



SCOTLAND:
Human Challenge of Sustainability
at
Findhorn College

SPRING TERM 2010
February 13 – May 22, 2010

ACADEMIC HANDBOOK



UMASS
AMHERST

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Welcome!

Welcome to the Human Challenge of Sustainability – the Findhorn Community Semester. Thank you for saying “Yes!” to the adventure of this program and for consciously choosing to be a part of the creation of a sustainable future!

This Academic Handbook follows on from the Student Handbook and this will offer you specific information about the **academic** journey you are embarking on in this semester.

It serves the purpose of informing you about:

- The Findhorn Foundation Colleges’ Educational Charter, educational pedagogy and philosophy,
- Curriculum,
- Assessment, and
- Features of the program

History of the Findhorn Foundation College

Located in the north of Scotland, the Findhorn Foundation College is at the heart of one of the largest and best-known spiritual communities and ecovillages in the world. From its beginnings 40 years ago the Foundation has gained an international reputation for the excellence of its education programs in spiritual and personal development, the arts and sustainable living.

The Foundation is a Non-Governmental Organization associated with the UN Department of Public Information, and the Ecovillage Project received Best Practice designation from the UN Centre for Human Settlements in 1998.

For many years, it has held a vision of expanding its work into the fields of accredited further and higher education, vocational training and professional development. This vision finally became a reality in 2001, with the establishment of Findhorn Foundation College.

The College is an independent non-profit, charitable company owned by the Foundation – which is itself a charitable trust. The College has its own Board of Directors, appointed by the Foundation, and a small core management staff. Most of its courses currently are run by expert facilitators from the Community under short-term contracts. The College also is developing collaborative relationships with academics and other educators outside the Community.

Findhorn Foundation College, in partnership with Living Routes, is pleased to offer a program that allows students to pursue academic and holistic life-changing studies.

Findhorn Foundation College Educational Charter

Education for Inner Growth and Outer Action

Findhorn Foundation College's role is to develop holistic accredited courses in further and higher education, vocational training and professional development that draw upon the 43 year experience of the Findhorn Community in all aspects of sustainable community living, the arts, and education for personal and spiritual development.

Findhorn Foundation College is dedicated to the full development of each individual, expressed through service to others and the planet.

We are committed to creating a learning environment that stimulates balanced development of mind, body, emotions, spirit, and relationships.

We aim to integrate experiential learning with mainstream academic education to create a holistic educational approach.

Educational institutions are instrumental in developing and cultivating an environment supportive of self-realization and ecological awareness. Many educators have argued that our present educational system and models do not adequately provide a supportive environment for students to embody sustainable lifestyles. Nevertheless, many educational institutions continue to shape humans into one-dimensional beings as consumers and producers, thereby repressing other important dimensions that inform our humanness. It will be increasingly important that more and more educational institutions help create conditions which deepen our understanding and embodiment of our humanness in a more-than-human world.

It is the vision of Findhorn Foundation College to contribute to the emergence of a new educational paradigm, which can deepen the process towards sustainable lifestyles and bring forth a self-realization and ecological ethic. As an essential step towards the creation of integral educational models, Findhorn Foundation College has developed an educational philosophy to align staff, faculty, and students within a comprehensive educational matrix. What follows is a summary of the premises and pedagogy of Findhorn Foundation College' educational philosophy.

We endorse the values and principles of the Earth Charter, which reflect our own inspiration and vision.

All we need to create a better future is for ordinary people to lead ordinary lives in extraordinary ways.

The Earth Charter*

We stand at a critical moment in Earth's history, a time when humanity must choose its future. As the world becomes increasingly interdependent and fragile, the future at once holds great peril and great promise. To move forward we must recognize that in the midst of a magnificent diversity of cultures and life forms we are one human family and one Earth community with a common destiny. We must join together to bring forth a sustainable global society founded on respect for nature, universal human rights, economic justice, and a culture of peace. Towards this end, it is imperative that we, the peoples of Earth, declare our responsibility to one another, to the greater community of life, and to future generations.

We urgently need a shared vision of basic values to provide an ethical foundation for the emerging world community.

Let ours be a time remembered for the awakening of a new reverence for life, the firm resolve to achieve sustainability, the quickening of the struggle for justice and peace, and the joyful celebration of life.

** Under the leadership of Maurice Strong and Mikhael Gorbachev, The Earth Charter was developed by the Earth Charter Commission between 1997 and 2000 “to establish a sound ethical foundation for the emerging global society and to help build a sustainable world based on respect for nature, universal human rights, economic justice, and a culture of peace”.*

Course Syllabi

Applied Sustainability: Eco-village Living at Findhorn

Program: Scotland: The Human Challenge of Sustainability, Findhorn Community Semester

Department: Landscape, Architecture and Regional Planning

Course Number: LARP 592B – Applied Sustainable Ecovillage Living

UMass Faculty Sponsor: Elisabeth Hamin

Lead Faculty: Jonathan Dawson (On Sabbatical Spring 2010)

Guest Faculty: Alex Walker, Michael Sharpe, Christopher Raymont, Pam and Nick Rodway, Galen Fulford, David Hoyle

Term: Spring

Credits: 4

Course Description

In this course students examine core theoretical and practical aspects of sustainable community living, observing and participating in the interplay of ecological, economic, social and cultural/spiritual dimensions of sustainability. Framed within an initial examination of the systemic nature of threats to the global ecological and social system, students' participation in the life of the Findhorn Community provides a tangible context for a holistic evaluation of the requirements for sustainability and the successes and failures of the specific approaches and sustainable practices Findhorn applies in its unique and fragile coastal ecosystem.

As we learn about the environmental, social, and economic issues regarding sustainability at Findhorn and in specific selected environs elsewhere in Scotland, 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 particular international ecovillage community? 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?

Course Objectives

- To gain a greater understanding of the systemic nature of the threats to the planet's well-being and the social, ecological, economic, and cultural consequences of current lifestyle and community development practices
- To explore the core nature of our species as one strand in the web of life, examining the relationship of humans with the natural world and with the other species that inhabit it, as well as with other generations
- To explore humanity's relationship with nature through systems of community-building, land, farming, shelter, energy, clothing, transport, waste management and so on

- To gain exposure to a range of the alternative socio-cultural and economic approaches developed inside and outside eco-villages to enable humans to live in more sustainable and meaningful ways, drawing particularly on the experience of the individuals and institutions of the Findhorn Community and the Isle of Erraid.
- To develop both a theoretical and practical understanding of ecological indicators, and more specifically ‘ecological footprint analysis’ – a metric helping individuals and organizations gauge the ecological impact of activities and identify ways to reduce this impact
- To be empowered to return home to translate the knowledge acquired into practical and achievable plans of action

Course Expectations

- Demonstration of an evolving understanding and integration of systems thinking and sustainable design principles
- Completion of one significant book and other appropriate and/or assigned readings followed by reflection papers.
- Collaborative research visioning paper combining an appropriate level of theory and practice on one of the sustainability-related themes to emerge during the course
- Participation in various field visits, including the small-scale sustainable farming community on the Isle of Erraid, Findhorn’s community supported agriculture farm sites, and the Living Machine biological wastewater processing facility.
- Active participation in course discussion

Proposed Sessions

- Introduction to the programme and to the ecovillage & ecological footprinting.
- Introduction to systems thinking and sustainable ‘permaculture’ design principles; the Global Ecovillage Network. (2 sessions)
- Waste
- Ecological housing
- Energy
- Tutorials on research papers
- Food & farming (2 sessions)
- Global economy
- Community-level economics
- Taking it all back home: tools for transferring new learnings to our home places
- Completion

Assessment

Assessment Summary

Reflection Papers 30%

Research Paper 30%

Participation in Class 30%
Living Education & Service (LES) Department 10%

Assessments and Assessment Criteria:

Reflection Papers 30%

Sessions on sustainability in each of the different sectors will be followed by Reflection Papers. The reflection/reaction papers are opportunities for the students to explore their beliefs and reactions regarding the material we will have explored together on each of the specific sectors covered: energy, waste, economics and livelihoods, and so on. They will allow the students to apply to each of these sectors the concepts of systems thinking and sustainable design that we will trace throughout the semester. Students will be encouraged to describe ways in which their thinking on the subjects in question have changed and what new questions have arisen within them.

Topics

- Ecological footprinting, sustainable design principles and ecovillages
- Food and farming
- Waste management
- Community economics
- Ecological design, ecovillages and Transition Towns
- Energy
- Global economics
- Ecological building

Assessment Criteria

Each paper should be between 500 and 1,000 words in length and will be graded on the basis of thoughtful questioning of new insights and learnings emerging from class sessions. Students will be encouraged in these papers to explore their evolving understanding and integration of systems thinking and sustainable design principles, not a recitation of learned facts. No formal references are required.

Research Paper 30%

This paper will be the result of research work undertaken during the course of the semester. It provides the students with the opportunity to dive more deeply into one of the subjects covered during the course of the semester. It also enables the students to create stronger bonds with community members who may be working on projects of relevance to the research topic chosen.

Assessment criteria

This will be a formal research paper of no less than 3,500 words in length and must be conventionally referenced. Students will generally be encouraged to choose subjects that enable them to both deepen their conceptual understanding of sustainability design principles and explore how these apply to specific contexts. Grades will be awarded on the depth and

coherence of conceptual understanding demonstrated and on the rigour and intelligence with which this is applied to the specific contexts chosen.

Participation in Course 30%

Assessment Criteria

Willingness to engage with materials presented

Completion of the required reading (Kinsale Energy Descent Plan) and other assigned readings, articles, chapters

Participation in all field visits

Living Education & Service (LES) Department - 10%

For 10 weeks of the semester, students will spend two afternoons per week working in one of the Findhorn Foundation Living Education & Service (LES) departments. The specific work & departments will vary with the students & the semesters, depending on what is available in the community. The aim is to integrate academics into community life, providing students the opportunity to learn through hands-on engagement with and active reflection upon the day-to-day operations of an ecovillage community.

Assessment will be based on participation and a writing assignment (1000-1500 words) consisting of three elements: 1) a descriptive and reflective account of your time in the LES department; 2) an assessment of the strengths and challenges of the department in relation to key concepts and themes from each of the following three courses – Worldviews & Consciousness, Group Dynamics, & Ecological Design; and 3) a set of concrete recommendations for the department, again in light of your learning in the three courses.

