The Practice of Organic Farming and Sustainable Food Systems

Fall 2024

In this Fall Quarter program, students will learn how successful organic farms can be highly productive, ecologically resilient, financially stable, and serve community needs while honoring traditional stewardship ethics along with experimentation and innovative practices. This program takes place primarily on the campus organic farm. Student experiential learning is centered in seasonal activities from land management, food production, scientific inquiry, planning, budgeting, marketing, and celebrating food cultures with the fruits of our labor. This program is suited for students who can dedicate at least 20 hours per week to on-campus program work that is team oriented, physically rigorous, and academically demanding. Upper division science credit may be pursued with student-faculty agreement on additional work requirements.

Students will have opportunities to apply regenerative farming practices based on the scientific underpinnings of Natural Resource Management, Agroecology, Soil Science, Agroforestry, Agronomy, and Animal Science. Production practices will be integrated with on-farm research. Design thinking and cooperative business organization will also be learned and practiced supporting collective student leadership development and the social impact of campus food production and garden spaces.

Fall is the harvest season, and from an outside perspective, work appears to be winding down on a farm. From the farmer's point of view, there is so much to be done from analyzing crop sales and financial data, fall cover cropping, season extension activities, planning for the coming growing season, maintenance and repair of physical infrastructure and tools, and more. Farm planning, finances, and marketing are critical to maintain the campus farm's operating budget and community base of support; students will be immersed in the iterative cycles of analyzing production and market data, setting sales goals and operating budgets, crop planning, seed ordering, seeding schedules, market stand sales, and nurturing customer relationships.

Anticipated credit equivalencies:

4 - Fall Season Practices of Ecological Agriculture

4 - Crop and Sales Planning

4 - Market Farming Production

4 - Organic farming practicum