

Claire Mueller

Individual Study Plan

CEP 2013

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# Vision Essay:

I am a student who is concerned with the future of mankind. I see us angling towards a waterfall that will lead to our demise, in that our current course leads us towards increased globalization with a focus on consumption. Little effort is being made by governments and the majority of citizens to turn this practice around. People are sucked in by the promise of a better life through newer computers, microwaves, and video games, without any focus being put on local communities, environmental problems, or fulfillment in our daily lives. We perpetuate a system of life without ever evaluating the pros and cons, successes and failures of that system. I want to use my education to evaluate this system, and then to learn what can be done to fix it. I want to learn about the value of community, local economy, and individual values in society. My goal is to understand what needs to be done to turn around this trend of increased pollution, lack of community, and disconnect from the planet we live on.

As we are learning in CEP 301, I see increasingly the connection between individual property and the loss of community value, but I refuse to let future generations see the effects of this. As people increase their focus on themselves, they lose focus on the community and those around them. Statistics show that since the rise of consumerism in the 1950’s, there has been a steady decrease in reported happiness of the population. This is because with the advent of technology, people no longer need to be interdependent. As people lose their interdependence, they become more isolated, and lose a feeling of belonging in their communities. Community belonging is important to fulfillment. It gives value to us as individuals. Without a purpose, who are you? If your only purpose is to consume, then your only value is a price tag. As part of a community, your value as a person is much deeper than that. Your value is your contribution, your conversation, your personality. These things are irreplaceable. Such a focus is being put on consumption that people are forgetting those values, distracted by the ads telling us that our hair isn’t pretty enough, or your shoes aren’t cool enough, or your phone is “old news”. I want to remind people of the important values that are being lost through a focus on consumerism, and bring back the ideal of a self-sustaining local economy, with a community that knows and cares about one another.

In order to have a self sustaining economy, we need land and resources not to be completely depleted. Thus, I do not see the value in perpetuating a system that allows the world to wither. With our increasing consumption, we all close our eyes to the negative effects this has on the world. This is called a “shadow ecology”, or negative environmental impact that cannot be seen by consumers. I am interested in learning to lower the shadow ecologies produced by the United States by teaching people about the value of locally made, fair trade, or sustainably produced goods. Therefore, in my education I want to learn about how economic equality effects people’s ability to change the environment around them. I used to think these topics were not related, but after my PoliSci 384 class, I see that they are intrinsically linked. I want to show the world how these are linked to encourage others to be aware of their consumption practices.

My value in education, therefore, is understanding the important connections between community, consumerism, culture, and the environment. All of these ideas are interconnected through a variety of intermediate topics. CEP will allow me to explore these through a tight-knit community that encourages growth and a self-designed curriculum. Previously I have been involved with many community programs, and have found that most of them are run by small groups, rather similar in style of governance to CEP. Thus, I feel that my experience on Friday’s will be invaluable to my future work in the community.

I am excited by the opportunity to study with such a diverse and exciting group of students. Together we will push each other to try new activities, learn about different ways of thinking, and most importantly, to explore about what a community means and how you can build it. My education will start me down a path towards sustainability and community education that will benefit future generations.

Fall Quarter 2011: 12 credits total

CEP 301: The Idea of Community: 5 credits CORE

This class looked at a variety of famous philosophers searching specific works to define their ideal community. Through reading their works, we learned about the importance of understanding what goal/purpose a community serves in order to best plan for that purpose. By looking at their ideas of an ideal community, we as a class were able to identify what are desirable and undesirable traits in different types of community, and how different forms of government, community structure, economy, and power structures can affect that community. This class has taught me to understand my idea of the “ideal community” and has given me the tools to think critically about how that community can be created. Now that I have those tools, I can look at ways that people are trying to implement their communities .

CEP 300: Fall retreat: 1 credit CORE

The CEP retreat is a forum for growth and community building within the CEP community. It gives students a chance to relax and spend time together without the stress and weight of school and work. At Fall Retreat we were able to have interesting and deep conversations about community, environment, our interests, our goals, our plans, and so much more. This retreat gives students the opportunity to connect with one another and understand how all of our goals fit into this dream we have about the world. This fills one of my 30 required core credits.

POLISCI 384: Global Environmental Politics: 5 credits METHODS

This class discusses and breaks down international treaties in terms of how they are created, what affect they may have, and how they are carried out. We discussed why treaties are more or less effective than other strategies to deal with environmental problems, as well as how these issues are tied to other types of international treaty, such as human rights treaties. This class has broadened my views on environmentalism substantially by allowing me to understand the connection between human rights/welfare and sustainability. Now that I understand this link, I can better understand how community plays a role in solving environmental problems, rather than individualized solutions like recycling or envirostar appliances.

