

**Spring Semester : Course Designation: 398E Farming Enterprise.**

**3 credit Practicum**

**Meeting time:** Currently set for Wednesday afternoon 1-4 pm (in April and May, also one other session for fieldwork, time to be determined by the class).

**Class size limit:** ten students

**Location:** Room 305 Ag Engineering; UMass Research Farm in South Deerfield MA.

**Prerequisites:**

1. Coursework: at least two courses in crop or soil science such as:

Sustainable Agriculture PLSOILIN 265

Soil Science PLSOILIN 105

Small Fruit Production PLSOILIN 305

Vegetable Crop Production PLSOILIN 325

Soil & Crop Management PLSOILIN 350

Organic Farming and Gardening PLSOILIN 120

*Note: taking these concurrently with 398E would meet the requirement*

2. Experience: At least two months of field work in farming, gardening or research.

3. Junior standing.

4. Completion of application form.

5. Permission of the instructor is needed. *Exceptions to specific prerequisites may be made depending on circumstances; students who are interested should apply even if not all prerequisites are met.*

The coursework will include:

- 1) **Planning for markets and specific crops** that will be produced during the field season at the UMass Research Farm. The crops chosen will be based on the needs of specific markets such as Earthfoods, other student businesses, or a possible fall CSA. Each student will create a complete production and marketing plan for at least two crops.
- 2) **Participating in weekly class** (two classes after field work begins) that will include lectures and hands-on training in soil fertility and crop rotations, farm machinery and (safety and use), organic certification and practices, basics in pest management of crops to be grown, crop planning, and marketing. The group will discuss and provide feedback on students' crop plans. Lecturers will include PSIS faculty and staff (Kyle Bostrom, Frank Mangan, Ruth Hazzard, Neal Woodard) as well as invited guests. Topics will also be based on student interest.
- 3) **Implementing field work** that is required during the semester, including any transplant production, field preparation, and planting. Some field work will need to be done outside of class time.
- 4) **Farm visits.** We will visit nearby farms to learn about production and marketing.
- 5) **Service Learning.** Working on local area farms will be required. Each student is required to spend 12-16 hours volunteering on two different vegetable farms. Students will work with the farm crew on harvesting, washing and packing crops or on other jobs depending on farm needs. A short reflective paper is due after each farm visit.
- 6) **Special topics.** Certain decisions or projects may be taken up by the class. For instance, what cultivation equipment is needed to make our production more efficient? If we decide to start a CSA, how should it be structured, how will we advertise, how much should it cost per share?

Sections of the crop plan and other written work will be due over the course of the semester. Grading will be based on completion of written work in a timely manner, active participation in class, field work and service learning.

For more information please contact, Ruth Hazzard [rhazzard@umext.umass.edu](mailto:rhazzard@umext.umass.edu)