Fielding Graduate University

HOD Doctoral Program

Assessment Contract

KA*703 – Systems, Social, and Community Studies

Student: E. Christopher Mare, M.A.
Faculty Mentor: Annabelle Nelson, Ph.D.
Faculty Assessor: Richard Appelbaum, Ph.D.

Assessment Begin Date: 1 January 2008
Assessment Completion Date: 1 April 2008
Agreement is for Credit
**Learning Goals:**

Through the course of this study, I will:

- From a systems perspective, explore variations in two distinct human settlement scales: the “city” and the “village.”
- Attempt to ascribe to each of these settlement scales intrinsic, defining socio-cultural characteristics or tendencies, especially as these may influence or affect the phenomena of “community.”
- Research the anticipated effects of “peak oil” on the “city” settlement pattern in particular.
- Determine necessary systemic adjustments to the “city” settlement pattern in a post-fossil-fuel era.
- Propose retrofit design solutions that establish “community” as high criteria.

**Readings: Texts, Journals, Web Resources:**

From a curriculum design and content perspective, this study of the potential for community within the contrasting contexts of “city” and “village” will be founded primarily upon the foundational works of Lewis Mumford, influenced by the Chicago School of Urban Ecology, and adapted to introduce current thinking in the fields of Urban Planning and Urban Sociology. Upon this sturdy foundation of understanding will be overlaid the current issue of fossil fuel depletion, with prescriptive solutions.

**Texts:**

Journals:

► Urban Affairs Quarterly
► Urban Design International
► Urban Ecology Series
► Planning
► Ecological Economics

Web Resources:

http://www.peakoil.net – Association for the Study of Peak Oil and Gas
http://culturechange.org – a Project of the Sustainable Energy Institute
http://www.odac-info.org – the Oil Depletion Analysis Centre
http://www.postcarbon.org – Post Carbon Institute
http://www.energybulletin.org – No nonsense reporting

DVD Documentary:

“The End of Suburbia: Oil Depletion and the Collapse of the American Dream” – Toronto, Ontario: Electric Wallpaper Film Company

Learning Plan and Demonstration of Learning

Overview Phase: During this phase, I will become familiar with the available literature. I will begin by reading Cities and Urban Life – a leading up-to-date textbook for urban sociology and urban studies – so that I can become functional with prevailing terminology and theories. From there I will move on to the Mumford texts and those associated with the Chicago School of Urban Ecology. With the integration of this new “urban” knowledge into my pre-existing understanding of the “village” pattern, I will approach the recent books and articles on oil decline and its implications. I’ve already begun scanning the websites and recording useful data. I also will research in depth the listed journals to discover if there’s been some recent publishing in this systemic, trans-disciplinary theme that I am investigating in this HOD*703 study. Finally, I will write the first part of a paper addressing some aspect of the admixture of Urban Sociology, Urban Planning, and Urban Ecology.

In-depth Phase: For the completion of this phase, I will write at least a 40-page scholarly paper detailing the results of my findings. This paper will be, in essence, a synthesis of
concepts, language, and proposals from the fields of Urban Sociology, Urban Planning, and Urban Ecology – as it may be applied to establishing and promoting “community” in a post-fossil-fuel era. Contrast of potentials at “city” and “village” scales will be explicit. This paper will be suitable for publication.

**Applied Phase:** For my demonstration of learning, I will use my nonprofit – Village Design Institute – to present a Design Course applying principles of Sustainable Community Design toward the retrofitting of the “city” pattern in preparation for the coming effects and consequences of “peak oil.” Finished product will be in the form of maps and/or site plans that may be presentable to City Council and Planning.

**Specific Scholar-Practitioner Skills to Work On:**

1) Awareness of alternative perspectives  
2) Synthesis of ideas  
3) Appropriate use of reference format  
4) Appropriate use of primary and secondary references

**Expectation of Faculty Assessor:**

1) Clear and explicit communications regarding faculty expectations at the outset of this study  
2) Reasonable expediency in evaluating materials at the scheduled completion of this study  
3) Honest, critical, growth-directed objectivity when evaluating materials