Assessment will be based on:

- Active participation and initiative-taking within the LES department
- Embodiment and integration of learning through action
- Use of key concepts of the course to illuminate reflections and analysis
- Quality of documentation
- Originality and creativity of approach to the assignment
- Risk taking and openness to challenge and new growth

Faculty

Lead Faculty: Jonathan Dawson BA (Hons) Politics and French, City of London Polytechnic, MA International Relations, University of Kent, Canterbury, M Phil, Economics, Brunel University. On sabbatical Spring Semester 2010.

Jonathan Dawson is a sustainability educator and activist. He has spent much of the last 20 years involved in development work in Africa and South Asia, as a researcher, author, project

manager and consultant, working primarily in the field of small enterprise and community economic development. Currently, Jonathan lives at the Findhorn Community, where he teaches on several programmes and courses. He is President of the Global Ecovillage Network (GEN-Europe), in which he is heavily involved in writing, representational and networking activities.

Guest Faculty

Alex Walker was educated at the universities of Leeds and Glasgow. He is a management consultant to a wide range of organisations working in the field of sustainability, and is chair of Ekopia Ltd, a successful development trust.

Michael Sharpe has a B.Sc (Hons) in Physical Geography and is a Bachelor of Journalism. He is currently studying for an M.Sc Architecture: Advanced Energy and Environmental Studies at the Centre for Alternative Technology, and University of East London.

Michael has worked for eight years for Build One Ltd., an eco-building company based at the Findhorn ecovillage. During that time he has helped build several dozen houses and design three. He has also been studying the advanced energy and environmental aspects of architecture, particularly passive solar design and renewable district heating systems. Other interests include geology, paleontology, archeology, art, photography, music, and history. In a previous life he was a journalist and scientific editor.

Galen Fulford is a founding partner in The Ecovillage Institute (EVI), an ecological design, engineering and training organization based in Findhorn, Scotland. EVI designs and delivers village-scale sustainability projects, and on-site trainings in the two-thirds world, Europe and the US, with an emphasis on water recycling and the shared stewardship of common natural resources.

Mr. Fulford is also the founder of The One Water Network in Bolivia that implements a whole systems approach to the problems of water scarcity, contamination and land degradation. The cornerstones of this work are community collaboration, water recycling, reforestation and organic agriculture. This work strongly supports many of the international objectives laid out in the United Nations Agenda 21 principles and the Millennium Development Goals.

Christopher Raymont was awarded a first class honours degree in Environmental Studies at London University's Wye College in 1970. Since then he has devoted his life to the practice of sustainable food production and consumer education. He developed a pioneering organic dairy farm in England and sat on the organic standards committee for UK organic livestock production. Since 1990 he has been part of the Findhorn Foundation directing organic vegetable production, founding a highly successful "Community Supported Agriculture" project in the area and teaching about food and farming inside and outside the community.

Pam & Nick Rodway have been involved in organic agriculture for over 30 years, both as farmers and activists. Pam has a B.A. (Hons.) and works for the Soil Association, running the school meals campaign, 'Food For Life'. She is also on the board of Slow Food UK.

Required reading

Pre-course Reading: TBA

Partial Bibliography

- Capra F. (2002) *The Hidden Connections: A Science for Sustainable Living* Harper Collins
- Dawson J. (2006) *Ecovillages: New Frontiers for Sustainability* Green Books Devon, UK
- Hawken, P., Lovins, A., & Lovins, L.H. (1995) *Natural Capitalism*. Little Brown Co. New York, USA
- Homer-Dixon T. (2006) *The Upside of Down: Catastrophe, Creativity and the Renewal of Civilisation*, Souvenir Press
- Jackson H. and K. Svensson (2003), *Ecovillage Living: Restoring the Earth and Her People* Green Books, Devon, UK
- McKibben B. *Deep Economy: The Wealth of Communities and the Durable Future*, ISBN: 0805076263, 2007
- Mander, J., & Goldsmith, E. (Eds.) (1996) *The Case Against the Global Economy* Sierra Club Books San Francisco, USA
- Meyer A. (2000) *Contraction and Convergence* Green Books, Devon, UK
- Orr, D.W. (2004) *Earth in Mind: On Education, Environment and the Human Prospect* Island Press, Washington DC, USA
- Shuman M. (2000) *Going Local: Creating Self-reliant Communities in a Global Age*, Routledge New York, USA
- Todd, N.J., & Todd, J. (1994) *From Eco-cities to Living Machines: Principles of Ecological Design* North Atlantic Books Berkeley, CA, USA
- Wachernagel, M., & Rees, W. (1996) *Our Ecological Footprint: Reducing Human Impact on the Earth* New Society Publishers Gabriola Island, BC, Canada
- Weisman, A. (1998) *Gaviotas: A Village to Reinvent the World* Chelsea Green Publishing White River Junction, VT, USA

Exploring Sustainable Living Through Creative Expression

Program: Scotland: The Human Challenge of Sustainability Findhorn Community Semester

Department: Service Learning

Course Number: Honors 397L, Exploring Self and Community through the Arts

UMass Faculty Sponsor: John Gerber

Lead Faculty: Lisa Shaw MFA

Guest Faculty: Deborah Jay-Lewin, Lesley Quilty, Margot Henderson

Term: Spring

Credits: 4

Course Description

Creative Expression through the arts is one of the most profound ways of understanding and expressing the human condition, while exploring the arena of sustainable living. Using Creative Expression as a vehicle enables a unique opportunity to learn about the environment and ourselves in a non-verbal, non-linear way. In addition, 'art' as a medium offers an oblique way to engage with, process and integrate the intensity of experience learning in Community offers, along with all the material actually being learnt.

This course will explore artistic creativity as a means of self-awareness and self-expression, particularly in relation to the individual and her/his interaction within community and the local and larger cultures. When art is appreciated and furthered in our personal and community lives, all gain from it. We will consider art's role as an integral part of a healthy and sustainable culture. Community life itself can be seen as a multifaceted work of art: creative in the moment, beautiful, precious, nourishing, and challenging.

Creative expression through the arts brings attitudes and values into the light and opens new vistas. We have often come to believe that we are either born to be artists or should leave it alone. But creative artistic expression has a vital function for the individual, as well as for the world. As adults, we can give ourselves permission to appreciate our unique ability to be playful through art, and to feel life in its myriad forms and ever-changing interactions. We see art as an interdisciplinary practice that can both be healing and foster social engagement.

Employing a variety of media – including creative writing, music, drawing and painting, sculpture, storytelling, drama, and dance – students will learn ways to transcend blocks to creative expression and performance, and explore their own individual voice and style. In addition, immersion and participation in the lively performing arts events and celebrations of the Findhorn Community will provide a rich setting for delving into the pivotal role of the arts in sustainable communities, as well as ample formal and informal opportunities to explore public performance and presentation of creative work.

The particular setting of the Findhorn Community, an international centre for education, offers cross-cultural perspectives and an exposure to regard art within diverse cultural and social contexts, each of which offer key attributes of a quest for social sustainability.

Course Objectives

- To explore the role and meaning of creativity and artistic expression in our lives through a range of artistic media.
- To develop trust in and openness to individual voice and styles of expression, respecting the varied forms of creative processes, and working through inhibiting blocks.
- To develop the capacity to articulate constructive and critical reflection on one's own work and on the work of partners in a learning community.
- To develop the capacity to collaborate on group projects, integrating individuals' visions into a mutually-agreed upon collective whole through community service.
- To see art in an historical and cultural context, as a window into individual and community identity within a particular place and across time.
- To investigate the power of creative expression through the arts to address social and environmental issues.

Overview of Course Content

What is art?

Cultural and social contexts of art
Cross-cultural perspectives of art
Bringing art and creativity into our everyday lives

Art in relationship to self and community

Finding one's authentic voice and personal essence through art
Creating a community identity via the arts
Healing aspects of art
Developing tools and strategies for working in collaboration with community
Values of community-based arts for both communities and artists

Local art as a means to preserve and strengthen cultural life of communities

The role of art in the Findhorn Community
Scottish folklore and the bardic tradition
Celebration and ceilidhs

Art across boundaries

Art across generations & cultures
Youth empowerment through art

Art as a vehicle for social and environmental change

Revealing the relationship between the personal and the political
Art as essential to open, enlightened democracy
Use of media as art form

Course Format

During the first month and a half of the program students will be engaged in a variety of exercises, classes, workshops, and intensives that will give them a sample of and experience with the diversity of artistic expression available to them in the Findhorn Community. Throughout the second half of the semester students will create an individual learning plan in which they'll identify some area(s) of creative expression in which they wish to develop greater skill, and set up ways to pursue this. They will be keeping/creating/developing a portfolio on an ongoing basis. They will engage in a group presentation that will incorporate all the other learning modalities from the Semester. In addition, they will each choose an area of the Community to be active in Community Service, using their creativity to make a difference in their immediate surroundings.

Course Expectations

- Creation of a personal portfolio of performance pieces, studio artworks, and creative and reflective writing that demonstrates deep self-exploration and progress in the articulation of their unique voice and style.
- Active participation in learning community activities, including learning from community members, presenting work to the class and larger community when appropriate, offering feedback on peers' creative work, and discussion.
- Active participation in variety of intensive art workshops and related community service.
- Organization of and participation in public showing of an art exhibition in the medium/media of the group's choosing.
- Completion of a minimum of one significant book and other appropriate readings as approved by faculty advisor.

Assessment

- Participation: 30%
- Portfolio: 30%
- Group Presentation: 30%
- Community Project 10%

Faculty

Lead Faculty: **Lisa Shaw** M.F.A. Grays School of Art, Aberdeen, 2007-2009. B.F.A. The Cooper Union for the Advancement of Science and Art, New York City, 2000-2004.

Lisa Shaw is an artist, designer and educator. She is the art director of the Ecovillage Institute, an ecological design and engineering firm based in Findhorn, Scotland. She has worked on water restoration projects in India, China, Bolivia, Russia and the UK as part of the Ecovillage Institute team, educating for the restoration and sustainable use of water and soil. This work targets problems of water scarcity, contamination and land degradation. Lisa is involved in community building and ecological art and is currently researching issues of self-image in relationship to the

environment in Scotland. She creates paintings on canvas, photographs, videos, murals and dialogical interventions and has taught art to adults and children.

Guest Faculty

Deborah Jay-Lewin has been working with a variety of client groups, using a range of creative mediums, for the last 18 years. This includes working with people with special needs, women's groups and as an organisational consultant. Deborah's specialty is working with movement and dance. She has been involved in an educational capacity with the Findhorn Foundation Community since 1990 where she lives with her family in an ecological straw bale house. Having become certified to teach the 5Rhythms in 1994, Deborah has just completed two years of further training with Gabrielle Roth in the States in 2007.

