The course is designed to learn about teaching and learning in informal and non-formal contexts, such as: museums, nature reserves, animal gardens, city streets, workplaces, and family life. The course will include an introduction to theories of learning in such contexts, pedagogical perspectives (such as: outdoor learning outside the classroom, place-based learning, work-based learning, and home-based learning - unschooling), research methods in the field, and discussions on the possibilities and limitations of learning in different environments and their implications for the design of the environment and teaching.

The course will include reading and discussion of articles, development and guidance of learning activities in informal contexts, visits and excursions to informal learning environments, reflective observation of the learning processes that take place in the course and children's homework.

Topics of study:
- Learning theories and concepts such as: learning by experience, constructivism, situated learning (situated), apprenticeships, and communities of practice.
- Learning in nature field trips.
- Learning in museums.
- Learning at home.
- Learning through hobbies.
- Learning by the body (Embodied cognition).
- Learning at work (including professional learning of teachers).

Grading criteria and course composition:

- Attendance in lectures and excursions - mandatory.

*Prerequisites:

- High school diploma.


Course name: Beyond school: learning in informal environments
Course number:
Lecturer: Dana Vedder-Weiss
Course Hours: Wednesday 12-14
Reception Hours: Wednesday 14-15

General description and Goals:
Learning takes place in different contexts and environments across the life span. In this course, we will learn about, examine and experience intentional and non-intentional learning in various in/non formal environments, such as: museums, nature, zoo, home and the workplace. The course will focus on relevant learning theories, derivative pedagogical approaches (such as outdoor learning, place-based learning, learning-on-the-job and unschooling), research approaches and a critical discussion of the affordances and constrains of learning in such environments and the implications for design and instruction. The course will include reading and discussion of papers, development and facilitation of a learning activity in an in-formal environment, field-trips, reflective observation of the course learning processes and a final paper.

Course Chapters:
Learning theories and concepts, such as: Experience (Dewey), constructivism, situated learning, apprenticeship and communities of practice.
Out-door, field-trip learning
Learning in museums, zoos and science centers
Family learning
Learning in playground
Hobby learning
Learning on-the-job (including teachers professional learning)
Place-based learning
Un-schooling

Course requirements:
Attendance: Required
Active participation and assignments (reading and reacting, critical analysis of field trips, reflection and more): 30%
Group assignment – field trip and development of learning activity in an in-formal environment: 30%
Final Paper: 40%
Bibliography (A tentative list)


