

DOING THINKING: WORKING WOOD, CRAFTING IDEAS

Major areas of study: artisan craft, educational theory and practice, and cross-cultural studies

Winter 2011

CRN: winter 20160

Class standing: sophomores or above

8 credits per quarter

Special expenses: \$50 for supplies

Faculty team

Gillies Malnarich

Education, social sciences

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Artisan craft, architectural history

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Meeting dates: *This 8-credit program meets from 6 to 9:30 pm every Monday except on holidays (January 3, 10, 24, 31; February 7, 14, 28; March 7) and on either alternating Wednesdays (January 12, 26; February 9, 23; March 9) or Saturdays (January 8, 22; February 5, 19; March 5, 12) when we meet from 10 am to 3 pm.*

Meeting rooms: *During the first week of classes we will meet in Sem II E1107. Classes will typically be held in this classroom and the newly renovated wood workshop in the Arts Annex.*

FOR PROSPECTIVE STUDENTS

Doing Thinking is a vibrant learning community where you will be welcomed by students and faculty who are seriously engaged in working through the “hard parts” of crafting ideas, working wood while addressing the guiding questions that have served as the touchstone for our collective work to date (see section from the syllabus titled *Course Description and Guiding Question*).

The faculty designed this two-quarter long program to accommodate students who want to continue and deepen the work they began in fall 2010 as well as students who will join the program in winter 2011.

The public section of the *Doing Thinking* program blog <http://blogs.evergreen.edu/doingthinking/> includes artifacts from some of the work we have done to date. To enter the program, you will need a faculty signature after meeting two requirements: 1) meet with a member of the faculty team for an interview and to be introduced to the reliquary project ; 2) review the package of materials which includes completing a student information sheet and selected reading prior to the January 3rd class.

FOR CONTINUING AND NEW STUDENTS

During the second quarter of *Doing Thinking: Crafting Ideas, Working Wood*, we will have access to the new woodworking workshop (YES!) and the opportunity to discover the nuances of doing thinking as reliquary designs move from drawings to objects fashioned from wood. We will deepen our use and understanding of two texts from the first quarter —*Analytic Thinking* and *Tools of the Trade* —and we will continue our collective inquiry through an exploration of the ideas in David Perkins’s *Knowledge as Design*.

Additional readings for class as a whole

- *A Pattern Language*. First published in 1977, this classic text pioneered an approach to design based on discerning *patterns* from everyday living where a pattern is described as “a problem which occurs over and over again in our environment, and then a way you can use this solution a million times over, without ever doing it the same way twice.” We will investigate the thinking underlying *A Pattern Language* and its application to multiple fields of study and our collective and individual work.
- Selected readings (available as handouts) will include John Berger’s *Ways of Seeing*, Maxine Greene’s *Releasing the Imagination: Essays on Education, the Arts, and Social Change*, and student recommendations.

Group project:

- As a class we will integrate reading of *A Pattern Language* with initial design work on the proposed Japanese tea garden.

Your independent work

- Early in the quarter you will be invited to choose your own area for inquiry and/or project. The expectation is that in consultation with faculty you will select background materials, including readings, you wish to pursue. This work will culminate in an end-of-term presentation.

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EXCERPTS FROM PROGRAM SYLLABUS FALL 2010, WINTER 2011

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND GUIDING QUESTIONS

What do we know about how people learn "something" well? What is the relationship between thinking and doing, between the work of the mind and the work of the hand? Why does working through "the hard parts" move us closer to the elusive nature of mastery? How do novices become experts and apprentices turn into artisans? We will explore these questions in a learning environment which intentionally cross-fertilizes workshop and classroom learning experiences.

The practice of *working wood* begins with conceptualizing something and understanding its purpose. We choose a shape, size and structure; we select the material from which to make it; we assemble tools appropriate to the task. But, to actually make the object we must possess the necessary skills. *Crafting ideas* requires a similar level of discipline: the process is as imaginative, intentional, and skill-based as *working wood*. Intellectual work turns *ideas* into tools for analysis.

Doing Thinking: Working Wood, Crafting Ideas invites us to re-conceptualize our understanding of tools as instruments of both the hand and the mind as we address the program's overarching questions. Throughout the program, we will develop both our abilities to make things of consequence from wood and our abilities to work with ideas that matter in the world and that are worth understanding.

REQUIRED READINGS:

- Mike Rose. 2004. *The Mind at Work: Valuing the Intelligence of the American Worker*
 - Wade Davis. 2009. *The Wayfinders: Why Ancient Wisdom Matters in the Modern World*
 - Jeff Taylor. 1996. *Tools of the Trade: The Art and Craft of Carpentry*
 - D. N. Perkins. 1986. *Knowledge as Design*
 - Linda Elder and Richard Paul. 2007. *The Thinker's Guide to Analytic Thinking*
- Additional readings will be handed out in class and posted on the *Doing Thinking* moodle.

THE NATURE OF OUR COLLECTIVE WORK

On craft-based workshops and classroom learning experiences:

All our meetings will be working/learning sessions. We will combine reading-based seminars, exploratory writing and seminar exercises, workshops, and other activities designed so you can explore the guiding questions of the program on your own and in collaboration with others. Students can expect to "do thinking" as you work wood and craft ideas. Class meetings are privileged opportunities to develop the habits of mind and academic skills foundational to both an Evergreen education and active, informed citizenship (see syllabus section on Evergreen's *five foci of learning* and *six expectations of a graduate*). Each week a *class agenda* will outline proposed work for the evening as well as assignments for the upcoming class.

Please go to the *Doing Thinking* blog for the full syllabus <http://blogs.evergreen.edu/doingthinking/>.