



Land Stewardship Ambassadors

Bexar County Cohort: Witte Museum

Webb County Cohort: Falcon Bank

Cameron County Cohort: Camp Rio @ Historic Lula Sams

Sundays, 2-4:30 p.m.

Spring 2021

Contacts

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Course Description

Land Stewardship Ambassadors is a 10 session course over 12 weeks for high school students offered by the Witte Museum and the East Foundation in order to increase awareness of land stewardship principles and promote civil engagement. There will be three cohorts of this course—Bexar County will meet in San Antonio, Webb County will meet in Laredo and Cameron County will meet in Brownsville. During the regular sessions, students will participate in discussion and activities related to a given topic. There will also be two special weekend-long sessions of the course, where all cohorts will come together in person—first at the Witte Museum in San Antonio and then at the East Foundation's San Antonio Viejo Ranch in Hebbronville.

Partnership

With the mutual goal of providing transformational experiences regarding land stewardship for the great state of Texas, the Witte Museum and the East Foundation are partnering to ensure that messages of land stewardship permeate all aspects of the Texas Wild exhibition, labs and educational programs. One outcome of this partnership is that children and adults will be empowered through a better understanding of diverse ecosystems of the state, becoming educated citizens as it relates to water, habitat, land management and conservation issues.

Course Objectives

Students who complete this course successfully will be able to:

- Discuss topics of land stewardship as it relates to the local and state communities
- Identify reputable sources for research
- Communicate effectively with a group of peers and instructors in order to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of topics related to land stewardship
- Act as an ambassador of the Witte Museum, the East Foundation and the Land Stewardship Ambassadors program to the general public

COVID-19 Statement

With the pandemic, we do not know what the situation will be in February. All sessions will be formatted according to the latest CDC guidelines. Face coverings, physical distancing, temperature checks and other safety measures may be required of participants but all participants will be notified of the requirements prior to the February 7, 2021 mandatory parent/student information session. If the situation arises that the cohorts cannot meet in person, we will utilize the Zoom platform to meet virtually.

Required Texts will be provided and distributed ahead of required reading assignments.

Student Requirements

Students are expected to complete all weekly assignments, participate in weekly discussions, write reflections from their discussions and present a final project at the end of the semester.

Google Classroom

Students will be utilizing Google Classroom to access weekly assignments, readings, videos and additional links. Students will also be submitting assignments via Google Classroom. Please ensure you are able to access the Google Classroom prior to the Parent and Student Information meeting. Please notify your instructors if you are unable to access so that we can troubleshoot appropriately.

Weekly Assignments

In order to make sure the students are engaging the text efficiently and thoughtfully, each student will write a T.Q.C. report and turn it in. Students will be told which readings are eligible for the T.Q.C. assignment each week. These will be graded/annotated/checked by the instructors and feedback will be shared with the student. The T.Q.C. report will have a deadline of Thursday at 5:00 p.m. prior to the Sunday meeting.

The “T” stands for thesis, which is where the students will write their own thesis statement that they believe captures the main point of the reading. They will then find a particular quote (“Q”) that caught their attention and write it down. They will then comment (“C”) on the significance of the quote and why it caught their attention and elaborate.

T. Thesis

Write your own thesis statement that reflects the main idea of the assigned text/media.

Q. Quote

Record one quote that catches your attention that relates to the thesis.

C. Comment

Comment on the quote by explaining why it stood out to you and expand on its significance.

Sample TQC

Thesis:

Children are the future of the world and if environmentalists continue to ignore them, there will be no passionate earthy people for the future.

Quote:

“She gasped and grabbed my leg. She had never seen the stars before...She was a changed person. From that moment on, she saw everything, the camouflaged lizard that everyone else skipped by. She used her senses. She was awake.”

Comment:

This quote reminded me of the transition I feel every time I leave the city to go camping or hiking. It takes a while to stop being startled by every bug and to quit passing by plants without looking. Once you get all the way transitioned, everything is amazing and fascinating. I also notice that it takes longer with my family, thoroughly urbanized folks, than with girl scouts, a group of enthusiastic, earthy women I'm lucky to have. This chapter really emphasized the importance of children being in nature with adults who model appreciation and respect. It's dangerous to raise a generation indoors.

