

Living Routes

Study Abroad in
Sustainable Communities



ISRAEL Peace, Justice and the Environment at Kibbutz Lotan

FALL SEMESTER 2012
August 15 – December 15, 2012

ACADEMIC CURRICULUM



UMASS
AMHERST

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Overview

Students on this program will explore the connections between new forms of ecological identity and stewardship, social justice and community in Israel. Participants will work alongside Palestinian-Arab, Bedouin and Jewish Israelis who are striving for a just and lasting peace. Students will gain hands-on experience in ecological design, green building and sustainable agriculture and put permaculture into action in a Bedouin Village in the Negev Desert.

Through engagement with a holistic approach to world issues that encompasses inner, cultural, and outer processes, participants will broaden and deepen their understanding of sustainability and ecology. Students will learn from experts about cutting-edge ecological building techniques such as adobe, straw bale, and geodesic domes, as well as permaculture design. Engage in peace dialogues with marginalized groups around their experience and ideas for creating peace and justice in the region. This program emphasizes critical thinking, open-mindedness, consensus decision-making, community living, and non-violent communication in order to explore sensitive international, community, and personal dynamics.

Kibbutz Lotan as Community

Kibbutz Lotan is located in Israel's southern Arava valley, an extremely arid environment with an average of 30mm rainfall a year. The community is based on Reform Zionist Jewish values and is committed to renewing Judaism, equality, economic cooperation, ecology and community. Most of the Living Routes classes will take place within the environmental education park and eco-neighborhood/campus.

Living Routes Learning Modalities

The semester program 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 Kibbutz Lotan and other communities and projects in Israel, the following learning modalities are offered to facilitate this process of transformation:

Seminar/Workshop Series

Living Routes faculty and members of host communities 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 Kibbutz Lotan, Israel, 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 local perspectives and lifestyles, 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 on site should be integrated and assimilated into your paper writing, group discussions, and journal practice.

Individual Academic Advising and Base Groups

On a weekly basis when possible, students will meet either on their own with a faculty advisor or in smaller, “base” groups of 6 students together with a facilitator. Individual meetings will be opportunities for students to discuss their personal and academic progress with a faculty member while the base group meetings will offer a forum for peer support.

Collaborative Learning Sessions

On a weekly basis when possible, the learning community will gather to reflect on, integrate, and synthesize the learning (readings, seminars and site visits) of the week. In general student members of base groups will facilitate these sessions.

Learning Journal

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

The mainstay of the Learning Journal should be reflective entries. This means students pushing themselves to think in depth about what they are feeling. As student’s write, we encourage them to ask themselves 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 experienced or read?” In other words, students will be asked to develop a practice of questioning their assumptions, reflecting on the trajectory of their understandings and emotions, and seeking new horizons.

Journaling is a place not only to engage in critical thinking, but to explore other forms of knowledge creation. In addition to written reflections, we therefore encourage students to explore reflecting in ways other than with words. One suggestion is for students to go into a quiet space with some art supplies (crayons, watercolors, collage images and words, pencils, etc.) and set them around them within easy reach. They may even want to put on some music in the background. We encourage students to let their mind go quiet, take some deep breaths and relax! When they feel ready, with the use of images, words, and sentences, it's time to begin to creatively explore their responses to the questions asked. This kind of activity, sometimes called visual journaling, can take students to places where their 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 of 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.

As the Learning Journal serves as a document of the changes in student's thinking over time, they are expected to reflect in it on a regular basis, beginning as soon as possible. Faculty will regularly review the Learning Journals, and students will also be asked to share selections of their writing with other community members.

Knowing that faculty will be reading the student's Learning Journal might influence how students approach it, and what they choose to include. During the semester students will have the option to hide journal entries that they want kept private, or they may choose to keep a separate journal for such entries. However, we encourage students to not let the fact that their Learning Journal will be shared hamper their creative exploration. It's important for students to not wait until their ideas are clearly formulated to write about them, and to not over-edit themselves or restrain the free flow of their reflections through fears of appearing foolish or uninformed. Reflecting in the Journal is as part of the student's path towards polishing their thoughts and understanding what these experiences mean to them.

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. In order to get the most out of this more self-directed section of the program, students will be asked to articulate their academic intentions within a framework that consists of setting up a series of goals that will help them to recognize and mark their progress along the way. Their plan will also serve as an assessment tool, which seeks to identify "what counts" for them as an individual student - how they will know that they have indeed made progress in their learning.

These learning plans are working documents that may grow and change with each student. Students must consult with their faculty advisor and relevant others as they work on formulating their original plan and inform their advisor when significant changes seem necessary.

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. Student's engagement with each course, and with the overall evolution of our semester, is a large part of their final assessment and grade. As an active learner, it is the student's responsibility to continually seek feedback from faculty and peers, while assessing their own work in an ongoing manner.

A community dedicated to collaborative and individual learning emerges when:

- 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 conflicts that 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 a student's role as a facilitator and leader is an integral part of their semester. The learning community is an ideal setting in which they can take creative risks in their teaching and facilitation methods and receive constructive feedback to aid in their development as a facilitator or leader.

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

Various Community-Building Processes such as consensus decision-making, weekly community sharing circles, and daily health check-ins and "attunements" (ie 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).

Collaborative Learning Sessions: academic sessions integrating learning of the week (including assigned readings)

Peace and Social Justice in Israel/Palestine

Program: Israel: Peace, Social Justice and the Environment at Kibbutz Lotan

Course Number: Judaic 390L

Department: Judaic & Near Eastern Studies

UMass Faculty Sponsor: Shmuel Bolozky, Ph.D.

Living Routes Faculty: Daniel Burstyn, M.A.

Term: Fall 2012

Credits: 4

Course Description

Despite decades of intense work by individuals, non-profits, and governments, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has yet to be resolved. Through engaging with a wide spectrum of conceptual models, projects and activists – all striving towards peace and social justice – students in this course will gain insight and understanding of the past, the present, and possible futures in the Holy Land.

This course will encourage students to bridge the conceptual gap between identity based politics and ethnic nationalisms on the one hand and the values that drive peace and social justice activists on the other. We will

- (1) examine cultural narratives of the majority and minority populations in Israel and Palestine,
- (2) understand traditional and alternative approaches to the problem of living together, and
- (3) engage with people and projects working towards peace and social justice in Israel/Palestine.

Significant historical events will be addressed from the perspective that it is not facts that create conflict, but rather peoples' reactions to them. Students will be exposed to a number of different and often opposing narratives (e.g. Jewish vs. Arab, religious vs. secular, right wing vs. left wing, *The Jerusalem Post* vs. Al Jazeera) and be guided to move beyond dualistic thinking. What sides do we tend to take? Whom do we tend to marginalize? What happens when we allow ourselves to recreate another's experience within ourselves?

