



India: Sustainability in Practice at Auroville

Spring Semester, 2009

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Program Overview

Students who participate on this program with study abroad in Auroville, an international community dedicated to promoting human unity in the Indian state of Tamil Nadu along the tropical coast of southern India. Students will participate in an academic program that fosters collaborative inquiry, critical thinking, and dialogue while exploring daily awareness practices such as yoga, non-violent communication and meditation.

Through engagement with a holistic approach to world issues that encompasses inner, cultural, and outer processes, students will broaden and deepen their understanding of sustainability issues and ecology. Opportunities to engage in hands-on experiences with habitat restoration, local organic food production, teaching in village schools, working with village action groups and more will support participants to in building a growing theoretical and practical understanding of issues relating to local and global sustainability.

Living Routes Learning Modalities

The Sustainability in Practice Semester is based on the premise that conditions on our planet are reaching a crisis so deep, that we are at a crossroads in our evolutionary journey. We are either heading toward a self-induced extinction or we can respond to the planetary crisis by consciously participating in a transformation toward an immeasurable and unknown future.

In order for humanity as a whole to move away from collapse and instead create conditions for the emergence and restoration of a sustainable world, a conscious transformation is needed. In accordance with Living Routes' educational philosophy, the content of the four UMass courses, and the context of Auroville and India, the following learning modalities are offered to facilitate this process of transformation:

Seminar/Workshop Series

Living Routes faculty and residents of Auroville will offer a selection of seminars and site visits. These have been carefully selected to provide a holistic understanding of the current ecological and social crisis and offer tools and concepts necessary for the emergence of a sustainable world. They will also assist the student in exploring different ways of relating to body, heart, mind, and soul as tools and practices for awakening the human spirit.

Bioregional/ Cross-Cultural Explorations

Throughout the semester, students will have regular opportunities to cultivate their sense of place within Auroville and the surrounding culture and bioregion. These explorations are meant to deepen understanding of the natural history and ecosystems within the region, to explore applications and challenges of sustainable living first-hand, and to deepen understanding of Tamil culture and South India, through cross-cultural interactions.

Academic Readings

Throughout the semester, students will receive a selection of readings that will support the seminars and syllabi content. Information and ideas from these readings, as well as from the various books available in the Living Routes library and other libraries in Auroville should be integrated and assimilated into your paper-writing, group discussions and journal practice.

Base Groups

On a weekly basis when possible, students will meet with an academic advisor in smaller, “base” groups of 6 students. In addition to providing academic support and offering feedback on quality of work, the base group meetings are an opportunity for sharing journal entries and papers.

Collaborative Learning Sessions

On a weekly basis, the learning community will gather to reflect on, integrate, and synthesize the learning (readings, seminars and site visits) of the week.

Learning Journal

In addition to writing papers, you will be asked to maintain a Learning Journal in order to express, integrate, and synthesize your thoughts, feelings, dreams, and opinions about what you are experiencing during the program as well as to formulate and engage with questions that may lead to further and deeper inquiry. Your Journal is not so much a product as it is part of your process of integrating knowledge and deepening your understanding of coursework material, group discussions, learning community experiences, Auroville, India, and yourself. Long after the semester is over many students appreciate having this unique record of their learning and experiences, and we encourage you to put as much energy into your journaling practice as you can.

The mainstay of your Learning Journal should be reflective entries. This means pushing yourself to think in depth about what you are feeling. As you write, ask yourself questions such as: Why do I feel this way? How have I arrived at this thought? Are these my authentic thoughts or are they what I think I am supposed to be thinking or writing or feeling? What information might I be missing? Do I agree with what I have experienced or read? In other words, develop a practice of questioning your assumptions, reflecting on the trajectory of your understandings and emotions, and seeking new horizons.

Your journaling is a place not only to engage in critical thinking, but to explore other forms of knowledge creation. In addition to your written reflections, we therefore encourage you to explore reflecting in ways other than with words. Try going into a quiet space with some art supplies (crayons, watercolors, collage images and words, pencils, etc.) and set them around you within easy reach. You may even want to put on some music in the background. Let your mind go quiet, take some deep breaths and relax! When you feel ready, with the use of images, words, and sentences, begin to creatively explore your responses to the questions asked. This kind of activity, sometimes called visual journaling, can take you to places where your surface

mind does not normally venture. The ways in which we write papers and tell our stories often contain elements of what we think others are expecting us to say or want to hear or myths we have created about ourselves that may no longer be viable – or perhaps never were! Moving from language to visual representations allows us to move beyond the mind’s limitations. One opportunity to put this into practice is writing two entries for the blog.