Margot Henderson BA (Hons) First Class, Philosophy; Dip HE in Dance & Drama, LAB, Training for Artists in Schools, Institute for Arts (IATE) Dip in Integrative Arts Therapy. Margot is a poet and storyteller, skilled in community education and the Celtic ceremonial tradition. She also works in Cullerne garden.

Lesley Quilty trained as a physical theatre artist at Dell'Arte International School of Physical Theatre in northern California. She has been devising, touring and teaching in Clown Theatre ensembles in North America and the UK since 1993. Lesley teaches and performs as a "Clown Consultant" at environmental, educational and social activist conferences and events. She works with sick and dying children and their families in Scottish hospitals as a "Clown Doctor." She also coaches and presents the work of Olivier Mythodrama Associates.

Partial Bibliography

Optional: Mapping the Terrain: New Genre Public Art Edited by Suzanne Lacy
The Lure of the Local: Senses of Place in a Multicentered Society by Lucy R. Lippard
Conversation Pieces: Community and Communication in Modern Art by Grant Kester
Land, Art: A Cultural Ecology Handbook by Jeffrey Kastner, Lucy R. Lippard, Wangari Maathai, and Cameron Sinclair
Art Nature Dialogues: Interviews with Environmental Artists by John K Grande
Vitamin D: New Perspectives in Drawing by Emma Dexter
The Reenchantment of Art, by Suzi Gablik

Theory and Practice of Group Dynamics and Conflict Facilitation

Program: Scotland: The Human Challenge of Sustainability Findhorn College

Department: Communications

Course Number: Comm 352: Group Dynamics

UMass Faculty Sponsor: Gretchen Rossman,

Lead Faculty: Gill Emslie

Guest Faculty: Ana Rhodes-Castro, Fabiola Fuentes ngles

Term: Spring

Credits: 4

Course Description

The theory of transpersonal psychology and sociology is used to inform the practice of social relationships at all levels of interaction – interpersonal, intrapersonal, inter-group and international. Theoretical lectures and papers form the basis for students to examine the psychology of groups through first hand engagement in their learning community and the Findhorn Community and the smaller scale community on the Isle of Erraid. Working well within diverse group settings and dealing with conflict are critical competencies for effective leadership and transformative action in this age of organizational complexity and global society. Students learn practical steps to conflict prevention and resolution for the family, workplace, and the world. The knowledge acquired includes a working understanding of a Deep Democracy approach, how our belief systems influence all our actions, basic facilitation skills effective group participation, leadership both as a role and a function, (generating ideas, presenting proposals, facilitating agreement and implementing decisions) effective listening, feedback skills, meta-skills, the roots of conflict and practical conflict facilitation, working with diversity in groups and addressing rank and power dynamics and how to develop eldership or the ability to take the third position.

Course Objectives

- To explore the dynamics of groups through theoretical & experiential learning
- To understand and experience the concept of deep democracy
- To explore the relationship between personal psychology and group dynamics
- To work with non verbal communication signals and atmosphere in groups
- To identify and gain experience with roles commonly held in groups
- To identify and understand common issues in-group dynamics, including safety, leadership, power, projection, marginalization, sub-groups, scapegoat, etc.
- To demonstrate an understanding and application of basic conflict facilitation skills
- To develop skills in observation, communication, and facilitation as practical tools to be more effective in groups and to reinforce theoretical learning

- To learn to give and receive interpersonal feedback in effective ways

Course Expectations

- Completion of one significant book (this includes pre-course reading of *Sitting in the Fire* by Arnold Mindell) and other appropriate and/or assigned reading
- Student presentation on key theoretical concepts that have underpinned students' studies showing the link between theory and practice.
- Creative presentation showing how the learning from this module has contributed to increasing knowledge of group dynamics and conflict facilitation. This could include visual or movement-based images or a piece of theatre. (To be agreed with lead faculty.)
- Active participation in class discussion, activities, and group process
- Learning sets meet weekly to review and discuss learnings and insights. Students practice facilitation skills and receive feedback on their participation in the group.

Proposed Sessions

- Introduction and Deep Democracy – a whole systems approach
- Leadership and Roles – archetypes
- Belief Systems and non-verbal communication
- Facilitation skills
- Embracing Diversity and Power, Rank & Privilege
- Nonviolent Communication (Fabiola)
- Understanding and transforming conflict
- Group Process (Ana)
- Cycle of Blame and accusations
- Final Presentations /assessment (2 sessions) am & pm

Outline of Topics

- Exploring self in relation to other Primary Identity
 - Belief Systems
 - Exploring our hidden potential
- Roles, dynamics, and psychology of groups
 - Groups as systems
 - Gender roles
 - Differences in personality
 - Cultural patterns and expectations
 - Norms, roles, cohesiveness, and Groupthink
- Group dynamics approaches
 - Process Work
 - Non-violent communication (NVC)
 - Developing Secondary Attention
- Verbal and non-verbal communication

- Intra and interpersonal communication
- Body language
- Listening and feedback
- Leadership
 - Principles of Leadership
 - Decision making strategies
 - Power and rank
- Diversity in groups
 - Strength of different perspectives
 - Whole Systems Thinking
 - Exploring the relationship between whole systems thinking and group dynamics
- Understanding and Transforming Conflict
 - What is conflict?
 - Understanding self and your response to conflict
 - Seeing conflict as opportunity
 - Creative and Interactive problem solving
 - Conflict resolution techniques
 - Understanding whole systems approach to working with conflict

Assessment

Assessment Summary:

Reading:	25%
Living Education & Service:	10%
Participation:	20%
Presentation:	20%
Papers:	25%

Assessments and Assessment Criteria:

Reading – 25%

Assessments:

- Write a brief analysis and critique of *Sitting in the Fire* by Arnold Mindell. For example: What are your key understandings? Do the ideas make sense to you? How are they or might they be applicable in your own life and in situations you are involved with or know about? Offer specific examples of both the concepts and examples from your life. 700-1000 words.
- Write a short paper on the key concepts from the book, *Nonviolent Communication*, by Marshall Rosenberg, and their relevance to your own life. Think of a specific interaction in your own life that did not go as you would have liked. What elements of what was said or done (or not said or done) would you characterize as what Rosenberg calls ‘life-alienating’? Why? Drawing on your understanding of the Nonviolent Communication process, how might you have made other choices in this situation? Replay the interaction. What intentions, awareness, and ways of communicating might you have brought to bear? Throughout,

demonstrate an understanding of the underlying theory. For example, demonstrate your understanding of the meaning and purpose of identifying ‘observations’, ‘feelings’, ‘needs’ and ‘requests’. 300-500 words.

- Write a short paper on the topic of awareness. 1) What is ‘awareness’? Define this term, drawing on course reading material or other sources (for example, 'Sitting in the Fire'; www.aamindell.net; ‘Dreaming While Awake’ by Mindell; 'War Hotel' by Audergone; Pema Chodron's books). 2) Why is awareness important? 3) Describe a personal experience of awareness. This paper will also be informed by discussion in class. Approx. 500 words.
- Read a selected section of ‘Welcome to the War Hotel’ by Arlene Audergone for discussion in class and write a short paper outlining your responses to the material, your thoughts and opinions on the link between psychological dynamics and violent conflict, and what questions it raises in you. Describe an example which illustrates the relationship between global violent conflict dynamics and the way these dynamics appear within your own life and/or within communities that you’ve been part of. 500 - 700 words.
- Read at least the first two chapters of Blessed Unrest by Paul Hawken, and view the YouTube video of Paul Hawken, Blessed Unrest from the 2007 Bioneers Conference, for discussion in class. What does this say about collective consciousness and the self-organizing tendencies in any group?

Living Education & Service (LES) Department - 10%

For 10 weeks of the semester, students will spend two afternoons per week working in one of the Findhorn Foundation Living Education & Service (LES) departments. The specific work & departments will vary with the students & the semesters, depending on what is available in the community. The aim is to integrate academics into community life, providing students the opportunity to learn through hands-on engagement with and active reflection upon the day-to-day operations of an ecovillage community.

Assessment will be based on participation and a writing assignment (1000-1500 words) consisting of three elements: 1) a descriptive and reflective account of your time in the LES department; 2) an assessment of the strengths and challenges of the department in relation to key concepts and themes from each of the following three courses – Worldviews & Consciousness, Group Dynamics, & Ecological Design; and 3) a set of concrete recommendations for the department, again in light of your learning in the three courses.

Assessment will be based on:

- Active participation and initiative-taking within the LES department
- Embodiment and integration of learning through action
- Use of key concepts of the course to illuminate reflections and analysis
- Quality of documentation
- Originality and creativity of approach to the assignment
- Risk taking and openness to challenge and new growth

Assessment of Participation - 20%

Assessment criteria are based on the following below, in conjunction with self-assessment on learning goals established at the beginning of the course between student and tutor.

Key components of Assessment of Participation are:

- Willingness to engage actively in the group and with materials presented.
- Participation in all classes.
- The ability to give and receive feedback.
- The ability to apply skills learned during the course.
- Completion of the required reading including all assigned readings, articles and chapters.

Tutorials

Tutorials are used for support as well as firming up on what it is that you do to meet your individual learning needs and objectives. For example faculty input is essential in deciding your research paper. These tutorials happen inside or outside of the regular times.

Paper 25%

Research Paper 2000 – 3000 words.

This paper involves researching a specific case study of group dynamics and/or conflict facilitation, through interviews with Findhorn Community members and/or local neighbours (from Findhorn village, Forres, Kinloss or the RAF base). Discuss your findings within the context of a process-orientated (whole systems) approach, based on your critical learning so far, making explicit how your own awareness of these issues has grown during the semester and the ability to articulate both sides of the discussion. If you have a personal bias please make this explicit and indicate how it may influence your findings.

Either give an overall view of the Findhorn Community dynamics internally or in relationship to a neighbour, focus on a specific aspect of the community dynamics, or create a case study of a specific event. For example, describe and analyze a decision making process you have witnessed, a ‘violent’ or disturbing conflict and how it was dealt with, an experience of leadership or community building, or another ‘issue’ that would illustrate an aspect of your learning in this module. This paper may link up with work in other modules of the program but would need a group dynamic or conflict facilitation perspective. The details of this paper will be finalised in consultation with lead faculty.