The course will explore dynamics within and between individuals, among groups, and between humans and nature. Students will meet individuals and organizations from diverse "camps" and learn how their goals and methods derive from their basic understandings of what constitutes peace and social justice. Is it primarily about ending violence or supporting equal rights? Is it about economic development, intercultural understanding, a state of consciousness, or something else altogether? How does the media's portrayal of various groups compare with meeting members of these groups in real life?

Students will also experience environmental and social justice issues first hand within marginalized Bedouin communities, Jewish towns, and industrial sites in the Yatir Forest and the Be'er Sheva region in the Negev desert and explore how Israeli militarism and the military occupation of Palestine have impacted the environment and various groups of people.

Course Objectives

- Learn how to become a participant observer within the diverse cultures and religious groups of Israel and Palestine
- Study and experience different models and tools of non-violent conflict resolution
- Gain an understanding of historical and current events in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict
- Engage with diverse Israeli and Palestinian communities
- Listen to voices currently marginalized in the international media
- Understand and experience environmental justice issues in the Negev desert

Learning Modalities

The faculty teaching this course use lectures, readings, discussions, guided meditations, site visits, small group work and student led exercises as key strategies to allow each student to develop mastery of course content.

Course Outline

This course consists of one, two-hour class session per week in addition to several seminars during the two semester trips (to Jerusalem and Beer Sheva in weeks 8 and 14). Each weekly session will include lecture and discussion. Students will be expected to prepare for each session by completing class readings and journal assignments. Additional readings will be assigned over and above those required for the lectures.

Week 1 – Introduction to Ecopsychology and Spiral Dynamics

- Practices: outdoor awareness meditation (Michael Cohen), pushing hands, self centering, introspective journaling
- An introduction to Ecopsychology – the connection between group dynamics, peace and social justice, and ecology
- Ken Wilber's matrix (inner-personal, outer-personal, inner-collective, outer-collective).
- Spiral Dynamics – a model for understanding individual and societal evolution
- Preconceived notions and assumptions about Israel and Palestine that may block our ability to make objective observations and have clear encounters with individuals and groups.

Week 2 – A Holy Land for Diverse Cultures

- Whose Story? Historical Narratives of the Middle East Conflicts (reading in Hanh)
- The Self in Jewish and Muslim thought – the social meaning of belonging
- Examination of Jewish and Muslim meditation practices (Students are encouraged to adopt and experiment with practices throughout)

Week 3 – The Response to Modernity

- Jewish responses to modernity - Religious Reform, Zionism, Socialism
- Islamic responses to modernity (reading in Firestone)
- History and cultural narratives and their impact on the present

Week 4 – Peace begins within (meditation, self restraint, Jewish and Islamic Holy Days)

- Introduction to Students’ Individual Process work – High Holidays self reflection checklist

Week 5 – High Holidays

- Individual Process work – High Holidays self reflection checklist

Week 6 – self and other, self and group

- Building the Sukkah – tents v. buildings – what is “shelter”?
- Group size or group consciousness? Diamond v. McIntosh

Week 8 - The impact of cultural differences on conflicts and their resolution

- Models of conflict resolution/transformation
- Jewish approaches to conflict
- Islamic approaches to conflict
- Jewish and Islamic sources on Holy war

Jerusalem Trip

- Meeting leading peace organizations and individuals (Eliyahu MacLean, Jerusalem Peacemakers)
- Media and conflict: meetings with international journalists if possible
- Humanizing the other: Beyond extremists – complexifying the images presented in the media
- Olive Harvest with Rabbis For Human Rights

Week 9 –Beyond Conflict – interaction, integration

- Open time to process trip
- Towards a holistic model of conflict resolution – integrating the various models
- Arava Institute model – focus on a common goal, the environment does not recognize borders

Week 10 – Hands on the land – whose practices work, whose practices fail?

- Eco-Zionism, Permaculture, etc
- From Mumford to Diamond: What makes cities work? What leads to breakdown?
- Peace Projects that succeed, Peace Projects that fail – seeking workable solutions

Week 11 - Israel’s international involvement in social justice – “Care” wash or honest

- Haiti earthquake, Israel Aid and tsunami and other disaster relief,
- Tevel B’Tzedek – social justice work in Nepal
- Creative movement and visual arts in Peace and Social Justice movement

Week 12 – Visions of cooperation

- Dead Sea Trip including vision quest
- The Dead Sea as a focus for cooperation (contacts through Arava Institute)

Week 13 – Marginalized communities

- Encounters with ultra orthodox Jewish community's social justice projects, the Ethiopian community, Darfur refugees
- Jewish ethics of service: Shlichut (mission) and Tikkun Olam (repairing the world).
- Muslim ethics of service.
- Christian ethics of service

Week 14 – Service Learning

Week 15 – (Empty for overflow)

Week 16 – Conclusion

- Final project presentations

Course Requirements

Course Documentation

1. Web logging

Students are expected to post two entries to the weblog per month – this is writing for public consumption – and guidelines will be discussed in the introductory class.

2. Journal entries

Students are expected to hand in journal entries to the instructor weekly – this is private, reflective writing. Some time will be dedicated to this in class each week. Reflective writing time will be preceded by guided meditation, providing writing prompts, sometimes leaving the assignment open ended.

3. Midterm Essay

A short, midterm essay will be due at the end of week 8. This essay should be a piece of reflective writing, about 3000 words in length, in which students consider the theoretical material covered in the first half of the semester, in relation to current events in the Israeli/Palestinian conflict.

4. Final Essay/Project

The final essay or project is intended to be a capstone requirement and a follow up from the Jerusalem/Al Quds visit and other travel experiences. Proposals (1-2 pages) for final projects should be

handed in no later than week 8. The final project will be preceded by a short presentation, which should summarize the main points in an informative and creative manner. Note that the written part of the project should be edited according to responses to the presentation. The paper could be written in an academic style, reflecting research and original thought regarding the topic. Students are encouraged to choose their own topic, within the range of the material studied, with a focus on practical application and implementation. In other words, papers should reflect possible directions for peace work, rather than be post-mortem dissections of things that didn't work. With approval from the instructor, final projects may include a creative component but must include a written component.

Active Participation

Students are expected to attend all classes, come to class prepared (As directed before class/work by the instructor for instance: with the right notebooks, writing implements, and books) and be actively engaged in course activities, discussions and projects. Certain sessions will be student-led participation will includes teaching such sessions. Students will be responsible for alerting the instructor before the start of class/work if there will be an anticipated absence.

Challenging Comfort Zones

We acknowledge that each student enters the course with his or her own worldview and comfort zone, and brings to the course his or her own personal directions for growth and learning. One of the goals of this course is to provide students with the secure framework from which to challenge themselves and to take risks which will enhance their personal and academic growth. Students will be individually assessed based on their willingness to engage themselves throughout the course, which includes their ability to get outside their comfort zones, see beyond their own worldview, and to interact with the course material in new and challenging ways.

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. 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.

