

COURSE OUTLINE

MA Movement Mind and Ecology

This programme explores the rich intersection of embodied practice, environmental philosophy, and ecological thinking. Literally grounded in the experience of its participants to place, this programme has the capacity to reshape our relationship to broader world, to nature, and to ourselves. By drawing on the expertise of existing faculty and staff at Schumacher College and on world-renowned experts in a wide range of physical pursuits, the MA in Movement Mind and Ecology offers a unique opportunity for students' physical, corporeal engagement with the world through the diverse threads of ecophilosophy, mindfulness, and ecological thinking.

The location of Schumacher College nearby to both Dartmoor National Park and the South Devon coastline presents a range of outdoor opportunities for students enrolled in the programme including access to trail running, canoeing, kayaking, rock climbing, cycling, swimming, both within the Dartington Estate and surrounds. Partnerships with on and off campus organisations and individuals include Dynamic Adventures CIC Devon; Rickey Gates (ultrarunner and author); The River Collective, Sirona Horsemanship, ISSC (the Institute for the Study of Somatic Communication), The Harmony Institute Health Initiative, and the Movement Network South West.

Students may choose to take the MA course full-time over one year, or part-time over two years. The course follows a low-residency model in which students are on-site in a residential learning community for 5 weeks each term and continue to learn off-site supported by online learning tools for 7 weeks each term.



MODULE CONTENT:

1. ECOLOGY and EMBODIMENT

This module shifts foregrounds the role of movement in ecological systems, from protosemiotic responses in bacteria and migration, to climate adaptation and ocean currents, to isostatic rebound and more. Students will engage in guided individual projects throughout the module, culminating in a final practical project that interweaves an embodied connection to place with a deeper understanding of the dynamic nature of the systems in which we are all already a part.

Through disciplines such as movement ecology or environmental philosophy, you will explore in lectures the role of movement across different environmental experiential scales from microscopic to climatic. Workshops and seminars will involve contrasting methods of movement and embodied practice as a way to explore inter-species storytelling, and to bridge the boundary between self, community, and the more-than-human world. Migration of humans and non-humans will be used to interrogate existing anthropocentric boundaries and critical zones for defining a socioecological approach to human/non-human interactions. A field trip to the Dartmoor National Park will allow you to understand the significance of the intersection of embodiment, environmental thought, and ecological systems in this complex and rich living landscape.

Supporting your practical inquiry is an ongoing critical dialogue formed through a reflective Contextual Journal, a reflective essay, and a Poster Presentation, presented individually, that interweaves an embodied connection to place with a deeper understanding of the dynamic nature of the systems in which we are all already a part.

2. MOVEMENT and MIND

This module explores the role of movement-based thinking in relation to ecological change, foregrounding the embodied engagement of students with natural places through a variety of different physical means. Students are introduced to methods of practice-led inquiry that involve physical engagement with the more-than-human world, intentional interspecies collaborations, and an understanding of socioecological systems.

Moving fluently between indoor studio practice and outdoor site-responsive learning, students develop together an inquiry into body-land-movement studies, articulated through somatic processes to do with sensory perception, body-responsibility, ethical encounter and deep adaptation. There will be an opportunity to explore your own movement range and capacity examining diverse physical training practices and developing collaborative tools to support movement expression and creative communication.

Your assessment will take the form of a nuanced critical presentation and supporting essay, presented individually and supported by micro assignments that reflect critical frameworks and methodologies covered in the module. As in all taught modules, the role of documentation and dissemination of your developing research practice will be embedded through your ongoing Contextual Journal.

3. MEDIATING BOUNDARIES

This module focuses on boundaries, migrations, and exploring alternatives to binary constructions of our relationship to place. The module grounds students' intellectual engagement with boundary concepts in direct personal experience with a diversity of borders and boundaries. The focus of the module on exploring, understanding, and challenging boundaries is mediated by physical practice through which students will use a phenomenological lens with which to explore the limits of the self. Students will reflect on border making as an active practice, building from concepts and methodologies developed across modules one and two, examining spatio-political discourses around decolonisation, and looking at contested landscapes through human and non-human species migration.

As part of this module you will prepare for and undertake a negotiated one week field trip in one of our established centres, building clear strategies of engagement as articulated through your ongoing reflective writing practice and culminating in an assessed Group Presentation. Your field trip will be supported by critical frameworks developed from sensory ethnography, focusing on an ecological conception of knowledge production and exchange that challenges dualistic and binary thinking, through engaging in human and non-human perspectives, sensations and interconnections.