Assessment criteria:

This paper should describe an area within the field of group dynamics that the student feels drawn to deepen their knowledge in, both in terms of theory and practice. This paper will be graded on the content as well as the way that the content is communicated. Students will demonstrate their evolving understanding and integration of group dynamics or social design, and the ability to apply these skills as an essential part of a sustainable human settlement.

Presentation 20%

20 minute presentation and feedback. In this presentation you will communicate about your experience of the group dynamics you find yourself part of, and demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between your inner and outer experiences, applying the skills and theoretical awareness gained in the course. More detail about this assignment will be given in class.

Assessment criteria:

You will be assessed not only on your presentations and participation, but also on your ability to reflect on, and learn from, your experiences during the semester. Your experience and ideas, your process and self-reflexivity are an important part of the content of a good assessment. You are encouraged to engage your creativity and to take risks in this process.

Format/Medium of presentations

You may use more than one format/medium in any presentation. You may also use material used in other parts of the course or out of the formal course structure such as in the work departments etc. if it meets the assessment criteria for this course. We can discuss your ideas of presentation, medium, etc. in your tutorial.

Faculty

Lead Faculty:

Gill Emslie

Dip. Process Oriented Psychology, (Masters level of study)

School of Process Oriented Psychology, Portland Oregon, USA and London UK

Gill has extensive experience as an international trainer and facilitator, with training in transpersonal psychology, as a consultant to organizations and communities, and as a psychotherapist Gill delivers trainings in group dynamics and conflict facilitation, social design, personal development, staff training, supervision, and developing the relationship between individual purpose and its application in the workplace and the world. Gill currently works within the corporate and voluntary sectors both in Europe and Latin America as well as teaching in a variety of educational programs.

Gill has been the lead faculty for this course since 2006.

Guest Faculty:

Fabiola Fuentes

Fabiola is an international teacher of Nonviolent Communication skills applying these skills in a wide variety of settings. Originally from Colombia, she currently lives in Forres.

Partial Bibliography

Audergon, Arlene (2005) The War Hotel, UK

Capra, Fritjof (2003) *The Hidden Connections: Flamingo*, UK
Emslie, Gill & Alfred, Robin (2002) *Findhorn Consultancy Occasional Papers FFCS*, Findhorn
Hawken, Paul (2008) *Blessed Unrest*, USA
Jaworski, Joseph (1996) *Synchronicity: The Inner Path of Leadership* Berrett-Koehler
Publishers, USA
Macy, Joanna & Brown, Molly Young (1998) *Coming Back to Life* New Society Publishers,
USA
Macy, Joanna (1991) *World as Lover, World as Self* Parallax Publishers, USA
Mindell, Arnold (1995) *Sitting in the Fire: Large Group Transformation Through Diversity and
Conflict* Lao
Tse Press, Portland, Oregon. PRE-COURSE READING
Mindell, Arnold (2002) *Deep Democracy of Open Forums: Practical Steps to Conflict
Prevention and
Resolution for the Family, Workplace, and the World* Hampton Roads Publishing Company, VA,
USA
Mindell, Arnold (1993) *Earth Based Psychology: Path Awareness* (2007), USA
Rosenberg, Marshall (2003) *Nonviolent Communication: A Language of Life* Puddle Dancer
Press, USA
Shohet, Robin (2000) *Supervision in the Helping Professions* Open University Press, UK
Shupbach, Max (2001) *Worldwork, Transformation in Organisations, Communities, Business
and the Public Space*.

Web page references

www.aamindell.net
www.maxfacilitation.net
www.wikipedia.com
www.youtube.com

Worldviews and Consciousness

Program: Scotland: The Human Challenge of Sustainability, Findhorn College

Department:

Course Number: Int'l Ed* 292E

UMass Faculty Sponsor: Gretchen Rossman

Lead Faculty: Melissa Godbeer

Guest Faculty: Alexandra McNamara, Franco Santoro, Kajedo Wanderer

Term: Spring

Credits: 4

Course Description

In seeking to build a sustainable and ecologically viable world, and not repeat the mistakes of the past, it is imperative to examine and understand the foundations of our experience of the world.

Toward this end, this course asks two fundamental questions:

- (1) what are the beliefs and assumptions that underlie our view of ourselves and the world, what are the implications of these beliefs, and how can we shift and expand them?
- (2) How can we become more fully conscious of our own potentials as humans as well as of the multi-faceted nature of the world we inhabit?

The aim of the course is to empower students by exploring alternative ways of perceiving and thinking about their lives and the world, challenging their assumptions about who they are and how the world is. A methodology of self-awareness lies at the core of the course, combining theoretical exploration, cross-cultural comparison, and experiential activities.

This course aims to both examine and synthesize theoretical and experiential understandings of worldviews and consciousness. Students address the creation of worldviews and the processes that facilitate paradigm changes. They also examine their personal and cultural backgrounds in comparison with their worldviews, investigating how various beliefs and practices shape and are reflected in their paradigms, as well as exploring these phenomena for other individuals and in other cultures.

In addition to academic readings, journaling, reflective essays, and philosophical discussion, students experience and critically reflect upon personal daily practices. Students examine how such practices derive from and support various worldviews, and explore the reciprocal relationship between practices and the maintenance or altering of a worldview.

Course Objectives

- To develop an understanding of worldviews and consciousness, how they affect human behavior, and their relationship to social and personal development
- To reflect critically on our own and others' worldviews and socio-cultural conditioning
- To examine how differences in worldview may affect global issues

- To introduce models of consciousness, and learn ways to integrate them into daily life
- To explore and develop daily practices that foster conscious awareness at the individual and community/collective level
- To observe how self-reflective practices manifest themselves in daily life, reinforce or challenge our worldviews, and inform community/collective consciousness

Course Expectations

- Reading of assigned Worldviews and Consciousness books and articles
- Involvement in, and critical reflection on, a daily mindfulness practice or a related technique of introspection of the student's choice
- Regular journal entries responding to assigned reflection questions, demonstrating an evolving understanding and integration of course content
- Active participation in peer- and self-assessment exercises
- Collaborative presentations to learning community, examining assigned topics
- Engagement with and critical reflection on experiential aspects of the program, as well as seminars, large and small group discussions, workshops, field site visits, and service departments
- Completion of critical reflective papers examining assigned topics
- Multi-media presentation (or 1000-1500 word essay) tracing the evolution of, and influences on, a student's worldviews and self-awareness during their time in the Findhorn Community, demonstrating conceptual understanding of the presented theories as well as a commitment to their process of self-investigation

Proposed Sessions

Introduction to the Topic & Why Explore It?

- Overview of course expectations, requirements and assessment methods
- Introduction to daily practice

What is Consciousness / What are Worldviews?

- Views of consciousness
- Varieties of worldview
- Peer- and self-assessment assignment presentation

Tutorials in Learning Support Groups

Gaia Theory

- Seminar
- Experiential: Touching the Earth

Celtic Worldview and Consciousness

- Scottish site tour with local bard
- Celtic worldviews of consciousness with guest presenter

Colloquium on Tipping Point

- Discussion with each student presenting one particularly interesting or important point from the audio lecture, and leading a brief discussion

Shamanism

- Seminar
- Experiential
- Prep for Sweat Lodge

Weekend Sweat Lodge

- Preparation of the lodge
- Integration of the experience: expression in “earth art” and group sharing

Models of Consciousness

- Course and assignment review

Retreat Day of Silence

- Introduction to the practise of observing silence
- Sitting and walking meditation
- Experiential: Time in silence

Tutorials in Learning Support Groups

Assimilation: presentations and next steps

- Student presentations
- Peer- and self-assessment
- Next steps: relevance of course to life beyond Findhorn

All Faculty / Student Circle sharing

Completion

Assessment

Assessment Summary

Journal 30 %

Daily Practice 15%

Class Participation including peer and self-assessment 15%

Living Education & Service (LES) department 10%

Papers 15%

Presentations 15%

Journal 30%

Assessment Criteria

Honesty and self-assessment;
Thoroughness of reflection and self-awareness;
Depth and detail of reflective accounts;
Indication of creative, critical, and analytic thought;
Presentation and legibility;
Regularity of entries;
Proof of a willingness to question and reconsider one's own beliefs;
Clear evidence of the relationship between entries, course work, and posed questions.

Daily Practice 15%

Assessment Criteria

Perform a chosen practice no less than four times a week, at least 15 minutes per session;
Research and read relevant reading material to aid you in this practice;
Reflect upon questions posed by Faculty regarding your practice in your journal;
Meet with peer group once a week to assess self and peers' daily practice progress;
Meet with Faculty twice for tutorials during semester.

Class Participation including peer and self-assessment 15%

Assessment Criteria for Class participation

Engagement in the group and with the group such as:
Class attendance;
Ability to take leadership within the learning community;
Effective involvement in student-led discussions;
Ability and willingness to offer constructive feedback to peers;
Demonstration of willingness to receive and integrate feedback from peers;
Ability to suggest solutions to any arising difficulties;
Active involvement in the collaboration and presentation of any group work;
Demonstration of interest in the maintenance of the groups functioning throughout semester.

Assessment Criteria for Peer- and Self-Assessment

Demonstration of willingness to receive and give constructive feedback with peers;
Demonstration of ability to integrate feedback into personal and academic goals through the means of assignments set by Faculty.

Living Education & Service (LES) department - 10%

For 10 weeks of the semester, students will spend two afternoons per week working in one of the Findhorn Foundation LES departments. The specific work & departments will vary with the students & the semesters, depending on what is available in the community. The aim is to integrate academics into community life, providing students the opportunity to learn through hands-on engagement with and active reflection upon the day-to-day operations of an ecovillage community.

Assessment will be based on participation and a writing assignment (1000-1500 words) consisting of three elements: 1) a descriptive and reflective account of your time in the LES department; 2) an assessment of the strengths and challenges of the department in relation to key concepts and themes from each of the following three courses – Worldviews & Consciousness, Group Dynamics, & Ecological Design; and 3) a set of concrete recommendations for the department, again in light of your learning in the three courses.

Assessment will be based on:

- Active participation and initiative-taking within the LES department
- Embodiment and integration of learning through action
- Use of key concepts of the course to illuminate reflections and analysis
- Quality of documentation
- Originality and creativity of approach to the assignment
- Risk taking and openness to challenge and new growth

Papers 15%

Assessment criteria:

Each paper should illustrate the following:

An original/creative approach of understanding;

A personal interpretation of the material;

Quality and clarity of explanation or critique;

Demonstration of the amount of thought and effort applied to the topic;

The breadth and depth with which the topic relates to the development of personal worldviews and the understanding of consciousness;

Personal reflections and reactions that involve both critical and analytic thought.