Course Requirements percent of total course grade is as follows:

Active Participation.....	20%
Challenging Comfort Zones.....	15%
Final Essay/Project.....	25%
Midterm - Short Essay.....	10%
Journaling.....	20%
Weblog Entries.....	10%

Required Reading

In addition to the required books mentioned below, students will receive a reader in pdf or bound form with articles and selections from religious texts (eg. Koran, Tanakh, Mishnah, Midrash, etc).

Copies of each of the following books will be available at Lotan, however students are asked to buy a copy of Firestone, Hanh, and Wilber for pre-semester reading.

Baltzer, Anna. (2007) *Witness in Palestine: a Jewish American woman in the occupied territories*. Paradigm Publishers.

Dershowitz, A. (2004). *The Case for Israel*. Wiley.

Firestone, R. (2008). *An Introduction to Islam for Jews*. Jewish Publication Society of America.

Hanh, T. N. (2004). *Peace Begins Here: Palestinians and Israelis Listening to Each Other*. Parallax Press.

Nusseibeh, S. (2008). *Once Upon a Country: A Palestinian Life*. Picador.

Wilber, Ken. (2007) *A Brief History of Everything*. Shambhala.

Suggested Reading

Boyarin, D. (1997). *Unheroic Conduct: The Rise of Heterosexuality and the Invention of the Jewish Man* (1st ed.). University of California Press.

Burg, A. (2008). *The Holocaust Is Over; We Must Rise From its Ashes*. Palgrave Macmillan.

Kanner, A. D., Roszak, T., & Gomes, M. E. (1995). *Ecopsychology: Restoring the Earth, Healing the Mind* (1st ed.). Sierra Club Books.

Said, E. W. (1996). *Peace And Its Discontents: Essays on Palestine in the Middle East Peace Process* (1st ed.). Vintage.

Sternhell, Z. (1999). *The Founding Myths of Israel*. Princeton University Press.

Course Bibliography

Ali-Karamali, S. (2008). *The Muslim Next Door: The Qur'an, the Media, and That Veil Thing*. White Cloud Press.

Armstrong, K. (2001). *The Battle for God* (1st ed.). Ballantine Books.

- Avi-Yonah, M., & Peres, S. (2005). *A History Of Israel And The Holy Land* (Trade edition.). Continuum.
- Ben-Ami, S. (2007). *Scars of War, Wounds of Peace: The Israeli-Arab Tragedy*. Oxford University Press, USA.
- Borders, R. W. (2003). *Israel/Palestine: The Black Book* (1st ed.). Pluto Press.
- Boyarin, D. (1997). *Unheroic Conduct: The Rise of Heterosexuality and the Invention of the Jewish Man* (1st ed.). University of California Press.
- Bregman, A. (2002). *Israel's Wars: A History since 1947* (2nd ed.). Routledge.
- Brodeur, P. (2006). *Building the Interfaith Youth Movement: Beyond Dialogue to Action*. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc.
- Buber, M. (1999). *On Zion: The History of an Idea*. T. & T. Clark Publishers, Ltd.
- Burg, A. (2008). *The Holocaust Is Over; We Must Rise From its Ashes*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Butler, J. (2006). *Precarious Life: The Power of Mourning and Violence*. Verso.
- Chernin, K. (2004). *Seven Pillars of Jewish Denial: Shekinah, Wagner, and the Politics of the Small*. North Atlantic Books.
- Chomsky, N. (1999). *Fateful Triangle: The United States, Israel, and the Palestinians (Updated Edition)* (2nd ed.). South End Press.
- Chomsky, N. (2004). *Middle East Illusions: Including Peace in the Middle East? Reflections on Justice and Nationhood*. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc.
- Davis, A., & Patel, E. (2009). *Hearing the Call Across Traditions: Readings on Faith and Service*. Skylight Paths Publishing.
- Dershowitz, A. (2004). *The Case for Israel*. Wiley.
- Devine, G.P., Plant, E.A. & Blair, I.V. (2001) Classic and Contemporary Analyses of Racial Prejudice in Brown, R., & Gaertner, S. L. *Blackwell Handbook of Social Psychology* (p. 556). Wiley-Blackwell.
- Diamond, J. (2005). *Guns, Germs, and Steel: The Fates of Human Societies* (1st ed.). W.W. Norton & Co.
- Dorff, E. N. (2007). *The Way into Tikkun Olam: Repairing the World*. Jewish Lights Publishing.
- Fanon, F. (2008). *Black Skin, White Masks* (Revised.). Grove Press.
- Finkelstein, N. G. (2008). *Beyond Chutzpah: On the Misuse of Anti-Semitism and the Abuse of History* (2nd ed.). University of California Press.

- Freire, P., & Macedo, D. P. (1995). A Dialogue: Culture, Language, and Race. *Harvard Educational Review*, 65(3), 377-402.
- Grossman, D. (2002). *The Yellow Wind: With a New Afterword by the Author*. Picador.
- Halabi, R., & Reich, D. (2004). *Israeli and Palestinian Identities in Dialogue: The School for Peace Approach*. Rutgers University Press.
- Hanh, T. N. (1992). *Peace Is Every Step: The Path of Mindfulness in Everyday Life*. Bantam.
- Hanh, T. N. (2004). *Peace Begins Here: Palestinians and Israelis Listening to Each Other*. Parallax Press.
- Herzl, T. (2008). *A Jewish State: An Attempt at a Modern Solution of the Jewish Question*. BiblioBazaar.
- Joubert, K. A., & Alfred, R. (2007). *Beyond You and Me: Inspiration and Wisdom for Community Building*. Permanent Publications.
- Kanner, A. D., Roszak, T., & Gomes, M. E. (1995). *Ecopsychology: Restoring the Earth, Healing the Mind* (1st ed.). Sierra Club Books.
- Khalidi, R. (2007). *The Iron Cage: The Story of the Palestinian Struggle for Statehood* (Reprint.). Beacon Press.
- Klein, M. (2007). *A Possible Peace Between Israel and Palestine: An Insider's Account of the Geneva Initiative*. Columbia University Press.
- Laqueur, W., & Rubin, B. (2008). *The Israel-Arab Reader: A Documentary History of the Middle East Conflict: Seventh Revised and Updated E* (7th ed.). Penguin (Non-Classics).
- Lerner, M. (2003). *Healing Israel/Palestine: A Path to Peace and Reconciliation*. North Atlantic Books.
- Levine, P. A. (1997). *Waking the Tiger : Healing Trauma : The Innate Capacity to Transform Overwhelming Experiences*. North Atlantic Books.
- McIntosh, S. (2007). *Integral Consciousness and the Future of Evolution*. Continuum.
- Meir-Levi, D. (2007). *History Upside Down: The Roots of Palestinian Fascism and the Myth of Israeli Aggression*. Encounter Books.
- Memmi, A. (1991). *The Colonizer and the Colonized* (Expanded.). Beacon Press.
- Morris, B. (2001). *Righteous Victims: A History of the Zionist-Arab Conflict, 1881-2001*. Vintage.
- Morrison, D. (2003). *The Gush: Center of Modern Religious Zionism*. Gefen Books.

