

# ECOTHERAPIES CERTIFICATE

**Note: No applications are being accepted for the Ecotherapies Certificate for 2025-26.**

Ecopsychology and ecotherapy are transdisciplinary fields that explore psychological concepts and therapeutic practices in the context of humans' relationships and interbeing with nature. Both draw on a number of disciplines including psychology and other social sciences, health care, critical social theory, public health, and the humanities. In particular, ecotherapy highlights the personal and beneficial aspects of incorporating nature into the therapeutic process. Ecotherapy also addresses environmental experiences and beliefs, which may include empowerment and/or despair about addressing climate change and other environmental issues. This focus on the "personal and planetary" can also be used to advocate for sustainability and conservation behaviors on multiple scales from the individual to the societal. Students study the theories and robust empirical findings associated with ecopsychology and ecotherapy and their implications for practice in counseling, psychotherapy, and education.

The Ecotherapies Certificate provides an opportunity for graduate students and practitioners to enhance their knowledge and training using an evidence-based, experiential, and socially progressive curriculum. This includes access to the educational resources available at the Graduate School of Education and Counseling at Lewis & Clark, a top-rated US "Green School," and Portland, Oregon, a world center for ecological living and sustainability innovation.

The course of study includes an orientation to environmental identity and behavior, an exploration of the theoretical and empirical foundations of ecopsychology and ecotherapy, and courses focusing on nature based therapies including wilderness and adventure therapy. Additionally, special topics classes including the human-animal bond, the plant-human bond, creative interventions, and play therapy are offered.

## Ecotherapies Certificate

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The Ecotherapies Certificate is comprised of 8 credits of coursework with the required sequence of courses typically beginning in the fall of the academic year. Courses are offered during the fall, spring, and summer semesters. Additionally, required courses are held in person during weekend or summer week-long intensive formats.

There are several pathways to enrollment in the certificate:

1. Good standing in one of the programs at Lewis & Clark Graduate School, for example: Professional Mental Health Counseling (<https://docs.lclark.edu/graduate/counselingpsychology/professionalmentalhealthcounseling/>), Professional Mental Health Counseling—Specialization in Addictions (<https://docs.lclark.edu/graduate/counselingpsychology/addictionstudies/>), Marriage, Couple, and Family Therapy (<https://docs.lclark.edu/graduate/counselingpsychology/mcft/>), Art Therapy (<https://docs.lclark.edu/graduate/counselingpsychology/art-therapy/>) or School Psychology (<https://docs.lclark.edu/graduate/counselingpsychology/schoolpsychology/>).

2. Good standing in a comparable MA-level counseling related degree program at another institution.
3. Being an alumni of the graduate school.
4. Being a graduate of an accredited master's level counseling related degree program with comparable pre-requisites.

## Certification

By situating the Ecotherapies Certificate in the context of Lewis & Clark's accredited counseling, therapy, school psychology and education programs, students have the opportunity to add a certificate to their degree program.

## Certificate Requirements

A minimum of 8 semester hours, distributed as follows:

ECOT 501	Introduction to Ecotherapy	1
ECOT 554	Theoretical & Empirical Basis of Ecopsychology	1
ECOT 596	Wilderness and Adventure Therapy Immersion	2
ECOT 597	Ecotherapy and Applied Ecopsychology	2
ECOT 598	Topics in Ecotherapy and Applied Ecopsychology (2 semesters, 1 hour each)	2

## Courses

### ECOT 501 Introduction to Ecotherapy

Content: Ecotherapy is the field of inquiry concerned with the human-nature relationship and includes a substantial body of evidence demonstrating the physical and psychological benefits of interacting with nature. A basic tenet of the field is that our inner worlds and the outer world are intimately connected. The need for nature still resides in our bodies, minds, and spirit. From an ecotherapy perspective, a central challenge of our time is the integration of our connection with nature with our scientific culture and our technological selves. As such, ecotherapy has a role to play in addressing such issues as the decreased presence of nature in our lives; the exponential growth of technology in daily living; and the impact of global climate change. This course guides students toward self-reflection regarding their environmental identity and their "sense of place". It also explores the motivations for integrating ecological perspectives into academic and professional work.

Prerequisites: None.

Credits: 1 semester hour.

### ECOT 554 Theoretical & Empirical Basis of Ecopsychology

Content: This course provides an introduction to ecopsychological theory and surveys research that supports the theoretical foundations of nature based practices found in Ecotherapy, Wilderness Therapy, and other Nature-based therapies. The course also surveys related concepts, findings and practices in psychology and counseling/therapy that provide a foundation for conservation and sustainability work, environmental education, advocacy, and activism.

Prerequisites: ECOT-501

Credits: 1 semester hour.

**ECOT 596 Wilderness and Adventure Therapy Immersion**

Content: This course provides an opportunity to explore ecopsychology concepts and nature based practices in the context of a multi-day outdoor experience. Topics include backcountry safety, outdoor leadership, wilderness philosophy and conservation, benefits of immersion in natural settings and retreats from modern technologies; multicultural rites of passage; and techniques for counseling/therapy in the outdoors. The course typically features an off-campus weeklong or multi-weekend residential format including tent camping along with other activities such as day and/or overnight hiking; mindfulness and team building exercises; and other nature based and/or adventure based activities. Outdoor experience not required. There is a course fee.

Prerequisites: ECOT-501

Credits: 2 semester hours.

**ECOT 597 Ecotherapy and Applied Ecopsychology**

Content: This course in Ecotherapy focuses on broadening and deepening the practice of counseling and therapy by extending the psychotherapeutic context to include the natural world in which we live. We will further our survey of research that supports the theoretical foundations of ecotherapy found in environmental and conservation psychology, ecopsychology, evolutionary psychology, and biophilia. Specific practices and methods that incorporate nature into the therapeutic process will be explored and students will have the opportunity to practice these techniques. We will further explore the restorative effects of direct contact with nature, the psychological impact of "a sense of place", the concepts of a Nature Language and Human Rewilding, and contemporary influences that affect the human-nature relationship. Ethical issues unique to the practice of ecotherapy and incorporating ecotherapy with special populations will be discussed.

Prerequisites: ECOT-501. ECOT-554.

Restrictions: Admission to Ecotherapies Certificate

Credits: 2 semester hours.

**ECOT 598 Topics in Ecotherapy and Applied Ecopsychology**

Content: This course provides an opportunity for students to do in-depth exploration of specialized topics or practices related to ecopsychology and to gain experience in various roles such as counselor, therapist, educator, activist, consultant, or researcher. Course focus and format varies given year and instructor. Topics have included human animal bond, environmental justice, and creative interventions.

Prerequisites: None.

Credits: 1 semester hour.