T.Q.C. Submission

The T.Q.C. report will have a deadline of Thursday at 5:00 p.m. prior to the Sunday meeting. To submit a T.Q.C. the student will utilize Google Classroom.

Final Project

Each student must develop a public presentation and deliver it to an audience as their final project. The project must be observed by an LSA instructor or recorded and submitted to the LSA instructors. The student will select a topic related to land stewardship to be approved by the instructors. The presentation must be a minimum of five minutes and a maximum of eight minutes. Students will utilize a PowerPoint template provided to them.

Additionally, students will receive deadlines for presentation topic, presentation abstract, presentation outline, and presentation PowerPoint draft. Zoom practice sessions will be scheduled during April.

This project will be assessed by the rubric attached to this document and will be discussed in further detail during the semester.

Students will also be required to complete the post-test, an exit essay, an exit survey and submit two short videos that express what you have learned from the Land Stewardship Ambassadors Program. Guidelines and prompts will be provided.

Participation

Student participation is essential for the successful completion of this course. Participation is defined as, but not limited to, the following:

- Completing and turning in a T.Q.C. each week
- Participating in a meaningful and productive way during class discussions each week
- Journaling reflections of each week's discussion which will be known as an "Exit Ticket" and completed after the facilitated discussion and submitted via a google form
- Attending **7 out of 8** of the regular class sessions and **both** of the special weekend-long sessions

- **Deadline for Final Presentation to a Public Audience: June 5, 2020**
- **Deadline for LSA Video Promo, Exit Survey, Exit Essay, Post-Test: June 18, 2020**

Course Policies and Information for Students

Inclusive Learning Environment Statement

The best learning environment—whether in the classroom, laboratory or fieldwork site—is one in which all members feel respected while being productively challenged. At the Witte Museum and the East Foundation, we are dedicated to fostering an inclusive atmosphere, in which all participants can contribute, explore and challenge their own ideas as well as those of others. Every participant has an active responsibility to foster a climate of intellectual stimulation, openness and respect for diverse perspectives, questions, personal backgrounds, abilities and experiences, although instructors bear primary responsibility for its maintenance.

Attendance Policy

Students are expected to arrive on time to their designated meeting places and remain for the entirety of the scheduled time. They will attend a minimum of 7 out of 8 regular program sessions and both of the weekend-long full group sessions.

Plagiarism

Academic integrity is vital to the success of the Land Stewardship Ambassadors program. Each student's level of understanding, knowledge, and ability to connect readings, videos, and discussions will be assessed via the exit ticket and final project.

Stipend

The \$400 stipend will only be awarded to students who successfully complete the course. The requirements for this are as follows:

- Student attended 7/8 of the regular class sessions
- Student attended both of the weekend-long sessions
- Student completed all coursework in a timely manner
- Student completed a final project and presented to a group of their peers in accordance with the provided rubric

Preliminary Schedule of Meetings, Readings, Topics and Other Assignments *(subject to change)

February 7, 2021 – 2:00 – 4:30 PM - Mandatory Parent/Student Information Session

Selected applicants should plan to attend this information session with a parent or guardian. The meeting will include an overview of the program and expectations. An online pre-test to evaluate the student's knowledge about land stewardship will also be administered. This will be an excellent opportunity for students and their parent/guardian to ask questions. Exact meeting locations will be provided when acceptance emails are sent in December.

February 20-21, 2021 – Overnight at the Witte Museum in San Antonio for all cohorts

Theme: What is a Land Steward?

Webb County Cohort will leave Laredo at 9:30AM on Saturday and return by 12:30PM on Sunday. Cameron County Cohort will leave Camp Rio at 7:00AM on Saturday and return by 3:00PM on Sunday. A packing list will be provided at the Feb. 7th Information Session.