We have found that an 8” by 11” unlined journal offers the most flexibility for the combination of written and visual explorations we are hoping you will bring to your Learning Journal. As the Learning Journal serves as a document of the changes in your thinking over time, you are expected to reflect in it on a regular basis, beginning as soon as possible. Faculty will regularly review your Journal and you will also be asked to share selections of your writing with other community members.

Knowing that faculty will be reading your Learning Journal might influence how you approach it, and what you choose to include. During the semester you will have the option to hide journal entries that you want kept private, or you may choose to keep a separate journal for such entries. However try not to let the fact that your Learning Journal will be shared hamper your creative exploration. Do not wait until your ideas are clearly formulated to write about them. Try not to over-edit yourself, or restrain the free flow of your reflections through fears of appearing foolish or uninformed. See reflecting in the Journal as part of your path towards polishing your thoughts and understanding what these experiences mean to you. At the end of the semester 10 entries will be collected and two blog entries will be counted towards the requirement.

Self-Directed Learning

Throughout the semester, students will be introduced to a vast spectrum of integral approaches to sustainability, addressing ecological, social, cultural and spiritual responses to the current planetary crisis. The content of much of this learning will be pre-determined and students will be guided within a pre-existing structure and set of academic activities. A great breadth of topics will be covered during these early weeks.

In conjunction with this curriculum, students have the opportunity to select particular areas of personal interest to explore more deeply. Students will pursue personal as well as community interests and goals, while remaining within academic and programmatic requirements. Students will engage in Service Learning Projects (SLP’s) of their choice (see Applications of Sustainable Living course outline). In addition to these SLP’s, students will prepare for and engage in a 40-hour personal retreat (“sacred solo”), for which they will largely determine how they construct their solo experience. Finally, students will design an self-designed experiential learning project to be carried out during Community Stays in Auroville, weeks 11-13. For this learning plan you will be asked to articulate your academic intentions within a framework that consists of setting up a series of goals that will help you to recognize and mark your progress along the way. Your project plan will also serve as an assessment tool.

Learning Community Participation

Involvement in every aspect of our community's day-to-day functioning, educational activities, and group dynamics is expected for successful participation in the Living Routes Program. We want each person in the community to see him or herself as an active part of a greater whole and act accordingly. By helping each other, working collaboratively, sharing excitement about ideas and events, actively seeking experiences, and participating in them, we all contribute to each individual's education and gain skills for the practice of sustainable lifestyles. Your effort and engagement with each module, and with the overall evolution of our semester, is a large part of your final assessment and grade. As an active learner, it is your responsibility to continually seek feedback from faculty and peers, while assessing your own work in an ongoing manner.

A community dedicated to collaborative and individual learning emerges when the following criteria are established:

- The community comes together with a common purpose or goal.
- There is mutual respect among all participants and there is clarity and agreement on how we all work together.
- Diverse backgrounds are recognized and individuals bond into an association dedicated to collective as well as personal learning.
- Dialogues have the open-ended quality of exploration. Students not only present points of view, but also test and modify their ideas; instead of doggedly defending personal conclusions, they listen to one another with interest. Differences of opinion produce inquiries, not disputes. There is a willingness to work through the conflicts that will inevitably arise, recognizing that conflict can be healthy and productive if dealt with effectively.
- Constructive feedback is openly received and offered.

Facilitation and Leadership

Developing your role as a facilitator and leader is an integral part of the semester. The learning community is an ideal setting in which to take creative risks in your teaching and facilitation methods and receive constructive feedback to aid in your development as a facilitator or leader.

Over the course of the semester you will be asked to facilitate the following as a minimum requirement:

- **Community-Building Processes** such as consensus decision-making, weekly meetings and sharing circles, and daily health check-ins and "attunements" (i.e. sharing a meditation, song, poem, reading, or other creative act as a way to focus the community and bring everyone together before starting the day).
- **Weekly Leadership Team:** Each student will have an opportunity to guide the learning community through a week of learning, by facilitating community meetings, planning community celebrations and play, organizing attunements and weekly check ins etc.