- Mumford, L. (1968). *The City in History: Its Origins, Its Transformations, and Its Prospects*. Harvest Books.
- Netanyahu, B., & Netanyahu, B. (2000). *A Durable Peace: Israel and Its Place Among the Nations*. Grand Central Publishing.
- Oz, A. (2005). *A Tale of Love and Darkness*. Harvest Books.
- Pappe, I. (2006). *A History of Modern Palestine: One Land, Two Peoples* (2nd ed.). Cambridge University Press.
- Patel, E. (2008). *Acts of Faith: The Story of an American Muslim, the Struggle for the Soul of a Generation* (Reprint.). Beacon Press.
- Patton, B. M., Ury, W. L., & Fisher, R. (1992). *Getting to Yes: Negotiating Agreement Without Giving In* (Second Edition.). Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.
- Philo, G., & Berry, M. (2004). *Bad News from Israel*. Pluto Press.
- Qutb, S. (2000). *Social Justice in Islam* (Revised.). Islamic Publications International.
- Ravitzky, A. (1996). *Messianism, Zionism, and Jewish Religious Radicalism* (1st ed.). University Of Chicago Press.
- Reinhart, T. (2004). *Israel/Palestine: How to End the War of 1948, 2nd ed.* (2nd ed.). Seven Stories Press.
- Rose, R. O. N., Kaiser, J. E. G., & Klein, M. (2007). *Righteous Indignation: A Jewish Call for Justice*. Jewish Lights Publishing.
- Rosenberg, M. B. (2003). *Nonviolent Communication: A Language of Life* (2nd ed.). Puddledancer Press.
- Rosenthal, D. (2005). *The Israelis: Ordinary People in an Extraordinary Land*. Free Press.
- Said, E. W. (1979). *Orientalism* (1st ed.). Vintage.
- Said, E. W. (1992). *The Question of Palestine*. Vintage.
- Schwarz, S. (2008). *Judaism and Justice: The Jewish Passion to Repair the World*. Jewish Lights Publishing.
- Segev, T. (2007). *1967: Israel, the War, and the Year that Transformed the Middle East* (1st ed.). Metropolitan Books.
- Shahak, I., & Mezvinsky, N. (2004). *Jewish Fundamentalism In Israel: New Introduction by Norton Mezvinsky*. Pluto Press.
- Shulman, D. (2007). *Dark Hope: Working for Peace in Israel and Palestine*. University Of Chicago

Press.

- Sidanius, J., & And Others. (1992). A Comparison of Symbolic Racism Theory and Social Dominance Theory as Explanations for Racial Policy Attitudes. *Journal of Social Psychology, 132*(3), 377-95.
- Silberman, N. A., & Finkelstein, I. (2002). *The Bible Unearthed: Archaeology's New Vision of Ancient Israel and the Origin of Its Sacred Texts*. Free Press.
- Tajfel, H. & Turner, J.C. (1986) The Social Identity Theory of Intergroup Behavior. In Worchel, S. *Psychology of Intergroup Relations* (2nd ed.). Burnham Inc Pub.
- Tippett, K. (2008). *Speaking of Faith: Why Religion Matters--and How to Talk About It*. Penguin (Non-Classics).
- Weiss, A. (2008). *Spiritual Activism: A Jewish Guide to Leadership and Repairing the World*. Jewish Lights Publishing.
- Wilber, K. (2001). *A Theory of Everything: An Integral Vision for Business, Politics, Science and Spirituality* (1st ed.). Shambhala
- Zertal, I., & Eldar, A. (2007). *Lords of the Land: The War for Israel's Settlements in the Occupied Territories, 1967-2007*. Nation Books.

Group Dynamics

Program: Israel: Peace, Justice and the Environment at Kibbutz Lotan

Course Number: Comm 352

Department: Communications

UMass Faculty Sponsor: Leda Cooks, Ph.D.

Living Routes Faculty: Mark Naveh, M.Sc.

Semester: Fall 2012

Credits: 4

Course Description

Participants in this course will create their own learning community to experience for themselves what it is like to design, live, work and learn as an intentional community. Participants will have the opportunity to practice skills such as group facilitation, empathic communication, conflict resolution and consensus-based decision-making. They will investigate the concept of intentional community as a framework for the expression of values and as a vehicle for social change. They will work in small groups on designing model communities from the social, economic and ecological perspective that are based on a worldview, value system and vision that they will define and clarify for themselves. Through their experience learning and living in community students will be encouraged to reflect on the role of the individual in community.

Through these overlapping experiences students will be 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 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.

The semester will be spent living in an intentional community, where students will get to see first hand what life in community is like. Kibbutz Lotan is an intentional cooperative community in southern Israel based on the principles of liberal, egalitarian Judaism, cooperative living, and striving for ecological sustainability. With Lotan as their base students are exposed to the challenges involved with the design, building and running of sustainable communities. Students will take day trips to other area kibbutzim in order to gain a deeper understanding of the kibbutz movement and learn how different communities organize their economic and decision-making structures. Students will also visit Jewish, Arab and Bedouin villages and cities throughout the country.

Course Objectives

- To recognize and understand the foundations of sustainable communities and to distinguish between unsustainable features and practices and their sustainable alternatives
- To gain an understanding of the Kibbutz movement in Israel and compare and contrast visions and day-to-day functioning of various communities, recognizing that different approaches are appropriate for different circumstances
- To create and engage in the Living Routes learning community, as well as the host community 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 and peace
- To strive to promote right relationships with oneself, others, and the earth

Learning Modalities

The course is built around four main themes: 1) Exploring self and relationships within a community context; 2) Building our unique Living Routes learning community; 3) Engaging with Kibbutz Lotan and other Israeli kibbutzim; and 4) Intentional Communities and Ecovillages -- Living & Learning Centers. These themes may be seen as widening concentric circles that are developed throughout the semester through theoretical and experiential sessions, personal reflection, and active engagement with Lotan and other communities in the surrounding region. Group processes will be investigated via group exercises in class. Weekly facilitated sharing circles with the whole group form an integral element of the course. Ongoing project work in small groups allow course participants to engage with the material in an active way, while simulating creating the foundations for a sustainable community of their own design.

Course Outline

This course consists of two, one-hour class sessions per week. One session will focus on theories relevant to Community Dynamics and the functioning of groups while the other will be dedicated to a practical exploration of those processes.

