



Sustainable Futures

A community-based interdisciplinary studio
Summer 2007

The Course

This ten-week course of study is designed to offer university students and interested professionals the opportunity to live and work in a rural, but rapidly developing region in Costa Rica on projects concerned with creating futures that are ecologically and socially just. This is a multi-disciplinary program that uses theory and practice as the learning approach, and introduces issues such as how one organizes to do work and how to engage a diverse and complex community in place-making. The studio projects take place within a community-based learning environment where students learn from residents about local history and conditions and incorporate such knowledge into the planning, design and construction of projects in the Monteverde area. Students work with community members through the local and regional institutions and organizations serving the Monteverde region. In the course of providing technical assistance to the greater Monteverde community, students will learn skills required to gather information from place and residents and to process this information both analytically and expressively in order to develop inspired design.

Teaching Team (tentative; subject to adjustment)

June Semester:

Scott Shannon, Associate Professor & SF Coordinator, Faculty of Landscape Architecture,
SUNY-College of Environmental Sciences and Forestry, sshannon@mvinstitute.org

David Myers, Professor, Department of Natural Resource Science and Landscape Architecture,
University of Maryland, dmyers@umd.edu

July Semester:

Dennis Andrejko, Professor of Architecture, School of Architecture and Planning, University of
Buffalo, andrejko@ap.buffalo.edu

Lynda Schneekloth, Professor School of Architecture and Planning, University of Buffalo,
lhs1@ap.buffalo.edu

All Ten Weeks:

Anibal Torres, Monteverde Institute Course Coordinator, atorres@mvinstitute.org

Times and Locations

May 28- August 6, 2007. Monday through Friday, 8-5 at the Monteverde Institute

Key Concepts

Interdisciplinary: This program integrates scholarship and methods of inquiry from architecture, landscape architecture, and planning. Students should be open to learning new approaches, looking at new areas of research/literature, and be willing to complete tasks that may be unfamiliar to them. Most of the work will be done in teams that include students from all three disciplines. The faculty will also work as a team.

Community/MVI partnership: This class is part a long tradition of working with local community members. The Monteverde Institute advocates for a sustainable future in the region, as well as supports local institutions and implements plans and projects developed by the students and faculty of the Sustainable Futures program. MVI works year round with the community as part of its educational and research programs.

Service Learning: From the student perspective, this program aims to give real-world application to your academic studies. You are providing technical expertise to MVI and the greater community while the residents are teaching you about local conditions, community dynamics and getting things done.

Professionalism: The work that students do in this program goes to a client and will be implemented. While students may be learning through the process of the work, it is important to realize that the product must be professional and thorough. Final work needs to be “A” quality. Similarly, students are expected to be responsible, courteous, and reliable in all dealings with students, faculty, and our community clients.

Goals and Objectives

- To produce a variety of designs and plans for use by the Monteverde Institute and its local partners, and facilitate discussion and consensus building regarding growth and community development in the Monteverde region.
- To introduce and prepare students with skills and understanding of issues relevant to community design and planning in professional practice.
- To develop informed concern about sustainable development and contemporary social issues.
- To promote critical reflection on the role of community leaders and social designers/planners in building, empowering, and sustaining communities.

Course Expectation and Evaluation

The following serves as a contract between faculty and students as to the expectations of the class.

Attendance

Attendance is mandatory everyday of class and for the entire period. Students are expected to be ready to work at 8:00am when class begins. No absences are allowed except in the case of medical or other emergencies (great surf at Jaco is NOT an emergency).

For each absence (this includes arriving late and leaving early), the student’s grade will drop by one third letter grade for the course (for instance, if the student has received a grade of A- on all projects/assignments, missing one day would drop this to B+)

There will be times when individuals and teams will need to leave the classroom/studio to out into the field. Students should check with faculty in advance to make sure that there are no conflicts, or that appropriate transportation is available. If you need to get someplace without planning ahead, transportation costs (taxi) will not be reimbursed.

Participation and Expectations in Class and Teams

This class requires that each student contribute to the end product through a variety of responsibilities and roles. Each project will include a collective grade for the group product and an individual grade based on personal contribution and team responsibilities.

The quick pace and applied nature of this course necessitates strict adherence to attendance, preparation and deadlines. The faculty will make every effort to stick to the course schedule, but variations are inevitable (including assignment deadlines and requirements). If you miss class (such as when you need to be in the field), it is your responsibility to find out what happened. Anything that is handed out will be posted in the studio.

Students are encouraged to ask the faculty and MVI staff for guidance as often as they want or need. Faculty and students will work closely together throughout the course. Additionally, most course-related problems can be resolved if they are jointly addressed by the instructors and students early in the semester. Students with special needs – factors that might interfere/conflict with a student’s successful completion of the course – should tell the instructors as soon as possible. The faculty encourage individuals or groups of students who see ways to improve the course to arrange an informal meeting with the faculty.

Please be aware of the university guidelines regarding academic integrity at your home institutions. These same guidelines apply when you are abroad. Academic dishonesty includes such things as cheating, inappropriate use of university equipment/materials, fabrication of information, plagiarism (presenting someone else’s work from any source as your own), and so on. All forms of academic dishonesty will be considered a serious offense of university policy. Students committing any form of academic dishonesty will be reported to their home department and university. Any student who violates the university academic integrity policy will receive a failing grade for the course.

