Course Proposal
Fairhaven College
E. Christopher Mare
Spring Quarter 2002

Ecological Design: The "Sustainability Demonstration Site"_____

This course will be a follow-up to the Ecovillage Design course presented Spring 2001. We will reinstate and reinvigorate the organized, purposeful, systematic, comprehensive ecological design process begun then in our ongoing efforts to transform the Outback Farm into a model for sustainability – a "Sustainability Demonstration Site."

There are numerous such models springing up at various campuses around the country – most noticeably at Humboldt State, UC Santa Cruz, and the University of New Hampshire. Perhaps it is time to establish one here, in the heart of Ecotopia?

We will investigate and study three primary and interrelated design philosophies: Permaculture Design, Ecological Design, and Whole Systems Design in order to approach this challenge with a well-rounded and well-informed conceptual and epistemological base. Once we have adequately defined, examined, and integrated essential fundamental principles we can actively move into the conscious Group Design Process.

This phase of our work will begin with the "programming" method employed universally by landscape architects. After establishing our "program," we will utilize the "transparency overlay" technique to provide our design context with ever richer, more detailed and revealing information. Using these professional methods and techniques, we will be able to begin producing sound, thoughtful, high quality, aesthetically pleasing design proposals that decision-makers may take note of and incorporate.

This class will operate from the nexus of a Design Studio, where, surrounded by art supplies, drafting equipment, paper and other media, charts and graphs and maps, we can begin to translate our design ideas into a representational and communicable format. This creative time in the Studio will be equally balanced with data collection time in the field: gathering, measuring, and recording a variety of environmental information to knowledgeably inform our evolving designs.

With discipline, patience, and practice – not to mention overflowing optimism – we can utilize this class as a tool to move the Outback Farm one practical step closer to its actualization as a recognized (and recognizable) "Sustainability Demonstration Site."

REFERENCES: *Design with Nature* by Ian McHarg and *Site Planning* by Kevin Lynch and Gary Hack, along with an extensive multi-disciplinary reader, temporally augmented with specific pertinent sources as the needs arise.