

# Master of Science in Applied Ecopsychology

## Akamai University

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*Oh, what a catastrophe, what a maiming of love when it was made personal, merely personal feeling. This is what is the matter with us: we are bleeding at the roots because we are cut off from the earth and sun and stars. Love has become a grinning mockery because, poor blossom, we plucked it from its stem on the Tree of Life and expected it to keep on blooming in our civilized vase on the table.*

---D. H. Lawrence

*A true to life 'Pandora-Na'vi' relationship-strengthening process;  
it helps our well being improve through sensory contact  
with nature's restorative balance and beauty.*

---Michael J. Cohen

Applied Ecopsychology reverses our disconnectedness by utilizing proven medical procedures. For example, good medical thinking and research have created surgical techniques that reattach an amputated arm back to the body. If reconnected properly, the arm will, in time, function normally. Part of this art is the surgical technology our clear thinking has devised to bring the arm back in proper contact with the body. The remainder of the procedure is trusting that once this reconnection is made, nature itself has the wisdom to heal the rupture and rejoin the arm and body as one integrated organism. We don't know how to do that healing, however nature does it continuously via its natural attraction ecological processes at sub-atomic and global levels, for that is its way. Good medical thinking respects that nature has this extraordinary regenerative power. It taps into it. It surgically provides the proper environment and time for nature to heal, as only nature can. Applied Ecopsychology activities do the same thing with respect to our extremely nature-separated psyche and thinking process and the disorders they create.

The field of Applied Ecopsychology researches and initiates practical self-guiding methods and materials. These tools enable the prospective applied ecopsychologist to learn, use, and teach the nature-reconnecting process in the personal, professional and educational environments. This degree program offers vital information, expertise and support through mentorship, distance learning courses, interactive workshops, academic readings, Internet presentations, and independent study and projects.

Discover how our excessive separation from nature stresses our sentient inner nature and causes our most challenging problems. Learn to reverse this destructive process. Master thoughtful nature reconnecting activities that dissolve stress by satisfying our deepest natural loves, wants and spirit. This course teaches hands-on education, counseling and mental health skills that interlace our thoughts and feelings with the "higher power" wisdom of nature's creation process. Its unique natural attraction methods and materials let nature nurture self-esteem, friendships and responsibility. Applied Ecopsychology increases wellness and creativity and helps us build rewarding, sustainable relationships. Learn and teach this process to increase personal, social and environmental well-being.

Michael J. Cohen, Ph.D.  
Program Director  
Applied Ecopsychology

## **Program Audience**

Applied Ecopsychology participants have successfully applied nature-connected education and healing to a wide array of career fields, entrepreneurial and professional activities. While not an exhaustive list of fields from which our program has prepared successful practitioners, following will provide a perspective for the interested applicant for application of the program.

- Self-help, stress management, personal growth, motivational neuro-linguistic programming, creative writing, home schooling, hypnotherapy, aromatherapy, Reiki, energy medicine, and art therapy.
- Life coaching, personal coaching, success coaching, and relationship coaching, leadership skills, consulting, memory training, nutrition, men's and women's issues, and action assertiveness
- Teaching, mentoring and facilitating disorder and prevention remedies: eating, sleep, anxiety, post traumatic stress (PTSD), attention deficit, addiction, dependency, burnout, autism, self-confidence, mid-life crisis, and self-worth dysfunctions.
- Counseling: pastoral, therapy, recovery, family, marriage and spiritual counseling, massage therapy and biofeedback.
- Shamanism, spirituality retreat centers, self-esteem, Yoga, civil rights, therapist, retreat center training.
- Course instruction, workshop presentations, social work, conservation strategies, outdoor leadership, sociology, environmental education, and mental health.
- Meditation, complementary and alternative medicine, naturopathic medicine, parenting, relaxation, and intimacy.
- Founding or directing stress and healing programs, or creative writing courses for training or degree programs.
- Increasing training, administration, personal and professional benefits, improved conferences, progressive human services, independent contracting, child care, addressing global warming, retreats.

## **Entry Requirements**

As prerequisites for acceptance to the Master's degree, applicants should have completed the equivalent of a recognized baccalaureate degree in an appropriate field of study and have several years of meaningful career experience. Applicants are expected to be proficient in collegiate English language skills. Second language English applicants should submit records of TOEFL examination with scores of 550 minimum. All applicants are expected to have access to a computer, email and the Internet, and verify access to academic library resources for the full extent of your program.

