



India: Integral Sustainability  
At Auroville

Fall Semester, 2009

ACADEMIC HANDBOOK

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**ASSESSMENT RUBRIC** **29**

## Program Overview

Students who participate on this program will study abroad in Auroville, an international community dedicated to promoting human unity in the state of Tamil Nadu along the tropical coast of southern India. Students will participate in an academic program that fosters collaborative inquiry, critical thinking, and dialogue while exploring daily awareness practices such as yoga, non-violent communication and meditation.

Through engagement with a holistic approach to world issues that encompass ecological, social, cultural and spiritual processes, students will broaden and deepen their understanding of sustainability issues and ecology. Opportunities to engage in hands-on experiences with habitat restoration, local organic food production, teaching in village schools, working with village action groups and more will support participants in building a growing theoretical and practical understanding of issues relating to local and global sustainability.

### *Auroville as Community*

Based on the philosophy of Sri Aurobindo and Mirra Alfalssa (a.k.a. "The Mother"), Auroville is a grand experiment in building human unity with the vision of becoming a universal township for 50,000 people. On February 28th, 1968 over 5,000 people from 124 nations assembled for the inauguration of Auroville. After the festivities ended, a handful of people remained to begin the task of transforming a devastated landscape into a vibrant ecosystem and a thriving international community. It worked. Today, Auroville extends over 2 square miles and is home to 2,000 members from 40 nations.

Auroville was designated an Ecovillage in 1997 though it's commitment to ecological work began at it's inception. Through overgrazing of cattle and the monsoon rains, Auroville began on land that, as one early visitor described it, "was quickly dying back into a moon." In the first 10 years, over a million trees were planted. The forest slowly grew back, which in turn attracted birds that brought with them seeds from trees they hadn't planted. A negative feedback loop (which is actually a good thing!) was created and today, much of Auroville is green and lush. But that is only the beginning of the story. From its 15 organic farms to its 150+ houses fully powered by photovoltaic panels; from its cost-effective building techniques using ferrocement and unfired earth to its ecological wastewater treatment facilities (a.k.a. "Living Machines"), Auroville has become internationally recognized as a leader in sustainable technologies and continues to aspire toward becoming the "City the Earth Needs."

## Living Routes Learning Modalities

The Integral Sustainability at Auroville semester is based on the premise that conditions on our planet are reaching a crisis so deep, that we are at a crossroads in our evolutionary journey. We are either heading toward a self-induced extinction or we can respond to the planetary crisis by consciously participating in a transformation toward an immeasurable and unknown future.

In order for humanity as a whole to move away from collapse and instead create conditions for the emergence and restoration of a sustainable world, a conscious transformation is needed. In

accordance with Living Routes' educational philosophy, the content of the four UMass courses, and the context of Auroville and India, the following learning modalities are offered to facilitate this process of transformation:

### ***Seminar/Workshop Series***

Living Routes faculty and residents of Auroville will offer a selection of seminars and site visits. These have been carefully selected to provide a holistic understanding of the current ecological and social crisis and offer tools and concepts necessary for the emergence of a more sustainable world. They will also assist students in exploring different ways of relating to body, heart, mind, and soul as tools and practices for awakening the human spirit.

### ***Bioregional/ Cross-Cultural Explorations***

Throughout the semester, students will have regular opportunities to cultivate their sense of place within Auroville and the surrounding culture and bioregion. These explorations are meant to deepen understanding of the natural history and ecosystems within the region, to explore applications and challenges of sustainable living first-hand, as well as to deepen understanding of Tamil culture and South India, through cross-cultural interactions.

### ***Academic Readings***

Throughout the semester, students will receive a selection of readings that will support the seminars and syllabi content. Information and ideas from these readings, as well as from the various books available in the Living Routes library and other libraries in Auroville should be integrated and assimilated into paper-writing, group discussions and journal practice.

### ***Base Groups***

On a weekly basis when possible, students will meet with an academic advisor in smaller, "base" groups of 6 or more students. In addition to providing academic support and offering feedback on quality of work, the base group meetings are an opportunity for sharing journal entries and papers, more deeply discussing course themes and exploring questions that emerge from individual and group daily experiences.

### ***Collaborative Learning Sessions***

On a weekly basis, the learning community will gather to reflect on, integrate, and synthesize the learning (readings, seminars and site visits) of the week.

### ***Learning Journal***

In addition to writing papers, students will be asked to maintain a Learning Journal in order to express, integrate, and synthesize their thoughts, feelings, dreams, and opinions about what they are experiencing during the program as well as to formulate and engage with questions that may lead to further and deeper inquiry. The Journal is not so much a product as it is part of the process of integrating knowledge and deepening one's understanding of coursework material,

group discussions, learning community experiences, Auroville, India, and one's self. Long after the semester is over many students appreciate having this unique record of their learning and experiences, and we encourage students to put as much energy into their journaling practice as they can.

The mainstay of the Learning Journal should be reflective entries. This requires pushing one's self to think in depth about the feelings that are being experienced on a daily basis. We encourage students not to wait until ideas are clearly formulated to write about them and not to over-edit, or restrain the free flow of reflections through fears of appearing foolish or uninformed. Instead see reflecting in the Journal as part of the path towards polishing thoughts and understanding what these experiences mean on a personal level. Students are encouraged to challenge themselves to develop a practice of questioning assumptions, reflecting on the trajectory of their understanding and emotions, and seeking new horizons.

*While writing we have found that the following types of questions can be useful guides for students to ask themselves:*

- Why do I feel this way?
- How have I arrived at this thought?
- Are these my authentic thoughts or are they what I think I am supposed to be thinking or writing or feeling? What information might I be missing?
- Do I agree with what I have experienced or read?

Journaling however, is not only a place to engage in critical thinking, but also a space in which to explore other forms of knowledge creation. In addition to written reflections, we therefore encourage students to explore reflecting in ways other than with words. This kind of activity, sometimes called visual journaling, can take us to places where the surface mind does not normally venture. The ways in which we write papers and tell our stories often contain elements of what we think others are expecting us to say or want to hear or myths we have created about ourselves that may no longer be viable – or perhaps never were! Moving from language to visual representations allows us to move beyond the mind's limitations.

