

Permaculture Design: Design Practicum

Instructor: Michael Burns, mb756@cornell.edu

Prerequisite: You must have taken either the Permaculture Fundamentals or Permaculture: Ecosystem Mimicry Course (or both) to attend the Practicum.

Purpose: To examine the basics of permaculture design and understand the potential for ecological design on a multitude of scales and contexts.

Students will apply principles and ecosystem understanding to the Permaculture design process by engaging in a personal design project of his/her choosing and walk through the steps to complete a meaningful landscape plan including design concepts, budget details, and strategies for implementation.

Course Objectives: Upon completion of this course, you will be able to:

- Define permaculture and describe key elements of permaculture systems.
- Describe the parts of a map and create a base map for your design site.
- Conduct a thorough assessment of current environmental characteristics.
- Set specific and detailed goals for designs.
- Develop design concepts and conduct necessary research.
- Create accurate project budgets and plans for implementation.

Course Philosophy: Permaculture is a philosophy with three explicit ethics; Care for Earth Resources, Care for People, and Redistribution of Surplus. This course engages students in learning a foundational perspective that guide you towards designing backyards, gardens, businesses, and communities in the frame of regeneration; the process of healing and restoring ecological health.

Expectations:

Plan on spending 10 - 15 hours per week working through course lessons.

You will need to spend a considerable amount of time outside at your site.

This course will present a wide range of information including historical perspectives, ecology, landscape design, and activities to apply content to a student's daily life.

The content is honest and acknowledges the existence of climate change, ecosystem degradation, and decline in human health factors in order to understand how we can overcome these challenges. Students will engage in presentations, readings, and hands-on activities to make positive changes in their daily lives.

The online course format relies on self-motivation to complete assignments, ask questions, and participate in dialogues on the material.

There will be required assignments as well as optional readings and activities.

As we discuss complex and emotional issues during the class, please be sensitive and supportive of other classmates. Rude or offensive language, and overly critical commentary will not be tolerated.

The most important expectation is that you keep up with weekly design work and activities. They build on and refer to previous lessons. Four weeks will pass very quickly.

The readings are a critical part to understanding content. The activities will compliment readings and lead you through steps of the design process.

Pick an outdoor site as your reference and design project. You will spend time there making assessments. If you own property this might be ideal. If you are not a landowner then consider a site that would benefit from some design consideration such as a community park, garden, or the land of a friend or relative. A place that is close to where you live or work is best, as you will visit it often.

Lessons: Each week's lesson contains the following components:

- Presentations of the core material, usually as a video or series of videos.
- Readings to reinforce or expand upon the material presented.

- Activities conducting around your chosen site; some with deliverables to share with the instructor or your classmates.
- Reflective writing to allow you to develop a thoughtful perspective and a dialogue with the course instructor.
- Discussion forum questions and topics for discussion.
- Optional additional readings, activities and resources.

Required assignment deadlines are typically at midnight on Thursday night. Late assignments will be accepted but instructor feedback may be delayed. Consider optional activities only after completing and submitting required assignments.

Your reflective journals will allow you to develop creative and observational components of your self. It will encourage you to make connections between the course and your life experience.

Recommended Readings:

The main text for all of the Permaculture classes is *Introduction to Permaculture* by Bill Mollison and Reny Mia Slay (2nd printing, 2000). The latest edition can be ordered through www.permacultureactivist.net. A list of optional books to be used with this course can be found in the 'Additional Resources' topic at the end of the course.

Supplies:

- A computer with reliable Internet access (to view videos) and the ability to compose and submit written assignments is essential.
- A roll or two of 24" – 36" tracing paper.
- A set of your favorite markers.
- A clipboard for field assignments.
- A space to keep a large (minimum 24" x 36") base map.
- You may also want to start a binder for assignments, handouts and other resources.

Detailed Course Timeline

INTRODUCTORY WEEK

1. Reading: Course Overview and
2. Reading: Instructions for Navigating this Course
3. Course Syllabus
4. Finger Lakes Permaculture Institute certification

5. Presentation: What is Design? (Narrated Lecture 55 minutes)
6. Activity 0.1: Finalize Base Map of Your Site Assignment
7. Activity 0.2: Permaculture Design - Design Practicum Self-Assessment Assignment Participant Forum: Share about your site and goals for design Optional Resources
8. Presentation: Maps 101 (Narrated Lecture 31 minutes)
9. Presentation: Intro to Google Earth (Narrated Lecture 35 minutes)
10. Activity 2.1: Map Research Assignment Reading: Designing our way to Sustainability

WEEK 1:

1. Goals Articulation Presentation: Goals Articulation (Narrated Lecture 19 minutes)
2. Reading: Examples of Goals Articulation
3. Goals Articulation Example #1
4. Goals Articulation Example #2
5. Goals Articulation Example #3
6. Activity 1.1: WILD Design Assignment
7. Activity 1.2: Get it Down Assignment
8. Activity 1.3: Get it Good Assignment
9. Participant Forum: Strategies for Success

WEEK 2:

1. Site Assessment Presentation
2. Activity 2.1: Overlay Assessment Maps Assignment
3. Site Assessment Example: Water
4. Assessment Map Example: Access and Circulation
5. Assessment Map Example: Microclimate
6. Activity 2.2: Summary Assessment Map
7. Assignment Participant Forum: Assessment Map

WEEK 3:

1. Schematic Design
2. Schematics Activity 3.1: Bubble Bonanza
3. Activity 3.2: SWOC Analysis
4. Activity 3.3: Final Schematic Map
5. Participant Forum: Bubble Map Sharing
6. Reflective Writing: SWOC Analysis

WEEK 4:

- Final Design Reading: From Dreams to Reality
- Activity 4.1: Final Design Map and Presentation
- Assignment Reflective Writing: Personal Evaluation
- Assignment Participant Forum: Final Design

Grading: All work submitted is evaluated and assigned outstanding, satisfactory, or unsatisfactory as a grade for the effort. Please note that to be eligible for Permaculture Design Certification through Finger Lakes Permaculture Institute you must complete all lessons and assignments in all three Permaculture distance-learning courses with at least a satisfactory average. Certificate of completion Successful completion of this course earns you a certificate of completion from continuing education office.

Permaculture Design Certification through Finger Lakes Permaculture Institute: Students who complete all lessons and assignments in all three Permaculture distance-learning courses with at least a satisfactory average are then eligible to submit their coursework and final design project to the Finger Lakes Permaculture Institute to receive the Permaculture Design Certification. This certification is recognized around the globe and would be a useful addition to any resume especially for those looking to complete international development work (e.g. Peace Corps) and enter the fields of ecological and landscape design or various land management and field-work positions. See the PDF file on certification in the course docs for more information.

Questions: Please direct inquiries on the course to the instructor, Michael Burns at mb756@cornell.edu