

Is it possible to restore the dignity of the village?

ECOVILLAGE DESIGN

Course Syllabus

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Quarter: Spring 2001

Credits: 3

Time: Fridays, 2-5

Course Intention

The purpose of this course is to familiarize participants with the emerging concept of the “ecovillage.” We will be looking at some of the world’s premier ecovillage models as well as theorizing on an image of the ‘ideal’ ecovillage, and then drawing contrasts between “ecovillage” and some of the other possible forms of community. This class also has a practical aspect: We will be simulating a professional design team, working through a comprehensive group design process, and preparing maps and models of our finished designs. The intention is for each participant to learn the concepts, skills, and languages, and become acquainted with the resources and networks, so as to be able to re-enact this type of design process at a later time, at a place of their own choosing.

Learning Goals

- 1) Acquire experience with professional organizational management techniques, including affinity diagrams and prioritization matrices
- 2) Gain applied competence at transforming design ideas into communicable media
- 3) Practice the integrative transparency overlay technique of design synthesis
- 4) Develop increased comfort-ability to think and work in teams
- 5) Deepen sensitivity to ecological realities influencing design decisions at any scale

Learning Activities

The course will be divided into two phases: Phase I will be preparatory work: defining an epistemology; investigating various perception tools; brainstorming all the possibilities, and then organizing them into a coherent whole. Phase II will begin the actual design work: gathering and recording data from the site and then transposing this information

onto charts and graphs. We will be continually alternating between 'whole group,' 'subgroup,' and 'individual' perspectives.

Learning Activities

Learning assessment will be based on achievement of the course learning goals as demonstrated through timely completion of design projects, attendance at class sessions, and active participation in class activities (in a manner congruent with participants' learning style). Additionally, a seven-page paper will be expected highlighting your accumulated findings in the particular aspect of the site design with which you have been engaged. These papers will be included in an 'archive' for the benefit of future students.

Course Schedule

Week 1: Introduction

What's in a Name?

Where are We Now? (a design process)

Resources

Community Building

Tour of Site

Write: "Visualization of Ideal Living Situation"

Read: *Ecological Design* to p.50

Week 2: Ekistics

Epistemology of Design

Brainstorming of Functional Elements to include in "Ecovillage Demonstration Site"

Defining Parameters of Project

Slide-Show: "Mechanistic or Organic Metaphors?"

Read: *Ecological Design* to p.102

Week 3: Silent "Affinity Diagram"

Permaculture: zone, sector, stacking in time and space, multiple functions, etc.

Tour of "Permaculture Demonstration Site"

Slide-Show: Findhorn

Read: Finish *Ecological Design*

Week 4: Organize: “Prioritization Matrix”

Systems Theory

“A Pattern Language”

Slide-Show: Crystal Waters

Read: *Design with Nature* to p.66

Week 5: Identify Nodes and Flow Patterns on Site

Feng Shui

Sacred Geometry

Sectorize the OELS

Slide-Show: The Farm (Ecovillage Training Center)

Read: *Design with Nature* to p.115

Week 6: Maps and Map-making

Entropy and Negentropy

Slide-Show: Huehucoyotl

Week 7: CoHousing

Gathering Environmental Data – Hydrology and Geology

Slide-Show: The Donovan Farm

Week 8: Design Lab

Documentation

Week 9: Design Lab

Portfolio

Week 10: Design Lab

Celebration