070.376 – Social Ecology

A community-based learning course in partnership with the Friends of Stony Run (FSR) in Baltimore, and the Center for Social Concern (CSC) at Johns Hopkins University

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Fall 2019, Thursdays 1:30-3:50 PM, Mergenthaler 439

This course explores the social and cultural dimensions of the contemporary ecological crisis. We do so from the perspective of a small place on earth – the riparian landscape of the Wyman Park that adjoins our Homewood campus – and in partnership with the community organization that stewards this environment, Friends of Stony Run (stonyrun.org). As an effort in community-based learning, our work in the course will be guided by this partnership, and the practical needs of our collaborators. We aim to understand better what draws some people to this wilder tract, what keeps others away, and what this implies about human-environment relations in the city. We also attend to relationships between the Homewood community and the forest on its edge.

Expectations (and % of total grade). This class is a seminar; attendance and participation in all class sessions and field trips is required (10%). We will frequently leave the classroom for the park; be prepared for trail walking, rain, and other inclement weather. By the crack of dawn each Thursday morning, please post a paragraph reflecting on the week’s materials on the Blackboard discussion forum (20%). Our work in the class will center on the development of an interpretive strategy regarding the human history and experience of the Stony Run landscape. You are expected to spend time in the community and environment each week, working in teams to develop this project. You will keep a journal to make weekly notes on your activities, and to make narrative reflections on this experience (20%). Each team will assume responsibility for a different aspect of this project, to be planned in partnership with FSR and to be presented to the community at a public event in December (20%). You will be asked to write a short reflective paper on your experience of the project and collaboration (20%). FSR will be invited to evaluate the contribution to their work made by the class as a whole (10%). You are expected to work with academic and personal integrity, as the university requires, and to meet our ethical obligations to the human subjects of our research, as anthropology demands.

September 5  Introduction
CSC, “An In-Depth Look at Community-Based Learning”
Field visit with FSR representatives, Wyman Park

September 12  Social ecology

September 19  Wyman Park

Field visit with National Parks Service archeologist David Gadsby

**September 26**

**Social life of urban parklands**
Setha Low et al, *Rethinking Urban Parks*, selections
Presentation on community-based learning by Shawntay Stocks (CSC)

**October 3**

**Watershed imagination**
Van tour, Stony Run watershed

**October 10**

**Strategies for cultural and natural interpretation**
Field visit to Wyman Park and environs
Field journals due

**October 17**

**Wyman Park management plans, past and present**

**October 24**

**Nature and aesthetic intervention**
Field visit to Herring Run and Function with artist Jordan Tierney
Field journals due

**October 31**

**Walking and movement as landscape interpretation**

**November 7**

**Green and community mapping**
Workshop with Janet Felsten, Baltimore Green Maps

November 14  
**Digital interfaces for urban experience**  

November 21  
**Signage, space, and nature interpretation**  
Jason Byrne “When Green is White”; Nate Gabriel, “The Work that Parks Do”; Campbell et al, “The Written Park”  
Workshop with Tom McGilloway, FSR and Mahan Rykiel  
Field journals due

December 5  
**Imagining ahead and beyond**  

December 16  
Public presentation of project ideas to Friends of Stony Run and community members, Café Azafran

December 20  
Reflective responses due