



Living Routes

CURRICULUM

Mexico

Leadership for Social Change at Huehuecoyotl

**INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY SERVICE LEARNING
COMMCOLL 398 – 4 CREDITS**

ACCREDITED BY



LEADERSHIP FOR SOCIAL CHANGE AND CONSENSUS FACITATION

INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY SERVICE LEARNING – COMMCOLL 398 – 4 CREDITS

Course Description

This three–week, residential course is designed to give students an intensive experience in community living, team work and participatory leadership 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).). Last year’s group designed and constructed a bus shelter at the entrance to the community that has 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 be encouraged to practice speaking as much Spanish as possible.

Course topics:

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

- Introduction to Consensus
- Basic Facilitation Skills
- Power dynamics
- 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 and social history
- Spanish language

Field Trips

One or more field trips to connect the course content with local history and culture will be scheduled.

Requirements/Assignments

- Assigned reading (see below)
- Written assignments including
 - draft agenda, including 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 meeting of the group, 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

- *Introduction to Consensus* by Beatrice Briggs (provided upon arrival)
- Selected articles
- Before the program, please seek out and 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.

Optional recommended reading about Mexico (for discussion purposes)

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

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 check list, 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 learnings

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

Sample calendar: Leadership for Social Change, Huehucoyotl, Mexico, January 2006

Program may change slightly and will include daily check-in, announcements and frequent evaluations

Week 1: Introduction to Huehue, Tepoztlán & Consensus					
	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday 4	Thursday 5	Friday 6
9 am – 1:30 pm			Arrival	<p>Theme: Orientation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introductions • Course objectives and outline • Housekeeping & community norms • Local bioregion • Huehucoyotl history & tour 	<p>Theme: Intro to consensus (and why it can be so difficult)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rank & Privilege • Consensus Process
			Room assignments Supper Opening circle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spanish • Optional pc work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visit to Tepoztlán
Week 2: Leadership and Communication skills					
9 am – 1:30 pm	<p>Theme: The role of the facilitator and other process roles</p> <p>Practice: Brainstorming scribing, maintaining speaker's list</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • community service project meeting 	<p>Theme: Elements of productive meetings: Agendas, ground rules and proposals</p> <p>Practice in creating all of the above</p>	<p>Theme: How to have a difficult conversation</p> <p>Practice: the 4 elements of a difficult conversation (what happened? how do I feel about it? What does this mean to me? What are we going to do now?)</p>	<p>Theme: Listening skills and dealing with “difficult people”</p>	Final project planning meeting
3:30-6:30 pm	Ecovillage movement Drumming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spanish Permaculture work or reading/journaling? 	C.S project meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spanish Permaculture work or reading/journaling? 	Meeting with Huehue members to present proposal
Week 3: Integration of skills and Community Service project					
9 am – 1:30 pm	Implementation of CS project(s) with planning and evaluation meetings as needed	Implementation of CS project(s) with planning and evaluation meetings as needed	Implementation of CS project(s) with planning and evaluation meetings as needed	Complete CS project(s) with planning and evaluation meetings as needed	Final evaluation and closing
3:30-6:30 pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spanish 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spanish 	Spanish	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spanish 	