

Program Covenant
Knowing Nature
2007–08

In carrying out the curriculum of Knowing Nature, we are creating a community in which we can share our intellectual and personal understandings. This community forms the context for our conversations together. Conversing well requires being conscious and reflective about how we speak and act, how we use our time, and how we do our work individually and collectively. We cannot assume that a community will come about naturally. We must choose principles and activities that will enable us to build a community, one that becomes a community of learners.

Such a community requires sustaining disagreement, differences, and diversity in a spirit of equality. In order to achieve this, each of us must agree to the following principles and actions:

1) Respect

To create and participate in a community capable of sustaining intense, but respectful, interaction and discourse we must:

- strive to be aware of how our actions affect others and be honest with others about how their actions affect us;
- read and act in accordance with the Evergreen Social Contract, the Student Conduct Code and the Sexual Harassment Policy
- give all people opportunity and encouragement to speak;
- maintain a reflective and respectful approach to the study of our own and others' experiences and knowledge.

2) Engagement

To be engaged in our individual and community work means generating and sharing personal interpretations and understandings such that we make the material and ideas our own. Doing so requires, at a minimum, fulfilling our responsibilities to:

- attend class and keep appointments punctually;

- prepare assignments and evaluations promptly;
- notify the group of intended absences and schedule changes;
- attend and be actively involved in all program sessions unless prevented by sickness or outside responsibilities.

3) Special Responsibilities of Students:

- attend all scheduled classes and arrive on time, except when illness or other serious circumstances prevent this; (Students must notify faculty on the day they miss class and let them know what to expect.)
- complete all assignments in full and on time;
- maintain a portfolio of all work and evaluations;
- write self-evaluations each quarter, including a transcript worthy self-evaluation at the end of the program; write faculty evaluations at the end of the program.
- in the spirit of Evergreen's mediation process, take up any grievance about anyone in the program (faculty or student) with that person first; only then, if the results are unsatisfactory, ask for consultation with the faculty team. (If one feels one cannot approach faculty directly, then our Core Connector, Therese Saliba, should be consulted.)

4) Special Responsibilities of Faculty:

- during the fifth week of each quarter, notify any student who might not receive full credit for that quarter;
- give prompt and thoughtful responses to student work;
- make time available for individual conferences with students;
- handle all disputes in a spirit of respect and goodwill;
- conduct interactions with each other collaboratively and professionally
- actively participate in faculty seminars and planning meetings.

5) Academic Honesty

In an academic community, sharing and taking responsibility for our own ideas is vital. At the same time, acknowledging use of other people's ideas is equally important. Often our work will be collaborative, so we must get into the habit of acknowledging the people and ideas that have influenced us. At other times, we will be asked to take individual positions -- in essays, research projects, and seminar discussions--and assert our own distinctive interpretations and judgments. In the end, we must take responsibility for our own work while also recognizing the contributions of those who have influenced our learning.

Failure to make such acknowledgments and present the work of others as our own is plagiarism. Any student who knowingly plagiarizes material will be asked to leave the program and may be required to leave the college. Because college policy makes the consequences of plagiarism so severe, ask your faculty if you have any questions.

6) Resolving Conflicts

Academic and personal conflicts arise in academic communities. The Social Contract lays out expectations about how we should deal with such conflicts:

Evergreen can thrive only if members respect the rights of others while enjoying their own rights. ... All [members of the community] must share alike in prizing academic and interpersonal honesty, in responsibly obtaining and in providing full and accurate information, and in resolving their differences through due process and with a strong will to collaboration. (The Social Contract--WAC 174-120-020)

We expect everyone in Knowing Nature to abide by these principles of honest and face-to-face resolution of conflicts. In the event you have not been able to resolve a conflict, bring your concerns to the attention of your seminar leader or to the faculty team (or Therese Saliba, if necessary). Any conflicts that cannot be resolved by your own efforts, those of your seminar leader, or the faculty team, or Therese, will be referred to our program dean or other mutually agreed upon mediator.

Disputes about credit or the content of an evaluation must first be addressed to the faculty member who wrote the evaluation. If a student is not satisfied after a discussion with the faculty member involved, then the

issue will be addressed by the faculty team. The program faculty will make final decisions about credit and evaluations.

7) Credit Policy

Of course, college credit depends on college-level work. Faculty take for granted that this implies attendance and punctuality at all program events and timely completion of all assignments. Faculty will assess the quality of student work along the way. Determination of whether or not student work is credit worthy will be made when a student completes (or exits) the program.

Credit is a matter of what a student achieves, not where a student began. In determining credit, faculty will assess both the quality of student work throughout the program and what a student subsequently accomplishes. Since Knowing Nature is a coherent, interdisciplinary curriculum, there is no guarantee that partial work will result in partial credit.