

ENVS 411 – Home & Environment

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Office Hours: Columbia 47A; Tuesday 11-12, Wednesday 2-3, and by appointment

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W: 12:00-1:50 PM **11 Pacific**

F: 10:00-1:50 PM **30 Pacific**

Course Description

Join two New Hampshire carpenters in exploration of small-scale residential shelter, for those with a desire to live in a meaningful, and “sustainable” place of residence. We will strive to answer the question: *What makes home?* We will approach this central question from practical (hands-on!) and abstract vantage points, with an explicit concern for environmental impacts, while paying close attention to the human subject, processes of home making, materials, technology, and cost. This course will address basic architectural concepts, but is designed to aid any occupant, and in particular, the aspiring homemaker. The course is designed as a collaborative, feedback-oriented endeavor, in exploration of the relationship of home and the environment. Expect to emerge from this experience as an informed resident, with an awareness of the energy that the home embodies and exudes.

Course Goals

- Acquire basic knowledge of residential building techniques, materials, and design en route to becoming a low-impact occupant.
- Synthesize hands-on experiential learning with reflective academic work, in the process of honing critical, creative thinking and compositional skills.
- Develop greater comfort presenting information verbally, while providing and receiving feedback in a collaborative atmosphere.

Learning Objectives

- At the conclusion of this course students will be able to explain ways in which residential design choices have an environmental impact.
- At the conclusion of this course students will have the knowledge to make better-informed, environmentally sound decisions as occupants.
- At the conclusion of this course students will be able to assess building materials from a life cycle assessment perspective.
- At the conclusion of this course students will be able to speak more comfortably and confidently in a public venue.
- At the conclusion of this course students will demonstrate a cross-cultural understanding of what a home must or should be.

Methods of Instruction

We strive to be highly adaptive, remaining open to changes that best suit the passions and aspirations of you, the student. We will allow opportunities for student-generated course content. This course will be both experiential and seminar-style in nature. In-class experience will consist of occasional brief lectures (15-20 min.), inviting input and questions. Class time will otherwise be discussion based, with instructor facilitation, encouraging widespread collaboration and idea exchange. We will strive to cultivate a comfortable classroom atmosphere, in which students feel safe expressing thoughts and receiving constructive criticism.

Course Requirements

Class Participation and Attendance

This class stresses experiential learning in conjunction with seminar-style discussion. Attendance is very important, and weighted accordingly in the grading schema.

You are permitted to miss one field activity over the course of the term, and are otherwise required to attend all classes and field sessions. Absences from field activities beyond the one permitted will result in a letter grade reduction of your overall grade, unless otherwise excused. Discussion is an extremely prominent component of the course. You should be prepared to participate all class periods, to be called upon frequently, and readily voice your opinion. Absences from Wednesday seminar, if not excused in advance, will impact your grade.

Field Activity Fridays (*See Course Outline*)

We will be working with Habitat for Humanity <<http://www.sehabitat.org/>> & Eugene Community Supported Shelter <<http://communitysupportedshelters.org/>>

Friday build days will offer exposure to basic residential construction techniques, tools, and materials. Through this hands-on experience, you will serve the community en route to becoming a better-informed resident of the environment.

Following build days, you are expected to engage in journal writing and in-class discussion reflecting upon these field experiences. You will be encouraged to synthesize experiential learning with readings, the insights of your peers, and instructors. Topics explored in the class will relate to what you experience and observe in these field activities.

H&E Term Project

This project is an opportunity for hands-on exploration and experimentation. In groups, we challenge you to identify a problematic environmental relationship, to then devise possible solutions in your Home & Environment Term Project. You will be granted the freedom to pursue a subject matter that relates to environmental impacts and residency. Your group will prepare a report that describes the problematic relationship, quantifies the impact, and proposes a solution that will reduce this impact. You will also apply a general life cycle approach to analyze the

embodied energy of your solution to the extent applicable.

In the H&E Term Project, your audience is your peers. Help everyone better understand the problematic relationship you've identified, and empower your audience to implement the solution you propose. You will do this through the creation of a model and poster. Each group will submit a concise final report and model on the last day of classes, to then participate in an Open House poster session during the final exam period (**Monday June 9th, 10 AM - 12:30 PM**) showcasing your projects to the community.