## **Degree Requirements**

Participants in the Master of Science program in Applied Ecopsychology complete a minimum of 40 credits above the baccalaureate degree, including the thesis and summary reviews. The coursework requirements include the core elements of the academic major, a major concentration within the major field and research preparation coursework. Participants also complete a comprehensive examination at the conclusion of the academic coursework, prepare a formal thesis proposal, complete the thesis project, and prepare the manuscript for physical and oral review by the faculty committee.

## Degree Requirements: Master of Science in Applied Ecopsychology

- Core Elements of Academic Major (Required: 18 credits minimum)
- Major Concentration (Required: 9 credits minimum)
- Research Preparation (Required: 3 credits minimum)
- Comprehensive Examination (Required: 2 credits)
- Thesis Proposal (Required: 2 credits)
- Thesis (Required: 4 credits)
- Oral Review of Thesis (Required: 2 credits)

### **Core Elements of the Academic Major (18 credits)**

Participants complete core elements of the academic major comprised of 18 credits of mandated studies, as outlined below:

#### **Required: Each of the following modules:**

- ECO 500: Psychological Elements of Global Citizenship (3 credit)
- ECO 501: Introduction to Educating and Counseling with Nature (3 credits)
- ECO 502: Educating and Counseling with Nature I (4 credits)
- ECO 503: Educating and Counseling with Nature II (4 credits)
- ECO 508: Natural Attractions, Intelligence and Sanity (1 credit)
- ECO 792: Advanced Readings in Applied Ecopsychology (3 credits)

### **Major Concentrations (Required: 9 credits)**

Participants select a major concentration comprised of nine credits of specialized studies selected from one the following area of study in Applied Ecopsychology. The selected concentration would also be the focus of the student's thesis topic:

- **Applied Ecopsychology** encompasses the process of educating, counseling and healing with nature applied to any discipline profession or interest that a student has training or expertise.
- **Natural Attraction Ecology** focuses upon identifying the scientific process and ecological evidence in the practice of educating, counseling and healing with nature
- **Integral Ecology** includes the areas of applying the process of educating, counseling and healing with nature to environmental, ecological and conservation practices.
- **Eco-therapy** focuses upon the application of educating, counseling and healing with nature to psychotherapy or other health and mental health procedures
- **Nature and the Human Spirit** encompasses applying the process of educating, counseling and healing with nature to spiritual and educational practices.

### Major Concentration Requirements

Student complete three of the following modules for a total of 9 credits with focus upon the selected area of concentration. Note that the area of concentration will also be the specialization for the student's thesis research project. The assigned instructor will guide the student in structuring the unique focus of the courses and assign the require readings and study materials.

**Required: The following modules for a total of 9 credits**

- ECO 751: Field Studies in Educating and Counseling with Nature (3 credits)
- ECO 753: Case Studies in Applied Ecopsychology (3 credits)
- ECO 791: Special Projects in Applied Ecopsychology (3 credits)

**Research Preparation**

Master's students must pursue studies providing advanced research knowledge necessary for success in their final projects (thesis). At least three semester credits of research preparation coursework is required and this might focus upon quantitative and qualitative methods or participatory action research techniques including subject selection, research design, and statistical analysis, as appropriate to each student's proposed project.

Through this requirement, students learn to effectively define applied problems or theoretical issues and articulate the rationale for the study. They should learn to present an effective scholarly review of the academic literature and implement quantitative, qualitative or participatory action methods for evaluating academic issues.

**Required: Minimum of three credits selected from among the following:**

- ECO 561 Phenomenology Research Techniques (3 credits)  
OR
- Another research preparation course module, as determined in communication with the student's Committee Chair.

**Comprehensive Examination**

Once students have completed the coursework elements of their degree, they will be asked to schedule the Comprehensive Examination. The primary mentor and a faculty member representing the secondary academic area conduct both the written and oral components of the examination. The written portion is open book style with selected essay questions requiring creative responses that reach for the higher levels of cognition. Your answers are expected to draw from both the primary and secondary competencies of your program with proper referencing of the scholarly literature. The oral component of the examination is normally completed by telephone conference and is intended to allow detailed investigation of your written responses.