Global and Local Sustainable Living

Program: India: Sustainability in Practice at Auroville

Department: Environmental Design

Course #: ED 592A

UMass Faculty Sponsor: Elisabeth Hamin (Landscape Architecture and Regional Planning)

LR Faculty: Aitcheson, Pollack, Silbiger and Vecchione, Hirsch-Tauber (FIT) Jackson (FIT)

Credits: 4

Course Description

Bringing with us an awareness of the general social and environmental state of the world from a developed-world perspective, we begin to ground ourselves in an awareness of the complexity and interdependence of the ecological crisis. We learn the key principles of sustainable development and use this as a tool to evaluate how sustainably we are living here in India and at home. We then explore environmental solutions from a personal, local, national and global level. In turn we will examine the international community of Auroville within Tamil Nadu and India.

As we experience different places and diverse cultural ways, we see more clearly the role of society in producing and promoting sustainable or unsustainable practices, and the challenges of cross-cultural communication and decision-making. We consider the roles of lifestyles, economics, aesthetics, educational systems, political structures such as nation-states, etc. in shaping human relationships to earth. Understanding how to approach issues of sustainability will of necessity be grounded in our knowledge of local natural systems and ecology, as well as an exploration of alternative technologies, practices, and designs, learning to apply a systems lens to both.

As we learn about the environmental, social, and economic issues relating to sustainability in Auroville and southern India, we address how these relate to and translate to other places in the world, including our own homes. Can what is applied on a local level here be expanded outward to the global? What new perspectives are we gaining from being immersed in this ancient, yet rapidly developing economy? What do we, in turn, have to offer here? Looking at past and current patterns of relationship between culture and nature, how can we move towards a new eco-social paradigm for the future? From the cultural perspective, how does art and creative expression promote global and local sustainable living? What challenges and opportunities exist in the realm of sustainable design? How do our environmental aesthetics relate to ecological integrity? (For example, English Ivy is considered in the West a beautiful plant but can be an aggressively invasive species.) How does policy assist in driving sustainable development?

Course Objectives

- To define and study the paradigm of sustainability and work to understand its applications on the local level in Auroville and southern India, as well as in our home regions and globally
- To investigate global environmental trends, problems and solutions, by focusing on local and regional examples
- To increase our awareness of individual and collective roles in, and impact on, local and global ecosystems
- To examine the environmental history of, and the influence of culture on, the region in terms of engendering effective social change for sustainability
- To familiarize ourselves, through immersion, with the ecological systems of the local bioregion including plants, soils and geology, watersheds, weather patterns, etc.
- To acknowledge our shared responsibility towards creating the necessary changes in how we think and live in order to build sound ethical and practical foundations for the emerging global society
- To understand the form and function of sustainability from a design perspective.

Learning Modalities

This course uses lectures, seminars, discussions, readings, site visits, small group work and hands-on projects as key strategies for allowing each student to develop mastery of course content.

Course Outline

- I. Examination of the Concept of Sustainability
 - A. Principles of sustainability
 - B. Dimensions of sustainability (i.e. inner, outer, cultural)
 - C. Interdisciplinary nature of sustainability
 - D. Applications of sustainability (e.g. sustainable development, technology, etc.)
- II. Developing Awareness of Complexity and Interdependence
 - A. Principles of ecology
 - B. Systems theory
 - C. Application at the local level: Bioregional studies
- III. Local Issues of Sustainability – Auroville and southern India
 - A. Familiarization with the Founding Vision for Auroville – City of Human Unity
 - B. Preservation and/or Restoration of Local Ecosystems
 - C. Agriculture
 1. Existing problems
 2. Potential farming/food solutions in Auroville
 - D. Water Systems
 - E. Transportation: Regulations, Roads, Vehicles, Mobility, and Pollution
 - F. Equity Issues
 - G. Alternative Technologies/Practices

- H. Effective Design solutions
- I. Government, Non-Governmental Organizations, Policies, and Decision-Making
- J. Economics

- IV. Global Issues and Impacts seen through the Lens of “West” and “East”, “North” and “South”
 - A. History of colonization and development
 - B. Women’s rights and empowerment
 - C. Homogenization of cultures and education
 - D. Non-geographically based economic elites
 - E. Displacement of land-based peoples through forces of development and globalization
 - F. Global ecological concerns
 - G. Global trade and the environment
 - H. Ecological footprint analysis and sustainability indicators
 - I. Environmental Aesthetics and Ecological Integrity

Course Requirements

Sustainability Action Research Project and Sharing:

You will identify an area of sustainability work within Auroville which interests you and research this “in the field” through a combination of interviews, site visits, and background research (web, library). You will then create a presentation of your findings and share what you learned with your base group, emphasizing the usefulness of this technology within Auroville and one potential application in the world at large.

