EDES 406
SUSTAINABLE ENVIRONMENTS:
AN INTERDISCIPLINARY OVERVIEW

Joe Donaldson (LARCH), Brook Muller (ARCH), Paul Wack (CRP) and Guests!
Wednesday Evenings 7:10 PM – 10:00 PM • Dexter Hall Room 227

DESCRIPTION

“We inherit the earth, but . . . we also rebuild the earth, -without plan, without knowledge of its properties, and without understanding of the increasing coarse and powerful tools which science has placed at our disposal. We are remodeling the Alhambra with a steam shovel.”
- Aldo Leopold, 1933

“Laws control our lives, and they are designed to preserve a model of society based on values learned from mythology. Only after re-imagining our myths can we coherently remodel our lives, and hope to keep our society in a realistic relationship to what is actual.”
- William Kittredge, 1987

This course provides an introduction to the concepts and principles of sustainability, from a global-to-local perspective, and involves faculty from several CAED departments who promote diverse, albeit compatible, approaches to healthy, socially and ecologically responsive design. The course offers an interdisciplinary and holistic perspective in approaching environmental design problems, problems that are by nature complex, many-sided and open-ended.

This course offers lectures, readings, video presentations, and a range of assignments to provide motivated class members an opportunity to learn the importance of sustainable design and living practices. The success of this course depends on the commitment and participation of class members. The more thorough your note taking, the better you are likely to do on the exam and on written assignments. This course is not a normal lecture-exam format; a typical 2 1/2 hour class involves:

- introductions and class announcements
- 40-60 minute presentation by faculty and/or guests
- 10 minute break
- break-out group activity, class discussion, or video
- wrap-up, with info and assignments for next week

READINGS
Readings relate directly to the themes, presentations and discussions of each weeks class (see schedule), and will assigned in advance of that class You will need to have finished the readings in order to participate in in-class activities. There is no one required text; readings will be either handed out in class or will be available on reserve in the library.

MID-TERM EXAMINATION
A mid-term examination is scheduled for Week 7 (November 5th). The exam will cover material from presentations and readings from weeks 1-6.

THINKING PAPERS AND OTHER ASSIGNMENTS

Ideas won’t keep; something must be done about them.
Thinking papers offer you an opportunity to reflect on and consider the implications of the presentations and readings. Please review the course schedule for the due dates for the (5) required thinking papers. A typical paper should be a page in length and should relate to the presentation(s) that you attended prior to the class that the paper is due. In addition to thoughtfulness, if you spell correctly, use proper grammar and cite class readings in your paper, you will receive a higher evaluation.

Please observe the following format for a typical thinking paper:
• Paragraph/Part 1: Recap of the presentation(s) and reading(s)
• Paragraph/Part 2: Free thinking/open reflection
• Paragraph/Part 3: Given what you have learned, how might you act?

Specific and additional requirements for the Ecological Footprint Assignment, Current Event Thinking Paper, Field Trip Thinking Paper and Website Thinking Paper will be clarified at the time these assignments are issued.

FIELD TRIP
The October 18th field trip to the Guadalupe/Nipomo Dunes is a required component of this class.

EVALUATION & GRADING
• Class attendance & participation (includes Field Trip) 10%
• Thinking Paper 1 (due October 1) 10%
• Ecological Footprint (due October 8) 10%
• Current Event Thinking Paper 2 (due October 15) 10%
• Field Trip Thinking Paper 3 (due October 22) 10%
• EXAM (November 5) 30%
• Website Thinking Paper 4 (due November 12) 10%
• Thinking Paper 5 (due December 3) 10%

EXPECTED OUTCOMES
Students in this course will gain a measurable:
• Awareness of critical relationships within and between natural and human ecologies.
• Awareness of the impact of resource limitations on various past, present and future physical settlement patterns and building technologies.
• Understanding of the significance of specific class themes within a larger paradigm of sustainability.
• Ability to analyze planning & design proposals at various scales, as well as other interventions to environmental systems, to identify regenerative and sustainable design opportunities.