*Starting a Visual Journaling practice might include:*

- Going into a quiet space with some art supplies (crayons, watercolors, collage images and words, pencils, etc.) and set them around within easy reach. Perhaps put on some music in the background.
- Allow the mind to go quiet by taking some deep breaths and relaxing!
- When one feels ready, with the use of images, words, and sentences, begin to creatively explore responses to the questions asked.

We have found that an 8" by 11" unlined journal offers the most flexibility for the combination of written and visual explorations we are hoping students will bring to their Learning Journal. As the Learning Journal serves as a document of the changes in one's thinking over time, students are expected to reflect in it on a regular basis, beginning as soon as the semester begins. Faculty will regularly review Journals and students will also be asked to share selections of their writing with other community members.

Knowing that faculty will be reading the Learning Journal might influence how one approaches it, and what is chosen to be included. During the semester students will have the option to hide

journal entries that they want kept private, or may choose to keep a separate journal for such entries. However we encourage students to try not to let this hamper their creative exploration.

At the end of the semester 12 entries will be collected and two blog entries will be counted towards this requirement as well.

### ***Self-Directed Learning***

Throughout the semester, students will be introduced to a vast spectrum of integral approaches to sustainability, addressing ecological, social, cultural and spiritual responses to the current planetary crisis. The content of much of this learning will be pre-determined and students will be guided within a pre-existing structure and set of academic activities. A great breadth of topics will be covered during these early weeks.

In conjunction with this curriculum, students have the opportunity to select particular areas of personal interest to explore more deeply. Students will pursue personal as well as community interests and goals, while remaining within academic and programmatic requirements. Students will engage in Service Learning Projects (SLP's) of their choice (see Applications of Sustainable Living course outline). In addition to these SLP's, students will prepare for and engage in a 40-hour personal retreat ("sacred solo"), for which they will largely determine how they construct their solo experience. Finally, students will design a Self Designed Learning Plan and Presentation to be carried out over the course of the semester. For this learning plan you will be asked to articulate your academic intentions within a framework that consists of setting up a series of goals that will help you to recognize and mark your progress along the way. Your project plan will also serve as an assessment tool.

### ***Learning Community Participation***

Involvement in every aspect of our community's day-to-day functioning, educational activities, and group dynamics is expected for successful participation in the Living Routes Program. We want each person in the community to see him or herself as an active part of a greater whole and act accordingly. By helping each other, working collaboratively, sharing excitement about ideas and events, actively seeking experiences, and participating in them, we all contribute to each individual's education and gain skills for the practice of sustainable lifestyles. Students' effort and engagement with each module, and with the overall evolution of our semester, is a large part of the final assessment and grade. As an active learner, it is each student's responsibility to continually seek feedback from faculty and peers, while assessing their own work in an ongoing manner.

A community dedicated to collaborative and individual learning emerges when the following criteria are established:

- The community comes together with a common purpose or goal.
- There is mutual respect among all participants and there is clarity and agreement on how we all work together.
- Diverse backgrounds are recognized and individuals bond into an association dedicated to collective as well as personal learning.

- Dialogues have the open-ended quality of exploration. Students not only present points of view, but also test and modify their ideas; instead of doggedly defending personal conclusions, they listen to one another with interest. Differences of opinion produce inquiries, not disputes. There is a willingness to work through the conflicts that will inevitably arise, recognizing that conflict can be healthy and productive if dealt with effectively.
- Constructive feedback is openly received and offered.

### ***Facilitation and Leadership***

Developing skills as a facilitator and leader is an integral part of the semester in Auroville. The learning community is an ideal setting in which to take creative risks in one's teaching and facilitation methods and receive constructive feedback to aid in one's development as a facilitator or leader.

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

- **Community-Building Processes** such as consensus decision-making, weekly meetings and sharing circles, and daily health check-ins and "attunements" (i.e. sharing a meditation, song, poem, reading, or other creative act as a way to focus the community and bring everyone together before starting the day).
- **Weekly Leadership Team:** Each student will have an opportunity to guide the learning community through a week of learning, by facilitating community meetings, planning community celebrations and play, organizing attunements and weekly check ins etc.

# Global and Local Sustainable Living

**Program:** India: Integral Sustainability at Auroville

**Department:** Environmental Design

**Course #:** ED 592A

**UMass Faculty Sponsor:** Elisabeth Hamin (Landscape Architecture and Regional Planning)

**LR Faculty:** Bindu Mohanty, Ethan Hirsch-Tauber and Priya Reddy (Faculty in Training)

**Term:** Fall 2009

**Credits:** 4

## *Course Description*

Bringing with us an awareness of the general social and environmental state of the world from a developed-world perspective, we begin to ground ourselves in an awareness of the complexity and interdependence of the ecological crisis. We learn the key principles of sustainable development and use this as a tool to evaluate how sustainably we are living here in India and at home. We then explore environmental solutions from a personal, local, national and global level. In turn we will examine the international community of Auroville within Tamil Nadu and India.

As we experience different places and diverse cultural ways, we see more clearly the role of society in producing and promoting sustainable or unsustainable practices, and the challenges of cross-cultural communication and decision-making. We consider the roles of lifestyles, economics, aesthetics, educational systems, political structures such as nation-states, etc. in shaping human relationships to earth. Understanding how to approach issues of sustainability will of necessity be grounded in our knowledge of local natural systems and ecology, as well as an exploration of alternative technologies, practices, and designs, learning to apply a systems lens to both.

As we learn about the environmental, social, and economic issues relating to sustainability in Auroville and southern India, 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 ancient, yet rapidly developing economy? 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? From the cultural perspective, how does art and creative expression promote global and local sustainable living? What challenges and opportunities exist in the realm of sustainable design? How do our environmental aesthetics relate to ecological integrity? (For example, English Ivy is considered in the West a beautiful plant but can be an aggressively invasive species.) How does policy assist in driving sustainable development?

## ***Course Objectives***

- To define and study the paradigm of sustainability and work to understand its applications on the local level in Auroville and southern India, as well as in our home regions and globally
- To investigate global environmental trends, problems and solutions, by focusing on local and regional examples
- To increase our awareness of individual and collective roles in, and impact on, local and global ecosystems
- To examine the environmental history of, and the influence of culture on, the region in terms of engendering effective social change for sustainability
- To familiarize ourselves, through immersion, with the ecological systems of the local bioregion including plants, soils and geology, watersheds, weather patterns, etc.
- To acknowledge our shared responsibility towards creating the necessary changes in how we think and live in order to build sound ethical and practical foundations for the emerging global society
- To understand the form and function of sustainability from a design perspective.

