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ENST 494.02: Practicum in Sustainable Agriculture Education

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ENST 494.02
Practicum in Sustainable Agriculture Education
2 credits
Fall 2013 – PEAS Farm
Fridays 10:10-11:30a.m.

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Course Description

This practicum is an opportunity to gain practical experience teaching about sustainable agriculture at the Garden City Harvest/UM EVST PEAS Farm. Under the direction of the GCH Farm to School Program Director, **Farm Educators** (you!!!) will guide visiting school groups on tours of the PEAS Farm and lead educational activities focused on the social, scientific, and nutritional components of sustainable agriculture and the food system. Farm Educators may also have the chance to choose and lead lessons tailored to the curriculum needs and skill levels of visiting school groups. Farm educators will also learn about educational techniques through articles and other reading selections, and have the opportunity to develop a lesson plan that will be used at the PEAS Farm for future field trips and summer farm camps. The Farm to School Director will base assessments on personal effort and growth demonstrated through teaching, lesson plan development, group discussions, and individual reflection.

Course Requirements

You have a unique opportunity to teach, learn from, and influence the lives of many of Missoula's youth. This course was created for your benefit as well as the benefit of Missoula schoolchildren and the PEAS Farm, please use this time wisely.

Attend group discussions. Practicum students will meet once weekly on Fridays at the PEAS farm for 1 1/2 hours to practice teaching methods, discuss program materials, selected readings, and experiences as educators. **You are expected to be present and participate in ALL group discussions.** We can have a really great time learning from each other and our place if we want to! Contact Jason in advance if you expect to miss a discussion, **each Friday discussion you do not attend without prior arrangement with the instructor will lower your final grade ½ a letter grade.*******

Learn Farm Tour information and lessons. At the start of the semester, *Farm Educators* will learn the specifics of guiding a group through the PEAS Farm and teaching a variety of lessons from the *Farm Educator Manual*. Lessons you choose should be appropriate for student ages, the current season, and the curriculum objective requests of visiting teachers. You are welcome to use lessons from additional curriculum if approved by GCH Farm to School Program Director.

Lead field trip tours and activities Farm Educators will spend a minimum of three hours (two field trips) on the farm per week working with visiting groups. Depending on availability, they may lead groups on their own or with one or two other *Farm Educators*. A

schedule will be set at the beginning of the semester based on your availability. The schedule will be posted in the PEAS Farm Barn and e-mailed to you every Friday for the upcoming week. All materials needed for Farm Lessons will be provided.

Required readings Required readings are included in the Syllabus and may be supplemented or changed by the instructor during the course. Please come to that week's discussion prepared to reflect on and discuss that week's reading and its significance to sustainable agriculture education.

Personal Reflection Journal (Due 11/15) An important component of this course is taking time to reflect on what you are learning about teaching and working with elementary-aged children in an experiential education environment. To do so, I ask you to keep a journal throughout the semester. Your syllabus has suggested journal questions to help you get started, but if you want to go a different route with your journal entries, by all means, do so, this is for your benefit. I only ask that you please take time to reflect after each group you work with and keep up with your journal entries (nothing is worse than a journal of two months of experiences that was written the night before!). This journal will help you throughout the semester with your teaching and prepare you to write a final reflection paper at the end of the semester. I will collect these, but I will return them to you!

Create your own lesson plan (Due 11/15) One of the best ways to engage in experiential education is to come up with your own lesson plan. These lesson plans, if done well, will be included in future Farm Educator Manuals (a great way to secure your legacy at the PEAS Farm!), so please put some time and effort into them, they are a great way to help make change in our world. Don't be afraid to push the boundaries with your lesson plans!

Alone, or in pairs (or maybe threes), practicum students will create agriculture related lessons that include:

- 1) "Objectives" describing what students will learn
- 2) Grade levels/ages that are appropriate
- 3) A list of materials needed
- 4) How long the lesson should take
- 5) Clear instructions so that anyone could teach the lesson.
- 6) Please indicate if your lesson is compatible with any of the MCPS Science Standards or Benchmarks (please try and make them compatible as they are our number one partner!).

I encourage lessons to be specific to the PEAS Farm since that is where we are, but you may go with a more general approach and develop a lesson that is adaptable for any farm setting. We will spend the last few weeks of group meetings "teaching" our lessons to other Farm Educators and getting feedback from them. You will have time after presenting your lesson to the class to revise it before turning it in.

Refer to the "Inquiry-Based Learning" Website for help creating a "facilitation" type lesson.

http://www.thirteen.org/edonline/concept2class/inquiry/implement_sub2.html

Final reflection paper guidelines (Due 11/15)

In 3-5, double-spaced pages, reflect on your experience as a PEAS Farm Educator. Be honest and creative as you respond to the questions below. Remember this is for you, but can also be very helpful in improving our programs. And again, if these questions don't address the direction you want to go with your paper, scrap 'em! Just remember personal reflection about teaching can only make you a better teacher!