Presentations 15%

Assessment criteria:

Relevance of content to the title and/or purpose of the presentation;

Competency of response to questions and comments;

Ample breadth and depth of content evident during presentation;

Use of originality and imagination in exploring and delivering content;

Clear delivery of message;

Sufficient evidence given to support all critique;

Critical thinking;
Presence, as reflected in characteristics such as tone, posture, eye contact, audibility, clarity of articulation, etc;
Engagement with audience;
Keeping within given time limit.

Faculty

Lead Faculty: Melissa Godbeer *B.MSc & M.MSc University of Metaphysics, California*
Candidate in a Ph. D programme with University of Sedona, Department of Philosophy

Born in Zimbabwe and growing up during pre and post Apartheid South Africa Melissa has first hand experience of widely diverse worldviews.

Prior to living at Findhorn, Melissa was one of the initial leaders of the East Coast urban sustainable small farm movement, initiated through a not-for-profit pro-peace organisation, which she co-founded.

Intrigued by the process of world views and how they define our capacity for a collective capable consciousness, Melissa's PhD research focuses on how our 'industrialised mind programmes' shape our cultural norms, 'norms' that lie at the root of present global crisis.

Presently, serving as a sustainability liaison for a variety of Africa based charities, Melissa is inspired by the positive possibilities that are available to humanity through low-impact means.

As an active minister and holistic councilor, Melissa advocates for 'Greening our Minds'.

Bibliography

Required Reading

Chodron, P (2002) *The Places that Scare You: A guide to fearlessness in difficult times.* Boston. M.A. Shambhala
Harding, S (2009) *Animate Earth: Science, intuition, and Gaia.* Devon. Green Books

Required Audio Lecture

Laszlo. E. (2009) *Tipping Point.* Sounds True Podcasts.

Further Reading

Caddy,E. (1994)*S Spirit of Findhorn.* Scotland. Findhorn Press
Wilbur, K. (2002) *A brief History of Everything,* Boston M.A. Gateway
Gunaratana. B. (2002). *Mindfulness in Plain English.* Wisdom Publications
Starhawk.(1994) *The Fifth Sacred Thing* New York. Bantam
Elphinstone, M. (2009) *The Gathering Night.* GB. Canongate Books
Goldsmith, E. (1996) *The way – an ecological World-view.* G.B.Themis Books
Schumacher.E.F. (1997) *This I believe and other essays.* Devon U.K. Green Books
Torey, Z. (1999) *The Crucible of Consciousness.* Australia. The MIT Press

Hanh, T. (1998) *Teachings on Love*. California. Parallax Press
Trungpa, C. (1976) *The Myth of Freedom*. Massachusetts. Shambhala
Trungpa, C. (2002) *Cutting Through Spiritual Materialism*. Boston. Shambhala
Codron, P. (1997) *When things fall apart*. G.B. Element
Laszlo, E. (1996) *The systems view of the world*. New Jersey. Hampton Press
Bhave, V. (1994) *Moved by Love, the Memoirs of Vinoba Bhave*. G.B. Green Books
Ray, P. & Anderson R. (2001) *The Cultural Creatives : How 50 Million People Are Changing the World*. New York. Three Rivers Press

Assessments Shared Between Courses

While each course has its own focus and assessment criteria, students may choose to create one project or paper that will satisfy the criteria for two—or even more—courses. This is encouraged as a way of integrating and cross-fertilizing the ideas of the programme as a whole: The human challenge of sustainability. Yet, if a student chooses to do such a “shared assessment,” it is important that the project/paper reflects both depth of thought and intensity of effort demanded of two projects. That is to say that it is not a way of getting a “two for one” bargain. Assessment criteria will be strict in terms of integrative thought and the effort made. Any such shared assessment must be agreed upon by both instructors before it is begun.

Findhorn Foundation College Educational Philosophy

Holistic Learning

Most formal education is primarily concerned with training the rational mind through learning facts, mental techniques, and analytical and critical skills. A well-trained mind, often measured by the intelligence quotient or IQ, is important for solving logical and strategic problems in today's complex technological world.

However, in the last decade it has been increasingly recognised that other qualities besides IQ are also important for both personal fulfilment and a society that functions well. For instance, Daniel Goleman¹ has argued that emotional intelligence (sometimes referred to as EQ) is of equal importance.

EQ is concerned with our awareness of our own and other people's feelings, and with qualities such as empathy, compassion, anger, fear, motivation, and the ability to respond appropriately to pain or pleasure. There is no doubt that such emotional maturity is a critical factor in many aspects of life and in working towards a better future.

Then, in 2000, Danah Zohar and Ian Marshall² suggested that there is a third type of intelligence – spiritual intelligence or SQ – which is also vital to successful living. SQ relates to fundamental issues of life, such as meaning and value, or questions of good and evil. It is associated with qualities such as being inspired by vision and values, flexibility, self-awareness, the capacity to face and use pain and suffering, a reluctance to cause unnecessary harm, seeing the connections between diverse things, seeking deep answers to questions of 'why?' or 'what?' and the ability to go against convention.

Finally, systems sciences, particularly ecology, have made us aware that 'No person is an island.' We are all parts of the whole and the idea of the isolated individual, which dominated twentieth century western thought, is a mirage. Without the planet's ecosystems to provide food, water and air we would not exist. Without the solar system, and the galaxy and universe beyond, those supporting ecosystems would not exist. And so we are inextricably parts of the whole. In a similar way, our personas and psyches with which we identify so closely are largely creations of the families and societies in which we grew up. So learning to live in creative, constructive relationships with other people and the natural world as integral parts of the whole is an essential aspect of becoming a mature human.

¹ Goleman, Daniel (1995) *Emotional Intelligence* Bantam Books, New York USA

² Zohar, Danah & Marshall, Ian (2000) *SQ: Connecting with our Spiritual Intelligence* Bloomsbury Publishing Company, New York USA

Four Courses In An Integrated Curriculum

The Findhorn Community Semester program, “The Human Challenge of Sustainability,” is an integrated educational program. While the University of Massachusetts awards four credits for each of the four core courses, all the courses—along with “the living curriculum” of life in the Findhorn community--synergize to create a unified learning curriculum and experience, which is designed to support your educational development as a builder of new ways of living together and an agent of cultural change.

The real human challenge of sustainability is a multi-level challenge that demands competence, at a minimum, in areas of group relationship, creativity, personal transformation of consciousness and understanding of worldview, as well as ecovillage design. While each of these areas is “taught” by way of a university course, learning to integrate and embody them in your life, and share them in your own culture “at home,” is what the FCS program is about. And, while each course is graded and credited independently, it is only together that they form the core curriculum for deep transformation, both internal and cultural--which, of course, can only be a reflection of one’s own transformation.

Because of this synergy of course approaches and material, we have found it important that students follow through on all four courses of the program. Students are required to complete all courses. In the human challenge of sustainability, the question becomes how we become proficient in a variety of skill areas, whether they seem immediately fulfilling, interesting, and relevant or seem less immediately compelling. Throughout the program, students and faculty have the opportunity to work closely together to create courses in such a way that they encompass both students’ individual focus of learning and a synergistic educational experience.

Premises of Educational Philosophy

The Findhorn Foundation College share with Living Routes Ecovillage Education the following four premises: the awareness premise, the ecology premise, the community premise and the learning-living premise.

1. The Awareness Premise

The first premise of Findhorn Foundation College educational philosophy suggests that humans must experience their sacred interconnections within the broader world in order to work through the current planetary crisis. When humans explore their interconnectedness within the phenomenal world, they have the chance to investigate their individual and cultural cosmologies, or stories. In order to experience the interdependent nature of existence, methods such as meditation, story telling, ritual, dance, and music are drawn from different cultural traditions that have recognized this reality for ages.

2. The Ecology Premise

The second premise of Findhorn Foundation College educational philosophy is based on the deep realization that humans are a part of a living system that is shaped by a set of strict ecological

principles and finite constraints. In order for humans to act in a healthy way within this living system, there is a need for the development of a global citizen who embodies an ecological consciousness. When humans live consciously within this ecological consciousness, they have the opportunity to think constructively, live sustainably, and view problems within their longterm, global interests. Similarly, by becoming more ecologically literate, humans may achieve a deepening awareness of the ecological reality that shapes their lives, as well as their capacity to transform that reality.

3. The Community Premise

The third premise of Findhorn Foundation College educational philosophy recognizes that humans are not autonomous individuals, but are rather embedded in an interwoven web of life. Experiencing and participating within an interdependent community gives humans an opportunity to recognize that, as living systems, they are integrated wholes, as well as part of larger wholes. Cultivating our sense of community involves investigating the takenforgranted beliefs and practices that may be counterproductive for a transition towards a sustainable community.

4. The Living-Learning Premise

The final premise of Findhorn Foundation College educational philosophy is that learning and living are not separate, but form an integrated whole within the educational process. The context where Findhorn Foundation College' educational programs take place is in a living-learning center, community and organization which strives to offer sustainable, real-world solutions and skills to today's pressing problems.

The College aims to facilitate integration and balance of mind, body, emotions, spirit and relationships through its education programs. We do this through two broad strands of learning – intellectual and experiential. The first intellectual strand relates to the rational, analytical, factual education typical of higher education. This involves classes and discussion, individual study and reading, and written assignment work.

The second strand is learning through experience – what at Findhorn we call Living Education. Traditional education is primarily concerned with training the mind, with little attention being paid to the body except in sports, dance and similar physical disciplines. In most cases, very little attention is given to emotional, spiritual and relationship education, and where it is, it often takes the form of talking about the subject rather than becoming involved in it. Yet real learning in these areas, like learning a physical skill, can only be gained from experience – by doing it. Actually, a lot of learning on these levels does go on in the classroom, but it is generally unconscious, and often has unforeseen consequences. For instance, we learn a lot about relating to others through dominance hierarchies, and that it is not ok to feel, let alone express, our emotions.

At Findhorn we include learning through experience in various ways. In a supportive learning environment we seek to break down the teacher-student divide and learn together as people with varied knowledge and experience. Students are encouraged to work cooperatively, and to express and resolve their feelings about what is happening in the group; where deep issues of meaning and purpose are shared and are as important as facts and skills.

Experiential learning is gaining acceptance in mainstream education, and the Findhorn Foundation College is supported in its work by the pioneering work and staff of the Human Potential Research Group at the University of Surrey, pioneered more than 25 years ago by John Heron³.