## ***Learning Modalities***

This course uses lectures, seminars, discussions, readings, site visits, small group work and hands-on projects as key strategies for allowing each student to develop mastery of course content.

## ***Course Outline***

- I. Examination of the Concept of Sustainability
  - A. Principles of sustainability
  - B. Dimensions of sustainability (i.e. inner, outer, cultural)
  - C. Interdisciplinary nature of sustainability
  - D. Applications of sustainability (e.g. sustainable development, technology, etc.)
- II. Developing Awareness of Complexity and Interdependence
  - A. Principles of ecology
  - B. Systems theory
  - C. Application at the local level: Bioregional studies
- III. Local Issues of Sustainability – Auroville and southern India
  - A. Familiarization with the Founding Vision for Auroville – City of Human Unity
  - B. Preservation and/or Restoration of Local Ecosystems
  - C. Agriculture
    1. Existing problems
    2. Potential farming/food solutions in Auroville
  - D. Water Systems
  - E. Transportation: Regulations, Roads, Vehicles, Mobility, and Pollution
  - F. Equity Issues
  - G. Alternative Technologies/Practices

- H. Effective Design solutions
- I. Government, Non-Governmental Organizations, Policies, and Decision-Making
- J. Economics

- IV. Global Issues and Impacts seen through the Lens of “West” and “East”, “North” and “South”
  - A. History of colonization and development
  - B. Women’s rights and empowerment
  - C. Homogenization of cultures and education
  - D. Non-geographically based economic elites
  - E. Displacement of land-based peoples through forces of development and globalization
  - F. Global ecological concerns
  - G. Global trade and the environment
  - H. Ecological footprint analysis and sustainability indicators
  - I. Environmental Aesthetics and Ecological Integrity

## ***Course Requirements***

### Course Written Documentation

#### **1. Carbon Footprint Analysis and Reading (pre-semester)**

***Due: September 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2009***

Students are asked to complete a *Carbon Footprint Analysis* as a pre semester assignment for this course. A print out of this analysis should be brought to India.

In preparation for this assignment students are also asked to read two articles. Refer to pre-semester assignment write up for details.

#### **2. Sustainability Action Research Project and Presentation**

***Due: September 26<sup>th</sup>, 2009***

This project asks students to identify an area of sustainability work within Auroville of interest and conduct research “in the field” through a combination of interviews, site visits, and background research (web, library). Students will then create a presentation of their findings and share what they have learned with their base group, emphasizing the usefulness of this technology within Auroville and one potential application in the world at large. Examples include researching biodynamic farming, solar photovoltaics, compressed earth buildings, or spirulina farming.

#### **3. Global to Local Final Paper and Presentation**

***Due: December 14<sup>th</sup>, 2009***

This major research paper will be an opportunity for students to design a project that they could implement at some point in the future, either in Auroville or another part of the world where they will be living. Using academic language, appropriate citations, and reference to specific articles

and books students will write to an audience who will require a full explanation of the issue, the nature of the approach, and a solution that would be considered “integral”. This paper should be no less than 3000-4000 words in length.

As part of this requirement students are also expected to design a fifteen-minute presentation in the spirit of sharing their research and findings with peers, faculty and Auroville community members

### Active Participation and Leadership

Students are expected to actively participate in all aspects of the course including reflective journaling, seminars, discussions and site visits. Students are expected to take on an active leadership role during this course and actively challenge their comfort zones to maximize their individual and group learning process and mastery of course content.

Active participation for this course includes taking part in all site visits, thoughtfully contributing to discussions, reflecting in journal entries on theoretical paradigms. Active participation could also take the form of sharing interesting articles, movies and websites with other students.

### Risk Taking and Challenging Comfort Zones

Students are expected to take risks in their intellectual and personal process in this course and actively challenge their comfort zones during this semester in order to maximize their intellectual and personal learning process. Students are expected to stretch themselves academically by taking individual responsibility for their learning and exploring aspects of course material that are both new and stretch their conceptual and content knowledge of global and local sustainability. Challenging one’s own comfort zones can take many forms including but not limited to, pushing oneself to adopt a more sustainable life practice, and challenging one’s own commonly held beliefs.

### Overall Mastery of Course Content and Application of Learning

In papers, presentations, journal entries and discussions, students are expected to demonstrate some mastery over course content by seeing inter-connections between various theoretical concepts, ideas and paradigms. Mastery of course content is also demonstrated by applying significant learnings to everyday life and decisions.

### Readings

Students will choose one book (in addition to required course readings) of their choice and additional articles relating to the course content (see bibliography/library) to deepen their learning. Students are expected to reference these readings in their *Integral Sustainability Paper* and *Sustainability Action Research Project*.

## **Grading**

In this course faculty actively promote multiple means of evaluation and authentic assessment including student self-assessment, peer assessment, faculty-student debriefs and rubric (page 28). In order for students to receive credit for this program through the University of Massachusetts, the faculty will submit a letter grade and written evaluation of each student's learning.

### Course Requirements percent of total grade is as follows:

Course Written Documentation:.....	45%
Active Participation and Leadership:.....	25%
Risk Taking and Challenging Comfort Zones:.....	15%
Overall Mastery of Course Content and Application of Learning:.....	15%

## **Course Bibliography (sample)**

- Berry, W. (1977). *The Unsettling of America: Culture and agriculture*. San Francisco, CA: Sierra Club Books.
- Capra, F. (1997). *The Web of Life: A new understanding of living systems*. New York: Doubleday.
- Chambers, N., Simmons, C. & Wackernagel, M. (2001). *Sharing nature's interest: Ecological footprints as an indicator of sustainability*. London: Earthscan Publications.
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- Fukuoka, M. (1978). *One straw revolution: An introduction to natural farming*. Emmaus, PA: Rodale Press.
- Gadgil, M., & Guha, R. (1995). *Ecology and equity: The use and abuse of nature in Contemporary India*. London: Routledge.
- Hartman, T. (2004). *The last hours of ancient sunlight: The fate of the world and what we can do before it's too late*. (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). New York: Three Rivers Press.
- Korten, D. C. (1999). *The post-corporate world: Life after capitalism*. San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler Publishers.
- Mander, J. & Goldsmith, E. (Eds.) (1996). *The case against the global economy: And for a turn toward the local*. San Francisco: Sierra Club Books.
- McDonough, W., & Braungart, M. (2002). *Cradle to cradle: Remaking the way we make things*. New York: North Point Press.