URBP 498: Planning as a Profession: 1 credit ELECTIVES

This class is a lecture style course that allows students to learn about the different applications of Urban Planning in real world settings. We heard from a variety of professionals who work on zoning laws, as architects, with developers deciding what the land should be used for, and much more. This allowed me to understand what my degree can be used for, and to broaden my horizons for the future, in that I have a better understanding of the bureaucratic system in which all development must take place. When designing and building essentially Ecovillages, it is important to know and understand the typical process through which development happens. This class, which fills an elective credit, does exactly that; it gives me an insight into the steps and processes that a building and city must go through to create development.

DIVERSITY: 5

METHODS: 5

CORE: 6

ELECTIVES: 1

Winter Quarter 2012: 8 credits total

CEP 302: The Environment: 5 credits CORE

This class looked at research specific to Washington State related to global warming. We created Washington State Adaption Plans for topics chosen by each group. My group created a report discussing the future of electricity production for Washington State when decreases in rainfall and snow pack are taken into account. We looked at relative prices of alternative energy, as well as risks, costs of maintenance, and successes in other places with similar types of energy production. This class not only taught me what environmental impacts global warming is expected to have in this region, but also taught me group management skills, group writing skills, and academic research skills. I am very proud of the work I produced in this class, and will take these skills with me into the business world.

L ARCH 362: Urban Landscape: 3 credits METHODS

In this class we studied DIY Urbanization as a movement and a way of coping with inadequate urban planning. DIY Urbanization is when residents of a place reclaim an unused or underused space or resource, and use it for an alternate purpose. An example of this could be the use of sidewalks for street vendors, the use of alleys and rooftops for gardening, or the reclamation of abandon property for community spaces. DIY Urbanism is by definition separate from city government. We studied countries around the world and how they have handled DIY Urbanism, as well as the causes of these movements. Usually they are reactions to a lack of a certain type of infrastructure. This can be widely applied in the United States, especially in relation to underrepresented communities and urban food systems. I am excited to use my understanding of DIY Urbanism to identify infrastructure or services that are lacking in specific places, and then to use that information to push for change.

METHODS: 3

CORE: 5

ELECTIVES: Spring Quarter 2012: 14 credits total

CEP 303: Social Structures and Processes: 5 credits CORE

In this class we looked at the theory and history of planning in the United States. Using the academic literature we had reviewed, we travelled as a class to the Lake City neighborhood in North Seattle. Lake City is undergoing major redevelopment currently, as the largest landholder, Bill Pierre Motors, is redeveloping all of the land that they own. They hired Marty Curry, our teacher, to bring our class to Lake City to do research on what the community values within their space, and how we can improve it. Through a series of interactive assignments that involved groups of students working with Lake City residents, I learned about how to gather and analyze information about important spaces and changes within a community. This experience will be invaluable to me in the future in surveying groups of people about their understanding of a space, using a variety of methods to collect data, analyzing that data, and compiling it in an accessible way to non-academic populations. I hope to continue doing work of this type of work in the future.

CEP 300: Spring Retreat: 1 credit CORE

Our twice yearly retreat, this all day meeting gave us time to begin working on our Senior Projects, reflect on whether or not the methods of teaching on our classes thus far has been the best that it can be, and of course, to spend time with the other people in our major. We had a very productive day filled with small group workshops, and finished the day by working on the major’s mission statement. As one of the people who had worked on setting up, organizing food, and cleaning up, it was also a planning experience for me.

L ARCH 363: Ecological Design and Planning: 3 credits METHODS (NW)

A discussion of how environment fits into cities, this class fits very well into my focus. I want to explore urban food, sustainability, and community systems to someday build an ecovillage in our own city. This class will teach me design theories that seek to refocus landscape design around “the goal of achieving ecological sustainability.” I am excited to learn the terms and theories necessary for me to interact with other landscape architects and building architects so that I can work with them in designing a future green Seattle. This class will fill 3 of 25 methods credits.

METHODS: 8 credits

CORE: 6 credits

ELECTIVES: 0 creditsSummer 2012: 4 credits total

LARCH 498: The Elwha Dam: 4 ELECTIVES

The Elwha Dam on the Olympic Pennisula was built out of code. Not a day of its life has it fit the requirements for dams in the USA. This class explored why it took almost 70 years to tear down, in spite of its inability to meet code. It also explored how the dam impeded natural systems, and how those systems have changed since the dam was built. Now that a plan is in place to remove the dam, we were able to explore what effect the removal of the dam will have on the ecosystem and surrounding community, and what plans are in place to mitigate those impacts.