- 1) Based on your experiences this semester, what is the most important lesson you learn about being an educator?
- 2) What was your greatest strength as a Farm Educator?
- 3) How could you improve your teaching and leadership?
- 4) How will this experience help you move forward with your personal and/or professional goals?
- 5) How could the Farm to School Program be improved for visiting school groups?

Additional assignment for Graduate students (Due 11/15)

Research one method or theory of experiential education (i.e. place-based education, Montessori schools, Waldorf education, etc.) and write a 4-6 page "literature review" about your chosen method/theory. Describe how it ties or could tie into teaching at the PEAS Farm. Include an annotated bibliography with at least five references.

Grading

Undergraduate:

Attendance & Effort-----	75%
Lesson Plan-----	15%
Journal-----	10%

Graduate:

Attendance & Effort-----	75%
Lesson Plan-----	10%
Lit Review-----	10%
Journal-----	5%

Course Schedule

8/30 Go over syllabus. Tour of the PEAS Farm: Get to know the place where you will be educating. The farm changes fast this time of year, we will walk around, get to know the place, where things our and think about what it would be like to be a child who visits the PEAS Farm for a field trip.

For next week:

Read: Pages 1-8 of David Sobel's book, Place-Based Education , and "The Challenge of Bioregional Education" By Frank Traina. Also, visit the Garden City Harvest Website at www.gardencityharvest.org to read about the organization and the history of PEAS and the farm.

Journal questions: *What are your personal goals and objectives for this Practicum? What skills would you like to gain or improve upon? What must it be like for a an elementary school-aged child to visit the PEAS Farm?*

9/6 Introduction to the PEAS Farm Educator Manual and how to give a tour of the farm, discussion of readings as well.

For next week:

Read: Chapters 4, 8, and 20, from Richard Louv's book Last Child in the Woods. **Also:** Get to know your PEAS Farm Educator Manual and take at least one more slow walk around the PEAS Farm getting to know the place in the Fall of 2013 better (remember the farm is constantly changing!).

Journal questions: *Why is teaching kids about sustainable agriculture important to you? What are some of the major topics we should talk with them about? What spaces at the farm offer the most "teachable moments"?*

9/13 Lesson planning (if necessary) and discussion of the current "educational paradigm"

For next week:

Read: "MCPS Science Curriculum Objectives" and "Teaching Tips" in your Farm Educator Manual

Journal questions: *How can we facilitate a love of one's place by what we do at the Farm? What "lessons" do you think every student should take home from their PEAS Farm visit? What do you think of the MCPS Science Curriculum Objectives?*

9/20 Come to the farm and give a tour to a classmate. I will be out of town this day, I want you all to partner up and give an informal tour to a classmate.

For next week:

Read: Concept to Classroom, Inquiry Based Learning Workshop.

Online at: <http://www.thirteen.org/edonline/concept2class/inquiry/index.html>

Sections to read:

- Explanation: First 4 Sections listed on website
- Demonstration: "What do Inquiry Based Lesson Plans Look Like?" Then click on: Grade Level 4-5, Science Facilitation Plan Lesson
- Implementation: Key Principles

Journal questions: *How does "Inquiry based learning" relate to teaching about sustainable agriculture? How can I use this teaching method?*

9/27 Find partner(s) for lesson plan development, brainstorm ideas about lessons, look at examples of past student lesson plans.

For next week:

Read: "Feeding Our Future" by Michael Ableman (available at <http://www.ecoliteracy.org/publications/rsl/michael-ableman.html>)

"Feeding our kids the right food... and inspiring them to eat it." by Pamela Koch (available at http://www.ecoliteracy.org/publications/rsl/pam_koch.html)

The Ecoliteracy website has a great section called "Thinking outside the Lunchbox" which you should all check out!

Journal: *Journal about a challenging moment you have had as a Farm Educator.*

10/4 Discuss Place-Based Ed as it relates to Sustainable Ag Ed

Journal: *Journal about a success you have had as a Farm Educator.*

10/11 **Lesson plan ideas due**, Discuss how we, as somewhat experienced Farm Educators, can make an impact on what kids eat, and how they look at food and our food system.

Journal: *Continue journaling about your teaching experiences.*

10/18 Meet to discuss field trips so far, and schedule lesson plan presentations.

Journal: *Continue journaling about your teaching experiences.*

10/25 **Lesson Plan Presentations**

Journal: *Continue journaling about your teaching experiences.*

11/1 Last class meeting: **Lesson Plan Presentations** (I will send you all feedback on your lesson plans before you have to submit them for a grade)

11/15 **Lesson Plans due electronically; Reflection Paper and Journals due**

11/15 **Graduate Student Paper due**

Special Professorial Note

If you all have any questions or concerns throughout the semester, or right from the start, PLEEEEEEEASE let me know ASAP, I want you all to have a wonderful learning and teaching experience and that starts with high levels of quality communication! Don't be afraid to speak up and ask questions or raise concerns!