- McKibben, B. (1995). *Hope, human and wild*. Boston: Little Brown and Company.
- Meadows, D. H. (2004). *Limits to growth: The 30-year update*. White River Junction, VT: Chelsea Green.
- Merkel, J. (2003). *Radical simplicity: Small footprints on a finite Earth*. Gabriola Island, BC: New Society Publishers.
- Nabar, V. (1995). *Caste as woman*. London: Penguin Books.
- Nabhan, G.P. (2002). *Coming home to eat: The pleasures and politics of local foods*. New York: Norton.
- Norberg-Hodge, N. (2001). *From the ground up: Rethinking industrial agriculture*. London: New York: Zed Books.
- Odum, E. (1997). *Ecology: A bridge between science and society*. Sunderland, MA: Sinauer Associates
- Roy, A. (2004). *An ordinary person's guide to empire*. Cambridge, MA: Southend Press.
- Roy, A. (2001). *Power politics*. Cambridge, MA: Southend Press.
- Sainath, P. (1996). *Everybody loves a good drought*. Delhi: Penguin Books.
- Shiva, V. (1989). *Staying alive: Women, ecology, and development*. London: Zed Books.
- Shiva, V. (1999). *Stolen harvest: The hijacking of the global food supply*. Cambridge, MA: Southend Press.
- Todd, N.J., & Todd, J. (1994). *From eco-cities to living machines: Principles of ecological Design*. Berkeley, CA: North Atlantic Books.
- Trawick, M. (1996). *Notes on love in a Tamil family*. Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Van der Ryn, S., & Cowan, S. (1996). *Ecological design*. Washington, D.C.: Island Press.
- Wachernagel, M., & Rees, W. (1996). *Our ecological footprint: Reducing human impact on the earth*. Gabriola Island, BC: New Society Publishers

# Group Dynamics

## Learning Communities within Living Communities

**Program:** India: Integral Sustainability at Auroville

**Department:** Communications

**Course #:** Comm 352

**UMass Faculty Sponsor:** Leda Cooks

**LR Faculty:** Bindu Mohanty, Ethan Hirsch-Tauber and Priya Reddy (Faculty in Training)

**Term:** Fall 2009

**Credits:** 4

### *Course Description*

The focus of this course is twofold: to experience living in, learning about, and developing a learning community in order to build skills in communication and conflict resolution necessary for addressing issues of sustainability in the world; and to participate in and observe the larger community of Auroville and other host communities in southern India. Through these overlapping experiences we are challenged to recognize and think critically about the physical, social, economic, ethical, political, and spiritual elements that make up sustainable communities. We see the similarities and contrasts between the different intentions that have brought us together: we as a learning community (with a surprising diversity of goals and backgrounds even within our small group) and the goals of these other quite different communities that are working to build a life together and/or accomplishing social /cultural reform. For this course we also strive to deconstruct the idea that humans are autonomous, self-directing individuals living within a human-centered universe, and attempt to stimulate in students a sense of identity as a part of an interdependent community that includes the entire biota, thereby encouraging treatment of all living beings with respect and consideration.

A large segment of this experience exposes us to the complexity and immensity of Auroville's aspiration to design and realize an international community that restores the land, is self-sustaining, and seeks to foster human evolution within the pre-existing cultural context of southern India. Auroville is an extraordinary place in which to appreciate the obstacles and impediments to, as well as the potential for, achieving sustainable communities worldwide, as it is a microcosm of the international picture. It is sometimes difficult to maintain a healthy, critical, yet open mind while exploring the attempts Auroville has made since 1968 towards these ends, as it is not, nor does it claim to be, perfect or even sustainable. Through this and our other experiences, we begin to identify time-tested and innovative sustainable community ideas, designs, strategies, and practices currently being used and to witness future designs, plans, and hopes.

## ***Course Objectives***

- To recognize and understand the foundations of sustainable communities and to distinguish between unsustainable features and practices and their sustainable alternatives
- To compare and contrast visions and day-to-day functioning of various communities, recognizing that different approaches are appropriate for different circumstances
- To meaningfully engage in the Living Routes learning community, as well as the various host communities where we will be staying during the semester, thereby becoming aware of the vital role that active participation plays in sustaining community, and of the reciprocal relationship between freedom and responsibility
- To open oneself to experiencing the different educational methodologies that underlie and support the Living Routes learning community environment
- To acquire effective collective decision-making, facilitation, conflict resolution, and other skills for living and working within diverse communities
- To explore the dynamic tension, and find the balance, between individual and community needs
- To realize that deep cultural change begins with the individual and consequently that one must be willing to explore the self, and to challenge ingrained personal patterns of thought and behavior in order to foster sustainability
- To strive to promote right relationships with oneself, others, and the earth

## ***Learning Modalities***

This course uses lectures, seminars, discussions, readings, site visits, and hands-on projects as strategies for allowing each student to develop mastery of course content.

## ***Course Outline***

- I. Building our Unique Living Routes Learning Community
  - A. Agreeing on community values and vision
  - B. Defining and distributing community responsibilities
  - C. Sharing our stories
  - D. Gaining experience with facilitation and leadership skills
  - E. Actively participating in community meetings and sharings
  - F. Exploring the use of collective decision making methods
  - G. Acquiring and actively working with conflict resolution skills
  - H. Learning to speak and listen effectively
  - I. Seeking out, attempting to understand, and respecting diverse viewpoints
  - J. Appreciating the role of check-ins, logistics meetings, ritual and celebration, music, and play
- II. Exploring Self & Relationships within a Community Context
  - A. Self-inquiry
  - B. Discovering who we are through the mirror of relationships
  - C. Challenging and supporting one another to “step out of the box”; experimentation with new ways of being in the world

- D. Exploring the tension between inclusivity and exclusivity in community relationships
- E. Respecting and (when appropriate) challenging personal boundaries
- F. Critically reflecting upon the roots and appropriateness of our thoughts, language, and humor
- G. Awareness of our social, cultural, and institutional contexts: recognizing that we are a part of the whole

### III. Schools as Learning Communities -- Living & Learning Centers

- A. Teacher as guide, mentor, and facilitator of learning
- B. Redefining student/teacher relationships
- C. Alternative educational methodologies
- D. Providing constructive feedback for one another
- E. Process of personal self-assessment

### IV Exploring and Interacting with Indian culture and Auroville

- A. Appraising the different purposes, visions, and foundations of Auroville
- B. Assisting in the daily running of host communities throughout the semester
- C. Intentional communities as living laboratories for applying principles of sustainability in technologies, practices, and relationships
- D. Contemplating the cultural context of Auroville
- E. Investigating community governing structures and design
- F. Exploring Tamil culture and villages life

## ***Course Requirements***

### Course Written Documentation

#### **1. Auroville/ India Readings, Journal Entry #1 and Blog Entry (pre-semester)**

***Due: September 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2009***

Students are expected to read specific articles about Auroville and India, post an introductory blog entry and complete a journal entry related to Ecovillages as pre-semester assignments for this course. This assignment must be completed prior to arrival in Auroville. Refer to pre-semester assignment write up for details.