4. PERFORMING PLACE

Students will work toward developing their own active physical practice that can help extend concepts raised throughout the course and encourage others to find their own connections to place through physical action and bodily engagement. In this largely practical module, students will work with partners in the areas of event development, design, and coordination, green health, outdoors access and recreation, outdoor adventure learning, and others to take steps to design, develop, and work toward deployment of a community-facing project. Projects might include: developing a community walking group, starting a meditation practice for a local gardening group, adding an element of ecological education to an existing athletic event, or developing and deploying ways to challenge ableist conceptions of physical activity.

Building from your own emerging signature practice, you will design and negotiate a public facing project with a community of your choice, exploring transdisciplinary and creative and collaborative roles developed through the program to connect to community. Supporting your public facing project will be a series of lectures, tutorials, case studies and select reading materials, examining the role of transformative education in the 21st century. In addition, the module focuses on the professional application of practice through creative funding and grant writing, understanding of the ethics of participatory practice and research and exploring ethnographic and auto-ethnographic approaches to research.

5. DISSERTATION / PRACTICAL PROJECT:

This final module provides students with the opportunity to undertake a major, sustained, critical and evaluative piece of research, and to present the results in the form of either a written dissertation, or a project with written reflective and critical commentary. Students will explore and respond to the theoretical and practical understanding they have acquired, applying it to a particular research question.

MME dates 2024-2025

Term 1 22 Apr 2024 to 05 July 2024

Term 2 08 Jul 2024 to 05 Oct 2024

Term 3 28 Oct 2024 to 06 Feb 2025

Dissertation Deadline: 06 February 2024

MME Program TERM ONE			
RESIDENTIAL LEARNING			OFF-SITE
17-19 April	22 April – 7 May	8 – 24 May	28 May – 5 July ¹
INDUCTION	ECOLOGY and EMBODIMENT	MOVEMENT and MIND	MM & EE
MME Program TERM TWO			
RESIDENTIAL LEARNING	OFF-SITE	RESIDENTIAL LEARNING	OFF-SITE
8 – 26 July	29 July – 20 Sept ²	23 Sept – 11 Oct	14 – 25 Oct
MEDATING BOUNDARIES	MB & PP	PERFORMING PLACE	PP
MME Program TERM THREE			
OFF-SITE LEARNING 28 Oct – 13 Dec 2024/ 6-24 Jan 2025 ³ DISSERTATION DUE 06 Feb 2025			

READING WEEKS:

28 May – 2 June 2024

29 July – 2 Aug 2024

Christmas Holiday: 15 Dec 2024 - 6 January 2025

¹ May 27th Bank Holiday

² Includes Reading Week 29 July – 2 Aug and UK August Bank Holiday 26th Aug

³ Includes 3x weeks Christmas holiday 15 Dec 2024 - 6 January 2025

RECOMMENDED READING (indicative)

Batacharya and Wong's (2017) *Sharing Breath: Embodied Learning and Decolonisation*. Athabasca University Press.

Bennett, J. (2010) *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things*, Duke University Press.

Biggs, I. and Modeen, M. (2020) *Creative Engagements with Ecologies of Place: Geopoetics, Deep Mapping and Slow Residencies*. Routledge Press, London.

Bowman, Katy, and Jillian Nicol (2016) *Movement Matters: Essays on: Movement Science, Movement Ecology and the Nature of Movement*. Propriometrics Press.

Haraway, D. J. (2016). *Staying with the trouble: Making kin in the Chthulucene*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Hawker, Lizzy (2018) *Runner: a Short Story about a Long Run*. Aurum Press.

Heise, Ursula K. *Sense of Place and Sense of Planet: the Environmental Imagination of the Global*. Oxford University Press, 2010.

Ingold, T. (2011). *Being alive: essays on movement, knowledge and description*. London; New York: Routledge.

Ingold, T (2001) *The Perception of the Environment, Essays on Dwellings Livelihood and Skill* pp:145-156 Routledge Press, London.

Manning, E., & Massumi, B. (2014). *Thought in the Act: Passages in the Ecology of Experience*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Morton, T. (2013) *Hyperobjects: Philosophy and Ecology After the End of the World*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.

Reeve, Sandra (2011) *Nine Ways of Seeing a Body*. Triarchy Press.

Sweeney, R. (2020) 'Migrating Gestures: Body Weather as a cartographic process within interdisciplinary pedagogy' in *The Dancer Citizen* online journal

Tsing, A. L. (2015). *The mushroom at the end of the world: On the possibility of life in capitalist ruins*. Princeton University Press.

Whatmore, S. (2002) *Hybrid Geographies*. London: Sage.

