

Syllabi by Discipline :: Environmental Studies

Course Title: Neighborhoods and Watersheds

Instructor: Barry Messer, Ph.D.

School: Portland State University

Categories:

Environmental Studies, Senior Capstone

Syllabus:

General Course Objectives:

To provide students an opportunity to increase their understanding of important issues confronting the vitality and health of watersheds in urban environments.

To provide students an opportunity to increase their understanding of principles of citizen involvement and public stewardship of natural resources in an urban environment.

To apply the knowledge of natural resources and the principles of stewardship in assisting neighborhoods to effectively participate in the protection and enhancement of their watersheds.

To disseminate the knowledge and experience gained over the course of the project.

Through reflection and critical analysis, evaluate the learning and project experiences and accomplishments.

Course Structure

Scheduled class meetings on Tuesday will be held on an as needed basis for:

review and discussion of course materials
meeting with community partners and guest speakers, planning and preparing for project schedules, discussion and reflection of

Scheduled class meetings on Thursday will usually be to meet with project teams and/or community partners and held on an as needed basis

In addition to classroom and team meetings students will be expected to work on community projects (4 to 6 hours per week on average)

Course Readings: From time to time there will be a handout and/or assigned reading from the university or community library

Student Requirements:

Regular attendance at all scheduled class meetings
Regular attendance at all meetings with student teams and partners
Assist in maintaining community project team journal
Complete any assigned readings
Completion of all student team project assignments
Complete end of term reflection and evaluation exercise

Grading:

Grading will be equally based on the student's consistency, reliability and participation in the following: attendance at scheduled meetings, team projects assignments, journal, final reflection and evaluation exercise. This really is a course that a student can get an "A" for effort and I hope that all the students in this course do.

Student engagement and experience in meeting University Studies objectives

This Capstone will involve a multitude of community activities and class room exercises designed to meet the University Studies goals. Specifically, this capstone addresses the following university studies goals: communication, human experience, critical thinking, social responsibility.

(a) Communications: Students will be expected to actively communicate to business partners, community residents, city department representatives and other students in both written and oral methods. Proposals for watershed protection and conservation plans will be written and presented orally to business partners, written reports and meetings will be held with city department representatives; and students will maintain journals and written notes of student team meetings.

(b) Human experience: students will gain experience in working within a diverse cross-section of business and personnel to enrich their understanding and appreciation for the diversity of people and enterprises within the urban setting. This will include canvassing in a broad spectrum of socio-economic status neighborhoods, making presentations at community gatherings and churches, and engaging in fact-finding explorations in public usage areas.

(c) Critical thinking: students will do needs assessments and prepare alternative strategies for meeting the expectations for recycling and/or energy conservation practices. In addition, students will critically evaluate the planning and implementation for each project. Engaging issues of environmental protection in nearly all cases require a balancing of competing community interests and perspectives which do not easily become reconciled. Students will be given structured exercise and periods of reflection to examine how to best understand competing values, interpreting value-laden communications and deciphering critical paths, to community consensus building that engage and respect competing world views.

(d) Social responsibility: students will be exposed to the critical issues facing our urban environment and be challenged to examine the role of individual and collective practices which contribute or distract from the sustainability of our urban development. Each student will be expected to reflect on their experiences as to their own personal social responsibility as a member of the community as well as a steward of our earth's natural resources.

Capstone Project:

Urban Bounty Farm, Johnson Creek

Community Partners:

Friends of Zenger Farms (Urban Bounty Farm)
Portland Bureau of Environmental Services
Portland Watershed Stewardship Team, Johnson Creek
Johnson Creek Watershed Council

Project Background: See attached

Possible Project Activities: Organize and implement community survey

Initial term schedule:

Sept 29
Course intro and overview
Oct. 2
Meet community partners and discuss project plans
Oct. 4 (Sat) Participate in Johnson Creek Clean up (optional)
Oct. 6
Discuss and review Reading: Stream Scene
Develop short-term *project plans* and organize project teams
Oct. 8
Tour of Urban Bounty Farm location (car pool)
Oct. 13
Begin team projects

Proposal to Develop a Community Resource at the Zenger Farm Property

Mission Statement

Zenger Farm is a unique urban resource, encompassing both farm and wetland. To preserve this irreplaceable site, protect its value, and involve the local and surrounding community, the Friends of Zenger Farm propose to expand the existing organic farming operation at Zenger Farm, transform it into an education and job training center, and teach and demonstrate sustainable techniques for building construction, wetland restoration and maintenance, agriculture, and floodplain management.

Background

Zenger Farm is a 15-acre parcel adjacent to the former Foster Drive-In at SE 117th and Foster. The site is bounded on the north by the Springwater Trail; on the south by Foster Road; on the west by the former Foster Drive-In, now being developed as a commercial site; and on the east by other farmhouses. A farmhouse and barn are located near the southern end of the site, and are surrounded by the area currently in crops. The northern portion is a -??-acre wetland.