#### **2. Self Designed Learning Plan and Presentation**

***Due: 1<sup>st</sup> draft- October 9<sup>th</sup>, 2009***

***Final Draft and Presentation- December 12<sup>th</sup>, 2009***

You will be responsible for creating a self-designed learning plan early in the semester to direct your learning process during the four months we are together. This plan requires that you identify the areas that you are most passionate about, as well as areas in which you feel challenged and stretched. In turn you are expected to create a learning plan with detailed, objective measures of outcomes and clear criteria for assessing your progress over the course of

the semester. At the end of semester, you will be asked to present some aspect of your significant learning over the course of the semester.

### **3. Reflective Journaling**

*Due: Throughout.*

*Final submission: December 19<sup>th</sup>, 2009*

Over the course of the semester students will be asked to record and reflect upon their experiences in a journal. Some of your entries will be focused on specific assignments presented by faculty while others will be of students choosing. Students are asked and expected to share journal entries with faculty advisors throughout the semester. Although most students will likely have completed more than 12 entries by the end of the semester as a requirement for this course, students are asked to choose and submit 12 substantive entries for final review.

### **4. Weblog Entry**

*Due: Decided individually and collectively.*

*Final deadline: December 19<sup>th</sup>, 2009*

Each student is expected to complete at least two substantive web log entries over the course of the semester. Collectively, the web log entries of both students and staff are meant to clearly communicate to the world outside of the program the Living Routes' learning communities evolving experience in Auroville and understanding of sustainability issues on a personal, communal, regional and global level. Each entry should be about 300 words in length, include two pictures and specifically reference relevant, key concepts, topics, activities and experiences that the group has explored since the last web log entry. Entries should be posted to the Living Routes Auroville Fall 2009 weblog and e-mailed to the faculty advisor directly.

### Active Participation and Leadership

In this predominantly experiential course, active participation and leadership counts toward a significant percentage of the overall grade. Participation in this course includes, but is not limited to, taking an active part in all community activities, such as meetings, sharings, group exercises, yoga, communal meals, base groups, one on one's, etc. Taking initiative in any aspect of community building is also encouraged and leading by example is valued.

#### *Integral Leadership:*

During our time together students are expected (in pairs) to take on a leadership role, with the support of their faculty advisor, for one week of the semester. This role will include leading the group in a variety of activities including community meetings, check-ins, attunements, and play/celebrations.

## Risk Taking and Challenging Comfort Zones

Students are expected to take risks in their intellectual and personal process in this course and actively challenge their comfort zones in order to maximize their intellectual and personal learning process within the Living Routes community. Living in community is new to many of us and takes work. It is filled with many opportunities to celebrate but also many challenging and often difficult situations and issues are sure to come up as well. For most people living in community requires pushing one's self beyond one's comfort zones and shifting our priority from the I to the We. Recognizing one's fears/perceived limitations and boundaries in relationship to community members and the community as a whole and pushing one's self to make the effort to go beyond these boundaries for the sake of community are therefore part of this core course requirement.

Risk taking in the context of this course can include but not be limited to; trying out and spiriting a specific behavior that encourages community, taking on an active role in helping to resolve conflict, and being proactive about helping to bring the community together to discuss and work through challenges while also finding time to simply be together and have fun.

## Overall Mastery of Course Content and Application of Learning:

Mastery and application of learning in this course is demonstrated by specific behavioral changes such as demonstrating compassionate communication skills, offering genuine feedback when solicited, seeking resolution of conflicts and being mindful of the needs of the community. Students are expected to walk their talk in this course throughout the semester and put significant learning into practice in their daily lives.

## Readings

Students will choose one book (in addition to required course readings) of their choice and additional articles relating to the course content (see bibliography/library for guidance) to deepen their learning. These readings should be specifically referenced in the student's *Weblog Entry* and *Self Designed Learning Plan and Presentation*.

## **Grading**

In this course faculty actively promote multiple means of evaluation and authentic assessment including student self-assessment, peer assessment, faculty-student debriefs and rubric (page 28). In order for students to receive credit for this program through the University of Massachusetts, the faculty will submit a letter grade and written evaluation of each student's learning.

### Course Requirements percent of total course grade is as follows:

Course Written Documentation:.....	40%
Active Participation and Leadership:.....	30%
Risk Taking and Challenging Comfort Zones:.....	15 %
Overall Mastery of Course Content and Application of Learning:.....	15 %

## **Course Bibliography (sample)**

Girardet, H. (1992). *Gaia atlas of cities*. UK: Gaia Books.

Jackson, H. (2002). *Ecovillage living: Restoring the earth and her people*. White River Junction, VT: Chelsea Green.

Johnson, D.W. (1991). *Joining together: Group theory and group skills*. 4<sup>th</sup> Ed. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Kaner, S. (1996). *Facilitator's guide to participatory decision making*. Gabriola Island, BC: New Society Publishers.

Rosenberg, M. B. (2000). *Nonviolent communication: A language of compassion*. Encinitas, CA: Puddle Dancer Press.

Roseland, M. (1998). *Towards sustainable communities*. Gabriola Island, BC; New Haven, CT: New Society Publishers.

Shaffer, C. & Anundsen, K. (1993). *Creating community anywhere: Finding support and connection in a fragmented world*. New York: Tarcher/Perigee

Shields, K. (1993). *In the tiger's mouth: An empowerment guide for social action*. Gabriola Island, BC: New Society Publishers.

Some, M. P. (1993). *Ritual: Power, healing and community*. Portland, OR: Swam/Raven & Co.

