Craftsbury Academy

Mr. Ethan Self

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802-586-2541

**Course:** Earth/Environmental Science

**Meeting Times:** Monday-Friday (9:40-10:25 AM)



Your scientific horizons are just beginning. Never stop exploring.

“*We do not inherit the Earth from our ancestors, we borrow it from our children*.”-Native American proverb

**Course Description:**

Welcome to Earth Sciences! This year in science will be an exciting year in which we begin to understand, use, and explore what it means to do ‘science.’ You will not only take part in developing scientific questions and carrying out experiments, but you will be able to research, understand, and teach others about problems and issues that you care about.

Earth Sciences is a multidisciplinary field (lots of subjects!) that uses geology, ecology, astronomy and more to understand how our Earth works. We will explore how our planet’s climate influences us, and vice versa. We will consider what the future ecosystems of Vermont might look like. We will also examine how our own communities will be transformed and changed as we consider local and global sustainability, history, and culture!

**Classroom Expectations**:

* **S**elflessness. Help others, the school, and yourself whenever possible!
* **C**ritical thinking. Don’t just absorb information!
* **I**nvestigate outside of the classroom.
* **E**ngagement with your peers and community.
* **N**ot afraid to take academic risks. Be prepared to learn new things!
* **C**reativity and curiosity!
* **E**mpathy for others’ ideas and questions.

**Course Expectations:**

1. Our classroom will thrive if each of you contribute as active, engaged, and positive thinking students. Each day will be a new learning experience, whether it’s a laboratory, a research day, investigating new ideas, or more! I’ll do my best to have interesting topics, engaging learning activities, and independent choice for class, but **I’m looking for you to bring your own ideas and thoughts into class.**
2. Plan on having 15-30 minutes of homework each night. Completing homework on time will be very important in your success in the classroom! **If you are ever unsure of an assignment, or need an alternative source to better understand something, please let me know.**
3. If you have any questions or concerns about an assignment outside of class, please email at a reasonable hour (before 9:00 PM). **I expect you to communicate with me about any problem, concern, or question regarding** **an assignment either in person or via email.**
4. Group work is quite possibly the most important skill each of us can work on (even me!). We will have many group projects, laboratories, and even simple classroom exercises where you will be expected to be a **positive, engaged learner** **with all of your peers**. I don’t expect all of you to be best friends with one another, but **I do expect** **that your respect each others’ ideas and contributions, while also pushing each other to create the best possible learning environment.**
5. Finally, I want our classroom to be a **fun, exciting place to learn!** Science should be about examining our world, our selves, and our community. I would love your input and ideas to help me develop projects and learning experiences where we use the outdoors and classroom as a place to think creatively, critically, and have fun doing it!

**Grading**:

Semester grades will be determined on a point system (0-100). However, Craftsbury is transitioning towards a proficiency-based grade system. This means that all of your assignments will have **clear learning objectives and skills**, and that you will also be assessed on your **learning habits**.

* *Homework:* **10%** (graded for completion and effort, including class participation).
* *Quizzes:* **25%** (most formal assessments will be more frequent and smaller than a large test, but will cover learning in classes, homework, and labs. Quizzes can be retaken below a 70%).
* *Labs and Projects:* **25%** (we will use electronic means to record data, write and compose lab write ups, and more for easier organization)
* *Learning Habits*: **40%** (this grade is designed to help each of you become better learners. We will periodically assess our strengths and weaknesses as learners and classroom members, and set goals throughout the year. Also measured on classroom engagement, honesty, and respect).

**Other Tid-Bits**:

* **Late work policy**: Any assignment turned in late will not impact the grade attached to the assignment. However, late assignments must be handed in with a **late-assignment sheet**, as well as a **conversation with Mr. Self** about a plan to prevent future late assignments. I am flexible and understand that many things come up in life, but deadlines are important for making sure we are successful learners.
  + Late assignments however will **significantly impact your learning habits score**.
  + **Assignments must be completed before the end of the unit** (I will be very vocal about deadlines) or the grade will be marked a **0**.
* Organization is a great way to reduce wasted time and improve your grades. A three ring binder (or labeled segment in one) is necessary to keep track of handouts and assignments. Extra copies of handouts will be available in the classroom and on the class website.
* If you are absent, always please check **schoology** for assignments. I will gladly help you successfully learn missed learning activities, but I’m not simply looking for you to ask me what assignments were missed. **Be proactive and accountable!**
* Beyond schoology, I will have a class website with information regarding major assignments, resources for additional learning, a day-day agenda with attached documents, and more! I will also have a blog about exciting things in our classroom (for parents and community members) that will be written by you and me (we can compile and share your projects and labs!).
  + <http://craftsburyscience.weebly.com>
* **I am new to Craftsbury and am looking forward to becoming part of your community!** Please let me know about things going on in the town and beyond! I’m also looking to start several clubs/organizations at school (running, photography, food science, environmental outdoor clubl?), so let me know your thoughts on what Craftsbury’s next steps should be throughout the year!

Let’s have a wonderful and exciting year full of learning,

Ethan Self

*Please tear off the following page and fill it out with a parent or guardian. Return it to Mr. Self as your first homework assignment by* ***September 5th*** *.*

**Students and families**, after reading the above information please answer the following questions.

1. What is your full name? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
2. Do you prefer to be called by a different name in class? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
3. What’s the coolest/most unique place that you’ve ever visited?
4. How do you best learn new information or ideas? What challenges you when learning new things?
5. What has challenged you before in a science classroom? What have you enjoyed in a science classroom?
6. If a school garden was established next year, how excited would be to learn about gardening and agricultural science? Would you want to use the vegetables in the school cafeteria?

1. Additionally, what would your interest be in developing an outdoor club at Craftsbury, where students and teachers did outdoor recreation and natural sciences?

**For Parents To Answer:**

1. Will your student have computer access at home? Internet?
2. What is the best way for me to contact you? Phone? Email?
3. What are some of your son or daughter’s strengths or weaknesses that would help me make their learning more successful?
4. What methods of learning or learning strategies have helped your son or daughter in the past (in any classes)? Which haven’t helped?
5. What helps motivate your son or daughter to do well in school, or to strive to understand/apply anything she or he learns?
6. How well does your son or daughter handle frustration/adversity/difficulty in the classroom? Is there something I can do make sure they are both appropriately challenged but also successful in their learning?
7. Do you have any personal, work-related, or other connections to the science community (I’m looking to help collaborate in and out of the classroom for projects and learning opportunities)?
8. Do you have any questions, comments, or concerns regarding the class?

Please print and sign your name below to show that you have read and understood this information, and answered the above questions.

Student name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Student signature \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Parent / Guardian name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Parent / Guardian signature: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_