



**Living  
Routes**

Study Abroad in Ecovillages  
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**MEXICO:**  
Leadership for Social Change  
at Huehuecoyotl

*SPRING TERM, 2010*  
*December 29, 2009 - January-17, 2010*

ACADEMIC HANDBOOK



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# Leadership for Social Change

**Program:** Mexico: Leadership for Social Change at Huehucoyotl

**Course Number:** Honors 397i

**UMass Faculty Sponsor:** John Gerber

**Living Routes Faculty:**

Giovanni Ciarlo, *MA Sustainable Communities and Socially Responsible Businesses, Goddard College*; Kathleen Sartor, Beatrice Briggs, *PhD (ABD) History of Religions, Univ. of Chicago Divinity School, MA, Religious Studies, University of Chicago*

**Term:** Winter 2010

**Credits:** 4

## Course Description

This three-week, residential course is designed to give students an intensive experience in community living, team work and participatory leadership. The teaching method is designed to engage the head, heart and senses. Presentation of theory is supported by graphics and case studies drawn from the teacher's own experience. Then participants test the concepts in individual and group exercises, challenge them in discussions and apply them in classroom practice sessions and in the implementation of a community service project. Ample time is provided for personal and group reflection.

## Community Project

Using the skills taught in the course, students will design and implement a project chosen by the group either in Huehucoyotl, the adjacent national forest or neighboring village. Huehucoyotl members will present some possibilities to the group, which will research and evaluate them and then, in conjunction with the community, select and implement one (or more). In past years groups designed and constructed a bus shelter at the entrance to the community, a handicapped accesses ramp to the community center, a recycling center for all community materials, and a garden upgrade of composting and greenhouse structures. These have been greatly appreciated by all. The Huehue residents look forward to seeing what creative ideas arise this year!

The learning objectives for this part of the course include:

- Negotiating an agreement with Huehucoyotl's residential community, an international group of diverse interests and opinions.
- Working within the constraints of locally available materials, expertise and "*usos y costumbres*" (traditional ways of doing things), while satisfying the community's ecological criteria.
- Create a functional work team that includes all of the course participants.

While the course will produce a tangible result (the implemented project), the process by which this is accomplished is a key component of the learning experience. The academic focus will be

on the communication skills needed to bring a group together around a common vision and keep it together in the face of internal conflict and external challenges. In addition, the participants will be introduced to the values, history and current challenges of both the ecovillage and the surrounding area. They will also be encouraged to practice speaking as much Spanish as possible with staff, community members and the local residents of Tepoztlan.

## Course Topics

Among the specific content that will be introduced during this course are:

- Introduction to Consensus
- Basic Facilitation Skills
- Power dynamics
- Team building
- Creativity as a tool for sustainability
- Generating Ideas, Presenting Proposals, Reaching Agreement and Implementing Decisions
- Leadership styles
- Effective Listening
- Getting along in a diverse group
- Participatory Democracy in the context of Mexico's political/social history
- Limited Spanish instruction\*

\* *Students will be exposed to Spanish through informal conversations, games, and music during the program. Depending on student interest and time available, additional instructional classes may be scheduled.*

## Field Trips

One or more field trips to local villages, or sites of interest, that connect the course content with local history and culture will be scheduled. The main field trip for the course will be a three-night stay in a nearby traditional village of artisans and subsistence farmers where social justice, immigration, and fair trade issues will be explored with local activists.

## Course Requirements/Assignments

- Assigned reading (see below)
- Written assignments including
  - draft agenda, ground rules and process rules for a specific group
  - a written proposal, following the format provided
- Participate in all the individual and group exercises
- Facilitate at least one group meeting, as well as take other process roles
- Participate in the planning and execution of the community service project
- Submit a final paper of 300-500 words on "My Strengths and Weaknesses as a Participatory Leader in a Multi-cultural Context"

## Required Readings

- *The Skilled Facilitator* by Roger Schwarz, Josey-Bass, San Francisco, CA 2002 edition. Recommended facilitation text. You can find this on Amazon for \$24. 45
- *Privilege, Power, and Difference* by Allan Johnson, McGraw Hill, NY 2006. Helpful to understand diversity. You should be able to find it at a library or purchase a copy for ~\$27 from Amazon.com.
- Before the program, please seek out, peruse and identify the major concepts of one of the following books by Arnold Mindell (or parts of all three) *Sitting in the Fire*, *The Deep Democracy of Open Forums* or *The Leader as Martial Artist* as well as *Non-Violent Communication* by Marshall Rosenberg. A copy of each will also be available on site.
- *Introduction to Consensus* by Beatrice Briggs (provided upon arrival)
- Selected articles (provided upon arrival)