Integral Sustainability Project Paper and Presentation:

This major research paper will be an opportunity for you to design a project that you could implement at some point in the future, either in Auroville or another part of the world where you will be living. Using academic language and appropriate citations, you will write to an audience who will require a full explanation of the issue, the nature of your approach, and a solution that would be considered “integral”. This paper will range from 3000-4000 words. You will also have fifteen minutes to present your project to your peers as a way of practicing for sharing it with a broader audience at home.

Readings

Students will choose one book (in addition to required course readings) of their choice and additional articles relating to the course content (see bibliography/library for guidance) to deepen their learning.

Active Participation

Students are expected to actively participate in all aspects of the course including reflective journaling, seminars, site visits, and the self-designed experiential learning project.

Grading

In this course faculty actively promote multiple means of evaluation and authentic assessment including student self-assessment, peer assessment, faculty-student debriefs and rubrics (see page 24). In order for students to receive credit for this program through the University of

Massachusetts, the faculty will submit a letter grade and written evaluation of each student's learning.

Sample Bibliography

- Berry, W. (1977). *The Unsettling of America: Culture and agriculture*. San Francisco, CA:Sierra Club Books.
- Capra, F. (1997). *The web of life: A new understanding of living systems*. New York: Doubleday.
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- Shiva, V. (1999). *Stolen harvest: The hijacking of the global food supply*. Cambridge, MA: Southend Press.
- Todd, N.J., & Todd, J. (1994). *From eco-cities to living machines: Principles of ecological Design*. Berkeley, CA: North Atlantic Books.
- Trawick, M. (1996). *Notes on love in a Tamil family*. Delhi: Oxford University Press.
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- Wachernagel, M., & Rees, W. (1996). *Our ecological footprint: Reducing human impact on the earth*. Gabriola Island, BC: New Society Publishers

Group Dynamics

Learning Communities within Living Communities

Program: India: Sustainability in Practice at Auroville

Department: Communications

Course #: Comm 352

UMass Faculty Sponsor: Leda Cooks

LR Faculty: Aitcheson, Pollack, Silbiger and Vecchione, Hirsch-Tauber (FIT) Jackson (FIT)

Credits: 4

Course Description

The focus of this course is twofold: to experience living in, learning about, and developing a learning community in order to build skills in communication and conflict resolution necessary for addressing issues of sustainability in the world; and to participate in and observe the larger community of Auroville and other host communities in southern India. Through these overlapping experiences we are challenged to recognize and think critically about the physical, social, economic, ethical, political, and spiritual elements that make up sustainable communities. We see the similarities and contrasts between the different intentions that have brought us together: we as a learning community (with a surprising diversity of goals and backgrounds even within our small group) and the goals of these other quite different communities that are working to build a life together and/or accomplishing social /cultural reform. For this course we also strive to deconstruct the idea that humans are autonomous, self-directing individuals living within a human-centered universe, and attempt to stimulate in students a sense of identity as a part of an interdependent community that includes the entire biota, thereby encouraging treatment of all living beings with respect and consideration.

A large segment of this experience exposes us to the complexity and immensity of Auroville's aspiration to design and realize an international community that restores the land, is self-sustaining, and seeks to foster human evolution within the pre-existing cultural context of southern India. Auroville is an extraordinary place in which to appreciate the obstacles and impediments to, as well as the potential for, achieving sustainable communities worldwide, as it is a microcosm of the international picture. It is sometimes difficult to maintain a healthy, critical, yet open mind while exploring the attempts Auroville has made since 1968 towards these ends, as it is not, nor does it claim to be, perfect or even sustainable. Through this and our other experiences, we begin to identify time-tested and innovative sustainable community ideas, designs, strategies, and practices currently being used and to witness future designs, plans, and hopes.

Course Objectives

- To recognize and understand the foundations of sustainable communities and to distinguish between unsustainable features and practices and their sustainable alternatives
- To compare and contrast visions and day-to-day functioning of various communities, recognizing that different approaches are appropriate for different circumstances
- To meaningfully engage in the Living Routes learning community, as well as the various host communities where we will be staying during the semester, thereby becoming aware of the vital role that active participation plays in sustaining community, and of the reciprocal relationship between freedom and responsibility
- To open oneself to experiencing the different educational methodologies that underlie and support the Living Routes learning community environment
- To acquire effective collective decision-making, facilitation, conflict resolution, and other skills for living and working within diverse communities
- To explore the dynamic tension, and find the balance, between individual and community needs
- To realize that deep cultural change begins with the individual and consequently that one must be willing to explore the self, and to challenge ingrained personal patterns of thought and behavior in order to foster sustainability
- To strive to promote right relationships with oneself, others, and the earth

Learning Modalities

This course uses lectures, seminars, discussions, readings, site visits, and hands-on projects as strategies for allowing each student to develop mastery of course content.

