

The Perennial Turn (PT) ENVS0332 - Fall 2020

Community-Connected Learning Work Plan Fall 2020

*"In the beginner's mind there are many possibilities,
but in the expert's there are few."
¹Shunryu Suzuki (1905-1971)*

Introduction and Background

The Community-Connected Learning (CCL) course module is designed to create a relationship grounded in the theory and intellectual pursuits of our classroom and the practical work of partners/practitioners in the community. Thirty percent of the grade in ENVS 332: The Perennial Turn in Ag and Culture is based on the CCL semester work. As an architecture CCL establishes an aspirational two-way bridge between you, the student, and your practitioner(s) to achieve a transformational experience. It is founded on the zen principle of a beginner's mind and is rooted in the experimental intentions of the New Perennials Project.² To change culture, as this class sets out to explore, CCL offers a new literacy based on relationships and through the sharing of knowledge.

Otto Scharmer in his work at MIT and in the development of Theory U. argues that our capacity to pay attention co-shapes the world. What prevents us from attending to situations more effectively is that we aren't fully aware of that interior condition from which our attention and actions originate. Scharmer calls this lack of awareness our blind spot. CCL is one method to open each other to blindspots and assumptions - by opening the walls of the classroom to include the community.

At the start of the semester you will select a New Perennials Sphere³ that interests you and be assigned to a small group. Your group will be partnered with that sphere's practitioners who have agreed to join us this semester. ([see invitation letter to partners here](#))

As a student we expect that you will show up mind, body, and spirit by preparing and opening to your community partner and small group. There are three formally structured phases to this work during the semester. In addition we'll do some work on deep listening, consider theories of engagement and ontologies, and dominant social paradigms from scholars such as Lakoff, Gladwell, Brown, Gerbner, Meadows, and Feibleman, among others.

¹ <https://www.dailyzen.com/journal/zen-mind-beginners-mind>

² <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1n0hxKaocOd4wIVAQBcxAuw-Jeeh5QJxN/view?usp=sharing>

³ <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1b3vWkDL5Hwxw9eQFbWgC3bzPDS0MMBVaC8DAQ5FUAs/edit?usp=sharing>

Community-Connected Learning Modules & Timeline

1st Partner/Practitioner Meetings

1st One-on-One meetings: weeks 3-6 (9/25, 10/2, 10/9): Schedule, prepare and conduct a 90-minute to 2-hour conversation with your partner via ZOOM to gather information from them, about them, using the questions you have prepared (see next page for framework of questions) building upon the small intro they have already received about the class and our work.

Goal: Practice deep listening. You are exploring with your partner: Who are you? partners? What is your work/practice? Why do they do what you do?

Deadline: Class Friday, October 9th each group will make a 5 min presentation on first practitioner meetings.

2nd Partner/Practitioner Meetings

2nd One-on-One meeting: weeks 8 & 9 (10/30, 11/6): Schedule, prepare and conduct a 90-minute to two hour conversation (in person or Zoom) between 10/22 and 11/5. To prepare for this conversation you will apply the theories and ideas of The Perennial Turn (PT) to the work of your partner to share your thinking and learning. You will prepare some information to share with them in draft format to guide you and find out what they need to integrate the PT or what might stop them from integrating the PT, or perhaps how they are already doing the PT work.

Goal: Find opportunities for integration of PT into the person/org's work. Test ideas and thinking - teaching and learning - as they and you consider our work.

Objective: Synthesize what we have been discussing in class via our readings and discussions and how they align with the conversations and ideas you are both personally and collective considering. It is your turn to share with your partner. What is the Perennial Turn to you? What ideas are emerging for you and how do they apply to the sphere, to your partner/practitioner's work? You are still in a space of exploring with your partner.

Focusing on teaching and learning along with the cultural context of their work and your emerging ideas of cultural transformation.

Deadline: Class Friday, November 6th each group will make a 5 min presentation on second practitioner meetings.

Sphere Panels with current and former Community Partners/Practitioners

As the semester evolves Sphere panel discussion will be scheduled with past and present community partners to share and exchange ideas either within a sphere or across spheres. Each semester we anticipate one-two sessions via zoom.

Final Class Presentations: Fall 2020

Week 12: Via Zoom during final classes

Wednesday, 12/2: 2 to 4:45 pm EST

Friday, 12/4: 12:40 to 1:30 pm EST

Assignment

Students will work with your sphere group to prepare a conversation that includes a 15-minute pre-recorded segment to engage with partners' work, their questions, and your experience with them to weave together the ideas of a Perennial Education, ways of knowing, and learning and unlearning.

Each sphere group will have 45 minutes, max.

Please note the Sacred Practices group will be going on Friday as these partners can only make that day.

Format:

- Live - 5-minute BRIEF introductions - yourselves and your partners
- Recorded - 15-minute conversation
- Live - 15+ minutes q/a

For the 15-minute recorded conversation aim to include an overview of your partner, a reflection of your experience, and the application of your ideas of a perennial education. Consider the following questions:

- How is your partners' work perennial and contributing to the "whole" i.e. where are there overlaps between spheres?
- How might your experience with this course help them integrate the Perennial Turn concepts deeper into their work?
- How does their work support/contribute to a Perennial Education?
- How is your partners' work and the Perennial Turn symbiotic?
- Where is the potential for building community? (consider agency, motivation, resources)