The Sustainable Object/Sustainable Environment

General Synthesis Integration Course Proposal

ACRONYM: GIS
COURSE LEVEL: Senior
CREDITS: 4
LECTURE/LAB: GAH
SUB SCRIPTS: A, W

Course Description for Bulletin

This course offers students the opportunity to make three simple design projects informed by an intellectual investigation of sustainable design and eco-effective use of materials. International trends in Art as Social Practice, Eco and Land Art will be considered along with cutting-edge topics in Conservation Biology, Biodiversity, and Global Conservation Efforts. The course will be co-taught by a Visual Arts and Biology Faculty. The course will culminate with a public display of student projects.

A. General Studies Objectives

Objective 2: Commitment to citizenship through the ability to make informed decisions about public issues-- and of one's responsibility as an individual for the social whole.
Objective 8: Appreciation and understanding of artistic experiences as reflections of the depths and quirks of the human spirit.
Objective 7: Development of a conceptual framework with which to assimilate new experiences – and the ability to adapt it.
Objective 9: Scientific knowledge of the physical world, and understanding how that knowledge is attained and evaluated.
Objective 13: Critical understanding of one's own values and those of others, and of their role in making ethical choices.

Course Category

- Objective 7: Development of a conceptual framework with which to assimilate new experiences and the ability to adapt it. This interdisciplinary 4000-level course integrates the subjects of conservation biology, art, and design. Lectures, texts and hands-on design projects will explore the question: how can we rethink our approaches to making useful & aesthetic objects that are eco-efficient? Objectives focus on the creation of a surfboard, garment and dwelling organized around themes related to Conservation Biology, Design and Art. In-class discussions and reflective writing pieces form the conceptual framework to assimilate new experiences. This course fits the General Integration and Synthesis (GIS) course because it deals with problems and questions larger than a single discipline. It offers students the opportunity to experience the intellectual, cultural, ecological and logistical challenges that artists, designer and biologists confront as they search for functional solutions to large problems affecting humankind and our habitat. Assignments provide an integrated framework for positive action that will impact student capacity to be responsible citizens of the world. They graduate with an interdisciplinary portfolio that demonstrates competencies in critical thinking, research, writing, creativity and working collaboratively.

B. Course Description:

> *"If success or failure of the planet and of human beings depended on how I am and what I do… How would I be? What would I do?"*
>
> Buckminster Fuller

Buckminster Fuller's question serves as a point of departure for this course, since his sentiments underscore individual responsibility in shaping the course of the world and our environment. We are beginning with the premise that individuals must assume responsibility for the well-being of the environment by "rethinking and remaking the way we make things."

This interdisciplinary course integrates the subjects of conservation Biology, Visual Art, and Design. It will engage students in cutting-edge topics in Conversation Biology and Art, while exploring what artists, designers and biologists might have in common. Lectures, in-class discussions and texts will be applied experientially to the conceptualization and hands-on creation of three sculptural and functional design objects–a surfboard, a garment and a temporary dwelling using downcycled, repurposed and green materials.

Students will gain direct experience of making a functional, usable, and sustainable design object that can be shared with the college community. They will emerge from the course claiming direct experience as thinkers, designers and problem solvers empowered to take individual responsibility for the social and ecological whole as we work towards a more sustainable future.

Eco-related Artists, Designers, Architects and collaboratives who will be studied are Architects for Humanity, The Philadelphia Mural Art Program, Mel Chin, Wolfgang Laib, Ana Mendieta, Suzanne Lacy, Jason deCaires Taylor, Richard Long, Marina Abramovic and Alfredo Jaar.

Explanation of chosen objectives and course category (additional objectives may be stated here):

This interdisciplinary 4000-level course integrates the subjects of conservation biology, art, and design. Lectures, texts and a series of hands-on object making design projects will explore the question: how can we rethink our approaches to making useful and aesthetic objects that are eco-efficient? The course objectives focus on the creation of three design assignments, surfboard, garment and dwelling organized around lectures on cutting-edge themes related to Conservation Biology, Design and Art. In-class discussions and finite writing assignments form the conceptual framework to assimilate new experiences and respond. Instruction in basic art and design skills needed to complete each project will be a component of class: introduction to design principles, woodworking, and techniques for assemblage. Students will emerge from the course claiming direct experience as thinkers, and problem solvers empowered to take individual responsibility for the social and ecological whole as we work towards a sustainable future.

<u>Course category</u>

This course falls into the General Integration Synthesis category because it integrates thematic, topical, experiential and creative approaches to learning. It engages topics of ecological sustainability and conservation to inspire student hands-on creation of sculptural and functional design objects. We will therefore propose an "A" sub script for the course.

New Learning Opportunities and Interdisciplinary Nature:

This is a seminar mode GIS course co-taught by a faculty from the Visual Arts discipline and one from Conservation Biology. It integrates experiential hands-on art-making with intellectual discussion and debate about Biodiversity, Global Conservation Efforts and Renewable forms of energy, Art As Art as Social Practice, Land Art, Eco Art, and Performance Art. Through examination of International trends in Art and Conservation Biology, students will conceptualize and create solutions to simple design projects employing hand-made rather than computerized or software-driven processes. The seminar and experiential format of the course will permit studio or lab time whereby the faculty will demonstrate basic three-dimensional design methods to students. Some of the demonstrations will include: how to create a preliminary sketch, outline or storyboard of ideas; how to select and source environmentally neutral or friendly materials; how to safely and effectively use basic wood working tools, and how to assemble materials to construct the final object**.** The capstone of the course will be a public display of student work.