METHODS: 6 credits

CORE: 0 credits

ELECTIVES: 15 credits

Fall 2012: 14 credits total

CEP 460: Planning in Context: 5 credits CORE

This class is a required CEP core class that looked at the theories of Urban Planning in the context of the real world. I was assigned with 3 other students to a project in Des Moines, WA, where we worked directly with the Director of the Planning Office to create a Façade Improvement Incentive Program. The idea being that improved facades in the downtown corridor would help to bring in cars off of the SR which runs straight through it. This additional commercial traffic would in trun help to stimulate the local economy, helping the City of Des Moines to begin reworking its downtown neighborhood and turn it into a retail core. This project helped us to understand the relationship between building design and planning, and the economic viability of a downtown area. It gave us skills in research, presentations, report writing, and working within a bureaucracy to achieve a single goal. The culmination was a proposal to the Des Moines City Council looking to enact a Façade Improvement Program supported by local community organizations such as the Business Council, the Rotary Club, and the local Community College.

CEP 300: Fall Retreat: 1 credit CORE

This is the first of our twice yearly retreats. A chance to meet all the incoming juniors and learn about their views and interests, this allows us to build community and plan for the coming year. The most valuable thing about retreats is that students get a chance to spend time together without the weight of school and work on their shoulders, which allows us to converse and share ideas openly and without prompting. We worked to plan a new fundraising committee that increases funding to our program, worked as a class to further determine our Senior Projects, and began building strong relationships with Junior Classmen, to ensure good working relationships throughout the year.

## CEP 498 A: Senior Project Development

This class gave me a chance to learn about project development. Hand-in-hand with our CEP 460 class, it taught us about research, literature reviews, and how to develop an academically viable project. CEP 460 focused more on the real world expectations, which often differ greatly from the academic world, and how to utilize academic research in a hands-on Senior Project. It culminated with the production of a Senior Project proposal and Literature Review.

## CEP 498 B: Governance

This class is giving credit for a process that previously was contained in the 5 credits of the core CEP classes. Governance is a 2 hour per week workspace for students to run the major. We break into 5 committees, each one with a different set of responsibilities. They work in conjunction with the program manager, Caitlin Dean, to ensure that everything that needs to be completed, gets completed. I will be “pointing”, or managing, Hearthstone: the internal engagement committee. This quarter we planned 2 fundraisers, a winter social to allow us to bond as a community, and the making of CEP apparel for students, alumni, and guest speakers as a way to lower costs for the program.

## CEP 446: Internship

I interned for Popcorn Pavilion, LLC as the manager of their Bellevue Square store. January through October is very steady, and has very few fluctuations in business. During that time I work as a Store Manager, with a standard business model. Christmas, however, is a different story. With the coming of a new store and the introduction of mobile carts, our monthly business increased 6 fold during November and December. Much of my time in the beginning of the quarter was spent learning about how to prepare for such a huge increase in business, and from November 15th-December 31st was spent enacting those lessons. From hiring and training, to business function, operations change substantially with such a large growth in business. With the support of my internship class, I learned about the ways in which a business handles that type of growth, and what type of steps can be taken to mitigate problems caused by those changes.

METHODS: 8 credits

CORE: 6 credits

ELECTIVE: 0 creditsWinter 2013: 17 credits

CEP 461: Ethics and Identity: 5 credits CORE

This class is a required CEP Core course that discusses ethics. A philosophy heavy course, it really challenged me to think deeply about how my actions might affect future people. I learned a lot about different modes of decision making, and the issues with each of those modes. Every other week, we spent 2 hours discussing a case study, from issues of climate change legislation to personal choices, we had to look deep within ourselves and question what it is that makes a decision ethical. I think that after this class I have been much more aware of the impact of my decision making, which, as I progress in the business world, has been very helpful for my success.

## CEP 498 A: Senior Project Development

This class is part two in a series to assist seniors in developing their senior projects. This quarter was used to teach us about data collection, project methods, and presentation styles. Because there are such a variety of project types, much of this quarter was spent working within our Senior Project Accountability Groups discussing the effectiveness of methods, the depth of research and how to go about that research, and presentation organization/style. This was important for the completion of our Senior Projects, as the projects were in their implementation stage, and many of us were having difficulty implementing the process we had planned in Fall Quarter of this year.

## CEP 498 B: Governance

This class is giving credit for a process that previously was contained in the 5 credits of the core CEP classes. Governance is a 2 hour per week workspace for students to run the major. We break into 5 committees, each one with a different set of responsibilities. They work in conjunction with the program manager, Caitlin Dean, to ensure that everything that needs to be completed, gets completed. This quarter I transferred into the Headlights Committee. The Headlights Committee works on organizational design, such as Curriculum Review, Mission and Values Statements, and Core Competencies. I worked on developing the Core Competencies to assist in next year’s curriculum review. The Core Competencies are basically a list of everything that a CEP student should know by the time that they graduate. While that seems very straightforward, it is very important to have a detailed list to use when judging the effectiveness of our curriculum. This list has to be reviewed by students, professors, and staff before it can pass, making it a long and arduous process, where feedback must be gathered and incorporated multiple times.