Course Outline

- I. Building our Unique Living Routes Learning Community
 - A. Agreeing on community values and vision
 - B. Defining and distributing community responsibilities
 - C. Sharing our stories
 - D. Gaining experience with facilitation and leadership skills
 - E. Actively participating in community meetings and sharings
 - F. Exploring the use of collective decision making methods
 - G. Acquiring and actively working with conflict resolution skills
 - H. Learning to speak and listen effectively
 - I. Seeking out, attempting to understand, and respecting diverse viewpoints
 - J. Appreciating the role of check-ins, logistics meetings, ritual and celebration, music, and play
- II. Exploring Self & Relationships within a Community Context
 - A. Self-inquiry
 - B. Discovering who we are through the mirror of relationships
 - C. Challenging and supporting one another to “step out of the box”; experimentation with new ways of being in the world

- D. Exploring the tension between inclusivity and exclusivity in community relationships
 - E. Respecting and (when appropriate) challenging personal boundaries
 - F. Critically reflecting upon the roots and appropriateness of our thoughts, language, and humor
 - G. Awareness of our social, cultural, and institutional contexts: recognizing that we are a part of the whole
- III. Schools as Learning Communities -- Living & Learning Centers
- A. Teacher as guide, mentor, and facilitator of learning
 - B. Redefining student/teacher relationships
 - C. Alternative educational methodologies
 - D. Providing constructive feedback for one another
 - E. Process of personal self-assessment
- IV Exploring and Interacting with Indian culture and Auroville
- A. Appraising the different purposes, visions, and foundations of Auroville
 - B. Assisting in the daily running of host communities throughout the semester
 - C. Intentional communities as living laboratories for applying principles of sustainability in technologies, practices, and relationships
 - D. Contemplating the cultural context of Auroville
 - E. Investigating community governing structures and design
 - F. Exploring Tamil culture and villages life

Course Requirements

Integral Life and Learning Plan and Presentation:

Through a series of base group meetings, you will design a personalized learning plan, develop your own structure and process of self-assessment, reflect on your own life and future goals, and share this work with your learning community as a whole.

Integral Leadership:

During our time together, you will take responsibility for leading the group in a variety of activities including community meetings, check-ins, attunements, and play/celebrations.

Reflective Journaling:

This journal covers topics from all the courses, but will be considered as a major component of this course. Journal reflections will be self-designed, peer- and faculty-designed. Your journal will be collected periodically throughout the semester.

Readings:

Student will choose one book (in addition to required course readings) of their choice and additional articles relating to the course content (see bibliography/library for guidance) to deepen their learning.

Active Participation

Students are expected to actively participate in all aspects of the learning community including community meetings, seminars, site visits, base group meetings and one on one's.

Weblog Entry

Each student is expected to complete at least two substantive we log entries over the course of the semester. Collectively, the web log entries of both students and staff are meant to clearly communicate to the world outside of the program the base groups evolving experience in Auroville and understanding of sustainability issues on a personal, communal, regional and global level. Each entry should be about 300 words in length, include two pictures and specifically reference relevant, key concepts, topics, activities and experiences that the group has explored since the last web log entry.

Grading

In this course faculty actively promote multiple means of evaluation and authentic assessment including student self and peer assessment, faculty-student debriefs and rubrics (pg. 24). In order for students to receive credit for this program through the University of Massachusetts, the faculty will submit a letter grade and written evaluation of each student's learning.

Sample Bibliography

Girardet, H. (1992). *Gaia atlas of cities*. UK: Gaia Books.

Jackson, H. (2002). *Ecovillage living: Restoring the earth and her people*. White River Junction, VT: Chelsea Green.

Johnson, D.W. (1991). *Joining together: Group theory and group skills*. 4th Ed. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

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Rosenberg, M. B. (2000). *Nonviolent communication: A language of compassion*. Encinitas, CA: Puddle Dancer Press.

Roseland, M. (1998). *Towards sustainable communities*. Gabriola Island, BC; New Haven, CT: New Society Publishers.

Shaffer, C. & Anundsen, K. (1993). *Creating community anywhere: Finding support and connection in a fragmented world*. New York: Tarcher/Perigee

Shields, K. (1993). *In the tiger's mouth: An empowerment guide for social action*. Gabriola Island, BC: New Society Publishers.

