

**Syllabus
Environmental Studio
UAP 5794**

**Alexandria Center
Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University
Urban Affairs and Planning**

CLASS LOCATION:

Virginia Tech Alexandria Center
1021 Prince Street, Alexandria, VA

MEETING TIMES:

Thursdays, 7:00 to 9:30 p.m., with flexibility
August 23 – November 29, 2007

INSTRUCTOR:

Shelley S. Mastran Ph.D., shellmast@comcast.net

Office Hours: Wednesday and Thursday afternoons, 2:00 – 4:00 or by appointment.
Office: 1021 Prince Street, Room 228
Phone: 703-318-0276 (O), 703-927-4584 (c)

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This studio will conduct research and analysis to prepare a bicycle and pedestrian trail plan for the Journey Through Hallowed Ground (JTHG), the multi-county region from Gettysburg, PA, to Monticello, VA. The class will meet irregularly, as much of the work will be in the field or on-line.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the course are to

- master research and investigative skills
- understand the plan-making process
- work as a group on problem solving
- gain experience in interviewing local government staff
- understand the role of greenways in regional conservation
- understand the relationship between recreational trails and environmental conservation; and
- implement planning skills in developing an actual plan.

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE:

August 23 – 30 - Conduct background research on the Journey Through Hallowed Ground.

August 30 – September 13 - Collect information on existing bicycle and pedestrian trails in the jurisdictions of the JTHG, including those that cross the region (e.g., the C&O Canal Towpath, the Washington & Old Dominion rail-trail, the Appalachian National Scenic Trail, and the Potomac Heritage Trail).

August 30 – September 27 - Collect and evaluate all bicycle and pedestrian trail plans, whether freestanding or part of comprehensive plans, in the jurisdictions of the JTHG.

October 4-18 - Interview local Park and Recreation and Transportation planners regarding trail plans.

October 4 – 18 - Collect information from VDOT, MD SHA, and PennDOT on bicycle lanes and bike trail plans along the Route 15-20-231 corridor between Gettysburg and Monticello.

October 11 – 25 - Consult with recreational, conservation, and other interest groups on recommended trail routes and plans in the region, including bike and pedestrian trails commonly recommended in guidebooks and on web sites.

November 1 - Identify gaps in existing and planned trail connectivity throughout the region.

November 1 - Identify opportunities for linkages among existing and planned trails and, to the extent feasible, design linkages.

November 8 – 29 - Prepare GIS maps of existing trails, planned trails, and potential linkages, to the extent feasible.

November 8 – December 6 - Prepare a draft trail plan for the JTHG. The draft plan will include a description of all the research findings; GIS maps of existing and planned trails; a description and maps of potential linkages; possibly several case studies of new trail linkages; a discussion of opportunities and challenges; and a section on implementation and funding.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING:

The course will require each student to collect data, analyze data, conduct fieldwork, conduct interviews, and contribute to the final draft plan, although we may have a division of labor, depending on student skills and logistics. Class participation will be a key component of your grade. Each student will be required to turn in a final short reflective essay on the plan development process.

Grades will be computed on the following basis:

Class deliverables – 50%
Class participation – 40%
Final short essay – 10%

GRADUATE HONOR CODE:

The tenets of the Virginia Tech Graduate Honor Code will be strictly enforced in this course, and all assignments shall be subject to the stipulations of the Graduate Honor Code as outlined in the 2006-2007 Graduate Catalog. For more information on the Graduate Honor Code, please refer to the GHS Constitution, located online at <http://fbox.vt.edu/studentinfo/gradhonor>. Please contact the instructor immediately if you have questions.

SPECIAL ACCOMMODATIONS:

Students with special needs or circumstances are encouraged to meet with the instructor after the first class or a.s.a.p. Please do not wait until later in the semester. In all cases, please feel free to contact the instructor, should you have any questions.

SELECTED READING MATERIALS:

Green Infrastructure by Mark A. Benedict and Edward T. McMahon. Washington, D.C.: Island Press, 2006.

Designing Greenways by Paul Cawood Hellmund and Daniel Somers Smith. Washington, D.C.: Island Press, 2006.

Bicycle Transportation by John Forester. Cambridge: MIT Press, 1994.