

# ENVIR 240: The Urban Farm

## SPRING QUARTER 2026

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## Educational Outcomes

### *Students will:*

- Become familiar with techniques of food production in urban settings.
- Gain a working knowledge of plant families, basic soil characteristics and methods of compost production.
- Develop a deeper understanding of how productive urban landscapes can reduce the ecological footprint of urban communities.

## Course Description

*5 credits    synchronous, in person lectures*

*Synchronous, in person lab Session once a week – meets during specified times*

Students will be introduced to farming methods which promote sustainable long term food production in urban settings. This course will develop students' understanding of the ecological connections between food production, human health and planetary sustainability. Specifically, the course will teach the basic skills needed for food production in an urban area and the ethics behind sustainable urban agriculture. Classroom sessions will be organized around the writings of farmers, philosophers and scientists. During these classroom sessions students will explore national and international solutions to food production in urban settings. The course will also include as much hands-on experience as possible. Students will develop knowledge of agricultural plant families, urban soils, planting and harvest schedules and organic solutions for common farm pests. Students will practice 'closing the farm loop' by learning to build soil health through compost, crop rotation, cover cropping and other organic alternatives to industrial fertilizer.

## Grading Policy -

Urban Food Systems Podcast *or*  
Service Learning Reflection.....15%  
Book Project.....10%  
Reading & Lecture Quizzes.....20%

Lab Assignments.....35%

Farm Planning Project

Scope

Map

Plan Spreadsheet

Plan Narrative

Plant Biology

Plant Family Project

Irrigation Reflection

Weed Collection Assignment

Soils Reflection

Exam.....20%

**Grades will be converted to a 4.0 scale based on the current POE grade policy:**

<https://envstudies.uw.edu/students/resources/academic-resources/>

- The detail of which appears at the end of this document.

## Course Books

Farming While Black – Leah Penniman (2018) - REQUIRED by week 2

Gardening in the Maritime Northwest – Seattle Tilth (2014) - Optional but highly recommended

## Class Schedule

*\*NOTE\** - If the book source is unspecified, this reading is from Farming While Black

| Week   |      | Topic                               | Reading                      | Assignments                                                             |
|--------|------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Week 1 | 3.31 | Intro to the Farm                   |                              |                                                                         |
|        | 4.2  | Justice & Equity                    | Intro & Ch 1                 |                                                                         |
|        |      | NO LAB                              |                              | assign Plant Family Groups                                              |
| Week 2 | 4.7  | Farm Planning 1                     | Ch 2 pg 27 - 41              |                                                                         |
|        | 4.9  | Farm Planning 2                     | Ch 2 pg 42-52                |                                                                         |
|        | Lab  | Plant Families<br>Soil Blocks       |                              | Pre Lab:upload plant family presentations - Create Farm Planning Groups |
| Week 3 | 4.14 | Intro to Crop Rotation              | Ch. 6 - Crop Rotation        |                                                                         |
|        | 4.16 | The Urban Farm as Insurgent Act !   | Maybe also Intro to Seeds... |                                                                         |
|        | Lab  | Bed Prep, Seeding and Transplanting | Farm Handbook                | Tools - paper-potting - Seeding...Transplanting....                     |