Some, M. P. (1993). *Ritual: Power, healing and community*. Portland, OR: Swam/Raven & Co.

Applications and Practices of Sustainable Living

Program: India: Sustainability in Practice at Auroville

Department: Service Learning

Course#: Honors 397I

UMass Faculty Sponsor: John Gerber (Honors)

LR Faculty: Aitcheson, Pollack, Silbiger and Vecchione, Hirsch-Tauber (FIT) Jackson (FIT)

Credits: 4

Course Description

For this course, students engage in a Service Learning Project of their choice in Auroville for a period of five weeks. The emphasis is on having an immersion experience in different applications of sustainable living, within the parameters of this alternative community situated in the developing country of India. Some examples of possible service learning sites include: organic, biodynamic, and natural farms; locally-based small businesses in organic food production, natural dying, crafts, etc.; schools for Tamil and Aurovilian children; training and education centers for village women; water purification of Auroville and village water systems; cultural revival/reclamation at a village cultural center; a nursery or botanical garden; a center for solar and other technologies; or others. Availability of particular sites is dependent on site needs and student capacities and experience.

Course Objectives

- To learn more about “the Auroville experiment” and the opportunity it offers to be involved in the growth of a newly emerging “city of human unity”
- To experience, and reflect critically about real world challenges to implementing a sustainable paradigm
- To offer service to our host community
- To gain authentic experience and skills in cross-cultural communication
- To recognize and challenge our cultural biases
- To gain an appreciation for the intricacy, richness, and immensity of India’s development challenges
- To understand the value and complexity of experiential learning

Learning Modalities

This course uses seminars, faculty-student meetings, discussions and site based learning through internship as key strategies for students to develop mastery of course content.

Course Outline

I. Recognizing and Appreciating the Value and Role of First-hand Experience

II. Exploration of Different Service Learning Project Options Offered in Auroville

- A. Review of collated service learning project opportunities
- B. Visits to sites
- C. Interactions with potential on-site supervisors
- D. Consideration of intent of service learning project within overall semester goals and objectives

III. Development of Individual Focus and Intentions

- A. Meeting with faculty advisor and peers to elucidate and articulate intentions
- B. Meeting with on-site supervisor to share and discuss intentions
- C. Reassessment of intentions when necessary

IV. Immersion Experience

- A. Learning about and engaging in the work
- B. Development of relationship with on-site service learning project supervisor and fellow workers
- C. Awareness of how the Service Learning Project informs and deepens other learning and experiences of the semester
- D. Support of direct experience with critical thinking, reflection, discussion, reading, and research

V. Sharing Your Learning about Integral Sustainability Gained from the Service Learning Project Experience

- A. Technical and skill-based learning
- B. Philosophical understandings and life lessons
- C. Integration and application of learning beyond the Service Learning Project
- D. Outlook for the future: What are my next steps?

VI. Integral Sustainability assessment of your service-learning site

Course Requirements

Integral Sustainability Assessment Paper

Using an integral sustainability map or framework create an integral assessment of your service learning site. Write a paper (approx. 2000 words) combining your findings from the integral assessment, with your significant learning from the experience.

Self-Designed Experiential Learning Project

During the community stay you will design and implement an experiential learning project that includes components from all four courses and a method for evaluating your own progress. This will be done in close collaboration with faculty and your peers.

Readings

Students will choose (in addition to required course readings) one book of their choice and additional articles relating to the course content (see bibliography/library for guidance) to deepen their learning.

Active Participation

Students are expected to actively participate in all aspects of the course including attending all service learning sessions, completing reflective journaling exercises and sharing your experiences from your service project with the learning community.

Grading

In this course faculty actively promote multiple means of evaluation and authentic assessment including student self-assessment, peer assessment, faculty-student debriefs and rubrics (see pg. 24). In order for students to receive credit for this program through the University of Massachusetts, the faculty will submit a letter grade and written evaluation of each student's learning.