# Applications and Practices of Sustainable Living

**Program:** India: Integral Sustainability at Auroville

**Department:** Service Learning

**Course#:** Honors 397I

**UMass Faculty Sponsor:** John Gerber (Honors)

**LR Faculty:** Bindu Mohanty, Ethan Hirsch-Tauber and Priya Reddy (Faculty in Training)

**Credits:** 4

## *Course Description*

For this course, students engage in a Service Learning Project of their choice in Auroville for a period of five weeks. The emphasis is on having an immersion experience in different applications of sustainable living, within the parameters of this alternative community situated in the developing country of India. Some examples of possible service learning sites include: organic, biodynamic, and natural farms; locally-based small businesses in organic food production, natural dyeing, crafts, etc.; schools for Tamil and Aurovilian children; training and education centers for village women; water purification of Auroville and village water systems; cultural revival/reclamation at a village cultural center; a nursery or botanical garden; or center for solar and other alternative technologies. Availability of particular sites is dependent on site needs and student capacities and experience.

## *Course Objectives*

- To learn more about “the Auroville experiment” and the opportunity it offers to be involved in the growth of a newly emerging “city of human unity”
- To experience, and reflect critically about real world challenges to implementing a sustainable paradigm
- To offer service to our host community
- To gain authentic experience and skills in cross-cultural communication
- To recognize and challenge our cultural biases
- To gain an appreciation for the intricacy, richness, and immensity of India’s development challenges
- To understand the value and complexity of experiential learning

## *Learning Modalities*

This course uses seminars, faculty-student meetings, discussions and site based learning through internship as key strategies for students to develop mastery of course content.

## ***Course Outline***

- I. Recognizing and Appreciating the Value and Role of First-hand Experience
- II. Exploration of Different Service Learning Project Options Offered in Auroville
  - A. Review of collated service learning project opportunities
  - B. Visits to sites
  - C. Interactions with potential on-site supervisors
  - D. Consideration of intent of service learning project within overall semester goals and objectives
- III. Development of Individual Focus and Intentions
  - A. Meeting with faculty advisor and peers to elucidate and articulate intentions
  - B. Meeting with on-site supervisor to share and discuss intentions
  - C. Reassessment of intentions when necessary
- IV. Immersion Experience
  - A. Learning about and engaging in the work
  - B. Development of relationship with on-site service learning project supervisor and fellow workers
  - C. Awareness of how the Service Learning Project informs and deepens other learning and experiences of the semester
  - D. Support of direct experience with critical thinking, reflection, discussion, reading, and research
- V. Sharing Your Learning about Integral Sustainability Gained from the Service Learning Project Experience
  - A. Technical and skill-based learning
  - B. Philosophical understandings and life lessons
  - C. Integration and application of learning beyond the Service Learning Project
  - D. Outlook for the future: What are my next steps?
- VI. Integral Sustainability assessment of your service-learning site

## ***Course Requirements***

### Course Documentation

#### **1. Worldview Development Journal Entry (pre-semester)**

***Due: September 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2009***

Students are expected to read the *Mindful Traveler* and complete a related Worldview Development journal entry as a requirement of this course. Please refer to the pre-semester assignment write up for specifics.

## 2. Service Learning Assessment Paper

*Due: November 9<sup>th</sup>, 2009*

Using the integral sustainability criteria that the group will develop over the course of the program, students charge is to assess their service learning project/site. The paper should be approximately 2000 words in length, combining findings from the integral assessment, with significant learning from the experience. References to the books and articles that have been read over the course of the semester to deepen the learning process in this course should also be included.

### Active Participation and Leadership

Active participation for this course includes, but is not limited to, offering one's good-willed service and taking initiative while being of service for the duration of the service-learning project. Being an example to one's peers is also commended.

### Risk Taking and Challenging Comfort Zones

Students are expected to take individual responsibility for their learning in this course by defining, in consultation with their mentors, their plans and implementation for their service-learning projects. Challenging one's own comfort zones could take the form of pushing one's self to learn a new skill or to take up a job that one normally wouldn't. It is also means using the resources available (people, books, articles etc.) to more deeply understand the work students are involved in and apply what they learn to your service work in Auroville.

### Overall Mastery of Course Content and Application of Learning:

Mastery of course content can be demonstrated in the integral sustainability assessment papers, journal entries and discussions where students explore inter-connections between their service learning projects and theoretical paradigms or global challenges. Applied learning should result in making an active contribution to the service learning project/site as verified by the mentor. Students are also encouraged to explore how their learning in their service learning project can be applied to their life back in USA.

### Readings

Students will choose (in addition to required course readings) one book of their choice and additional articles relating to the course content (see bibliography/library for guidance) to deepen their learning. These readings should be specifically referenced in your Integral Sustainability Assessment Paper.

## **Grading**

In this course faculty actively promote multiple means of evaluation and authentic assessment including student self-assessment, peer assessment, faculty-student debriefs and rubric (page 28). In order for students to receive credit for this program through the University of Massachusetts, the faculty will submit a letter grade and written evaluation of each student's learning.

### Course Requirements percent of total grade is as follows:

Course Written Documentation:.....	45%
Active Participation and Leadership:.....	25%
Risk Taking and Challenging Comfort Zones:.....	15%
Overall Mastery of Course Content and Application of Learning:.....	15%

### **Course Bibliography (sample)**

(Also refer to Global and Local Sustainability bibliography)

Illich, Ivan (1969) *To Hell with Good Intentions*. National Society for Internships and Experiential Education

Taylor, John (fall 2002) *Metaphors We Serve By: Investigating the Conceptual Metaphors Framing National and Community Service and Service Learning*, Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning,

# Body, Mind and Spirit: Cultivating Personal Sustainability

**Program:** India: Integral Sustainability at Auroville

**Department:** International Education

**Course #:** IE 292C

**UMass Faculty Sponsor:** Gretchen Rossman (Int'l Ed)

**LR Faculty:** Bindu Mohanty, Ethan Hirsch-Tauber and Priya Reddy (Faculty in Training)

**Term:** Fall 2009

**Credits:** 4

## *Course Description*

This course is designed to help elucidate the deep personal and cultural transformations that must occur for many in order to support regionally and globally appropriate ecologically sustainable ways of life. We begin to trace the relationship between knowing oneself, the choice to live sustainably, and grounding in a spiritual life. Initially, this will involve a largely deconstructive experience where we examine our own personal and cultural backgrounds and worldviews, alongside our actions and their consequences. We add to our personal inquiry through exploration of the lives and worldviews of others, coming to see religion and spirituality as social constructs with both collective and individual aspects. Our time in Auroville and in southern India will expose us to a wide range of daily life customs including spiritual and religious practices and pujas (rituals) in both urban and rural environments. We will experience the cultural richness of living within a diverse international community in Auroville (where 40 nations are represented) while also encountering the drastic contrasts existent between it, the adjoining local villages, and the rest of the places we travel.