|                     |      |                                          |                      |                                                                                        |  |
|---------------------|------|------------------------------------------|----------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|
| Week 4              | 4.21 | Propagation & Tools for the Urban Farmer | CH 7 –Tools and Tech |                                                                                        |  |
|                     | 4.23 | Plant Starts                             | Coleman Ch 13 – PDF  |                                                                                        |  |
|                     | Lab  | Plant Biology Lab                        |                      | Pre-Lab: Garden Map Post<br>Post: Plant Biology Reflection                             |  |
| Week 5              | 4.28 | Soils: An Intro                          | Chapter 5            |                                                                                        |  |
|                     | 4.30 | Urban Soils Justice - Equity Access....  | Chapter 4            | PODCAST                                                                                |  |
|                     | Lab  | Soils                                    |                      | Pre-Lab Assignment: List of 15-20 crops you'll grow.<br>Post lab: Soils Lab Reflection |  |
| Week 6              | 5.5  | Compost Intro                            | Ch 12 HYVG - PDF     |                                                                                        |  |
|                     | 5.7  | Urban Compost & Worm Systems             |                      |                                                                                        |  |
|                     | Lab  | Irrigation Systems at Work               |                      | Pre Lab: Irrigation Questions<br>Post Lab: Irrigation Lab Write - Up                   |  |
| Field Trip Option 1 |      | 5/9 to 5/10 leave 7AM return 4pm sunday  |                      |                                                                                        |  |
| Week 7              | 5.12 | Plant Pests & Disease                    | Ch 11 HYVG – PDF     |                                                                                        |  |
|                     | 5.14 | Urban Farming & Community                | Chapter 11           |                                                                                        |  |
|                     | Lab  | Weeds of the Urban Farm                  |                      | Pre-Lab: Weed Collection<br>Post Lab: Reflection Weed Management                       |  |
| Week 8              | 5.19 | Irrigation - Introduction                | Ch 6 – HYVG          |                                                                                        |  |
|                     | 5.21 | Microgreens and Sprouts                  |                      | Pg 215-217                                                                             |  |
|                     | Lab  | No Lab                                   |                      | PreLab: Fill out Book Questionnaire                                                    |  |
| Field trip option 2 |      | 5.23 @ 7AM and return 5.24 @ 4PM         |                      |                                                                                        |  |
| Week 9              | 5.26 | EXAM                                     |                      |                                                                                        |  |
|                     | 5.28 | GRASS BASED FOODS -WHEAT & COWs          | Olivia & Eli         |                                                                                        |  |
|                     | Lab  | Book Project DUE                         |                      | Post Lab: Upload Book Reflection                                                       |  |
| Week 10             | 6.2  | Trauma, Land and Healing                 | Ch 14                |                                                                                        |  |
|                     | 6.4  | Breakfast Potluck?                       | Ch 15                |                                                                                        |  |
|                     | Lab  | Planning Project (ONLINE)                |                      | Presentations DUE!                                                                     |  |

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| WEEK 11 - Service Learning <i>or</i> Urban Food Systems Projects/Reports/Reflections are <b>due on</b> the Tuesday of finals week. |
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## Late assignments

**(turned in without prior approval) will incur sanctions of 10% for each day late.** For example, an assignment handed in on the due date after the appointed time will incur a late penalty of 10%; an assignment turned in three days after the due date will incur a penalty of 30%. An assignment turned in ten days late incurs a penalty of 100%. As such, we do not accept assignments later than nine days after the due date. Small assignments designed to help you prepare for class (e.g. online quizzes/discussions or homework due in class or section) as well as work scheduled to be presented or performed in class are not accepted late. This policy is flexible only in emergency or medical situations or, *with advance notice of excused absences*. Absences excused with advance notice may include: University-mandated absences, legal commitments, medical reasons, family need or personal emergency.

## Disability Accommodations

At the University of Washington, it is the policy and practice to create inclusive and accessible learning environments consistent with federal and state law.

All students are encouraged to make their instructors aware that they need disability accommodation and also to work with DRS to establish reasonable accommodations for course work. Possible accommodations include accessible furniture in classrooms, alternative print formats, alternative testing services, assistive listening devices, classroom relocations, early/priority registration, note-taking services, real-time captioning, and sign language interpreters. More information on DRS services and accommodations can be found at [UW DRS](#). Students who have already established accommodations with DRS should provide their letter of accommodation to each instructor in the first week of the course if not before, to assist the instructor(s) in creating accommodations and to inform and guide a discussion of options if needed.

Students who have not established accommodations with DRS and feel that they have a disability that will interfere with full participation should contact DRS to discuss accommodation options and consider discussing the need for accommodation with the instructor as soon as possible.

## Academic Honesty

Students at the University of Washington and within the College of the Environment are expected to maintain the *highest standards of academic conduct* which means *performing your own intellectual work to the very best of your abilities*. Most UW students conduct themselves with integrity.