Most Living Education at Findhorn happens outside the classroom, in the unwritten curriculum, through the experience of living, working and studying as a group in this community. In many ways, learning here is a 24 hour-a-day, 7 day-a-week process. Emotional maturity and relationship skills are learned through living and learning together and through joining a community Living Education & Service (LES) departments and community activities.

Often students find this holistic learning a deeply transformative experience that helps to shape the rest of their lives. Quotes from recent participants:

“This program is important in that it offers a much more effective educational style than most colleges and universities. I think it employs holistic learning effectively.”

“Probably the best semester abroad I could have wished for. Felt supported and full. Amazing connections – great new perspectives – closer to finding my passions.”

“Through the living education I learned that everything I learned in class applied directly to living. I learned how I am learning every second of the day. I learned more about working with other people to make something incredible. There was less academic pressure than in traditional settings and that actually increased my academic yield. The living education was essential for my understanding and absorption of classroom material. They were so beautifully interwoven, daily life reflected classroom learning. I could not/would not have learnt a fraction of what I have without the living education. “

Pedagogy of Findhorn Foundation College

The Findhorn Foundation College shares Living Routes’ approach to pedagogy. Pedagogy is the process by which one is educated. The College has adopted a model of education that can be seen through three main lenses: the subject or who is learning; the object or what is learned; and the learning process itself or how are we learning.

Who is Learning? (learning as an expression of transformation and contemplation)

“The fundamental theme of our epoch is domination—which implies its opposite, the theme of liberation, as the objective to be achieved.” - Paulo Freire

The students’ learning experience is one of transformation, reflection, and contemplation. Who is learning, or students’ particular perspective on the world, is critical in constructing meaning of

³³ For an up-to-date survey of experiential education, see Gregory, J. (2001) Chapters 8, 9 and 15 in Jarvis, P. (ed) *The Theory and Practice of Teaching* Kogan Page, London.

the experiences they are having. The transformation that takes place within the context of an international experience can best be understood as an evolution of the students' worldviews. By reflecting on the underlying beliefs about Self and world, the student is able to develop more comprehensive, inclusive, and integrated worldviews.

Findhorn Foundation College seeks to integrate awareness into the curriculum in order to help create a more just, compassionate and reflective society. The guiding methodology used by the College is inquiry – an open-ended process of deep questioning. Students learn to look deeply into the nature of life through inquiry into the essential human processes (body and senses, movement, feelings, thinking, memory, imagination and interaction with the 'world') as instruments for an open-ended process of awakening. Findhorn Foundation College seeks to assist the learner in:

- Encountering people, place, and ways of being that are truly “other” than our previous experience.
- Understanding the importance of worldviews and how they affect human behaviour in relation to each other and the Earth.
- Cultivating a conscious self that is capable of critical reflection.
- Developing skills that assist in the reconstruction of one's worldview.
- Creating conditions where individuals can learn through a path of self-discovery and self-investigation.
- Considering the relationship of the individual to the collective.
- Developing qualities of insight, wisdom and compassion.
- Integrating contemplative awareness into our daily lives so that one can learn to live more mindfully.
- Investigating how diverse spiritual traditions and practices may inform our own spiritual processes.
- Exploring life choices/practices that enhance our capacity to be in peace with all life and ourselves.
- Offering insight that can illuminate the central issues of our time.

How Is One Learning? (using holistic and experiential modalities to teach)

“Students graduate without knowing how to think in whole systems, how to find connections, how to ask big questions and how to separate the trivial from the important. Now more than ever, we need people who think broadly and who understand systems, connections, patterns, and root causes.”

- David Orr

Holistic education starts from the assumption that education is a dynamic open relationship, and that intelligence is expressed through diverse styles and capacities, all of which we need to respect. Holistic education also sees learning as a lifelong process where all life situations may facilitate learning. Learning becomes active and self-motivated and is encouraging of the human spirit. Finally, a holistic curriculum is interdisciplinary, integrating both local and global perspectives.

Most learning in traditional education takes place within the classroom and the primary source of learning is the transfer of book-based information and second-hand knowledge from teacher to student. Experiential education is based on the premise that learning only becomes meaningful when the student engages in an intentionally designed process, which includes three stages: the preparation phase; the actual experience; and the reflection phase. The reflective process is the most fundamental component of experiential education, because it is through the reflection process that students are able to integrate their experience into their lives and discover meaning within their unique perspectives.

Findhorn Foundation College expresses how we aim to teach as an opportunity to:

- Cultivate a critical awareness of the many contexts of learners' lives - moral, cultural, ecological, economic, technological, and political.
- Address the different dimensions of the learner: body/heart/mind/spirit, as well as our needs and values, as tools of knowledge and learning.
- Empower the individual, as well as cultivate a sense of belonging.
- Foster collaborative inquiry, critical thinking, and dialogue.
- Pay attention to the way we give meaning to our lives, our history and our destiny.
- Bring awareness and recognition that the individual is a part of a larger wholeness of life and that the individual is responsible for the well being of that wholeness.
- Integrate what students learn with how they live.
- Stimulate students to move beyond just being a receiver of knowledge and becoming an active seeker and creator of knowledge and experience.
- Allow students to move through the different stages of learning according to their own needs and capacities.
- Integrate observation-reflection-action within a cyclical learning process.
- Cultivate learning through reflection using a variety of tools, including group discussions, journal writings, class projects, presentations, and facilitation.
- Affirm the experience of self and that of diverse others within the learning process.
- Cultivate a meaningful context for learning.

What Is Being Learned? (ecological and cosmological education)

“This we know. The earth does not belong to us; we belong to the earth. This we know. All things are interconnected like the blood which unites one family. Whatever befalls the earth befalls the sons and daughters of the earth. We did not weave the web of life; we are merely a strand of it. Whatever we do to the web, we do to ourselves.”
- Attributed to Chief Seattle

Ecological education is based on the recognition of the interconnectedness of all things and the realization that we, as humans, are situated within a living system that has finite constraints and is shaped by a set of strict ecological principles. In order to live more sustainably, it is imperative that we develop an understanding of ecological principles, and the systems that govern the natural world. Where in some traditional educational modalities, students learn to see the world as a machine; ecological education invites students to perceive the world as a living system.

The destruction of natural resources at an alarming rate has raised the question of how this has happened and what the potential role of education is in halting this process. Many would argue that the main cause of our global crisis lies in our disconnection with nature, and that human-earth relations are based on particular cosmologies - the understanding of the origin and development of the universe and our place in it. The loss of connection with nature and the earth is therefore seen as a symptom of a loss of meaning, a crisis of cosmology.

The four areas of sustainability that are woven into the semester's four courses are environment, habitat and food, economy and society.

Set within the context of a spiritual community and ecovillage where there is a strong culture of co-creation with nature on all levels of consciousness, the exploration of spiritual, personal values and relationships is seen as deeply embedded and explicitly, experientially engaged with in the students' learning pathways. In spiritual values is included the concept of developing compassion, self-awareness and mindfulness in daily action.

The Findhorn Foundation College ecological and cosmological education model strives to:

- Draw connections and recall the interconnectedness of all things.
- To deepen the experience of human-human relations and personal responsibility in co-creating the change process on both personal and global levels.
- Explore how our own cosmologies are formed in response to our experiences with the natural world.
- To translate the knowledge acquired into practical and achievable plans of action.
- To develop an understanding and experience of the concept of deep democracy.
- To examine the power of the arts in addressing social and environmental issues.
- Deepen the students' understanding of the principles of ecology, such as interdependence, sustainability, ecological cycles, energy flow, partnership, flexibility, diversity and co-evolution.
- Develop knowledge of systems thinking.
- Illuminate how the principles of ecology are manifested within learning communities.
- Cultivate and practice the values of conservation, cooperation, quality and partnership.
- Assist students in living more harmoniously in the natural world.
- Examine the role of cosmology in underscoring human-earth relations, in particular as assumed by naturalists, articulated by religious writers, systematized by philosophers, and discovered by scientists.

Creating a Learning Community

Introduction

A learning community is a group that forms a common learning goal.

Students join the semester for different reasons, at different stages in their lives, and from a variety of backgrounds. But all have chosen an experiential, field-based education program.

So what is a Learning Community? The aim is to create a learning environment in which:

- Students and faculty learn together from each other by sharing knowledge, discoveries and experiences.
- Differences of rank, power and authority in the group are minimised whilst acknowledging differences in roles, personality, life experience and knowledge.
- Cooperative inquiry, collaboration and collective learning are encouraged.
- Group members (both students and faculty) are encouraged to set their own learning goals and achievement criteria which emphasise self-improvement rather than competition with others.
- Group members are encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning outcomes.
- Class content is flexible and negotiable to meet group needs and interests within the context of the established curriculum.
- Different learning styles (e.g. visual, kinaesthetic, and aural) are respected and catered for as far as possible.
- Differences of opinion and relationship issues within the group lead to constructive inquiry, dialogue and new understandings rather than conflict.
- An atmosphere of trust, openness and confidence is developed in which it is safe for group members to express any thoughts or feelings without risk of ridicule or judgement.
- There are clear 'contracts' between group members about the way the group works together.
- Group members are prepared to give and receive feedback on their behaviour and performance provided it is supportive and constructive, aimed at enhancing each other's learning.
- Learning is fun, challenging, motivated, self-directed and has the quality of open-ended exploration of all ideas, feeling, beliefs or values.

According to Christianson et al⁴

In a true learning community..... diverse backgrounds blend and individuals bond into an association dedicated to collective as well as personal learning. The students seem interested in one another and the academic assignment of the day. And their dialog has the open ended quality of exploration. Speakers not only present points of view but test and open modify their ideas; instead of doggedly defending personal conclusions, they listen to one another with

⁴ Pages 19-20 in Christianson, C. Roland, David A. Garvin, and Ann Sweet. 1991. *Education for Judgment: The Artistry of Discussion Leadership*. Boston: Harvard Business School Press, pp 19-20.

interest, not fear. Difference of opinion produce inquiries, not disputes. Working as a unit, the class learns to value measured progress without expecting instant gratification.

Similarly, Lenning and Ebbers wrote⁵

True community involves inclusiveness, commitment, consensus that allows differences to be acknowledged and processed, contemplation, vulnerability, and “graceful fighting” where conflict is not avoided, minimised or disregarded.

The ability to work together creating a living learning community is part of our expectation for successful participation in the program. By helping each other, working collaboratively, sharing excitement about ideas and events, and actively seeking experiences we all contribute to each other’s education. We want each member of the group to see himself, or herself as an active part of a greater whole and act accordingly.

