help differentiate it from similar spring wildflowers or weeds

- VII. Explain the ethno-botany of spring wildflowers and weeds
 - A. Describe the ways that Native Americans and pioneer Americans utilized a specific encountered spring wildflower or weed as a food source
 - B. Describe the ways that Native Americans and pioneer Americans utilized a specific encountered spring wildflower or weed for medicinal purposes
 - C. Describe ways that Native Americans and pioneer Americans utilized a specific encountered spring wildflower or weed for other practical purposes

- VIII. Appreciate alternative ways to enjoy spring wildflowers and weeds
 - A. Name a specific unknown spring wildflower or weed by applying a wildflower and weed dichotomous identification key
 - B. Name a specific unknown spring wildflower or weed by using an appropriate wildflower and weed field guide
 - C. Photograph encountered spring wildflowers and weeds
 - D. Plant spring wildflowers and weeds in gardens and home landscapes

Learning Activities:

Learning activities will involve the student in classroom discussion of plant shape and structure, field trips to specific spring wildflower and weed sites, application of dichotomous identification keys, utilizing wildflower and weed field guides, participating in organized spring wildflower and weed tours, oral quizzes over already identified spring wildflowers and weeds, recording observations in a bound field journal, and various appropriate projects.

Grade Determination:

The student's final grade determination will be based on satisfactory completion of assessment tasks (learning activities), attendance, participation, quizzes, exams, field journal, and projects.