Pre-reading assignment:

- History of the Witte Museum from website <https://www.wittemuseum.org/history/>
- From *Nature's Allies* the chapter on Aldo Leopold

February 28, 2021 – 2:00 – 4:30PM – All cohorts began to meet individually.

Theme: History of Conservation

Pre-reading assignment:

- *Nature's Allies: Eight Conservationists Who Changed Our World* by Larry Nielson, assigned chapter
- *Horses to Ride, Cattle to Cut* by Wyman Meinzer and Henry Chappell, pages 11-97

March 7 or 14, 2021 – 2:00 – 4:30PM

Theme: Public Speaking

Pre-reading assignment:

- TBD

March 21, 2021 – 2:00 – 4:30PM

Theme: Water

Pre-reading assignment:

- *Texas Watershed Stewardship Handbook* by Texas AgriLife Extension (Chapters 1 and 2)
- "Making the Connection: Watersheds and our water supplies" by Anna Huff
- "Where the First Raindrop Falls" by Larry D. Hodge
- "Soil and Water" by Steve Nelle

March 28, 2021 – 2:00 – 4:30PM

Theme: Politics and Advocacy

Pre-reading assignment:

- “How Laws are Made” <https://www.usa.gov/how-laws-are-made>
- Schoolhouse Rock: America- I’m Just a Bill <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FFroMQIKiag>
- Identify a current natural resource issue within your community.
- Research the Recovering America’s Wildlife Act and identify the main arguments for and against this bill. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8rSY5Wa9gig>

April 11, 2021 – 2:00 – 4:30PM

Theme: Economics

Pre-reading assignment:

- *An Initial Examination of the Economic Impact of Nature Tourism on the Rio Grande Valley* by Kyle M. Woosnam
- Video: “Herd Impact” ft. Deborah Clark & Emery Birdwell <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EBTINTcBbE>
- “How America Uses its Land” <https://www.bloomberg.com/graphics/2018-us-land-use/>
- “The Economics of Conservation” by Steve Nelle
- “Internal Controversy” by Steve Nelle

April 18, 2021 – 2:00 – 4:30PM

Theme: Human Dimensions – Public Benefits of Conservation

Pre-reading assignment:

- Abstract only: “The Health Benefits of Urban Nature: How Much Do We Need?” by Danielle F. Shanahan, et al <https://academic.oup.com/bioscience/article/65/5/476/324489>
- “Private Lands Public Trust” by Steve Nelle
- *Last Child in the Woods*, chapter 12

April 25, 2021 – Time based on location; each cohort will be making a field trip

Theme: Wildlife Management

Pre-reading assignment:

- *The Wildlife Techniques Manual, Volume 2: Management* by Nova Silvy (Chapter 31)
- “The Basic Skill” by Steve Nelle
- Videos: America’s Wildlife Parts 1 and 2 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iPmV1smiJWY> and <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TdY9Dp8huug>

May 2, 2021 – 2:00 – 4:30PM

Theme: Diversity in Conservation

Pre-reading assignment:

- *Black Faces White Spaces* by Carolyn Finney, Chapter 5
- Bird-Watching While Black: A Wildlife Ecologist Shares His Tips, www.youtube.com/watch?v=aaPWAE34GJU
Ron Finley, A Guerilla Gardener in South Central LA
https://www.ted.com/talks/ron_finley_a_guerilla_gardener_in_south_central_la?language=en

May 8-9, 2021 – Overnight at the San Antonio Viejo Ranch near Hebronville for all cohorts

Theme: Bringing It All Together

Webb County Cohort will leave Laredo at 10:00AM on Saturday and return by 3:00PM on Sunday. Cameron County Cohort will leave Camp Rio at 10:00AM on Saturday and return by 3:00PM on Sunday. Bexar County Cohort will leave San Antonio at 8:30 AM on Saturday and return by 4:00 PM on Sunday. A packing list will be provided at the Feb. 7th Information Session.

Pre-reading assignment:

- Pre-reading assignment: Wyman Meinzer, *Horses to Ride, Cattle to Cut*, pages 99-185
- Read from *Sand County Almanac*, TBD