This dedication to collective as well as personal learning is truly an art. It is not always easy to adjust from the competitive norm of standard education to this cooperative and collaborative model. We each need to be aware of, and work with, our tendencies toward competition and comparison that compromise the learning process. Despite the hard work, learning in community is an inspiring and rewarding experience.

Academic Focaliser

The Academic Focalizer holds the overall awareness for the program and students’ experience within it. This person’s role is also to support the students to create an integrated academic experience, beyond the four individual courses, coordination and ongoing development of the program, liaison between the Lead Faculty of the four courses as well as liaison between the various bodies i.e. Student group – College – Findhorn Foundation – Faculty. The Academic Focalizer, together with the Community Focalizer, holds the overall focus for the FCS group during their time at Findhorn, and are referred to as “Co-Focalisers.”

Karl Steyaert

M.S. Environmental Policy & Behavior, University of Michigan; M.A., Anthropology, University of Michigan; B.A., Anthropology, Dartmouth College

Karl is passionate about transformational learning and sustainable community building, teaching on a range themes relating to sustainability, conflict resolution, and evolution of conscious. He has taught courses in Global Environmental Policy and Anthropology at the University of Michigan, where he led an EPA study of urban agriculture and sustainable development in inner city Detroit. In the Fall of 2008, Karl was faculty for the Living Routes India semester in India, and from 2003 until 2005, he lived and taught at the Findhorn Community in Scotland, serving as Program Coordinator for the Living Routes Scotland semester program. Actively involved in a number of local and global sustainability education and community projects, his research focuses

⁵ Page 5 in Lenning, Oscar T., and Larry Ebbers. 1999. *The Powerful Potential of Learning Communities: Improving Education for the Future*. Higher Education Report, Volume 26, No. 6. Washington D.C.: George

on education for the evolution of consciousness, and design principles for sustainable communities.

Community Focaliser

The Community Focaliser holds the students in their non-academic lives in the Findhorn community, individually and as a group. This person holds the overall awareness of the physical, emotional & spiritual wellbeing of the group and individuals, and offers support in such areas as housing arrangements, one-on-one check-ins, connection to community contact people, community events and ongoing life in the community. Together with the Academic Focaliser, the Community Focaliser holds the overall focus for the FCS group during their time at Findhorn, and are referred to as “Co-Focalisers.”

Lesley Quilty

Dip Physical Theatre, Dip Mythodrama Artist Presenter

Lesley is a theatre artist, arts consultant, facilitator, coach, mother and long-term Findhorn community member. She trained as a physical theatre artist and clown at Dell'Arte International School of Physical Theatre in northern California. She has worked in professional theatre as performer, director, teacher and producer, in North America and the UK, for over 20 years, although her performing and teaching now take place almost exclusively in non-theatrical settings. She is a "Clown Consultant" at environmental, educational and social activist conference and events, and a "Clown Doctor" for sick children and their families in Scottish hospitals. She is also a coach and lead presenter of cutting-edge leadership development programmes for Olivier Mythodrama Associates.

Group Attunement

Each week the student group will meet for an Attunement with the guidance of the Academic Focalizer and Community Focaliser. Attunement will typically include a meditation, time spent in silent reflection and an opportunity for sharing how things are going for you personally (inner life) and how you are surviving micro and macro community life. After connecting with your personal and group consciousness, space may be opened for discussing and resolving any difficulties being experienced by the group, using an awareness of group dynamics, with a debrief at the end to help frame any learning. As your knowledge grows, you will also be encouraged to learn how to facilitate these sessions for yourselves with the support of the Academic Focaliser and Community Focaliser.

Findhorn Foundation College Learning Methodologies

Learning in Community is More than Reading Books and Writing Papers

Living in community, participating in community life, is central to your experience of the human challenge of sustainability. HOW we live and work together, whether it is as students or gardeners or cooks, the consciousness with which we go about our lives is what will create a truly sustainable world. We feel that this is of such importance that we have created a separate “course,” with its own set of expectations, goals, and evaluations to support you in this vital area of learning.

The Living Curriculum: Walking Your Talk

The Human Challenge of Sustainability is a semester experience of studying four accredited courses while living in the Findhorn Foundation community/ecovillage. While these courses form the core of your focus during the three months at Findhorn, most of your time--and perhaps your attention--will be spent living as a short-term member of the community. You will have all the opportunities for engagement in community activities, such as lectures, performances, workshops, and hanging out with new friends, and, you will also have the opportunity to share in the work that is central to the community’s purpose. Findhorn was founded with a profound and deep commitment to demonstrating values of cooperation and service. One of the founders, Peter Caddy’s, favorite saying was: “Work is love made visible!” And, this attitude is central to Findhorn’s vision of how the world needs be changed. Another of Peter’s comments was: “Love where you are! Love who you with! Love what you are doing!” This is a spiritual task in itself! Choosing to love in all situations is no small feat! And, yet, it is this attitude that creates the joy and goodness that visitors find most remarkable when they visit the community. It is inspiring and fulfilling to work toward this end: to seek to be loving and be willing to work to clear up the blocks that too often get in the way. No one is expected to be perfect. Everyone is expected to commit to this end!

If ecovillage living is about demonstrating a new and sustainable way of being on the planet, our human attitudes and processes of interaction are at least as important as the kinds of buildings we build. How we go about our daily lives, the quality of our interactions with others, and our awareness of the ATTITUDES and INTENTIONS with which engage in various activities are the building blocks for creating the new consciousness, which will in turn create a truly new and sustainable society, in an ecovillage or in a city neighborhood. It IS the human challenge of sustainability. Throughout the semester you will have innumerable opportunities to explore and practice, be fulfilled and inspired by this way of going about your life. Some might say that it’s really the ONLY way to change the world...

Here are some opportunities for you to practice “walking your talk.”

You will spend two afternoons per week as a member of an LES—Living Education Service--department to help in the running of the Foundation: you might help cook in one of the kitchens, preparing meals for upwards of a hundred people; you might join one of the homecare teams to keep the facilities clean and spiritually-empowered; you could become a part of one of the maintenance groups; you might have the opportunity to work in one of the gardens, tending the landscaping and flower beds and growing the vegetables that are cooked in the kitchens and eaten by the community. You will also be assigned to a “KP”—kitchen party?—team once a week, cleaning the kitchen, the eating utensils, and dining room after meals. You will join with the rest of the Foundation members in one shift—or perhaps two—of Saturday morning homecare, cleaning the guest facilities and readying them for the next week’s group of arriving guests.

At the same time, you will be forming a community of your own, your FCS group of students who you will get to know closely during the semester. We will have group time, both to talk about how life in an academic community—as well as the larger community—is working for you, as well as to go on outings and play together. We will have a chance to talk about these underlying attitudes of the community you have joined for this semester, how you feel about them, how they work for you.

Just as you will be assessed rigorously and quite specifically in your four academic courses, this “living curriculum”—the way you live your life in the community—will also be evaluated by your focalizers, your peers, and yourself. What kind of community member do you make? What do you contribute to living in an ecovillage? Central to Findhorn’s founding principles is the concept of service and demonstrating a positive way of being in the world. Put another way, if all of life is a balance of give and take, do you give as much as you take? What is the balance for you? Are you walking your talk? And, the evaluation of this aspect of your life at Findhorn will be reflected in the final comments sent back to Living Routes and UMass. The way you live your life in this ecovillage is the living challenge of sustainability.

The curriculum, aims, expectations, and assessment criteria for “the Living Curriculum” are as clear and specific as for the four academic courses, though significantly simpler and less complex, though in some ways equally demanding.

Curriculum

- Participation in Living Education & Service (LES) departments
- Participation in KP shifts
- Participation in Saturday morning homecare
- Participation in group/bungalow life, both social & caring for the space
- Participation in group attunements & activities
- Participation in self and peer evaluation

Aims

- An opportunity to participate as a community member in community life
- To learn and practice the underlying principles of the Findhorn Foundation’s communal life

To embody this approach to life—if you so choose—and be able to carry it within you after leaving Findhorn

To take responsibility as part of a team for completing whatever task you are met with

To contribute your particular skills, experiences, energy, interests, & inspiration to the team

To be increasingly conscious of your ability to choose your attitude and intention in the way you approach your life

Expectations

Attend work shifts, unless previously arranged with focalizer

Participate fully as a member of the LES department team

Maintain a positive attitude—“Work is love in action!”--recalling that this attitude affects both other people and the emotional/physical environment, OR

Share with the group your obstacles to being positive if those come up for you, either telling the “story,” if appropriate, or just sharing the fact that you are experiencing an emotional challenge in your life that makes it hard to be positive

Actively participate in structured group activities, attunements, outings, etc.

Participate, and take leadership in, keeping your living and study spaces clean and energetically clear.

Take leadership to the appropriate extent, in consultation with the focalizer, both in LES departments and in the FCS group

Be willing to give and take constructive feedback about your and others’ participation in the FCS community

Participate in self-evaluation at middle and end of program

Evaluation

Program focalizers (Program Director & Coordinator for Student and Community Life), in consultation with task focalizers (work dept., KP, Homecare) will reflect on, with you, your work as a member of the respective teams. (See “FCS Students Participation In Living Education Service Departments.”) Largely this means showing up and participating in the work of the department. Aspects of this “review” will comprise such things as attendance, attitude, leadership, and bringing good snacks.

Your participation in the FCS group (attunements, outings, inter-personal relationships, life in the bungalows, etc.) will be evaluated along the same lines as above: attitude, leadership, relationships, willingness, and embodying the principles of successful community/ecovillage relationships.

Assisted by program focalizers, you will do a self-evaluation, a semi-structured process by which you reflect on your time in the program, your learnings, your challenges, your inspirations, and your successes. This will occur approximately midway through the semester and at the end.

As with the self-evaluation, the FCS group will meet to engage in a peer assessment process, an opportunity to learn to give clear, honest, caring and constructive feedback to other group members as to your perceptions of their participation, and to listen openly and willingly to others’ reflections to you.

At the end of the semester, brief comments will be included, along with the comments from your academic faculty, in the final report to Living Routes, reflecting on your participation, leadership, and the particular qualities you contribute to ecovillage living.

Learning Goals

As a way of making your learning personally relevant, we will support you in the development of a specific and personally-meaningful learning goal or set of goals. Each student will develop these goals for personally embodying the semester's learning with the help of his or her peers and faculty. Your personal goals will include:

- Your aims for the semester – i.e. what you want to learn by coming to do this program at Findhorn.
- The actions you propose to take to achieve these aims
- The resources, capacities and support you will use
- The criteria by which you will assess how well you have achieved your aims.