In addition, students must abide by the rules outlined in the student handbook. In particular, inappropriate and unethical behavior in studio and during your free time could lead to your early dismissal and a failing grade in the course (for example, excessive public drunkenness, possession of illegal substances, fighting, verbally abusive language towards MVI staff or homestay family members).

Course Projects

During the course of the program, students are expected to work on group projects while also maintaining documentation of their individual efforts. Late assignments/projects are generally not accepted. Failure to attend reviews/pin-ups will be reflected in individual grades on projects. However, special arrangements (without penalty) may be warranted under certain circumstances.

Lectures

Students will be required to attend all course related lectures. In addition, students may be required to attend appropriate additional MVI lectures semester (a calendar of lectures will be posted in the studio).

Grading/Evaluation

The faculty will collectively grade each student in the class. Grades will be based on the following:

Projects: 80% (Grade based on average of grade from group product and individual contribution to process and product).

Individual initiative and participation: 20% (students who go the extra mile to seek and respond to critique, to lead discussion, and help manage project production will be rewarded. Just doing what you need to do to get by will not...)

Schedule

Week 1 (5/28)	Orientation, Intensive Language, Field Trips
Week 2-5	June Semester (Scott and David)
Week 6 (6/30-7/8)	Break
Weeks 7-9.5	July Semester (Dennis, Lynda) Thursday, August 2 - Symposium
Week 10 (8/3-8/6)	Wrap up and leave

Resources

Suggested Readings on Costa Rica, Environmental Policy, Monteverde Region and Scenario Planning, plus many other available in the MVI library.

What I have is a start. If you intend on bringing down more resource material, we can add it to the list. I would also like to list key SF reports, etc.

Costa Rica: General

“Republic of Costa Rica.” *Culturgram*.

Central American/Costa Rica Environmental Planning

Barzetti, Valerie and Yanina Rovinski. 1992. Excerpts from Towards a Green Central America: Integrating Conservation and Development. West Hartford: Kumarian Press.

Quesada-Mateo, Carlos A and Vivienne Solís-Rivera. 1990. Costa Rica’s National Strategy for Sustainable Development: A Summary. *Futures*, May: 396-416.

Daling, Tjabel. 1998. “Environment and Eco-tourism” In *Costa Rica: A Guide to the People, Politics and Culture*. New York: Interlink Books.

San Jose, Costa Rica, Urban Planning

Avalos, Angela, R. 2001. “La ciudad está al revés” *La Nación*. December 23.

Monteverde: Ecology, Ecotourism and Conservation

Honey, Martha. 1994. “Paying the Price of ecotourism.” *Américas*. Vol 46 (Nov/Dec): 40-47

Yoon, Carol Kaesuk. 2001. “Something Missing in Fragile Cloud Forest: The Clouds” *New York Times* (November 20).

Luther, Joseph. 1998. Journey to Monteverde: Lessons in Sustainability. *Western Planner*. March: 9-11

Aylward, Bruce, Katie Allen, Jaime Echeverría, Joseph Tosi. 1996. "Sustainable ecotourism in Costa Rica: the Monteverde Cloud Forest Preserve" *Biodiversity and Conservation*, 5: 315-343.

Vivanco, Luis. 2001. Spectacular Quetzals, Ecotourism and Environmental Futures in Monte Verde, Costa Rica. *Ethnology*, 40, 2: 79-92.

Nadkarni, Nalini and Nathaniel T. Wheelwright. 2000. *Monteverde: Ecology and Conservation of a Tropical Cloud Forest*. New York: Oxford University Press (Selected chapters: Introduction, The Physical Environment, Conservation in the Monteverde Zone, Agriculture in Montverde, Conservation Biology).

Other Monteverde

Leitinger, Ilse Abshagen. 1997. "Long-Term Survival of a Costa Rican Women's Crafts Cooperative: Approaches to Problems of Rapid Growth at CASEM in the Santa Elena-Monteverde Region." In *The Costa Rican Women's Movement: A Reader*. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press.

Community Participation, Neighborhood Planning

Morrish, William and Catherine R. Brown. 1994. *Planning to Stay* (selections). Milkweed Editions.

Talen, Emily. 2000. The Problem with Community in Planning. *Journal of Planning Literature*. 15, 2: 171-183.

Arnstein, Sherry. 1969. A Ladder of Citizen Participation. *Journal of the American Institute of Planners*, July: 216-224

Scenario Planning

Schwartz, Peters. 1991. The Scenario-Building Animal." In *The Art of The Long View*. New York: Doubleday Currency.

Myers, Dowell and Alicia, Kitsuse. 2000. "Constructing the Future in Planning: A Survey of Theories and Tools." *Journal of Planning Education and Research*, 19: 221-231.

Hirschhorn, Larry. 1980. "Scenario Writing: A Developmental Approach" *Journal of the American Planning Association*, April: 172-183.

Wilkinson, Lawrence. 1993. How to Build Scenarios. *Wired*. (Oct 26)
<http://www.wired.com/wired/scenarios/build.htm>

Ruona, Wendy. 2001. A Review of Scenario Planning Literature. *Futures Research Quarterly* 17, 2: 7-31.