



SCHOLÉ ACADEMY
CLASSICAL ACADEMIC PRESS

Nature Study

Mrs. Christa Maldonado

Yearlong Course

2023-2024

ELIGIBLE STUDENT:

This course would serve as an introductory science course based on restful observations of the world. The nature study course will combine observation, exploration, and journaling to help young learners appreciate the wonderful world around them. This course will include topics in life science, earth science, and astronomy.

THE COURSE IS INTENDED FOR GRADES 4-5.

REQUIRED TEXTS:*

None.

While there are no required texts, there will be recommended texts including *Nature Anatomy* by Julia Rothman and *Our Wonderful World* by Emery Lewis Howe. A full list of recommended reading will be provided.

COURSE SCHEDULE

ORIENTATION SESSION:

Our orientation will be August 31, 2023.

CLASS SESSION DATES: The dates of your class depend on the particular section in which you are enrolled. Consult the Scholé Academy [academic calendar](#) for details concerning scheduled, school-wide breaks.

OFFICE HOURS: Office hours are by appointment only.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Observing and asking questions about nature is the first step to building a love of scientific inquiry. An appreciation of nature allows us to enter into a conversation with our Creator.

We will be doing a mix of seasonal studies and a gentle introduction to life sciences. We will be learning about the classification of living things, the five classes of the animal kingdom, the differences between plants and animals including plant cells vs animal cells, and ecosystems/biomes. We will also be talking about non-living nature - water, rocks - and how these affect living things. We will learn about the carbon, nitrogen, and water cycles.

COURSE MAP

QUARTER 1

1. Seasons
2. Seeds
3. Flowers
4. Trees

QUARTER 2

1. Mammals
2. Birds
3. Amphibians
4. Reptiles
5. Fish

QUARTER 3

1. The Heavens
2. Weather
3. Cycles in Nature (Water, Carbon, Nitrogen)

QUARTER 4

1. Life Cycles
2. Insects
3. Habitats
4. Ecosystems

STUDENT EXPECTATIONS: EXECUTIVE FUNCTION SKILLS

Students will be expected to keep a field journal of their observations. They will build their observation skills and study skills by following prompts for a weekly journal assignment. In class, they will be expected to share their observations and thoughts about the topic studied.

Students will need to master respectful communication, age-appropriate time management, and attention to detail in order to fully benefit from this course.

STUDENT EXPECTATIONS IN ACTION

This course will require student participation in class.

During class time, students will review answers, pose questions, and explain and justify their answers and solutions. They will be required to take notes documenting the new content covered each class.

In this class, students will be expected to listen attentively and participate actively in class discussions and practices. Students are expected to arrive to class on time with all assigned material completed. The instructor will facilitate learning for the student, but the responsibility for staying up-to-date with classwork and assignments is ultimately the responsibility of the student.

Students will submit their work by scanning their homework pages and uploading it into the Canvas assignment window as **one PDF document**. **Photographs of completed assignments will not be accepted as they are incredibly difficult to read.**

STUDENT GRADING AND EVALUATION

Ideally, every average student working diligently should do praiseworthy work (*cum laude*). Those who excel beyond this expectation will receive *magna cum laude* for their efforts. Work which demonstrates minimal but sufficient mastery will be designated *satis*. *Non satis* designates work that demonstrates insufficient mastery.

STUDENT EVALUATION : MASTERY PORTRAIT

Students will complete a weekly assignment of an observation journal.. These will become more detailed as the year progresses. By the end of the year, we will have learned how to determine what kind of animal/plant it is and provide a detailed description.

Other assignments will include labeling/identifying parts, comparisons, and making lapbooks or posters as projects that you can use as part of an educational portfolio.

The masterful student will grow in attentiveness and detail as the year progresses.

STUDENT EVALUATION: ASSIGNMENTS, TYPES & WEIGHTS

Students' grades will have the following weight (out of 100):

1. Class Participation: 20
2. Journaling: 20
3. Quizzes: 20
4. Presentations: 20
5. Quarterly Portfolio: 20

The incremental nature of the assessments is in place to ensure that students are continually reviewing previous material.

- magna cum laude is the grade range of 94% or above.
- cum laude is the grade range of 85-93%
- satis is the grade range of 75-84%
- non satis is any grade lower than a 75%

This reflects the student's mastery.

Students and their parents will receive quarterly feedback from their teachers in the form of a quarterly update.

STUDENT EVALUATION: ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Students will often take tests and/or quizzes privately at home. Students are on their honor to abide by Scholé Academy's Learning Philosophy which assumes the personal cultivation of Student-Virtues described in the Student-Parent Handbook. **We ask that parents proctor quizzes and tests to help keep their children accountable.**

Specifically, cheating and plagiarism are punishable offenses. Copying the work of other students is prohibited and proper citation of all sources is essential.

THE VIRTUAL CLASSROOM:

We will be using the free online "virtual classroom" software provided by Zoom. The live, interactive nature of our courses is foundational and we require cameras to be on during all class sessions. The virtual classroom will provide students with interactive audio and an interactive whiteboard in which texts, diagrams, video and other media can be displayed and analyzed. We will provide students with a link (via email) that will enable students to join the virtual classroom. Courses will be managed through our learning management system, Canvas.

Specific information regarding the technology used by Scholé Academy (including required technology) can be found by visiting the [Technology in the Classroom](#) section of the Student Parent Handbook.

ABOUT THE INSTRUCTOR



Christa Maldonado has a love for learning and a deep enjoyment of puzzles and patterns. She enjoys identifying the patterns in nature, mathematics, and language that can lead the restful mind to contemplate the good and the beautiful. She has a Bachelor of Science in Natural Sciences from Excelsior College and a Bachelor of Science in Healthcare Management from Western Governor University. She is currently enrolled in a Master of Science in Instructional Design from Western Governor University. Although she has a great love for the patterns found in courses that give foundational structure, such as grammar and mathematics, she also enjoys learning more about the arts and sciences.

Christa is married and has three children. Her family enjoys discovering nature through hiking and camping. They live a restful life, full of good books and good food. Christa loves to read, sew, and bake. She has tutoring professionally since 2017. Christa is excited to help facilitate your child's learning about to goodness, beauty, and truth. c.maldonado.scholeacademy@gmail.com