Week 1

- Opening circle: Introductions, dreams, expectations.
- Sharing our stories.
- Ground rules for building a safe community space.
- Concepts of listening: Active, compassionate, NVC
- History, vision and values of Lotan.
- Overview of key values of the Lotan worldview: equal worth, community, Gaia/creation, mission
- Communication skills, problem solving and leadership
- Group game session

Week 2

- The value of community: What is community? When have we felt community? Aspects of traditional organic community. Is community a human need?
- Community as ecology – relationships, networks, feedback. Collectivistic vs communitarian social structure. Community as a vehicle for social change: Intentional community, ecovillages.
- Community Design Studio (CDS) 1: “What values do I hold for community?” Shared values exercise, formation of community design groups
- Eco-cinema: The Last Battle for Degania

Week 3

- The Concept of Kibbutz Historical and socio-economic perspective on the kibbutz and the kibbutz movement. The values on which the idea of the kibbutz was based
- Community economic/ cooperative models 1:
- Visit to Kibbutz Yotvata (classic kibbutz model) and Kibbutz Samar (“anarchist” kibbutz model).
- Case study of Kibbutz Lotan 1: Worldview and values.
- Students develop questions and interview kibbutz members about worldview and values
- Group sharing circle and check-in
- CDS 2: Personal non-negotiables

Week 4

- Equal worth, I-Thou.

- What makes us human? Biological determinism or “the human imperative”? Equal worth as based on belief of human’s created in God’s image. Equal worth as basis for mutual respect and communication – I-Thou (Buber).
- CDS 3: Vision in community. What is vision in community and why is it important? Creation of common vision in small groups.

Week 5

- Building community.
- Stages in community development: pseudo-community through to true community. Creating community glue, instilling an atmosphere of trust and goodwill. Incorporating issues of the heart, balancing work and love
- Gifting circle

Week 6

- Direct democracy, majority rule, consensus process, consensus building
- Consensus decision making process in practice

Week 7

- Conflict resolution.
- Dealing with conflicts in community. Empathic listening, non-violent communication, mediation
- Case study of Kibbutz Lotan 2: Social structure.
- Students develop questions and interview kibbutz members about social structure and community glue
- CDS 4: Creating and maintaining our community glue

Week 8

- Trip to Jerusalem

Week 9

- Interdependence of Gaia/ Creation -- Reconnecting to Nature.
- The will to wonder as path to connecting ourselves to nature and the divine. Developing sensitivity and receptivity to Nature, learning to listen to Nature. How nature influences human interaction and relationships
- CDS 5: Social structure.
- Creating the social basis for community – decision-making, conflict resolution, social organization.
- Health and healing. Human beings as a holistic union of mind, body, soul and spirit. Group Watsu session

Week 10

- Creative spiritual expression
- Experiencing spiritual expression as part of community life-cycle events. Elevating the day-to-day to holiness through spiritual expression. Spiritual expression as part of community glue
- Celebrating life through art and creativity.

- Art as medium for personal growth, healing and transformation that can be used by people of all skill levels. Designing and performing community celebrations as an expression of group Art, developing a culture of celebration

Week 11

- The global economy, community economics and right livelihood
- What is right livelihood? Bringing human and ecological considerations into economic and lifestyle choices.
- Community economic/ cooperative models 2:
- Visit to Kibbutz Neot Smadar, focus on social enterprise and right livelihood.
- Case study of Kibbutz Lotan 3: Economic structure.
- Students develop questions and interview kibbutz members about economic structure and social enterprise
- CDS 6: Economic structure.
- Creating a business plan for the community.

Week 12

- Socially Engaged Spirituality
- Linking together spiritual transformation and social change.

Week 13

- Integrated Ecovillage Design
- Ecovillage design challenges
- The Kibbutz Movement, Intentional Community Movement & GEN – forces for social change?

Week 14

- Service Learning trip to Beer Sheva: urban community; peripheral communities

Week 15

- CDS 7: Ecological, physical design.
- Ecovillage challenges. How does the physical layout of the community reflect our vision and values? Tying it all together.

Week 16

- Work on community designs
- Presentations of community designs

Course Requirements

Active Participation

Students are expected to attend all classes and to come to class prepared, having completed assigned readings and assignments before hand.) Students will be expected to actively engage in all course activities, discussions and projects. Students will be responsible for alerting the instructor before the

start of class if there will be an anticipated absence.

Challenging Comfort Zones

We acknowledge that each student enters the course with his or her own worldview and comfort zone, and brings to the course his or her own personal directions for growth and learning. One of the goals of this course is to provide students with the secure framework from which to challenge themselves and to take risks which will enhance their personal and academic growth. Students will be individually assessed based on their willingness to engage themselves throughout the course, which includes their ability to get outside their comfort zones, see beyond their own worldview, and to interact with the course material in new and challenging ways.

Community Process Facilitation

As part of the practical sessions of this class, students will be required to facilitate a one hour group meeting session. The facilitation will be evaluated based on attention to process, creation of a safe space, leadership style and listening skills. The session can include a group exercise/ game and/or discussion, but not a frontal lecture (i.e. must be interactive).

Community models reports

Students will submit a report after each community visit reflecting on that community's values, visions, and practices in light of the material covered in this class.

Sustainable community design project

Students will be learning about how communities work throughout the semester. Small groups will be meeting to create a design for a workable, sustainable, ecological community and will present this design to the group at the end of the course. Designs will be evaluated based on how well the design addresses the various elements of community that will be learned during the course. Assessment will also be based on a written report of the process the group underwent.

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. 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.

Course requirements percent of total course grade is as follows:

Active Participation.....	15%
Challenging Comfort Zones.....	15%
Community Process Facilitation.....	20%
Community Models Reports.....	20%
Sustainable Community Design Project.....	30%

Required Readings

(2007). *Beyond You and Me: Inspiration and Wisdom for Community Building*. Hampshire: Permanent

Course Bibliography

Bang, J. M. (2005). *Ecovillages: A Practical Guide to Sustainable Communities*. Gabriola Island, BC: New Society Publishers.

Butler, J. (2006). *Precarious Life: The Power of Mourning and Violence*. New York: Verso.

Cameron, J. (2002). *The Artist's Way*. New York: Tarcher.

Capra, F. (1984). *The Turning Point: Science, Society, and the Rising Culture*. United States and Canada: Bantam.

Foundation, N. G. (1981). *More New Games*. San Francisco: Main Street Books.

(2004). *Israeli and Palestinian Identities in Dialogue: The School for Peace Approach*. New Jersey: Rutgers University Press.

(1996). *Uncommon Ground: Rethinking the Human Place in Nature*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company.

Dimbleby, J. (2001) *From Here to Sustainability*. London: Earthscan Publications

Freire, P. & Macedo, D. P. (1995). *A dialogue: Culture, language, and race*. In Harvard Educational Review, 65, 3.

Halabi, R. & Zak, M. (2006), *Palestinian-Jewish Youth Encounters at the School for Peace, The School for Peace Research Center, Israel*. [www. sfpeace.org](http://www.sfpeace.org)

Meadows, D. (2008) *Thinking in Systems: A Primer*. NYC: Chelsea Green Publishing.

Rosenberg, M. B. (2005). *Nonviolent Communication: A Language of Life*. California: PuddleDancer Press.