Most professions have codes of ethics, or standards of behavior and conduct to which you will be expected to adhere. Your time at the University is no different. As a student, you are expected to present your own original work at all times. Using the work of others, including their ideas without proper attribution, is academic misconduct and *is not tolerated*.

Academic misconduct harms the University community in many ways. Honest students are frustrated by the unfairness of cheating that goes undetected or unreported. Students who cheat may skew the grading curve in a class, resulting in lower grades for students who work hard and do their own work.

If you suspect someone of cheating or engaging in academic misconduct, please report it to the relevant course instructor.

### *What is academic misconduct?*

Academic integrity requires that the course work (drafts, reports, examinations, papers, projects) you present to an instructor reflects (honestly and accurately) your own intellectual and creative efforts. Academic misconduct occurs when a student presents someone else's work as their own or when a student knowingly assists someone else to do so. **As defined in [Student Governance Policy, Chapter 209 Section 7.C](#), academic misconduct includes:**

#### *Cheating*

Cheating includes, but is not limited to:

- The use of unauthorized assistance in taking quizzes, tests, or examinations, or completing assignments;
- The acquisition, use, or distribution of unpublished materials created by another student without the express permission of the original author(s);
- Using online sources, such as solution manuals, without the permission of the instructor to complete assignments, exams, tests, or quizzes; or
- Requesting, hiring, or otherwise encouraging someone to take a course, exam, test, or complete assignments for a student.

#### *Falsification*

The intentional use or submission of falsified data, records, or other information including, but not limited to, records of internship or practicum experiences or attendance at any required event(s), or scholarly research.

#### *Plagiarism*

Plagiarism is the submission or presentation of someone else's words, composition, research, or expressed ideas, whether published or unpublished, without attribution. Plagiarism does not encompass unacknowledged submission or presentation of information that is generally known and widely accepted by educated members of a discipline. Plagiarism includes, but is not limited to:

- The use, by paraphrase or direct quotation, of the published or unpublished work of another person without full and clear acknowledgment; or
- The unacknowledged use of materials prepared by another person or acquired from an entity engaging in the selling of term papers or other academic materials.

*Other forms of academic misconduct:*

- Unauthorized Collaboration.
- Engaging in behavior specifically prohibited by an instructor in the course of class instruction or in a course syllabus.
- Multiple submissions of the same work in separate courses without the express permission of the instructor(s).
- Taking deliberate action to destroy or damage another's academic work in order to gain an advantage for oneself or another.
- The recording of instructional content without the express permission of the instructor(s), unless approved as a disability accommodation, and/or the dissemination or use of such unauthorized records.

## **Religious Accommodation**

Washington state law requires that UW develop a policy for accommodation of student absences or significant hardship due to reasons of faith or conscience, or for organized religious activities. The UW's policy, including more information about how to request an accommodation, is available at Religious Accommodations Policy. Accommodations must be requested within the first two weeks of this course using the Religious Accommodations Request Form.

## **The UW Food Pantry**

A student should never have to make the choice between buying food or textbooks. The UW Food Pantry helps mitigate the social and academic effects of campus food insecurity. We aim to lessen the financial burden of purchasing food by providing students with access to food and hygiene products at *no-cost*. Students can expect to receive 4 to 5 days' worth of supplemental food support when they visit the Pantry. For information including operating hours, location, and additional food support resources visit [uw.edu/anyhungryhusky](http://uw.edu/anyhungryhusky)

## **Technology and Access**

The UW prioritizes student learning and is working hard to help support students. If you have technology and access issues please contact your instructor or an advisor. We will work with you to identify issues and create solutions to support your learning experience this quarter.

