Is it possible to restore the dignity of the village?

ECOVILLAGE DESIGN

Course Syllabus

Facilitator: E. Christopher Mare

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Quarter: Spring 2001

Credits: 3

Time: Fridays, 2-5

Course Intention

The purpose of this course is to familiarize participants with the emerging concept of the “ecovillage.” We will be looking at some of the world’s premier ecovillage models as well as theorizing on an image of the ‘ideal’ ecovillage, and then drawing contrasts between “ecovillage” and some of the other possible forms of community. This class also has a practical aspect: We will be simulating a professional design team, working through a comprehensive group design process, and preparing maps and models of our finished designs. The intention is for each participant to learn the concepts, skills, and languages, and become acquainted with the resources and networks, so as to be able to re-enact this type of design process at a later time, at a place of their own choosing.

Learning Goals

1) Acquire experience with professional organizational management techniques, including affinity diagrams and prioritization matrices
2) Gain applied competence at transforming design ideas into communicable media
3) Practice the integrative transparency overlay technique of design synthesis
4) Develop increased comfort-ability to think and work in teams
5) Deepen sensitivity to ecological realities influencing design decisions at any scale

Learning Activities

The course will be divided into two phases: Phase I will be preparatory work: defining an epistemology; investigating various perception tools; brainstorming all the possibilities, and then organizing them into a coherent whole. Phase II will begin the actual design work: gathering and recording data from the site and then transposing this information
onto charts and graphs. We will be continually alternating between ‘whole group,’
'subgroup,' and ‘individual' perspectives.

**Learning Activities**

Learning assessment will be based on achievement of the course learning goals as
demonstrated through timely completion of design projects, attendance at class
sessions, and active participation in class activities (in a manner congruent with
participants' learning style). Additionally, a seven-page paper will be expected
highlighting your accumulated findings in the particular aspect of the site design with
which you have been engaged. These papers will be included in an 'archive' for the
benefit of future students.

**Course Schedule**

**Week 1:** Introduction

What's in a Name?

Where are We Now? (a design process)

Resources

Community Building

Tour of Site

Write: “Visualization of Ideal Living Situation”

Read: *Ecological Design* to p.50

**Week 2:** Ekistics

Epistemology of Design

Brainstorming of Functional Elements to include in “Ecovillage Demonstration
Site”

Defining Parameters of Project

Slide-Show: “Mechanistic or Organic Metaphors?”

Read: *Ecological Design* to p.102

**Week 3:** Silent “Affinity Diagram”

Permaculture: zone, sector, stacking in time and space, multiple functions, etc.

Tour of “Permaculture Demonstration Site”

Slide-Show: Findhorn
Read: Finish *Ecological Design*

**Week 4:** Organize: “Prioritization Matrix”
- Systems Theory
- “A Pattern Language”
- Slide-Show: Crystal Waters
- Read: *Design with Nature* to p.66

**Week 5:** Identify Nodes and Flow Patterns on Site
- Feng Shui
- Sacred Geometry
- Sectorize the OELS
- Slide-Show: The Farm (Ecovillage Training Center)
- Read: *Design with Nature* to p.115

**Week 6:** Maps and Map-making
- Entropy and Negentropy
- Slide-Show: Huehuecoyotl

**Week 7:** CoHousing
- Gathering Environmental Data – Hydrology and Geology
- Slide-Show: The Donovan Farm

**Week 8:** Design Lab
- Documentation

**Week 9:** Design Lab
- Portfolio

**Week 10:** Design Lab
- Celebration