Zenger Farm was originally part of a 40-acre parcel owned by Jacob Johnson in the late 1800s. It was sold several times, and was acquired by the Zenger family in 1913. It was in continual use as a dairy farm from 1913 until Ulhich Zenger, Jr.'s death in 1989. The property was acquired by the Bureau of Environmental Services in 1994. For the past 3 years, it has been leased by Urban Bounty Farm, a community-supported agriculture farm. Approximately 2 acres are currently in crops, with the potential for another acre to be used as farmland.

The current use as an organic farm is compatible with BES's mission to restore the wetland on the southern portion of the site because the farm does not result in additional runoff associated with structures or parking on the site; no pesticides or herbicides are used that can migrate down site into the wetland or Johnson Creek; and the existing use and possible related education programs are compatible with B 's long-term vision for the property as a wetland rehabilitation/floodplain management educational facility. The long-term vision for the property should recognize the sensitive environmental nature of the site, while supporting the site's inherent value as a regional attractor and contributor to the Lents Neighborhood.

Potential Programs

The Zenger Farm property has the potential to serve as a community resource while conserving the wetland located on the southern portion of the property and providing job training and educational opportunities. Friends of Zenger Farm, a group representing several community interest groups, has been meeting since early June to develop and design programs for the site. This group is ready to reach out to the surrounding community to determine how best to meet community needs with the Zenger Farm program. The Friends of Zenger Farm hope to expand on the existing farm operation and develop an education and job training program that teaches sustainable construction practices, organic farming, wetland stewardship, water quality preservation, and floodplain conservation and care.

Possible education/job training aspects of the project include site and program planning; rehabilitation of the buildings, wetlands, and fanning grounds; and stewardship of and education at the resulting facility. The site should be used to hold classes on such topics as wetlands, floodplain management, sustainable construction practices, organic farming, and nutrition; to

Environmental *Middle School*

Oregon Food Bank

CRUE (a program of Open Meadows School, a Portland Public Schools alternative education program)

The following groups are either attending meetings regarding the property or have expressed an interest in working with Urban Bounty Farms and BES to develop a longer term vision for the property:

Southeast Uplift

Association of General Contractors,

OMSI

Portland Home Garden Project

The Natural Step

Portland Local Food Coalition

PSU's Capstone Program (This program could provide as many as 10 students from September through March for 4 to 5 hours per week per student.)

Other possible partners who have been or will be contacted include:

?Middle and High School school to work and job training/education programs.

?Middle and High School environmental and agricultural/horticultural programs

?Local youth groups such as GLAD, Lents Boys and Girls Club, and Peace Camp

?Neighborhood groups such as the Rose CDC, Brentwood-Darlington Neighborhood Association, and Lents Neighborhood Association

Next Steps

1. Determine the costs and feasibility of rehabilitating the existing structures.

2. Identify school to work or similar program to rehabilitate existing structures as "place holder" for any long-term vision for the property.

3. Implement some of the "short-term" programs discussed above. These are low cost and low risk, and will heighten awareness of the site and its value as a community resource.

4. Begin an outreach program in the community to share possible long-term visions for the property and begin to receive community input.

5. Establish a citizens advisory committee or non-profit Board of Directors to broaden community participation in and oversee program development at the site.

6. Develop a long-term vision for the site, and establish partnerships for each element.

7. Solicit funding (i.e., grants, matching funds, materials) from partners, foundations or granting agencies, etc., to support the long-term vision and operating costs.

Capstone Project:

Urban Bounty Farm, Johnson Creek

Community Partners:

Urban -Bounty Farm Coalition

Portland Bureau of Environmental Services

Portland Watershed Stewardship Team, Johnson Creek

Neighborhoods and Watersheds

Capstone Project Ideas

First term (fall) projects:

1. Conduct survey of neighborhood business and residents regarding:

awareness of the farm

values in preserving open space and watershed protection

interests in volunteering for CSA farm projects

market analysis for purchasing products

2. Organize and prepare for exhibit table (Zenger farm exhibit) for the Summit regarding:

history of farm

role of farm as open space in watershed protection

organization of the CSA

vision for the future

results of the survey

etc.

Winter term projects

1. Coordinate school projects at the site: field tips, horticulture, environmental education, etc.)

Topics

walking tours

ambassador program student operated gardens

environmental "labs"

etc.

2. Plan and organize murals for the barn and possibly the "wall"

Topics

history of farm/area

environmental graphics watershed issues

etc.

3. Plan and coordinate a **neighborhood fair and/or celebration of the farm** to take place in the spring.

Topics

volunteer projects
community gardens
environmental education
etc.

Capstone Team. Steward Guidelines

The success of the capstone experience is greatly dependent on the effectiveness of the student project teams. Each student has a responsibility to be an active and reliable participant on the team. In addition, each student will be a "team steward" on a rotating basis. The team will decide on a method of rotating team steward responsibilities so that the opportunity to be a team steward is equitably distributed to all students. The general responsibilities for the team steward will be (1) to assure that there is timely information disseminated to all team members, the instructor and the community partner; (2) facilitate decision making within the team; and (3) maintain a record of all pertinent information regarding project and team activities. The specific responsibilities for the team steward are as follows:

1. **Scheduling:** the team steward will be responsible facilitating the team schedule for all regular weekly team meetings; special training and informational meetings; and planned project activities.

