Organic Gardening and Food Justice

Spring 2012 Decal Syllabus

"The garden is the smallest parcel of the world and then it is the totality of the world."

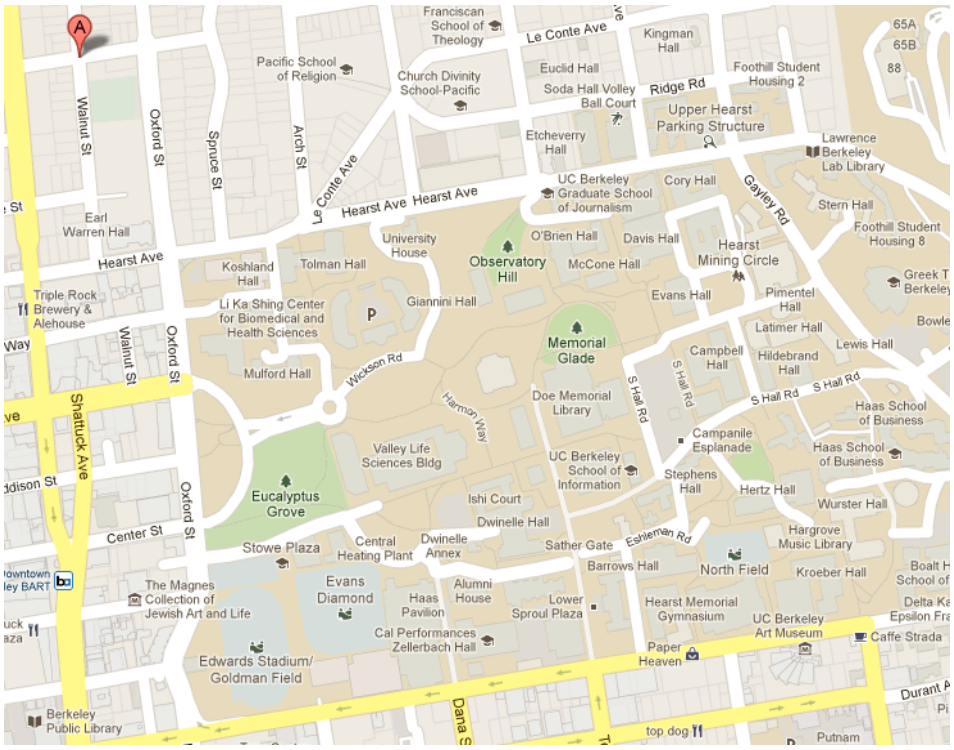
-Michel Foucault, Of Other Spaces (1967)

Purpose: This course is designed to both introduce new gardeners to the basic theories and methods of organic gardening, as well as provide an opportunity for more experienced gardeners to practice their skills and grow organic food. Above all, in our class we hope to inspire students to become intimately engaged with what they eat, through hands on experience in horticulture, compost, garden design, seasonal planning, and exposure to the local food justice movement.

People of all skill levels and of all majors are welcome, whether you grow all your own food or have a tough time keeping a cactus alive. As long as you're willing to get your hands a bit dirty, this is your chance to learn and practice some basic organic gardening techniques. After taking this class, a student should have the knowledge and experience to plan, plant, and care for their own garden using organic practices, meaning without the use of synthetic chemical fertilizers or pesticides.

Topics covered in the course will include plant propagation, soil, compost, and pest control to name a few. In the past, topics such as medicinal herbs, seed saving, and fruit tree pruning have been included, although we will shape our curriculum holistically according to student interest.

Course Format: The class will take place in the Student Organic Garden, which is two blocks from the northwest corner of campus at the intersection of Virginia and Walnut (see map below). Each class will include a short lesson on gardening techniques and/or environmental justice topics, along with related discussion and activities. The majority of the class time will be spent working hands-on in the garden. In addition, in order to further engage interest students, garden facilitators will plan optional educational/social resources: field trips, garden potlucks, workshops, projects, and other social events for students.



Grading: In order to pass this two unit course, the following three requirements must be met.