## Recommended reading (optional) (for discussion purposes)

- *The War Against Oblivion* by John Ross
- *Tepoztlan* by Oscar Lewis
- *Unbowed* by Wangari Maathai
- *Distant Neighbors* by Alan Riding

## Course Faculty

**Giovanni Ciarlo**, MA Sustainable Communities and Socially Responsible Businesses. Goddard College. B.A. Education. University of Connecticut, Graduate studies in Linguistics Central Connecticut State Univ

Ciarlo is a founding member of Huehucoyotl, a board member of the Global Ecovillage Network since 2003 and council member of the Ecovillage Network of the Americas since 1999. He is a world-traveled musician and performer working for educational reform through the arts and a member of IIFAC, and an experienced Spanish language instructor. He is a sustainability consultant, instructor and facilitator who also teaches international sustainability design courses. Ciarlo will also lead optional Spanish conversation classes for the group and oversee the service project.

**Kathleen Sartor**, Founding member of Huehucoyotl Ecovillage and staff for this course since 2005. Kathleen will be your host mom, and will be in charge of your every day needs, accommodations, food, health, and general wellbeing.

**Beatrice Briggs**, PhD (ABD) History of Religions, Univ. of Chicago Divinity School, MA, Religious Studies, University of Chicago B.A., English, McGill University, Montreal, Canada

Briggs is director of the International Institute for Facilitation and Consensus (IIFAC) in Cuernavaca, Mexico, and author of articles on decision-making and group facilitation as well as *Introduction to Consensus*, a manual used by ecologists and activists around the

world. Briggs leads courses and workshops throughout the Americas. She is a member of Ecovillage Huehucoyotl and is fluent in Spanish and English. She is a consultant for the course.

## Assessment and Grading

Students will be assessed on class participation and the completion of the above assignments. As the course is interdisciplinary and experiential in nature, grading is more challenging than in traditional classroom settings. The following criteria are offered to help students understand the process by which they will be assessed and graded.

Each student is expected to complete the course requirements as a minimum standard. To do the course requirements and nothing more will generally merit an average grade of “B.” For a higher grade, faculty will look beyond these minimum requirements for more qualitative, expansive and creative aspects of the students' work.

Below is a list of criteria that may be used to assign grades that go beyond the minimum requirements for the course. This is not an “equation” or a checklist, but examples of ways to assess excellence. Among the ways a student might demonstrate excellence are:

- Demonstration of leadership—getting the group together, initiating discussions
- Articulation of one's reflection process—what is one sharing with the learning community?
- Integration of reading and doing - demonstrating how one is applying that knowledge
- Attentive, active participation and asking of questions
- Interviewing people for further information and knowledge
- Suggesting improvements for course and program
- Self-directed learning—learning that takes place outside of the group experiences
- Facilitation of daily group responsibilities—watching time, being on time, initiating ideas and solutions, using one's voice, speaking up
- Quality and amount of written work—how does one go beyond just "keeping" a journal or "producing" essays and papers?
- Synthesizing the experience—relating what one has learned in the coursework to one's life and sharing those learning's

## Final Grade

Faculty on site will recommend final grades based on their personal assessment of student performance and they will be submitted to the UMass Division of Continuing Education by Dr. John Gerber, Professor of Plant and Soil Sciences at the University of Massachusetts. Students may be asked to submit a written self-evaluation of their performance.

The spirit of the evaluation is to provide space for group dynamics including organizing of groups, discussion for a sustainable future and presentation of group work. Faculty will provide feedback on the progress of students supporting their talents and limitations. Each student will be evaluated in four areas:

1. Class participation
2. Theory and practice
3. Overall mastery of course content
4. Quality of documentation

The course is graded in the following way:

Presence and participation in all course activities	-----	<b>60% “C”</b>
Practice of facilitation roles	-----	<b>10%</b>
Completing all assignments on time	-----	<b>15% “B”</b>
Blogging	-----	<b>5%</b>
Asking questions and engaging in meaningful dialogue	-----	<b>10% “A”</b>