Checkpoint assignments, as is the case with HW assignments, will be due by 5PM Sunday on Blackboard (.doc, .docx).

H&E Journal

You will be expected to maintain a journal throughout the course, in which you regularly generate 300-500 word responses to prompts, compiled in an electronic document journal (.doc, .docx). This is a venue for the synthesis of ideas. Journal entries should comment upon weekly readings, the previous build experience, and other pertinent class content. Inclusion of photographs, images, and other related digital content is encouraged. The journal will also serve as a means to develop your group's H&E Term Project.

Journal entry prompts will be posted on Blackboard following Friday field activity days. Each journal entry (submitted via Blackboard: .doc, .docx) will be due Wednesday, prior to seminar at noon. *You are encouraged to bring a printed copy of your entry to class to serve as a reference in discussion.* Nine journal entries total will be expected of you, which includes a comprehensive final entry.

If you have any trouble uploading to Blackboard you should e-mail your instructor prior to the deadline. The journal will be evaluated based on the degree to which it expresses serious intent, depth of thought, resonance with course content, creativity, and intellectual development.

H&E Journal Final Entry

Students will be asked to respond to a final prompt, in a critical-thinking, reflective endeavor, with a ~1,600 word entry. Responses will be evaluated based on the degree to which they are grounded in course experiences and demonstrate accrued knowledge of course content.

Readings

You will be expected to complete all readings for the Wednesday seminar. Readings will be posted to Blackboard one week prior to the class period for which they must be completed.

Readings will help construct a critical and analytical lens through which to view build day experiences, as well as positioning you to be successful in the completion of homework assignments and the H&E Term Project.

Seminar discussion and short lectures will relate to readings every week. Come prepared!

Homework Assignments

You will be expected to complete three HW assignments over the course of weeks 1-3, in preparation for the H&E Term Project assigned week 4. You will be expected to share your HW findings in an informal seminar setting.

HW #1: Forces That Define Home

- I. Home as Solution
- II. Cross Cultural Comparisons

HW #2: What's Your Current Home?

- I. What's In Your Wall?
- II. Material and Environmental Profile

HW #3: Problematic Relationships

- I. Individual - Examine Home Impacts
- II. Group - Examine One Impact [Segue to H&E Term Project]

Homework assignments will be assigned in class on Wednesday, and due by 5PM Sunday on Blackboard (.doc, .docx).

Grading Criteria

HW #1: 3%

HW #2: 7%

HW #3: 10%

Group Project: 30%

Report: 10%

Model & Poster: 10%

Checkpoints: 10% (2% each Checks #1 - #5)

H&E Journal: 25% [Final Entry accounts for 5%]

Class Participation & Attendance: 10%

Field Activities Participation & Attendance: 15%

*Graded for ENVS majors

*P/N optional for non-majors

Safety

It is your obligation as a student of this class to conduct yourself in a mature, responsible manner during build day experiences. While building, safety is the priority above all else, and you will be trained accordingly. You will be required to sign a waiver, absolving the University of Oregon and Environmental Studies Program of liability in the event of field activity related injuries.

Accommodations

If you have a disability (physical or learning) that you think may affect your participation in class activities, please contact your instructors as soon as possible so we can make arrangements necessary for your full access to the class experience.

Electronics

Disruptions from electronic devices (i.e. cell phones) will greatly impact your participation grade in the class. Advance permission is required if you wish to use a laptop during class. In seminar, out of common courtesy to the class community, under no circumstances should you be texting, making or receiving a phone call, or perusing the internet.

Educational Resources: Teaching and Learning Center (TLC)

If you need additional assistance with writing or mathematics, I encourage you to utilize the excellent resources available here on campus. The TLC offers free writing and math tutoring daily <<http://tlc.uoregon.edu/learningservices/labs/labs.html>>.

Academic Dishonesty

The University Student Conduct Code (<<http://uodos.uoregon.edu/>>) defines academic misconduct. Students are prohibited from committing or attempting to commit any act that constitutes academic misconduct. Please contact your instructors with any questions you have about appropriate academic conduct. Additional information about common forms of academic misconduct and plagiarism is available at <<http://library.uoregon.edu/guides/plagiarism/students/index.html>>

*This syllabus is subject to revision at the discretion of instructors to better suit student needs.