1. ***Attendance:*** *Students are allowed two excused absences out of the ten weeks of instruction. Since the Student Organic Garden is far from some classes, class begins an additional 5 minutes AFTER Berkeley time (ie. A 3PM class starts at 3:15, a 9:30 class begins at 9:45). Any student that arrives more than 15 minutes after class has begun will only receive half credit for attending their section.*
2. ***Garden Hours:*** *Every student is required to do 10 hours in any community garden. We hold open hours every Sunday from 12 – 2PM in which a facilitator will guide students in the garden. In the past many students have accomplished all ten hours at the Student Organic Garden. However, we encourage students to earn these ours by attending local community gardens (see potential locations and hours below). In addition, TWO of these hours may be earned by attending a campus/local event that have to do with food, agriculture and/or environmentalism (ie. A lecture, documentary, or special SOGA event). In terms of hours we want to allow students to personalize their experience and are very flexible in how they can be earned, so please discuss any additional ideas with your facilitator!*

   - Berkeley Youth Alternatives Garden
     open hours: Fridays, 10AM-1PM
     Bancroft at Bonar
   - Strong Roots Community Garden
     open hours: Sundays, 1-4PM
     Sacramento at Woolsey
   - Spiral Gardens Community Food Security Project
     open hours: Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays, and Saturdays from 10AM-5PM generally
     Sacremento at Oregon & 59th at Adeline
   - Kenney Cottage Community Garden
     open hours: Thursdays, 10AM-2PM
     5th at Virginia
   - City Slicker Farms:
     a. Herb Farm: 3434 Haven Street. Open Hours Tuesday 1PM – 4PM
     b. Annex Farm and West Oakland Woods Farm: 1580 5th Street and 537 Lewis Street. Wednesday 10AM – 2PM.
     c. Ralph Bunche School Nursery: 1240 18th Street. Wednesday 1:30PM – 5PM, Saturday 1:30 – 5PM.
     d. Center Street Farm: 16th and Center, Saturday 10AM – 5PM.
     e. Secret Garden: 5105 Genoa Street, Friday 10AM – 5PM
     f. Fitzgerald and Union Plaza Parks, 34th and Peralta open from suck until dawn.

3. ***Seed to Table Project:*** *Choose 1 food/crop/ingredient to incorporate in a seed to table project. Research the cultural history, use, production, and any other interesting facts of that particular ingredient and prepare a short 5 minute presentation for the beginning of section. In addition bring the food you are presenting to section for your classmates to eat. If you choose some ingredient that people cannot eat alone, prepare that ingredient in some kind of dish (ie if I picked cinnamon, I could make some kind of cinnamon cookies for class – like Snickerdoodles, yum).*

Schedule:

Week Number	Date of Section	Topic/Activity
	TBA, Feb 6th – 10th	**Information Session** *Meet facilitators, Sign up for a Section, CCNs distributed before the add/drop deadline (Feb 17th)*
1	**Feb 27th – 2nd**	**Introduction, Garden and Field Tillage Cultivation** *Ice breakers, Garden tour, Double Digging*
2	**March 5th – 9th**	**Propagating Crops from Seed and Greenhouse Management** *Seed sowing in the greenhouse, propagation media, seed viability, hardening (coldframes)*
3	**March 12th – 16th**	**Managing and Maintaining Soil Fertility** *Soil chemical & biological properties (microbes), compost intro, crop rotation, cover crops, mulching*
4	**March 19th – 23rd**	**Transplanting and Direct Seeding, Irrigation Principles and Practices** *Discuss transplant timing and optimizing needs of different crops, Direct sowing and Transplanting in the Garden, Irrigation*
5	**March 26th – 30th**	**SPRING BREAK**
6	**April 2nd – 6th**	**Making and Using Compost** *Make a compost pile, discussion of making compost at home, vermicompost, compost teas*
7	**April 9th – 13th**	**Agroecological Methods of Controlling Pests and Pathogens, Discussion of the Development of U.S. Industrial Agriculture and Environmental Issues** *How to diagnose plant disease. Demonstration of basic agroecological methods of addressing nutrient deficiency, pathogens and pests* *History and trends of US Ag development, green revolution, Genetically Modified Crops, Environmental Consequences of Industrial Food*
8	**April 16th – 20th**	**Plant Propagation, Social Issues in Modern Agriculture** *Plant cuttings for students to take home, discuss social consequences of food system structure, resource rift - Nathan McClintock?*
9	**April 23rd – 27th**	**Benefits of Community Gardens OR Medicinal Herb Use** **Field Trip to Urban/School Gardens** *TBA: possibilities include Willard & Claremont Elementary, Spiral Gardens, City Slicker Farms* *Alex Tuggle Guest Speaker? Making Herbal Teas/Salves*
10	**April 30th – May 4th**	**Radical Environmentalism, Wrap Up** *Make seed bombs, Garden Potluck, Distribute Class Surveys, Final Thoughts – imagining sustainable alternatives to conventional agriculture*
	Friday May 11th	**Grade Deadline** *All garden hours and Seed-to-table due*

***** During March some classes might fall within the rainy season, if it is raining class will be held at an alternative location announced by facilitators via email*****