

New College Class Pairs Science With Art

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Brianna Gibbs/KMXT

A new class offered at Kodiak College will give students a chance to blur the line between their left and right brains. Switgard Deusterloh will teach this fall's introduction to marine science through experiments and art, a new class that pairs her two passions: science and art. Deusterloh spoke on KMXT's Talk of the Rock on Tuesday and said the course aims to inspire artistic creativity by learning about marine science, but also enhance scientific understanding through art.

"Art is often a way to train the eye to observe more carefully. And that's where this connection comes in because in the sciences you really need that observation skill as well and to combine the two makes you look more closely at the natural environment and appreciate the beauty that we have."

She said the course will still have lectures, but also include field work and studio time with different mediums of art.

"The topics will span marine life forms from the very small plankton up to large vertebrates. And the art projects are going to span various materials and techniques. So we want to practice those skills of observation, but we're also going to play around with all kinds of materials."

For the past five years Deusterloh has worked with youth in Kodiak through the Ocean Science Discovery Lab. She said parents have often expressed interest in that program, which also includes various opportunities for art exploration. She said that sort of inspired her to create this college course, which is somewhat of an experiment in itself.

"I believe that our educational system has for a long time focused on making these mainstreams, where as in the working world we really need to overlap. What is needed now days in our day and age are people that can make connections between our different disciplines. And I feel that that needs to transition into the teaching, and it does in a lot of areas, well this is one area in which I would like to kind of experiment with that overlap and I think it just offers itself up to do that."

But Deusterloh isn't turning away the young learners she commonly works with, in fact, she's opened the course up to parent/child teams for students in 5th grade or higher. Basically the parent and child will be allowed to work through the two month class together.

"Now I realize that kids at that age cannot fully comprehend a college level textbook, usually. So the parent would probably read to the kid, discuss things a little bit, the kid might not take the full 100 percent information content home, but if they take 70 percent out of this class home with them, that's huge already."

The class is listed as a personal growth and development course at the college, meaning it isn't offered for credit. However, high school students can receive high school credits and teachers can take the course for professional development credits. There's no regular tuition, and those looking to register will only have to pay a \$25 fee for art supplies.

The class starts on October 5 and will run through December 7. It will meet every Saturday from 10 a.m. until 12:45 p.m. Those interested in taking the course can register at Kodiak College online.