Worchel, S. (1985). *Psychology of Intergroup Relations (The Nelson-Hall series in psychology)*. Chicago: Burnham Inc Pub.

Permaculture Design

Program: Israel: Peace, Justice and the Environment at Kibbutz Lotan

Course Number: PSIS 398B

Department: Plant, Soil & Insect Sciences

UMass Faculty Sponsor: John Gerber, Ph.D.

LR Faculty: Leah Zigmond, M.S. and Mike Kaplin

Semester: Fall 2012

Credits: 4

Course Description

Permaculture is an ethical design method for creating human habitats that are sustainable, diverse, intensive, efficient, and small in scale. Permaculture systems are modeled on ecological systems in that they integrate community, ecology, food production and land use, focusing on the harmonious relationships between these different elements through the application of natural principles arrived at by carefully observing nature.

This course emphasizes the acquirement of practical tools and skills for permaculture design. Participants will learn in detail and put into practice the design and construction of small-scale organic food production systems, study the basics of soil science and organic gardening, and will apply these principles in designing integrated permaculture systems. In addition, participants will experience first hand permaculture ethics as applied on a broader scale within the context of the building of a sustainable community, including worldview, spiritual, social, economic as well as ecological perspectives.

The course takes place on Kibbutz Lotan, an intentional community and developing ecovillage in Israel's southern Arava desert. Social, cultural and spiritual events in the community are open to all, and participants are encouraged to become involved in these aspects of community life as part of a holistic, integrated experience. A strong emphasis is placed on an open and interactive learning environment in which participants can explore their own avenues of interest and contribute to the overall process.

Graduates of the course will receive a Permaculture Design Course Certificate according to the International Permaculture standards.

Course Objectives

- Participants will acquire the knowledge, skills and philosophy pertaining to the design and maintenance of sustainable human habitats, whether urban or rural
- Participants will acquire a variety of practical skills in small-scale organic food production that may be applied and utilized in any environment.

- Participants will develop an ability to design efficient, sustainable systems according to permaculture principles utilizing methods, techniques and processes that stress integrative and harmonious interrelationships between different elements
- Participants will gain an insight into the challenges and workings of a community taking steps towards sustainability from social, economic and ecological perspectives
- Participants will experience the spiritual and social aspects of community and gain skills in participating in a group-building process
- Participants will gain an understanding of an alternative holistic worldview, undergo a process of personal values clarification and be empowered to apply these insights to their own lives
- Participants will experience and get to know first-hand a unique desert ecosystem and gain knowledge in its geology, ecology and socio-economic fabric

Learning Modalities

The faculty teaching this course use lectures, discussions, site visits, small group work and hands on projects as key strategies to allow each student to develop mastery of course content.

Course Outline

Week 1

- Orientation to organic garden: how do seeds sprout, why use a nursery for starting seeds
- Compost I: making a compost pile
- Harvesting with the plants in mind
- Permaculture 1: the 3 ethics
- Field trip: Lotan Southern Nature Trail: acquiring a sense of place

Week 2

- The carbon cycle in nature
- Soil science basics
- Soil care and preparation in the garden
- Compost 2: the Carbon/Nitrogen ratio
- Permaculture 2: the 10 principles and farming with nature
- Planting in the garden: what do roots need?
- Field trip: Wadi Lotan—getting to know our surroundings

Week 3

- Permaculture 3: Design Techniques
- Crop selection in the garden: companion planting, botanical plant families
- Environmental Ethics
- Compost maintenance and troubleshooting
- Natural Farming Principles
- Vermiculture
- Field trip: the nighttime desert

Week 4

- Permaculture 4: Design techniques 2
- The Synergistic Garden and the Future of Food
- Forest gardening
- Caring for plants throughout the season—mulching, organic liquid fertilizers
- Field trip: Northern nature trail

Week 5

- Cutting and grafting: asexual reproduction in plants
- Field trip: Ketura experimental orchard
- Permaculture 5: starting a design project in pairs

Week 6

- Sexual reproduction in plants: seed saving
- Permaculture design in pairs
- Field trip: Uvda valley

Week 7

- Garden Design 1—small scale design scenarios
- Off-season gardening: when we "grow" the soil
- Presentation of Permaculture design pair projects and feedback

Week 8

- Trip to Jerusalem

Week 9

- Permaculture: client interview for design projects
- Urban gardening and container gardening
- Community economics, legal and financial issues
- Permaculture design—work on personal projects
- Field trip: Red Canyon and Timna Park

Week 10

- Permaculture design—starting personal projects
- Irrigation
- Gardening with the moon
- Permaculture Kitchen

Week 11

- Presentations of personal and group projects
- Bioregions

- The economic side of the environment: right livelihood
- Shifting the global economy

Week 12

- Garden work week—early morning harvests, weeding, transplanting, etc...
- Garden design practical: creating a group garden

Week 13

- This week is dedicated to preparations of the final service learning project

Week 14

- Final design project: Ethiopian Immigrant Community service learning project in Beer Sheva

Week 15

- Gardening in other climates
- Rainwater Harvesting

Week 16

- Course summary

Total classroom hours: 50

Total practical hours: 80

Total field trip hours: 20

Course Requirements

Active Participation

Students are expected to attend all classes and practical work sessions, come to class and work prepared (As directed before class/work by the instructor for instance: with the right notebooks, writing implements, and books for class or the proper clothes, shoes, water, and hat for work) and be actively engaged in course activities, discussions and projects. Students will be responsible for alerting the instructor before the start of class/work if there will be an anticipated absence.

Challenging Comfort Zones

We acknowledge that each student enters the course with his or her own worldview and comfort zone, and brings to the course his or her own personal directions for growth and learning. One of the goals of this course is to provide students with the secure framework from which to challenge themselves and to take risks which will enhance their personal and academic growth. Students will be individually assessed based on their willingness to engage themselves throughout the course, which includes their ability to get outside their comfort zones, see beyond their own worldview, and to interact with the course material in new and challenging ways.

Garden Notebooks and Designs

During their time in the organic garden students will be required to keep a garden notebook with the information gleaned during their observation exercises and classes. By the end of the course students

will be given an assignment in garden design and will be expected to use the what they have learned throughout the semester to design a small organic garden plot according to a specific scenario.

Quizzes

Two quizzes related to organic gardening, composting, and basic plant biology will be given during the semester; one in the middle of the semester and one at the end.

Permaculture Design Group Project

The instructor will randomly assign the class into small groups. A “design brief” will be given to the students, which will specifically state the terms of the project and what will need to be included in the finished product. During the weeks that the students are working on this project there will be weekly meetings with the instructors to discuss the groups’ progress. Students will be expected to actively participate in these discussions: to come prepared with specific questions about the project, and to demonstrate progress on the project over the entire period of time allotted (in other words—these meetings are partly to prevent you from doing the entire project the night before it is due). The final assessment will be based on the group’s ability to demonstrate knowledge acquired and to successfully apply the permaculture ideas learned during the course such as the ethics of Permaculture, the Permaculture principles, and specific design techniques, all of which will be covered in the course. The designs must be written up in a document with accompanying maps and drawn plans for the project. For each project approximately 2-3 pages of written explanation will be expected and at least 3 drawings and maps. Projects will be presented to the learning community during a presentation session and will also be turned into the head faculty for this course. For the group project the students will also be graded on how well the group worked together, whether or not they managed to share the burden of the work, and the quality and clarity of their final presentation.