## MUSEN100: Choir

This class is a general choir class. It taught me skills in presentation, from posture to speaking voice, it gave me further confidence in standing up in front of a crowd and presenting. In the past 2 years I have worked hard to build this skill from the timid sophomore of 2011, to the confident public speaker I am today. This class allowed me to further strengthen that skill by giving me experience at being part of a larger presentation, without needing to be in control of the presentation. One of my biggest remaining issues with presenting is the need to feel in control to be able to present. If I am in control of the situation, I present quite well. However, if I am not in control, I lose my confidence and have difficulty doing my part. This class allowed me to step out of that, and gave me an opportunity to take the chance of not being in control.

Methods: 12 credits

Core: 5 credits

Elective: 0 creditsSpring 2013:

CEP 462: Community and Environment: 5 credits CORE

This class is the culmination of CEP core classes. With a strong focus on reflection and Senior Projects, it takes time to look at what has allowed us to be successful. About half of the time is spent working directly on our Senior Projects, from presentation or poster design to completing our EPortfolios and SP Writeups, it gives us guidance and support in ensuring that all of our final projects me the expectations of our program. The remaining half of the time is spent reflecting on our previous classes: How will we speak about this program and our experiences in an interview? How did each of these classes help us learn and what were the skills? What skills have we learned cumulatively, and what jobs can that lead us to? This type of reflection is important in helping us achieve the next step—finding and getting a job.

CEP 300: Retreat: 1 credit CORE

The second of the annual retreats, this retreat is much more business like than the Fall Retreat. Here we focus on what needs to be completed before the end of the year, gathering data for committees, such as an activity looking at the Core Competencies and gathering feedback on them. Only one day, rather than the Fall Retreat’s two, this retreat is a good way to maintain momentum going into Spring Quarter.

## CHID 496A: Intentional Communities

This class is an independent study including 2 other senior class students, one from CHID and one from the school of Social Work. The 3 of us have spent the last quarter visiting and reading about intentional communities, and then discussing their benefit from the perspective of each of our disciplines. Despite having different focuses within our academic careers, each discipline sees the value of these communities, and we are interested in knowing: How is that value determined? What terminology is used to discuss that value? And how can that value be understood in a larger non-academic sphere? This class has allowed me to think with more depth about intentional communities, and see the larger history behind them. In America, we often think of intentional communities as a “hippy” concept, but in reality, they have been around for thousands of years. So we discussed what has made them so successful, and what lessons we can learn from them to improve our own lives.

Methods: 10 credits

Core: 6 credits

Electives: 0 credits

# Fall Quarter 2013

GEOG 371: Hunger and Agricultural Development:

Specifically addressing food politics, international food markets, and food security, this class directly ties into the importance of locally available sustainable food. My biggest focus is how to achieve sustainability in food supply, and that will be to begin agricultural development around the Seattle area. While Washington has many farms and a fair amount of agriculture, most of our food still comes a long distance before reaching our table. My goal is to have every table in Washington fed from Washington soil. Although this is a lofty goal, I believe it can be done by understanding the politics of food production, the incentive in buying/producing food far from its eventual destination, and how food production location ties into human rights movements and sustainability movements.

## CEP 498: Senior Project Class ReDesign

Our Senior Project classes, currently a 2 class series, have many flaws. From inconsistent curriculum, to differing expectations between registered and nonregistered students, this program is realizing more and more the necessity of a consistent Senior Project curriculum. As such, I worked directly with Caitlin Dean, the CEP Program manager, to redesign the Senior Project class curriculum. The beginning of the quarter was spent researching other programs: How do they run their curriculum and what skills are they teaching? The second half of the quarter was spent reviewing the current work load, and modifying it in a way that best suits our program’s needs. The culmination of the quarter was a proposal of what a Senior Project class could look like, for Chris Campbell and Caitlin Dean to review with our Senior Project professor.

## CEP 446: Internship

At my job, KuKuRuZa Gourmet Popcorn, I am now the marketing manager. This summer we reworked our internet presence, from our website to our social media and review sites, to maximize our Search Engine Optimization (SEO). SEO is an important part of any company’s online presence, as it determines how easy it is for clients to find you. This means, when you search a term on Google, Bing, or Yahoo—how easy is it for them to find you? I worked closely with my boss, Alex Marrilanis, and Delaney Sullivan, to understand how each of their algorithms work and what management strategies a company can use to best optimize their site. By the end of the quarter, our website was up to our standards, and rated highly on the three top SEO management sites.