Sample Bibliography

(also refer to Global and Local Sustainability bibliography)

Illich, Ivan (1969) *To Hell with Good Intentions*. National Society for Internships and Experiential Education

Taylor, John (fall 2002) *Metaphors We Serve By: Investigating the Conceptual Metaphors Framing National and Community Service and Service Learning*, Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning,

Body, Mind and Spirit: Cultivating Personal Sustainability

Program: India: Sustainability in Practice at Auroville

Department: International Education

Course #: IE 292C

UMass Faculty Sponsor: Gretchen Rossman (Int'l Ed)

LR Faculty: Aitcheson, Pollack, Silbiger and Vecchione, Hirsch-Tauber (FIT) Jackson (FIT)

Credits: 4

Course Description

This course is designed to help elucidate the deep personal and cultural transformations that must occur for many in order to support regionally and globally appropriate ecologically sustainable ways of life. We begin to trace the relationship between knowing oneself, the choice to live sustainably, and grounding in a spiritual life. Initially, this will involve a largely deconstructive experience where we examine our own personal and cultural backgrounds and worldviews, alongside our actions and their consequences. We add to our personal inquiry through exploration of the lives and worldviews of others, coming to see religion and spirituality as social constructs with both collective and individual aspects. Our time in Auroville and in southern India will expose us to a wide range of daily life customs including spiritual and religious practices and pujas (rituals) in both urban and rural environments. We will experience the cultural richness of living within a diverse international community in Auroville (where 40 nations are represented) while also encountering the drastic contrasts existent between it, the adjoining local villages, and the rest of the places we travel.

In addition to academic seminars, readings, reflective journaling, and discussion on philosophical and spiritual movements that link inner transformation with political and environmental action in the world, this course also provides opportunities to experiment with how practices such as yoga/tai chi and meditation, personal retreat, holistic health, and rituals and celebrations can lead us to new conclusions about who we are and how we can practice sustainable living.

Course Objectives

- To understand the importance of worldviews and how they affect human behavior in relation to one another and the earth
- To become aware of one's own embedded worldview and consider whether it is consistent with our current values and understanding, recognizing the potential split between what we say we value and our actions in the world

- To explore the meanings of religion and spirituality, and our personal connection to, or disconnection from, them
- To gain an appreciation for the historical role of religions and spirituality in creating culture
- To observe how the religions of India manifest themselves in people's daily lives and examine the roles of ritual and celebration in creating social context
- To explore lifestyle choices and daily practices that foster personal sustainability and self-realization

Learning Modalities

This course uses lectures, seminars, discussions, readings, site visits, small group work, hands-on projects and reflective journaling as key strategies for allowing each student to develop mastery of course content.

Course Outline

- I. Deconstructing the Self: Who am I?
 - A. In relationship to the natural world
 - B. In relationship to my family and its history
 - C. In relationship to my body (i.e. body image, relationship with addictive substances, food consumption, exercise patterns, etc.)
 - D. In relationship with others
 - E. Identifying and overcoming my fears
 - F. Becoming conscious of and articulating my own worldview

- II. Exploring Diverse Viewpoints in Order to Better Understand Ourselves
 - A. Defining and Differentiating between Religion and Spirituality
 - B. Delving into the Spiritual Paths of Others
 1. Sri Aurobindo, The Mother, and Integral Yoga
 2. Sri Ramana Maharshi
 3. Gandhi
 - C. Overview of Religions of India
 - D. Role of Secular Worldviews
 - E. Introduction to Ecological Worldviews & the Ecological Self

- III. Engaging in Practices for Fostering Personal/ Inner Sustainability
 - A. Holistic health
 1. Ayurveda and Siddha medicine
 2. Food consumption patterns and food choices
 - B. Mindfulness and embodied practices
 1. Yoga and Pranayama
 2. Sitting and walking meditation
 3. Movement, dance, Tai-chi, etc
 - C. Reflective and visual journaling
 - D. Creativity and personal unfolding

- E. Community Sharing
- F. Sanskrit chanting & use of mantras
- G. Ritual and celebration
- H. The role of sports and play
- I. Personal “sacred solo” retreat

Course Requirements

Reflection Paper

This paper, written as a first-person narrative, will be an open exploration of your personal journey of transformation during the semester. (approx. 1500-2000 words).

Group Presentation/Experience

In small groups (2-3) you will share a 30-minute to hour-long presentation that explores aspects of this course as a whole. These creative and well-prepared sharings will be offered towards the end of the semester.

Readings

Students will choose one book of their choice (in addition to required course readings) and additional articles relating to the course content (see bibliography/library for guidance).

Active Participation

Students are expected to actively participate in all aspects of the course including sacred solo, daily group morning practice (weeks 1-8), reflective journaling, seminars and self-directed experiential learning project.

Grading

In all Living Routes programs we actively promote multiple means of evaluation and authentic assessment including student self and peer assessment, faculty-student debriefs and rubrics (see page 24). In order for students to receive credit for this program through the University of Massachusetts, the faculty must submit a letter grade and written evaluation of each student’s learning.

Sample Bibliography

Abram, D. (1996). *The Spell of the Sensuous*. New York: Pantheon Books.