In addition to academic seminars, readings, reflective journaling, and discussion on philosophical and spiritual movements that link inner transformation with political and environmental action in the world, this course also provides opportunities to experiment with how practices such as yoga/tai chi and meditation, personal retreat, holistic health, and rituals and celebrations can lead us to new conclusions about who we are and how we can practice sustainable living.

## *Course Objectives*

- To understand the importance of worldviews and how they affect human behavior in relation to one another and the earth
- To become aware of one's own embedded worldview and consider whether it is consistent with our current values and understanding, recognizing the potential split between what we say we value and our actions in the world

- To explore the meanings of religion and spirituality, and our personal connection to, or disconnection from, them
- To gain an appreciation for the historical role of religions and spirituality in creating culture
- To observe how the religions of India manifest themselves in people's daily lives and examine the roles of ritual and celebration in creating social context
- To explore lifestyle choices and daily practices that foster personal sustainability and self-realization

### ***Learning Modalities***

This course uses lectures, seminars, discussions, readings, site visits, small group work, hands-on projects and reflective journaling as key strategies for allowing each student to develop mastery of course content.

### ***Course Outline***

- I. Deconstructing the Self: Who am I?
  - A. In relationship to the natural world
  - B. In relationship to my family and its history
  - C. In relationship to my body (i.e. body image, relationship with addictive substances, food consumption, exercise patterns, etc.)
  - D. In relationship with others
  - E. Identifying and overcoming my fears
  - F. Becoming conscious of and articulating my own worldview
  
- II. Exploring Diverse Viewpoints in Order to Better Understand Ourselves
  - A. Defining and Differentiating between Religion and Spirituality
  - B. Delving into the Spiritual Paths of Others
    1. Sri Aurobindo, The Mother, and Integral Yoga
    2. Sri Ramana Maharshi
    3. Gandhi
  - C. Overview of Religions of India
  - D. Role of Secular Worldviews
  - E. Introduction to Ecological Worldviews & the Ecological Self
  
- III. Engaging in Practices for Fostering Personal/ Inner Sustainability
  - A. Holistic health
    1. Ayurveda and Siddha medicine
    2. Food consumption patterns and food choices
  - B. Mindfulness and embodied practices
    1. Yoga and Pranayama
    2. Sitting and walking meditation
    3. Movement, dance, Tai-chi, etc
  - C. Reflective and visual journaling
  - D. Creativity and personal unfolding

- E. Community Sharing
- F. Sanskrit chanting & use of mantras
- G. Ritual and celebration
- H. The role of sports and play
- I. Personal “sacred solo” retreat

## ***Course Requirements***

### Course Written Documentation

#### **1. Personal Life Map and Presentation, Readings and Journal Entry (pre-semester)**

***Due: September 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2009***

Students are expected to complete three pre-semester assignments for this course. Please refer to the pre-semester assignment write up for assignment details.

These include:

1. Selected readings
2. A Personal Life Map and presentation that will be shared with the rest of the learning community
3. A reflective journal entry

#### **2. Body, Mind, Spirit Reflection Paper and Presentation**

***Due: Nov 30<sup>th</sup>, 2009***

This paper, written as a first-person narrative, will be an open exploration of students personal journey of growth and transformation during the semester. Although this paper can be approached from many different angles students are expected to reference specific experiences, activities, readings and discussions they have engaged in/with over the course of the semester to enrich their reflections. Essentially, the paper should address what students have learned during this course and how they have changed throughout the program in relationship to the topics, themes, practices and processes that we have explored and learned about. Papers should be approximately 1500-2000 words in length.

In addition, students are also asked to create a presentation (30-minutes to an hour in length), which describes and explains the topics covered in the reflection paper. These presentations will take place in base groups.

### Active Participation and Leadership

Active participation for this course includes maintaining a regular yoga practice, participating in both organized retreats and the sacred solo at Nature Camp, and being fully present for resource experiences that explore Indian religions and culture. Students

are also expected to take on an active leadership role during this course. Leadership roles could include, but are not limited to, being an example to one's peers through body-mind-spirit practice, and sharing contemplative practices they have interest or experience with.

### Risk Taking and Challenging Comfort Zones

Students are expected to take risks in their intellectual and personal growth process in this course and actively challenge their comfort zones in order to enliven and deepen their learning. Students are also expected to take individual responsibility for their learning in this course by fully embracing the opportunities for personal growth that are offered in the program. Challenging one's own comfort zone could take the form of disciplining oneself to adopt a daily practice, developing awareness of nutrition, or defining and seeking to overcome one's fears.

### Overall Mastery of Course Content and Application of Learning:

Mastery over course content can be demonstrated in the personal reflection paper and journal entries pertaining to this course. Applied learning can be objectively demonstrated in behavioral changes. Students are also encouraged to explore in writing how their learning in this course can be applied to their lives back in USA.

### Readings

Students will choose one book of their choice (in addition to required course readings) and additional articles relating to the course content (see bibliography/library for guidance). These readings should be referenced in the *Reflection Paper*.

### ***Grading***

In this course faculty actively promote multiple means of evaluation and authentic assessment including student self-assessment, peer assessment, faculty-student debriefs and rubric (page 28). In order for students to receive credit for this program through the University of Massachusetts, the faculty will submit a letter grade and written evaluation of each student's learning.