## **Absence Policy**

This class is conducted in-person. Students are expected to participate in class to fully benefit from course activities and meet the course's learning objectives. Students should only register for this class if they are able to attend in-person. To protect their fellow students, faculty, and staff, students who feel ill or exhibit possible COVID symptoms should not come to class. When absent, it is the responsibility of the student to inform the instructor in advance (or as close to the class period as possible in the case of an unexpected absence), and to request appropriate make-up work as per policies established in the syllabus. What make-up work is possible or how assignment or course grading might be modified to accommodate missed work is the prerogative of the instructor. For chronic absences, the instructor may negotiate an incomplete grade after the 8th week, or recommend the student contact their academic adviser to consider a hardship withdrawal (known as a Registrar Drop).

## **Safety**

If you feel unsafe or at-risk while taking this course, and you feel comfortable please bring your concern to a member of the teaching team. If this does not feel possible, please contact SafeCampus, 206-685-7233 anytime. With SafeCampus, you can anonymously discuss safety and well-being concerns for yourself or others. SafeCampus can provide individualized support, discuss short- and long-term solutions, and connect you with additional resources when requested. For a broader range of resources and assistance see the Husky Health & Well-Being website.

## **Privacy**

Some class/lab sessions will be recorded using Zoom. The recording will capture the presenter's audio, video and computer screen. Student audio and video will be recorded if they share their computer audio and video during the recorded session. The recordings will only be accessible to students enrolled in the course to review materials. These recordings will not be shared with or accessible to the public.

The University and Zoom have FERPA-compliant agreements in place to protect the security and privacy of UW Zoom accounts. Students who do not wish to be recorded should:

- Change their Zoom screen name to hide any personal identifying information such as their name or UW Net ID, and
  - Not share their computer audio or video during their Zoom sessions.
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## Assignment Descriptions

### Reading/Lecture Quizzes

These quizzes will be based on assigned readings and lectures. They replace class participation, and are an important part of your grade this quarter. Watch for these quizzes (usually 2 per week) on canvas.

#### **Cultural Food Systems Presentations**

In small groups, you will present on a cultural food system, method or farm at the beginning of class on your assigned date at some point during the quarter. Your presentation will be approximately 5-10 minutes long, and it will end with 1-2 discussion questions for the class to cover. The list of presentation topics can be found here: , if you prefer to present on a different topic, theme, or place, please talk to me and we can discuss!

In addition to your presentation, you will also be required to respond to other classmates' presentations on a weekly assignment to receive participation points.

### Book Project

#### **Assignment Description:**

Choose a book from the following list (still a work in progress) and read it. This is a free form book report assignment. The goal is to get you to read a book you've been wanting to read about urban agriculture. The other goal is to help you deepen your knowledge about a particular area of food production that you've been hoping to learn more about. You should not choose a book from this list that you have already read – the point is to read something new!

You will report orally to the class about the book – what inspired you? Did anything in the book make you reconsider an idea that you had been holding for a long time? Do you look at things differently after reading the book? What are the major themes of the book and how do they dovetail with our class so far?



In addition to the oral presentation you will turn in a one page reflection on the book. This reflection is NOT a summary of the book. I already know what the book is about! But it is an opportunity to reflect on what you learned from the book and to offer up more questions you have as a result of the learning you have done. The summary page should be no more than 1 page long.

**Book Project** – here are some options!

Ableman, Michael. 1998. *On Good Land : the Autobiography of an Urban Farm*. San Francisco: Chronicle Books.

Baszile, Natalie. 2021. *We are each other's harvest : celebrating African American farmers, land, and legacy*. New York, NY. Harper Collins.

Berry, Wendell. 1977. *The Unsettling of America : Culture & Agriculture*. San Francisco: Sierra Club Books.

Carlisle, Liz, 2022. *Healing Grounds: Climate, Justice and the Deep Roots of Regenerative Farming*. Washington: Island Press.

Gussow, Joan. 2001. *This Organic Life : Confessions of a Suburban Homesteader*. White River Junction Vt.: Chelsea Green Pub. Co.

Kingsolver, Barbara. 2007. *Animal, Vegetable, Miracle : a Year of Food Life*. 1st ed. New York: HarperCollins Publishers.

Logsdon, Gene. 2010. *Holy Shit : Managing Manure to Save Mankind*. White River Junction VT: Chelsea Green Pub.