2. **Facilitate attendance and travel:** the team steward is responsible for communicating to everyone on the team the times and location of all scheduled meetings and activities to assure attendance --using prompts and reminders as necessary. In addition, the team steward will facilitate the development of a travel plan to off- campus activities; assuring that the travel plan and assignments are appreciative of individual student needs and are equitable to all students.

3. **Contact for team:** the team steward will be the contact for all information that needs to get to the team members regarding team project assignments. The facilitator will also be responsible for communicating, in a timely fashion, any pertinent information of team activities to the instructor and the community partner (if appropriate).

4. **Team record:** the team steward will be responsible for keeping a record of team meetings and activities. This record is to be kept in the Capstone Team Notebook and is to include the following:

- (a) Date, time and location of all team meetings and activities
- (b) Team member attendance at all scheduled meetings and activities
- (c) Team meeting minutes;
- (d) "To do" lists which identify all action items that are agreed to be the team, a target date for completion, identification of the responsible student that is to take a "lead" in getting it done, a record of completion.
- (e) Any printed information pertinent to the project activities that is collected over the course of the term.

5. **Team steward successor:** the team steward is to facilitate the assignment of the successive team steward and to assure that the Capstone Team Notebook is complete and in the successor's possession in a timely manner.

6. **Evaluation:** each team steward will complete a written evaluation at the end of their 'term' & as the team steward to include the team steward's name, the dates of their role as a team steward and the following information: (a) a summary of the team's accomplishments, (b) what went well; what didn't (c) an assessment of the team's cohesiveness and effectiveness as a team (d) suggestions for improvements, if needed.

The typed-written evaluation is to be turned into the instructor by the next class period following the end of the student's term as team steward. .

7. **Reflection:** each team steward will complete a written reflection in their journal as to their personal experiences and learning while serving as team steward.

Team Steward Evaluation Form

(Make copy, complete and *turn in at* the next class following end of student's term as a team steward)

Steward Name:

Summary of team accomplishments:

What went well:

What didn't:

Assessment of team process:

Suggestions for improvements:

Team meeting notes format:

(To be completed by team steward at completion of each team meeting)

Date:

Team Steward:

Attendance:

Student team:

Guests:

Agenda minutes: (summarize discussions & decisions)

Action ("to do"):

Student lead:

Target date:

Date completed:

Team Activity Log

(to be completed by team steward following each team activity: project, training, etc.)

Team Steward:

Date:

Time:

Student Attendance:

Guests:

Description of activity: (include the amount of time spent on different aspects of the activity and the total time)

Any follow-up activity planned?

What went well; what didn't?

Suggestions for improvement:

About the Journal:

Reflection and Journal Writing for Capstone Experience Neighborhoods and Watersheds Fall 1998

Barry Messer, Instructor

The journal-writing requirement provides you with the opportunity to record your experiences, make connections between class discussion, reading assignments, and service projects, and generally describe and analyze the total experience. This is a very important part of the course. The journal entries will serve as an important resource for you to maximize the benefit of these experiences and to contribute to the final course evaluation and publication.

There are no right or wrong ways to keep a journal, and no specific format, style or method will be prescribed. The important point is that each student, in her or his own way, maintains an honest and faithful account of the capstone experience.

General Guidelines:

Write often. Be honest. Write what you feel. Not what you think the reader wants to read.

Don't worry about instructor's judgment. It is your conversation with yourself that is important. Process is more important than product.

Write this to yourself (not to the instructor). This is your personal record of thought and action. I consider it a true privilege for you to share with me (even though it is a course requirement).

Specific Guidelines:

*journal entries for this capstone are to be made for two purposes:

1. Keep a running log of your work in the community on the capstone project. A journal entry should be made immediately after every instance that you participate in the planning, implementation or evaluation of the community project with your student team and/or community partner. This should include information about the work such as follows:

State date, time, duration and nature of the work (this is obvious, I guess).

Who were the participants and/or service recipients?

What was the best/worst part of the work? Why?

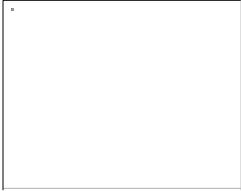
What did I feel was my contribution to the work? What was the value or outcome of this work?

What feedback did I receive? What feedback did I offer?

2. In addition to the running log entries, write "reflection" journal entries at least once a week that addresses how you are connecting the experiences with the course and the capstone project to your learning and development. Though there is no set format for these entries, this should be an opportunity for you to explore your assumptions, values and future directions. Specifically, this is an opportunity to examine how your initial knowledge, expectations, perspectives and attitudes regarding the "seven guiding issues" that you responded to in the beginning of this course, are being shaped or altered by the experiences in the class and within the community. You need not address each of these "seven guiding issues" in each journal entry. What is important is that you be mindful of all these issues as you work on your project and participate in the class, and then reflect and write on them in your journal with regularity throughout the term.

Journals are to be handed into the instructor in advance of the mid-term conference and at the finals. They will be returned with feedback from the instructor.

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