### Course Requirements percent of total course grade is as follows:

Course Written Documentation:.....	45%
Active Participation and Leadership:.....	25%
Risk Taking and Challenging Comfort Zones:.....	15%
Overall Mastery of Course Content and Application of Learning:.....	15%

### ***Course Bibliography (sample)***

- Abram, D. (1996). *The Spell of the Sensuous*. New York: Pantheon Books.
- Chapple, C.K., & Tucker, M.E. (Eds.) (2000). *Hinduism and Ecology*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Chodron, P. (2001). *Start where you are: A guide to compassionate living*. Shambala Books.
- Ingram, C., Kui, A.S., & Nagler, M. (2003). *In the footsteps of Gandhi: Conversations with spiritual social activists*. Berkeley, CA: Parallax Press.
- Kraftsow, G. (2002). *Yoga for transformation*. New York: Penguin, USA.
- Kornfield, J. (1993). *A Path with heart: A guide through the perils and promises of spiritual life*. New York: Bantam Books.
- Kumar, S. (2002). *You are therefore I am: A declaration of dependence*. Devon, UK: Green Books.
- Landis, P., & Gottlieb, R.S. (Ed.) (2001). *Deep ecology and world religions*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.
- Macy, J. (1998). *World as lover, world as self*. Gabriola Island, BC: New Society Publishers.
- Nhat Hanh, T. (1987). *Being peace*. Berkeley, CA: Parallax Press.
- Some, M.P. (1993). *Ritual: Power, healing and community*. Portland, OR: Swan/Raven & Company.
- Swimme, B., & Berry, T. (1994). *The Universe Story*. San Francisco, CA: Harper San Francisco
- Wilber, K. (1998). *The Essential Ken Wilber*. Boston: Shambhala

# Assessment Rubric

Assessment Descriptors	Unsatisfactory (non-transferable grade)	Satisfactory with Concerns (C- to C+)	Good (B- to B+)	Very Good (A-)	Excellent (A)
<p><b>Course Assignments</b></p> <p>Learning journal, papers, projects, presentations, weblogs etc.</p>	<p>Course assignment was either not completed or unacceptable with regard to content, organization, analysis and execution. Student showed little understanding of course content in the work they submitted and put little to no effort into the process. Assignment did not demonstrate an understanding of the relationships between concepts, ideas and processes.</p>	<p>Course assignment was completed adequately with respect to content, organization, analysis and execution. Student put a satisfactory effort into the process. Work shows a basic level of understanding of course ideas, concepts and relationships. Some difficulty seeing the relationships between concepts, ideas and processes.</p>	<p>Course assignment was well done in terms of content, organization, synthesis and execution. Student clearly put an effort into documentation and communicated a solid understanding of course ideas, concepts and relationships in their work. Assignment demonstrated an understanding of the relationships between concepts, ideas and processes.</p>	<p>Course assignment was completed successfully in a particularly clear, well-organized and well-executed manner. Content of documentation was original &amp; creative in their exploration and synthesis of topics and content and showed a strong understanding of course ideas, concepts and relationships. Assignment demonstrated a clear understanding of the relationships between concepts, ideas and processes.</p>	<p>Course assignment was exceptional in terms of organization and execution. Student's work was original &amp; creative in their approach to the topic(s) explored. Student challenged themselves to improve and deepen the quality of their work by elicited feedback. Assignment demonstrated an exceptional understanding of the relationships between concepts, ideas and processes. Student's work could be used as a model for other /future students.</p>
<p><b>Active Participation and Leadership</b></p>	<p>Student did not attend experiences, and/or gave no sign of attending to what went on, and/or participated in ways that were inappropriate and disruptive to the learning process of others. Student chose not to take on a leadership role during the course.</p>	<p>Student was present at experiences and appeared to be attending to what took place, but did not actively participate and infrequently asked questions or engaged in discussion. Student rarely took on a leadership role during the course.</p>	<p>Student was present at experiences and raised questions and/or positively contributed to discussions, activities, site visits and other course related events. Their participation was appropriate and helpful to the learning of others. Student occasionally took on a leadership role.</p>	<p>Student actively participated during all experiences and made useful contributions that included real engagement with key issues represented in the syllabus. Student gave evidence of considering the learning needs of others in addition to their own learning process. Student took on an active leadership role on a regular basis.</p>	<p>Student raised points that were original, and engaged others in dialogue that broke new ground. Student gave evidence of considering the learning needs of others in addition to their own learning process. The student was strongly involved with leadership and facilitation and often created space for others to participate.</p>
<p><b>Risk Taking/Challenging Your Comfort Zones</b></p>	<p>Student chose not to take risks with academic and personal growth in the course in almost all instances. Student showed little to no interest in challenging or pushing their comfort zones.</p>	<p>Student challenged himself or herself infrequently over the course of the semester both academically and personally in the course. Although at times student showed interest in taking risks with their learning, they chose to remain within their comfortable zones most of the time.</p>	<p>Student challenged himself or herself periodically over the course of the semester both academically and personally in the course. Student demonstrated a desire to engage course material and get outside their comfort zone.</p>	<p>Student has consistently challenged themselves, through a variety of methods, both academically and personally in this course. They showed openness to new academic ideas and ways of thinking &amp; being and began to actualize their learning during the course of the semester. They consistently pushed their comfort zones.</p>	<p>Student has consistently challenged him or herself in this course, and as a result, has grown both academically and personally and has encouraged others to do so as well. Their openness to challenge and feedback supported new growth for themselves and the learning community as a whole.</p>
<p><b>Overall Mastery of Course Content and Application of Learning</b></p>	<p>Student either gave evidence of not grasping basic course concepts, or could only repeat back what was presented, without giving evidence of understanding application. Student showed no sign of applying an understanding of course content in daily life. Work did not show improvement over the course of the semester as a consequence.</p>	<p>Student gave evidence of understanding most basic course concepts and at times attempted to apply course material to real life situations, though he or she did not always do so in an effective way. On occasion the student demonstrated an ability to see concepts in relationship to one another across disciplines. Student's work improved a little over the course of the semester.</p>	<p>Student gave clear evidence of understanding, synthesizing and applying course concepts and content. He/she gave evidence of applying many of the course's key concepts to real life situations in an effective manner. The student showed an emerging ability to see concepts in relationship to one another across disciplines. Student's work improved over the course of the semester as a result.</p>	<p>Student demonstrated a firm grasp of understanding and synthesizing course content. They applied what they learned to real life situations in a particularly clear and effective way. The student also developed a clear ability to apply knowledge of course content across experiences and disciplines and see the larger relationships related ideas/concepts to one another.</p>	<p>Student demonstrated an exceptional grasp of understanding, and synthesizing course content. He/she consistently used key concepts of the course to illuminate life situations in an original way, which led to new learning for all. In addition the student demonstrated an exceptional ability to see concepts in relationship to one another across course and disciplines.</p>