**Required: EXM 880: Comprehensive Examination (Required: 2 credits)**

**Thesis Proposal**

You are expected to prepare a formal proposal related to your concept for research under the direction of your primary faculty advisor and according to University expectations. At a minimum, your research proposal should clarify the thesis statement and methodology (including the data gathering instruments and data analysis techniques) and provide an effective overview of the scholarly literature that sets the foundation for the thesis. Your research proposal should

also include a brief manuscript outline that demonstrates how you will present in written form the various elements of the research project.

**Required:** RES 885: Thesis Proposal (Required: 2 credits)

### **Thesis Project**

Following approval of your thesis proposal, you will begin your research project. Your thesis may take the form of a traditional research project or it may be a major scholarly project of the type appropriate to the discipline. Whichever approach to the thesis is chosen, the resulting project must demonstrate mastery of a body of knowledge in the major field of study, be your original work and represent a meaningful contribution to the betterment of the human condition or an improvement to the professional field.

Your thesis research may be conducted via quantitative, qualitative, or participatory action research. The body of your thesis manuscript, structured according to a set of approved manuscript guidelines, should exceed 75 double spaced, typewritten pages. If your thesis takes the form of a scholarly project, it must follow the guidelines provided by the University for such projects.

**Required:** RES 890: Thesis Project (Required: 4 credits)

### **Oral Review of Thesis**

Once you have prepared the thesis manuscript, you will be asked to schedule the formal review process. Your primary faculty advisor and a faculty member representing the secondary academic area will conduct both the formal physical review of the thesis manuscript and the oral review of thesis.

The physical review of the thesis manuscript usually takes the review committee four to six weeks. Each reviewer will prepare questions and commentary relative to your underlying review of the literature, the thesis methodology, the mechanics of your project, and your presentation of the findings, conclusions and recommendations.

The Oral Review of Thesis is conducted under the direction of your primary faculty advisor with the assistance of one qualified member of the faculty. The examination is carried out by telephone conference call and is designed to allow detailed investigation of your thesis. The faculty reviewers explore with you issues related to your thesis including methodology, review of literature and interpretation of the findings.

One outcome of the thesis review process is a set of final expectations directing you through the remaining tasks for completing the thesis manuscript. Once your final manuscript is approved, you will submit the formal document to an approved bindery and later ship the bound thesis to the University for permanent archival storage.

**Required:** EXM 895: Oral Review of Thesis (Required: 2 credits)

## **The Thesis Committee**

### Formation of Thesis Committee

Master's students have a Thesis Committee of two qualified graduate faculty appointed to and govern the student's program structure, progress of studies, comprehensive examinations and thesis project .

### Responsibilities of Thesis Committee

The responsibilities of the Thesis Committee, under the leadership of the Committee Chair, are as follows:

- Directing the preparation and approval of the student's plan for study, clarifying the timeline for study and the assignment of faculty to provide instruction and to assist with the functions of the Thesis Committee.
- Providing direction regarding the student's foundational studies, core studies, specialization, and research preparation coursework.
- Providing leadership by integrating appropriate research preparation coursework or assignments within the plan for study, distributing the coursework to appropriate faculty for instruction and advisement.
- Providing leadership for the written and oral components of the student's comprehensive final examination, in unity with the other Committee members
- Providing oversight, direction, and mentorship during the conduct of the student's research project and manuscript preparation, in unity with the other Committee members
- Providing leadership for the physical and oral reviews of the research manuscript, in unity with the other Committee members.
- Assist the student in making formal changes in the plan study and timeline for completion, by written addendum, as needed to assure effective progress throughout the program of study.
- Providing final approval for the student's Thesis and overall degree program and cooperate fully in building the appropriate archival records for the University of record.

### Master's Committee Appointment Schedule

- The Committee Chair is appointed immediately following the Master's student's registration and continues in charge of the student's program until final completion is recorded at the school of record. While the secondary and tertiary members of the Thesis Committee are identified and confirmed at the onset of the program, and listed in the plan of study, they become active later, just prior to the activities for which they are asked to participate.
- In lieu of the Thesis Committee Chair being appointed at the onset of the program, when appropriate, a primary faculty advisor will be appointed to guide the development of the Master's student's plan for study. Under this situation, the Chair will be appointed later, one month prior to the commencing of the written component of the Master's student's Final Comprehensive Examination, and shall continue with governance of the student's program until final completion is recorded at the school of record.

- The Secondary Committee Member becomes active one month prior to commencing the written component of the Master's student's Final Comprehensive Examination and continues with the student's program until final completion is recorded at the school of record.