Permaculture Design Individual Project

Students will be asked to create a permaculture site design of their own. Many of the terms of this project are similar to the group project: again, a “design brief” will be given to each student, specifically stating the terms of the project and what will need to be included in the finished product. During the weeks that the students are working on their individual projects there will be weekly meetings with the instructors to discuss their progress. Students will be expected to actively participate in these discussions: to come prepared with specific questions about the project, and to demonstrate progress on the project over the entire period of time allotted (in other words, again, these meetings are partly to prevent you from doing the entire project the night before it is due). The final assessment will be based on the students’ ability to demonstrate knowledge acquired and to successfully apply the permaculture ideas learned during the course such as the ethics of Permaculture, the Permaculture principles, and specific design techniques, all of which will be covered in the course. The designs must be written up in a document with accompanying maps and drawn plans for the project. For each project approximately 2-3 pages of written explanation will be expected and at least 3 drawings and maps. Projects will be presented to the learning community during a presentation session towards the end of the course and written portions together with the drawings and maps will also be turned into the head faculty for this course. Students will also be graded on the quality and clarity of their final presentations.

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. 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.

Course Requirements percent of total course grade is as follows:

Active Participation.....	20%
Challenging Comfort Zones.....	15%
Permaculture Design Project (done in pairs).....	20%
Permaculture Design Project (personal).....	25%
Plant biology and organic gardening quizzes.....	10%
Garden scenario design and garden notebook.....	10%

Required Reading

Students will be provided with a reader made up of articles for this course. Weekly readings will be assigned from books available in the Lotan library, including:

Course Bibliography

Bell, G. (2008). *The Permaculture Garden*. NYC: Chelsea Green Publishing.

Bell, G. (2005). *The Permaculture Way: Practical Steps To Create A Self-Sustaining World (Practical Steps)*. Hampshire: Permanent Publications.

Bird, C., & Tompkins, P. (1998). *Secrets of the Soil : New Solutions for Restoring Our Planet*. Anchorage: Earthpulse Press.

Bird, C., & Tompkins, P. (1989). *The Secret Life of Plants*. Brattleboro: Harper Paperbacks.

Denckla, T. (1994). *The Organic Gardener's Home Reference: A Plant-By-Plant Guide to Growing Fresh*. North Adams: Storey Books.

Ellis, F. M., & Bradley, B. W. (1998). *Rodale's All-New Encyclopedia of Organic Gardening: The Indispensable Resource for Every Gardener*. Emmaus, Pennsylvania: Rodale Press.

Fukuoka, M. (1985). *The One-Straw Revolution*. United States and Canada: Bantam.

Guerra, M. (2005). *The Edible Container Garden: Fresh Food from Tiny Spaces*. London: Gaia Books Ltd.

Kourik, R. (2005). *Designing And Maintaining Your Edible Landscape Naturally*. Hampshire: Permanent Publications.

Mollison, B., & Slay, R. M. (1997). *PERMACULTURE: A Designers' Manual*. Kfar Sava: Tagari Publications.

Mollison, B. (1997). *Introduction to Permaculture*. Kfar Sava: Tagari Publications.

Watkins, D. (1993). *Urban Permaculture: A Practical Handbook for Sustainable Living*. Dallas: Hyden House (U K).

(2003). *The Findhorn Garden: Pioneering a New Vision of Humanity and Nature in Cooperation (Findhorn Community)*. Forres: Findhorn Press.

Sustainable Design and Construction

Program: Israel: Peace, Justice and the Environment at Kibbutz Lotan

Course Number: RP 596A

Department: Regional Planning

UMass Faculty Sponsor: Elisabeth Hamin, Ph.D.

LR Faculty: Alex Cicelsky, M.S. and Mike Kaplin

Semester: Fall 2012

Credits: 4

Course Description

This is a practically oriented course that provides skills and techniques for ecological design and construction. The course is taught through both theoretical lessons in the classroom and hands-on experience in various building projects. A variety of methods and materials are explored, including adobe bricks, construction using recycled materials, straw bales and geodesic domes. An emphasis is placed on energy efficiency, both in terms of embodied energy of materials and their capacity for insulation, the concept of ecological footprint, environmental cost, and planning that takes into account environmental factors such as the climatic and physical conditions of a given site. Basic structural engineering concepts are explored. Sustainability values as opposed to conventional values in design and construction are examined, and ways to elicit the necessary paradigm shift when dealing with normative architecture and engineering experts are discussed. In addition, appropriate technologies are investigated such as solar ovens, composting toilets and grey water systems.

The course also explores the concept of ecological design when applied to the community as a whole. Taking place on Kibbutz Lotan, an intentional community and developing ecovillage in Israel's southern Arava desert, the course examines the challenges involved in building sustainable community on the social, spiritual and economic level as well as the ecological.

The final weeks of the course are devoted to a group building project that ties together the methods and techniques that have been investigated into a hands-on learning experience that takes the students through the various stages of the construction process from beginning to end.

Course Objectives

- Participants will acquire the knowledge and skills pertaining to design and construction utilizing sustainable building methods and technologies.
- Participants will be able to analyze the specific environmental conditions of a particular site and plan construction accordingly.
- Participants will understand concepts of ecological footprint and embodied energy and be able to apply them to a design process.
- Participants will gain knowledge of basic structural engineering concepts and their application in sustainable building.

- Participants will acquire the vocabulary needed to communicate sustainability values to conventional architecture and engineering experts.
- Participants will gain practical knowledge and experience in the application of appropriate technologies as aids to achieving sustainability.
- Participants will gain insights into the challenges and processes involved in building sustainable communities.

Learning Modalities

The faculty teaching this course use lectures, discussions, and site visits, small group work and hands on projects as key strategies to allow each student to develop mastery of course content.

