

Spring at the Urban Farm

Dept. of Landscape Architecture
University of Oregon
Spring 2024
LA 390
4 Credits
Harper Keeler

CRN 32613 12:00 - 1:50
CRN 32614 2:00 - 4:50
Tuesdays and Thursdays

“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*



Wendell 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 Locally 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. For over 47 years, the Urban Farm has been a place and a process, integrating biological, ecological, economic and social concerns. Key to these concerns is the Urban Farm’s interactive relationship with like-minded Community Programs, offering guidance and hands-on assistance. Urban Farm students are introduced to and are directly involved with local concerns such as FOOD for Lane County, The School Garden Project of Lane County, Huerto de la Familia and many others.

The class is a hands-on experience where students learn by doing, drawing upon several organic gardening philosophies. Students should be prepared for physical and sometimes tiring work in all kinds of weather, especially with the uncertain climate of the northwest in the springtime. 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 have fun, work hard and to write about your experience. Also, be prepared to - quite literally - reap the fruits of their labor.

**For information regarding the Urban Farm Program contact:
Harper Keeler at hkeeler@uoregon.edu**