### Building the Student's Plan for Study

Immediately following registration, Master's students begin work with their assigned Committee Chair in structuring their formal plan for study. The process determines and formalizes the elements of the student's Master's program and the timeline for completion. The plan for study includes the following essential elements:

- The designation of the degree major for the Study Plan
- The identification of the school contacts and contact information for the schools participating in the delivery of the Master's program.
- Identification of the required array of coursework for each element of the program.
- Identification of the secondary and tertiary members of the Thesis Committee.
- Appointment and notification of the course module instructors
- Acceptance of transfer courses for the student's program.
- The timeline for completion of the degree program.

These activities require active participation in program planning by the student and may take considerable time to complete the dialogue and exchange of information. Students are strongly advised to discuss in detail the elements in the plan for study including the coursework, the examinations, and elements of research including the manuscript guidelines.

Once all of the decisions have been made concerning the plan for study, the student and Committee Chair approve the formal document. Copies of the document are sent to the University headquarters for entry to the permanent student record. The plan for study is then distributed to the participating schools and becomes the document that determines effective progress toward the degree. When the expectations laid out in the plan for study have been successfully accomplished, the student is recommended for the degree by the Committee Chair. Students are alerted that the University can make no commitment to inclusion of course modules and assignment of instructors to a student program until after the plan for study has been fully processed and approved.

### **Course Descriptions**

#### **ECO 500: Psychological Elements of Global Citizenship (Required: 3 credits)**

This entrance level, online, sensory-ecology course in practical, nature-connected education, counseling and healing enables you, backyard or backcountry, to master and teach the established therapeutic science of Applied Ecopsychology. Increase personal, social and environmental wellbeing by enabling individual to create beneficial moments that let Earth teach. This restorative thinking skill helps their 53 natural senses reasonably embrace their nurturing origins in the balanced, self-correcting and renewing ways of natural systems within and around us. Visit <http://www.ecopsych.com/coursespsu.html> for details.

**ECO 501: Introduction to Educating and Counseling with Nature (Required: 4 credits)**

Learn to promote social and environmental responsibility by adapting unique nature-reconnecting methods and materials for your personal or professional use. Tangible sensory reconnections with nature through 27 activities and 53 natural senses satisfy deep natural wants: when unsatisfied, these wants disrupt global balance and inner peace by fueling runaway disorders. (Instructor: Dr. Michael Cohen)

**ECO 502: Educating and Counseling with Nature I (Required: 4 credits)**

Discover how our society's prejudice against nature, in and around us, stresses us and reduces person, social and environmental well-being. Learn to reverse this destructive process. Master thoughtful nature reconnecting activities that help us renew our deepest natural loves, wants and spirit. This course teaches hands-on education, counseling and mental health skills that feelingly tap the grace of nature's self-correcting balance and beauty. Its nature-centered email and telephone correspondence nurture warm interpersonal relationships, wellness and responsibility.

**ECO 502: Educating and Counseling With Nature II (Required: 4 credits)**

Discover how our separation from nature stresses our sentient inner nature and creates our many problems. Learn to reverse this destructive process. Master thoughtful nature reconnecting activities that dissolve stress by satisfying our deepest natural loves, wants and spirit. This course teaches hands-on education, counseling and mental health skills that feelingly tap the wisdom of nature's creation process. Its email and telephone correspondence let nature nurture warm interpersonal relationships, wellness and responsibility.

**ECO 508: Natural Attractions, Intelligence and Sanity (Required: 1 credit)**

Discover how to prevent contemporary society's nature-separated thinking from deteriorating personal growth and responsible relationships. Encounter and consider how to meet the challenges of the socializing process of Industrial Society that reduces our sensitivity and sensibility by excessively separating us from the self-correcting grace, balance and renewing powers of nature in and around us. Increase your marketability, effectiveness and global citizenship by educating and counseling with a readily accessible natural systems thinking process.

**ECO 751 Field Studies in Educating and Counseling with Nature (Required: 3 Credits)**

Students experience in theory and practice how Western Civilization separates the "human" from the "natural" and destructively estranges us from nature's integrity, love, and spirit, in and around us. Students master, design and implement public education techniques that help reverse this dilemma and catalyze responsible relationships for "reconnecting with nature in people and places."