Masumoto, David. 1996. *Epitaph for a Peach : Four Seasons on My Family Farm*. 1st Harper Collins paperback ed. San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco.

Montgomery, David. 2007. *Dirt : the Erosion of Civilizations*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Nearing, Helen. 1974. *Living the Good Life How to Live Sanely and Simply in a Troubled World*. New York: Galahad Books.

Pollan, Michael. 2006. *The Omnivore's Dilemma : a Natural History of Four Meals*. New York: Penguin Press.

## **Final Project**

You will choose one of the two options.....

## **#1 Urban Farm Systems Podcast**

This replaces the traditional community engaged learning component of our class...

*For this assignment you will:*

1. Create, record, edit and mix 1 podcast session (of 30 - 45 minute length related to urban farming and food systems. (you may choose a partner to create this podcast with).

## **#2 Community Engaged Learning Reflection**

The bulk of your work in service learning is reflected in your activity as a service learner. The service learning reflection is designed to allow you time to consider how the work has helped you grow and deepen your understanding. The format of this is open, *at a minimum you must submit a 2 page reflection on your experience*. Alternatively, you can create and submit a dance (video), poem (or series of poems) or art which reflects your experience.

Please feel free to be as creative as you want. The goal is to support you in a spacious opportunity for reflection.

## **Lab Reflections**

Students are required to submit lab reflections (details on canvas). Generally there will be a pre- and post-lab assignment for each lab section. Lab reflections are designed to help you incorporate the lab activities with the in class learning.

The final lab assignment is a farm design! This can be done as a solo or group project and will be submitted during the 10<sup>th</sup> week of the quarter!

## **Class Participation**

This will be generally assessed through online responses to class content (primarily lectures) – which will generally be paired with online short quizzes to motivate student engagement with online learning objectives!

## **Exams**

There will be one exam in the 9<sup>th</sup> week!

## POE GRADE SCALE:

| Percentage of Earned Points | Numerical Grade, 4.0 Scale |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------|
| <b>98 – 100%</b>            | <b>4.0</b>                 |
| <b>97%</b>                  | <b>3.9</b>                 |
| <b>96%</b>                  | <b>3.8</b>                 |
| <b>95%</b>                  | <b>3.7</b>                 |
| <b>94%</b>                  | <b>3.6</b>                 |
| <b>93%</b>                  | <b>3.5</b>                 |
| <b>92%</b>                  | <b>3.4</b>                 |
| <b>91%</b>                  | <b>3.3</b>                 |
| <b>90%</b>                  | <b>3.2</b>                 |
| <b>89%</b>                  | <b>3.1</b>                 |
| <b>88%</b>                  | <b>3.0</b>                 |
| <b>87%</b>                  | <b>2.9</b>                 |
| <b>86%</b>                  | <b>2.8</b>                 |
| <b>85%</b>                  | <b>2.7</b>                 |
| <b>84%</b>                  | <b>2.6</b>                 |

|            |            |
|------------|------------|
| <b>83%</b> | <b>2.5</b> |
| <b>82%</b> | <b>2.4</b> |
| <b>81%</b> | <b>2.3</b> |
| <b>80%</b> | <b>2.2</b> |
| <b>79%</b> | <b>2.1</b> |
| <b>78%</b> | <b>2.0</b> |
| <b>77%</b> | <b>1.9</b> |
| <b>76%</b> | <b>1.8</b> |
| <b>75%</b> | <b>1.7</b> |
| <b>74%</b> | <b>1.6</b> |
| <b>73%</b> | <b>1.5</b> |
| <b>72%</b> | <b>1.4</b> |
| <b>71%</b> | <b>1.3</b> |
| <b>70%</b> | <b>1.2</b> |
| <b>69%</b> | <b>1.1</b> |
| <b>68%</b> | <b>1.0</b> |
| <b>67%</b> | <b>0.9</b> |
| <b>66%</b> | <b>0.8</b> |
| <b>65%</b> | <b>0.7</b> |