Chapple, C.K., & Tucker, M.E. (Eds.) (2000). *Hinduism and Ecology*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Chodron, P. (2001). *Start where you are: A guide to compassionate living*. Shambala Books.

Ingram, C., Kui, A.S., & Nagler, M. (2003). *In the footsteps of Gandhi: Conversations*

- with spiritual social activists*. Berkeley, CA: Parallax Press.
- Kraftsow, G. (2002). *Yoga for transformation*. New York: Penguin, USA.
- Kornfield, J. (1993). *A Path with heart: A guide through the perils and promises of Spiritual life*. New York: Bantam Books.
- Kumar, S. (2002). *You are therefore I am: A declaration of dependence*. Devon, UK: Green Books.
- Landis, P, & Gottlieb, R.S. (Ed.) (2001). *Deep ecology and world religions*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.
- Macy, J. (1998). *World as lover, world as self*. Gabriola Island, BC: New Society Publishers.
- Nhat Hanh, T. (1987). *Being peace*. Berkeley, CA: Parallax Press.
- Some, M.P. (1993). *Ritual: Power, healing and community*. Portland, OR: Swan/Raven & Company.
- Swimme, B, & Berry, T. (1994). *The Universe Story*. San Francisco, CA: Harper San Francisco
- Wilber, K. (1998). *The Essential Ken Wilber*. Boston: Shambhala

Assessment Rubric

Evaluative Descriptors	Unsatisfactory (non-transferable grade)	Satisfactory with Concerns (C- to C+)	Good (B- to B)	Very Good (B+ to A-)	Excellent (A)
Active Participation and Leadership	Student did not attend experiences, and/or gave no sign of attending to what went on, and/or participated in ways that were inappropriate and disruptive to the learning process of others.	Student was present at experiences and appeared to be attending to what took place, but either did not participate actively, or participated in an inappropriate way.	Student was present at experiences and occasionally raised questions and/or offered contributions to discussions and resource events. Participation was appropriate and helpful to the learning of others.	Student was active during experiences and made useful contributions which included real engagement with key issues represented in the syllabus. Student gave evidence of considering the learning needs of others in addition to their own learning process; showed active leadership on a regular basis.	Student raised points that are original, and engaged others in dialogue that breaks new ground. Student gave evidence of considering the learning needs of others in addition to their own learning process. Strongly involved with leadership and facilitation and creating space for others to participate.
Knowledge, Integration and Embodied Action	Student either gave evidence of not grasping basic theoretical concepts, or could only repeat back what was presented, without giving evidence of understanding application. Student unable to meet basic requirements in a timely manner.	Student gave evidence of attempting to apply course material to life situation, though he or she did not do so in an effective way. Student's work in the course was minimally acceptable; there were some problems (specify), though not severe enough to be considered unsatisfactory.	Student gave evidence of applying many of the course's key concepts to life situations. Student work was basically competent with no major problems.	Student applied most of the key concepts to life situations in a particularly clear and effective way. Furthermore he or she embodied these concepts directly. Student solidly fulfilled course requirements and integrated course material in a clear and effective manner.	Student consistently used key concepts of the course to illuminate life situations in an original way, which led to new learning for all. Student's work showed originality over and above solid competence; others learned from student's contribution to the learning process as well as embodying through action integration of new concepts.
Quality of Documentation	Papers unacceptable with regard to content, organization and/or writing style (specify). Learning Journal did not meet minimum basic requirements in terms of breadth and depth. Entries incomplete or unacceptable.	Papers and learning journal were minimally acceptable with respect to content, organization and writing style; there were problems in one or more of these areas (specify), but not so severe as to be deemed unsatisfactory.	Papers and Learning Journal adequate.	Papers particularly clear, well organized and well written. Learning Journal thorough.	Papers and Learning Journal both competent (or better) in execution, and original/creative in their approach to a topic; papers and Learning Journal could be used as a model for other /future students.
Risk Taking/ Challenging Your Comfort Zones	Student chose not to take risks with academic and personal growth.	Though student may have attempted to take risks with academic and personal growth, they did not effectively actualize new growth with regard to coursework. Student had difficulty engaging with new ideas.	Student challenged themselves at times.	Student has consistently challenged themselves, through a variety of methods, both academically and interpersonally. They showed openness to new academic ideas and began to actualize their learning.	Student has consistently challenged themselves, and as a result, has journeyed through new territory and has challenged others to do so. Their openness to challenge and feedback supported new growth for themselves and the learning community.