You will revisit this contract regularly with your group during the semester to assess your progress and to modify your aims if necessary. This contract will guide your overall learning during the semester, but will not be used in assigning grades for the academic courses, which will depend on your assignment work and other criteria defined by faculty.

The four academic courses have their own broad learning aims and outcomes that are defined by the college and faculty. At the start of each course you will be given an opportunity, with the support of peers and faculty, to define your own more specific learning goals as they relate to each course.

Creating Individual Learning Goals

The Individual Learning Goals are a tool to help you define and delineate areas of learning that you wish to further explore so as to fill out the picture of your engagement with the course material. In order to accomplish this goal we encourage you to look for larger themes that cross courses as well as areas of discrete interest that you wish to cover in more depth. Examples of the former might include: the politics of food; women and development; democracy on local and national levels, applications of The Earth Charter, the history of consensus decision making, Deep Ecological theory and practices, etc. Once you achieve clarity of intention the next steps are to determine how you will accomplish these aims. It is important that your learning plan includes work in all of your courses.

We hope that some of your goals will carry you beyond your comfort zones into new possibilities, while others may be building on previous knowledge and experiences. Some may be made with a particular future in mind, and some will have arisen out of a present moment's interests. It is important that you are able to articulate why you have included each element of your learning plan. We also hold the expectation that your plan will have you moving consciously beyond the accumulation of basic knowledge to later stages of the learning cycle where knowing moves to understanding, then to integration, to synthesis, and finally towards

action. Your focus areas should somehow address each of the dimensions of transformation -- outer/objective, cultural/intersubjective, inner/subjective.

Remember that a set of learning goals are a work in progress that will grow and change with you throughout the remainder of the semester. Please consult with your faculty and relevant others as you work on formulating your original plan and inform your Program Director when significant changes to it seem necessary.

The following questions can help you in identifying goals, measurable outcomes, and milestones:

- Where am I now in my understanding of the breadth and depth of the course syllabi?
- What are ways in which I can develop my understanding of particular areas of the curriculum?
- What do I hope to learn in each dimension of the curriculum: inner/subjective, cultural/intersubjective, and outer/objective?
- What is my current skill level in the universally relevant criteria?
- Where do I hope to be with my learning at the end of the semester?
- What are some realistic goals I can hope to achieve?
- How do I intend to achieve these goals?
- How can I express my understanding of process as well as content?
- How can I best demonstrate my learning to myself and others?
- In what ways am I taking risks as a learner and pushing myself in my learning?
- How will my faculty advisor and I evaluate where I am on my learning continuum?

These questions can help you in becoming more aware of your own learning continuum:

- How am I stretching myself “academically” (i.e. as a learner), personally, and in community?
- What is the balance of my engagement with theory and practice?
- Am I attending to both content and process in my learning?
- How am I making connections between what I learn and how I live?
- What is the breadth and depth of my coursework?
- How would others in the community describe my attitude, effort, and level of engagement?
- What are my challenges and how am I attending to them?
- How am I using creativity, innovation, and imagination as tools for deepening my understanding?
- Am I truly demonstrating what I know?
- How am I supporting the learning process of others?
- Am I digging deep or am I just skimming the surface?
- Do I show one face of myself to some and a very different one to others?
- Am I learning with my body and spirit as well as my mind?
- Am I challenging my cultural and personal assumptions or attempting to reinforce them?
- Am I open to new learning or fearful of it?

Community Learning

A big part of your learning will take place living and studying as a learning community. Practicing living in community, as a member, facilitator and leader is an intense and rewarding process. Community learning activities include community meetings, celebrations, decision-making, check-ins, attunements, sharings, etc.

Critical Thinking

Critical reflection is a process of questioning your assumptions, which are often unconscious. It is a difficult process to begin alone and in one's home environment because of the power and hegemony these situations reinforce. One of the best ways to encounter what is assumption, not fact, is to be placed in an unfamiliar situation where your normal processes are altered or disrupted and you are called to see yourself, others and your surroundings from a different perspective.

This semester provides a unique opportunity to search out people, readings, situations, environments, and practices that will challenge what is comfortable and familiar to you. While just coming on this semester is likely to push some edges, it is possible to remain largely within the bubble of our cultural assumptions and patterns even when immersed in another world. You are asked to support the risk-taking of one another and to take risks yourself in daring to grow beyond your old self.

Service Learning: Living Education & Service (LES) departments

Students engage with service learning by working two shifts a week in a Community LES department such as gardening, cooking, cleaning or maintenance. Whilst we value your contribution to the work of the community in this way, the main purpose is give you the opportunity to connect more deeply with the community rhythms, its staff, members and guests on other programs, as well as to experience and absorb work as "love in Action" an ethos established during the pioneering days of the Findhorn Foundation.

Evaluation and Assessment of Learning

Introduction

One of our aims in the Findhorn Foundation College is to facilitate development of students and faculty into mature self-directed learners. We aim to help participants to become people who can work out what they need to know in any situation, set appropriate learning goals, establish a learning program, and set criteria by which to measure the achievement their goals.

Our approach to assessment is based on the work of John Heron and later researchers⁶. Heron regards an educated person as one who is self-directing, self-monitoring and self-correcting. Humans have choice and, with that, responsibility; we are aware that we can affect the future and intentionally aim to achieve certain goals; and we seek meaning and value. All these qualities are reflected in the self, peer and faculty assessment process, which he pioneered. This approach is quite different to the usual College grading system, and requires each student to be an active participant in assessing their own learning and that of other students.

As usual, the faculty set the scope of the curriculum for each course, and criteria by which to assess achievement of essential academic learning outcomes. However, the details of the curriculum are often negotiated between faculty and students, depending on their interests and abilities.

Faculty are involved in assessing the student's work where they have particular knowledge or skills – for example in assessing how well a student has learned and understood the course material as reflected in an assignment. But the student also assesses their performance against their own learning goals and criteria, and the performance of each of the others in the learning community against their learning goals and criteria.

Some students know that they are the best person to critically assess their learning. For others it can be very difficult to adapt to this different style of learning. It requires each student to take responsibility not only for their own progress, but also to maintain an active interest in the learning of their peers so that they can make a reasoned assessment of their progress.

The process of personal reflection and assessment is also essential for authentic experiential learning to occur. Without it, an experience is simply an event that happens in space and time rather than an opportunity for growth, transformation and integration. Assessment thus becomes an integral part of the learning process as well as providing a grade for accreditation and to bring greater self-direction into their lives.

⁶ Heron began his work at the Human Potential Research Group at the University of Surrey, with which Findhorn Foundation College has a collaborative working relationship particularly with Josie Gregory. See, for example, Gregory, J (2001) *Assessment of Experiential Learning in Higher Education* Chapter 15 in Jarvis, P. (Ed) Theory and Practice of Teaching London, Kogan Page.

Evaluation often calls to mind the subjective judgment of a person in a position of submission by a person in a position of authority. We have all at times been graded and judged by others based on criteria, which hold no relevance to our own personal growth or to what is significant to us personally.

We seek to make assessment a relevant instrument of learning: relevant to what each of us as individuals deems important in the course of our own personal learning process. This is going to differ from student to student, and therefore we believe that each student needs to be an active participant, rather than a passive recipient, in the measurement of her own growth throughout the course of the semester.

Criteria of assessment of learning

Findhorn Foundation College faculty have adopted a set of criteria that are particularly important to the learning process of every student in the program. These five “universally relevant criteria” are:

- Learning Community Participation—one’s engagement with the learning community, including effort, attitude, attention, leadership, and communication.
- Self-Inquiry and engagement with others—the process of actively reflecting on one’s experience and of looking deeply into the one who knows, the one who sees, and the one who learns. Self-inquiry is a process of investigating the different layers of one’s being (body, heart, mind, soul, and spirit) in the context of personal sustainability. Self-inquiry can happen through journaling, dialogue, engagement with others’ learning processes, reflection on one’s present worldview and cultural lenses through which we perceive the world, and the engagement in practices that facilitate contemplation and awareness (such as meditation, yoga, tai chi, nature awareness practices, chanting, ritual, and prayer).
- Documentation of Learning—this includes all forms of documentation, such as: the academic journal; reflection, topic, and internship papers; creative writing; artwork, and any other means in which the student can show that learning has taken place.
- Presentations—presentation of student seminars, presentation of concepts, readings and insights within groups, and other skills related to the oral and kinaesthetic demonstration of one’s learning.
- Facilitation/Leadership—one’s ability to lead the group in a variety of contexts, such as: sense of place explorations; community celebrations; student seminars; community meetings; attunements; base groups, and other group experiences.
- Risk Taking/Stretching— stretching oneself, i.e. pushing beyond boundaries and seeking new horizons, is foundational in an experiential, transformative and self-directed learning process.

Soliciting feedback

One of the defining ecological principles of self-organizing systems (such as Gaia) is the ability to self regulate through the process of feedback loops. Each of us as individuals also has the opportunity to use feedback as a tool to enhance the learning process. It is important to think about ways that you will solicit feedback from others during the course of the semester and how you will use that feedback constructively. Think about what kinds of questions you want to ask

other students in the learning community, your faculty advisor, your internship mentor, and perhaps most importantly, what you want to ask yourself about your learning process along the way.

- What kind of feedback will be most helpful to your growth?
- What are some of the ways in which you can ask for and receive this feedback?

One of the foundations of experiential learning is that as education is happening all the time, so is assessment. However, there are two specific times during the semester that the community will focus on assessment—at midterm and at the end of the semester--you may want to define other times that feedback will be important to your process, and the manner in which you hope to receive it. Our weekly academic gatherings will provide an ongoing opportunity for assessment, and your ability to give and receive feedback will help make the learning process enriching and enlightening for each community member.

Grading

As we exist in an imperfect world with imperfect infrastructures that cannot be completely ignored the process of translating growth and learning into letter grades also cannot be entirely avoided. In order for students to receive credit for this program through the University of Massachusetts, the faculty must submit letter grades for each of the four courses as well as (and perhaps more importantly) a written evaluation of each student's learning. It is our intention that the process of assigning letter grades to student work will be an open dialogue within the learning community so that we may best address any concerns students may have about grading and assessment.

Course Evaluation

Our ongoing commitment to educational excellence and the development of this program involves requesting from students an evaluation of the program in weeks 8 and 13. This includes comments both on course content and delivery, as well overall satisfaction with the program and the wider experience of the community.

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.