**ECO 561: Phenomenology Research Techniques (3 credits)**

Students will investigate the available literature on participatory research techniques. This may include readings in the literature pertaining to implementing system-transforming innovations (Bushe and Shani), participatory action research in the workplace (Whyte), reflection in action (Schon), reframing organizational culture (Frost, et. al.) and self-reliant initiative (Fals-Borda), as well as other qualitative and action science methodologies. Students will identify an



appropriate mini-study, apply techniques from their readings, complete the study and prepare a technical paper of at least ten double-spaced typewritten pages referencing the literature and describing the value of participatory research techniques to the field of Applied Ecopsychology.

**ECO 752: Advanced Field Studies in Applied Ecopsychology (3 credits)**

This course explores present or past field studies that make, or would have made, the way nature works become an ally to increase well-being if organic psychology had been included as part of them. The application of Ecopsychology, as practiced in the discipline of "natural attraction ecology" and organic psychology, helps humanity address the crises that result from our estrangement from nature as nature's flow manifests itself as our living planet, Earth. Our nature-disconnected cultural environment envelopes us from birth. This socializes and molds us into being good citizens of our excessively indoor and unbalanced way of life in Industrial Society. We are seldom educated to think and act as contributing citizens of global life community, of its plant, animal and mineral kingdoms and their self-organized ways to support the flow of nature's non-polluting perfection, in and around us. Rather, we learn to conquer or exploit nature's flow, often for profit. This produces our most challenging problems, for nature is the essence that nurtures and restores life in purity, balance and well-being. As part of nature, we are born with nature's renewing abilities. However, our thinking learns to bury them out of our sight and consciousness. The purpose of this course is to explore field studies from our past and present life experiences and training and identify how the application of organic psychology and natural attraction ecology may release and strengthen nature's self-correcting powers in us so that they can help us address the heart of our troubles. In this way, students demonstrate that they have mastered, designed or implemented nature-connection techniques that will help us reverse many personal, social and environmental problems. Students prepare an academic paper or project report as a minimum written assessment in this course.

**ECO 753: Case Studies in Applied Ecopsychology (3 credits)**

This course explores present or past case studies, which make, or would have made, the way nature works become an ally to increase well-being if organic psychology had been included as part of them. The application of Ecopsychology, as practiced in the discipline of natural attraction ecology and organic psychology, helps humanity address the crises that result from our estrangement from nature as nature's flow manifests itself as our living planet, Earth. Students prepare an academic paper or project report as a minimum written assessment in this course.

**ECO 791: Special Projects in Applied Ecopsychology (3 credits)**

This course explores present or past special projects that make, or would have made, the way nature works become an ally to increase well-being if organic psychology had been included as part of them. The application of Ecopsychology, as practiced in the discipline of natural attraction ecology and organic psychology, helps humanity address the crises that result from our estrangement from nature as nature's flow manifests itself as our living planet, Earth. Students prepare an academic paper or project report as a minimum written assessment in this course.

**ECO 792: Advanced Readings in Applied Ecopsychology (3 credits)**

This course explores books, journal articles, and other learning materials that make, or would have made, the way nature works become an ally to increase well-being if organic psychology

had been included as part of them. The application of ecopsychology, as practiced in the discipline of natural attraction ecology and organic psychology, helps humanity address the crises that result from our estrangement from nature as nature's flow manifests itself as our living planet, Earth. Students prepare an academic paper or project report as a minimum written assessment in this course.

**EXM 880: Comprehensive Examination (2 credits)**

Masters students complete this comprehensive examination as a required element of their academic program, prior to undertaking the thesis. The examination usually includes both written and oral components and is confined to the programs of studies completed by the student.

**RES 885: Thesis Proposal (2 credits)**

This course is required of all Master s students designed to guide them through the formal research proposal process for their final projects, including the development of the research methodology, data gathering device and data analysis techniques. Students also prepare annotated bibliographies of the major scholarly works underlying their project.

**RES 890: Thesis (4 credits)**

This course governs the conduct of the thesis project for the Master's level student. The Master's thesis is the demonstration of the mastery of a body of knowledge in a given field and is presented in a manuscript usually 75 or more pages in length. The final project may take any of several forms, depending upon the field of study and the expectations of faculty. This may be quantitative or qualitative research, participatory action research, or a major project demonstrating excellence. Master's students may reenroll for this course for no-credit, as needed.

**EXM 895: Oral Review of Thesis (2 credits)**

This examination is an oral review of the Masters thesis conducted by the graduate committee immediately following their reading of the thesis manuscript.