Course Outline

Week 1

- Orientation to the Center for Creative Ecology—design, master plan, zoning permits
- Introduction to composting toilets
- Making adobe mud bricks

Week 2

- The concept of kibbutz
- Restoring nature: Orientation to the bird reserve
- Carbon footprinting and its relationship to design

Week 3

- Making a mud brick oven
- Solar ovens theory
- Solar ovens practical

Week 4

- How buildings learn: Ecological Design 1
- Building community: Kibbutz dreams and challenges

Week 5

- Ecological design 2—passive solar considerations
- Earthships
- Introduction to practical building techniques
- Building with recycled materials and earth
- Testing soil suitability for building

Week 6

- Straw bale construction theory
- Ecological design 3—green design overview and structures
- Wadi El Na'am straw bale clinic project

- Systems of site analysis (BREDIM)

Week 7

- Group building project
- Geodesic domes theory
- Grey water systems
- Composting toilets
- Geodesic domes practical

Week 8

- Jerusalem trip week

Week 9

- Continuation of Group building project
- Straw bale construction practical

Week 10

- Continuation of Group building project
- Final touches on group building project
- A-frames and water collection
- Field trip: Neot Smadar

Week 11

- Finishing touches on Group building project
- Integrated ecovillage design

Week 12

- Sculptural mud and interior design with earth

Week 13

- Individual building projects

Week 14

- Project week—Ethiopian Immigrant community in Beer Sheva

Week 15

- Continuation of individual building projects

Week 16

- Summarizing what we have learned, initiating steps for the future

Total classroom hours: 40

Total practical hours: 104

Total field trip hours: 6

Course Requirements

Active Participation

Students are expected to attend all classes and practical work sessions, to come to class and work prepared (As directed before class/work by the instructor for instance: with the right notebooks, writing implements, and books for class or the proper clothes, shoes, water, and hat for work) and be actively engaged in course activities, discussions and projects. Students will be responsible for alerting the instructor before the start of class/work if there will be an anticipated absence. In this course participation takes on an added importance since so many of the lessons involve practical work. Part of the participation grade will reflect the students' ability to demonstrate knowledge gained during the course during group projects

Challenging Comfort Zones

We acknowledge that each student enters the course with his or her own worldview and comfort zone, and brings to the course his or her own personal directions for growth and learning. One of the goals of this course is to provide students with the secure framework from which to challenge themselves and to take risks which will enhance their personal and academic growth. Students will be individually assessed based on their willingness to engage themselves throughout the course, which includes their ability to get outside their comfort zones, see beyond their own worldview, and to interact with the course material in new and challenging ways.

Natural Building Exam

A written test asking the students about structure, building principles and soil suitability for building purposes with earth will be given in the last third of the semester.

Ecological Design "Toolkit/Recipe Booklet"

Each student will compile a ecological design toolkit / recipe booklet that includes techniques and technologies that can be utilized for developing sustainable, low energy use and healthy living environments. The booklet combines information from formal and informal lessons as well as independent research by topic such as passive heating systems waste recycling, water collection and storage sorted according to environmental, social and economic parameters. This will be a take home test given in week 10 of the course. Students will then use the booklet as a manual/resource for the creation of their final project in the Permaculture course.

Carbon Assessment Project

Students will be required to calculate their carbon footprint during the semester and compare this with their footprint "at home". This will include monitoring all aspects of their lifestyle that include direct or indirect carbon emissions. The students will quantify and qualify these emissions. As an exercise, the students will determine strategies to replace, reduce and offset these emissions based on a personal acceptable emissions statement. In addition, they will prepare an educational community action event on the subject of reducing atmospheric carbon emissions. The assignment includes pre-semester work and data collection throughout the program.

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. 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.

Participants will furthermore be evaluated according to a demonstrated understanding of the methods, techniques and concepts taught throughout the course as expressed in the assignments listed above.

Course Requirements percent of total course grade is as follows:

Active Participation.....	20%
Challenging Comfort Zones.....	15%
Natural Building Exam.....	20%
Ecological Design Recipe Book.....	20%
Carbon Assessment Project.....	25%

Course Bibliography

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Assessment Rubric

Assessment Descriptors	Unsatisfactory (non-transferable grade)	Satisfactory with Concerns (C- to C+)	Good (B- to B+)	Very Good (A-)	Excellent (A)
<p>Course Assignments</p> <p>Learning journal, papers, projects, presentations, weblogs etc.</p>	<p>Course assignment was either not completed or unacceptable with regard to content, organization, analysis and execution. Student showed little understanding of course content in the work they submitted and put little to no effort into the process. Assignment did not demonstrate an understanding of the relationships between concepts, ideas and processes.</p>	<p>Course assignment was completed adequately with respect to content, organization, analysis and execution. Student put a satisfactory effort into the process. Work shows a basic level of understanding of course ideas, concepts and relationships. Some difficulty seeing the relationships between concepts, ideas and processes.</p>	<p>Course assignment was well done in terms of content, organization, synthesis and execution. Student clearly put an effort into documentation and communicated a solid understanding of course ideas, concepts and relationships in their work. Assignment demonstrated an understanding of the relationships between concepts, ideas and processes.</p>	<p>Course assignment was completed successfully in a particularly clear, well-organized and well-executed manner. Content of documentation was original & creative in their exploration and synthesis of topics and content and showed a strong understanding of course ideas, concepts and relationships. Assignment demonstrated a clear understanding of the relationships between concepts, ideas and processes.</p>	<p>Course assignment was exceptional in terms of organization and execution. Student's work was original & creative in their approach to the topic(s) explored. Student challenged themselves to improve and deepen the quality of their work by elicited feedback. Assignment demonstrated an exceptional understanding of the relationships between concepts, ideas and processes. Student's work could be used as a model for other /future students.</p>
<p>Active Participation and Leadership</p>	<p>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 chose not to take on a leadership role during the course.</p>	<p>Student was present at experiences and appeared to be attending to what took place, but did not actively participate and infrequently asked questions or engaged in discussion. Student rarely took on a leadership role during the course.</p>	<p>Student was present at experiences and raised questions and/or positively contributed to discussions, activities, site visits and other course related events. Their participation was appropriate and helpful to the learning of others. Student occasionally took on a leadership role.</p>	<p>Student actively participated during all experiences and made useful contributions that 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. Student took on an active leadership role on a regular basis.</p>	<p>Student raised points that were original, and engaged others in dialogue that broke new ground. Student gave evidence of considering the learning needs of others in addition to their own learning process. The student was strongly involved with leadership and facilitation and often created space for others to participate.</p>
<p>Risk Taking/ Challenging Your Comfort Zones</p>	<p>Student chose not to take risks with academic and personal growth in the course in almost all instances. Student showed little to no interest in challenging or pushing their comfort zones.</p>	<p>Student challenged himself or herself infrequently over the course of the semester both academically and personally in the course. Although at times student showed interest in taking risks with their learning, they chose to remain within their comfortable zones most of the time.</p>	<p>Student challenged himself or herself periodically over the course of the semester both academically and personally in the course. Student demonstrated a desire to engage course material and get outside their comfort zone.</p>	<p>Student has consistently challenged themselves, through a variety of methods, both academically and personally in this course. They showed openness to new academic ideas and ways of thinking & being and began to actualize their learning during the course of the semester. They consistently pushed their comfort zones.</p>	<p>Student has consistently challenged him or herself in this course, and as a result, has grown both academically and personally and has encouraged others to do so as well. Their openness to challenge and feedback supported new growth for themselves and the learning community as a whole.</p>