

The Urban Farm

Dept. of Landscape Architecture
University of Oregon
Winter 2021
LA 390 CRN: 23255
182 Lillis Hall
Mondays and Wednesdays 2:15 - 3:45
4 Credits
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“A person who undertakes to grow a garden at home, by practices that will preserve rather than exploit the economy of the soil, has his mind precisely against what is wrong with us....What I am saying is that if we apply our minds directly and competently to the needs of the earth, then we will have begun to make fundamental and necessary changes in our minds. We will begin to understand and to mistrust and to change our wasteful economy, which markets not just the produce of the earth, but also the earth’s ability to produce.”

-Wendell Berry, Think Little from A Continuous Harmony: Essays, Cultural & Agricultural

Berry also famously described eating as an agricultural act. As we become more aware of this intrinsic connection, the necessity of understanding where our food comes from becomes extremely vital. Eating Local has joined Organic as an important criterion for learning how to behave responsibly and sustainably. Consequently, the necessity to preserve vanishing prime agricultural land has become equally important and has the potential to shape how we reassess our Urban Spaces.

The Urban Farm is a model for alternative urban land use where people grow food, work together, take care of the land, and build community. Dating back to the 1970’s, the Urban Farm has been a place and a process, integrating biological, ecological, economic and social concerns.

The class is a hands-on experience where students learn by doing, drawing upon several organic gardening philosophies. The Wintertime can feel very sleepy, but there a great deal of work to be done in order to be ready for the coming on Spring. Season specific activities such as fruit tree pruning and stewardship, compost making, perennial planting and sowing the seeds for the spring will all need to take place this term. Students should be prepared for physical and sometimes tiring work in all kinds of weather.

A word about COVID: Although we will make every attempt to be out working in the gardens and orchards, **there will be occasions where we will meet in person in the classroom.** It will be necessary for all students to be present in the classroom and in the field. All group interaction will strictly adhere to the University of Oregon COVID guidelines with regard to masks, distancing, room sanitation etc.

In addition to the hands-on work, students are also expected to think deeply about how the work they are doing fits into the food system of which they are a part. There will be numerous assignments where they will demonstrate the degree to which they have done this critical thinking. Be prepared to work hard and to share your experience through projects and written reflection.

For information regarding the Urban Farm Program contact:
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