**PROGRAM SAMPLE SCHEDULE (Based on 2009 program)**  
 (Note: This is not the actual schedule for this year.)

Day / Time	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6
8:00	Arrival in Mexico City	<b>Desayuno</b>	Desayuno Chores Compost Area	Desayuno Chores	Desayuno chores	Desayuno Chores Garden work LAUNDRY
9:00		Orientation • Introductions • Housekeeping & community norms	Check-in	Check-in	Check-in	Check-in
9:30			Reading debrief  Introduction to the bioregion	Introduction to Participative Decision Making	Exploration of Social Identity	Debrief reading and lessons learned, Q&A from first 2 days of classes
11:00		Break	Break	Break	Break	Break
11:30		Expectations, objectives and course outline	Introduction to Facilitation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Models of intervention in groups</li> <li>• Setting Criteria and ground rules</li> </ul>	Effective communication	Project meeting #1 – Brainstorm, Planning for community service project/s
1:30						
1:45		Comida	Comida	Comida	Comida	Comida
3:30		Huehucoyotl history & tour	Leadership games	exercises: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• leadership games</li> </ul>	Trip to SARAR Tepoztlán  Spanish assignment Shopping”	Drumming with Mo
5:00		Arrival Huehucoyotl Room assignments	Huehue from above (short hike)	Wangari Maathai video and debrief		Facilitated group meeting about community project
7:00		Cena	Cena	Cena	Cena	Cena
8:00	Opening circle	Assigned reading “Nudge” “Web Blog” “Golf War” “Ground Rules”	What is an Ecovillage? Reading: “Consensus” “Unreasonable People”	“Dia de los Reyes” with community residents Reading: “Mindell p 225-43”	Night Walk	Journal Email Blog Reading: “The Soul of Money”

Week 2: Integration of Skills and Community Service Project(s)							
Day / Time	Day 7	Day 8	Day 9	Day 10	Day 11	Day 12	Day 13
8:00	Desayuno Chores	Desayuno Chores	Desayuno Chores	Desayuno	Desayuno	Desayuno	Desayuno Chores LAUNDRAY
9:00	Check-in	Free time	Depart field trip	Visita a la Secundaria	8 a 9 Distribucion de leche 9 a 12 Actividades Regidor de medio Ambiente  Comida	Desayuno	Debrief field trip
9:30	Community work		Arrive Totolapan	Visita al Parque de los Venados		Subida al Cerro Visita a proyectos de la UPM pollos , venta de calzado Evaluacion	Break
11:00	Break						
11:30	Project meeting #3 – develop proposal criteria develop proposals						
1:45	Comida		Comida	Comida		Comida	
3:00 5:00	Community and individual art work	Pueblos de Morelos	Intercambio con Jovenes	Intercambio con Mujeres San José de los Laurales Visita a Tlayacapan	Rest  CO2 Inventory	Project meeting #5– Decide on proposal(s) to bring to community meeting	
7:00							Cena
8:00	Cultural event	Blog Reading: “Fair Trade”	Exchange with host families	Exchange with host families	Exchange with host families Blog?	Reading, “Future Search” Blogging	Music Blog Cultural event

<b>Week 3: Integration of Skills and Community Service Project(s)</b>							
<b>Day/ Time</b>	<b>Day 14</b>	<b>Day 15</b>	<b>Day 16</b>	<b>Day 17</b>	<b>Day 18</b>	<b>Day 19</b>	<b>Day 20</b>
<b>8:00</b>	Desayuno Chores	Desayuno Chores	Desayuno Chores	Desayuno Chores	Desayuno Chores	Desayuno Chores	Desayuno
<b>9:00</b>	Check-in	Check-in	Check-in	Check-in	Check-in	Check-in	Departure
<b>9:30</b>	Community Work	Implementation of project(s) with planning and evaluation meetings as needed				Complete project(s) Final written assignment due	
<b>11:00</b>	Break	Break	Break	Break	Break		
<b>11:30</b>	Project meeting #6 preparations	Work on project(s)					
<b>1:45</b>	Comida	Comida	Comida	Comida	Comida	Comida	
<b>3:00</b>	Project meeting #7 Community meeting	Work on project(s)				Final evaluation and closing circle	
	Salsa Lessons						
<b>7:00</b>	Cena	Dinner preparation	Cena	Cena	Dinner preparation	Cena	
<b>8:00</b>	Spanish assignment “At El Telon”	Blog Reading: “Sustainability”	Reading: “Leadership” email journaling, Blog	Dialogue: assigned reading	Cena  Final written assignment	Despedida	