The course will require extraordinary effort on the part of professors to maintain a continuity of compelling module topics that present contemporary topics from the visual arts and conservation biology that guide students through the creation of sustainable object projects and designs. To accomplish these goals, the course is proposed as a joint teaching effort between Professor Ron Hutchinson, Professor of Conservation Biology and Elizabeth Hall, MFA, [Adjunct]. Faculty will alternate or share lecture and discussion sessions to present on their area of subject matter and topical expertise. Elizabeth Hall and/or Professor Hutchinson to guide the students through the use of tools and materials to construct each sustainable design.

C. Course Proposal Narrative:

New Learning Opportunities

This is a senior GIS course is co-taught by a faculty from the Visual Arts discipline and one from Conservation Biology. It integrates experiential hands-on design with intellectual exploration topics such as Biodiversity, Global Conservation, Renewable forms of energy, Art as Art as Social Practice, Land Art, Eco Art, and Performance Art. Through examination of International trends in Art and Conservation Biology, students will conceptualize and create solutions to three simple design projects using hand-made rather than software-driven processes.

Eco-related Artists, Designers and Architects who will be studied are Architects for Humanity, Mel Chin, Wolfgang Laib, Ana Mendieta, Suzanne Lacy, Jason deCaires Taylor, Richard Long, Marina Abramovic and Alfredo Jaar. Eco-related Artists, Designers, Architects and collaboratives who will be studied are Architects for Humanity, The Philadelphia Mural Art Program, Mel Chin, Wolfgang Laib, Ana Mendieta, Suzanne Lacy, Jason deCaires Taylor, Richard Long, Marina Abramovic and Alfredo Jaar.

Hands-on demonstrations will include: how to create a preliminary sketch and written proposal of an ideas; how to select and source environmentally neutral materials; how to safely and effectively use basic wood working tools, and how to construct a surfboard, a wearable object, a temporary dwelling. The capstone will be a public display of student work.

Interdisciplinary Nature

The course is proposed as a joint teaching effort between Professor Ron Hutchinson, Conservation Biology and Visual Arts Adjunct, Elizabeth Hall. (Although one professor in either discipline can teach this course). Elizabeth Hall, MFA has been teaching new media art forms, art history and writing college-level curricula since 1993.

Like biologists and conservationists, environmental, performance and site-specific artists typically collaborate with experts in other disciplines, such as ecologists and local officials to realize large and small-scale projects that raise awareness about pressing biology and environmental issues of our time. Students will have the opportunity to collaborate with their peers, the faculty, and the college community to realize the creation of the sustainable object and a public presentation to the college community.

Throughout the semester, students will be involved with the faculty to design and produce their objects and plan a public display of projects produced in the course. This may include but not be limited to: a temporary display of the work at Stockton College Art Gallery or a one-day "Earth Day" art opening to present a temporary outdoor dwelling.

Classroom requirements

The course will be organized into lecture and lab/studio sessions according to availability of suitable lab/studio space. A once per week 2-hour lab session where some tools and supplies can be stored. The Art Hammonton Arts Classroom Facility or Theater Workshop have been discussed as possibilities.

Organization of the course:

The course will be organized into 2 to 4-week modules depending on the complexity of each. Modules and Assignments are integral to each other. Each module will include readings, research, and discussions that culminate in the execution of one sustainable design object. Lectures and texts will provide the structure for concepts, themes, materials and tools, and project planning and execution.

Assignments

The creation of three objects constitutes the three project-based assignments for the course. The first two projects will be completed individually. The third assignment will be a collaborative effort. Students will write a project narrative for the final project and maintain a digital journal that documents through photographs and notes, the process of creating a sustainable design.

1. Introduction to The Formal Elements of Art & Principles of Design (Lecture)

2. Introduction to Contemporary issues in Conservation Biology (Lecture)

3. Surfboard Fabrication-wood working (Studio demonstration)

4. Ecologically motivated art: Earthworks, Land projects, Performance and Ephemeral Art (Lecture)

5. Surfboard Fabrication-wood working (Studio demonstration)

6. Land Art, Earth Art and Site Specific Installation-lecture

7. Art as Social Practice

8. Public Presentation (suggest concurrent with Earth Day

Texts

M. Braungart & W. McDonough. *Cradle to Cradle: Remaking the Way We Make Things*. North Point Press, 2002.

Excerpts
J. Michael Gorman. *Buckminster Fuller: Designing for Mobility.* Skira, 2002.
L. Lippard, *Weather Report: Art and Climate Change.* Boulder Museum of Contemporary Art, 2007.

Additional texts, The Richard E. Bjork Stockton College Library

Assemblage, Environment and Happenings, Kaprow, Allen PN3203.K3
Earthwork: art and landscape of the sixties, Boettiger, Suzann, N6494.E27B642002
Mapping The terrain: New Genre Public Art, Lacy, Suzanne, NX650.P6 M36

Assignments

Written Project Narratives

For each of the three designs, students will write a project narrative that describes the aesthetic and material components of their design, the art historic and ecological facts culled from lectures and text readings attempts to answers some essential question: "*how can I change the way I make things?" and where and how can my design be utilized?*

- Written project description
- Materials and supplies: where they will be sourced
- Photos, diagrams or schematics
- Proposed work plan with breakdown of timeline (how long it will take you to make)
- Proposed work plan including: method of installation; timetable for installation and removal (Final project only)

Grading:
*grading for each project includes a written narrative and completion of the design object

Surfboard	25%
Wearable-survival object	25%
Dwelling	25%
Attendance & Final Presentation	25%