

## 4.237 The New Practitioner

Spring 2009 Focus: 'Bayou Smart' Green Villages

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Spring 2009 Units 3-0-6

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Tuesday and Thursday, 11:00 - 12:30 p.m. Room 9-250

Multi-disciplinary - Class size limited



- **Learn and design with a community during IAP.** The class will be developed around a 'bayou smart' green cooperative village on the coast of Louisiana. A 'hands-on' workshop with villagers will brainstorm the rebuilding of their hurricane destroyed community, and to rethink the concept of elevated communities. (Send resume to [BayouSmartVillage@mit.edu](mailto:BayouSmartVillage@mit.edu) if interested)
- **Learn and explore sustainable 'off-the-grid' village infrastructure** as a key goal in 'bayou-smart' villages. The disruption of services from storms, and demands of environmental responsibility urge a comprehensive innovative approach.
- **Learn and test communication and dialogue skills** The course explores tools and techniques necessary for effective dialogue to prepare future professionals for a *service-oriented paradigm of practice*. Use of modeling, gaming, participatory planning, handbooks, alternative communication media will be tested.

The course targets those with a design and community service orientation who seek to explore energy and environmental issues, focusing on engineering, architecture and planning students. Undergraduates are strongly encouraged to participate.

The course stresses tools and techniques necessary for effective dialogue with communities and the poor who are generally excluded.. The purpose is to expose future professionals to a service-oriented paradigm of practice and to develop a rudimentary awareness of interactive processes. It is biased toward the notion that dialogue – not monologue – is essential for an efficacious and creative design process. It accepts that active user involvement is essential to good architecture. In this context the design of tools and techniques is integral to the design of the building itself.

Real-world, real-time issues will be addressed. Rethinking elevated coastal communities provides the context for the course, with the goal of conceptualizing a 'bayou smart green village'. It builds on the past three years of experience with sustainable housing in Louisiana which lead to the conceptualization and construction of 'Lift Houses' throughout coastal Louisiana. (See: [http://web.mit.edu/sigus/www/NEW/slide-shows/home\\_for\\_ms\\_betty/home\\_for\\_ms\\_betty\\_00.html](http://web.mit.edu/sigus/www/NEW/slide-shows/home_for_ms_betty/home_for_ms_betty_00.html)) 25 displaced villagers of the Isle de Jean Charles in the bayous of Louisiana will serve as 'clients' in testing our visions.

Emphasis is on practical hands-on exploration. Five themes are addressed: each theme would be summarized in a mini-report, usable for local NGOs in their rebuilding efforts.

- Replanning houses into a co-op village arrangement, increasing structural integrity and survivability against storms, and allowing the pooling of resources
- Living 'off-the-grid' in terms of energy and water/sanitation self-sufficiency, to become more hurricane survivable and environmentally friendly.
- Planning with communities with participatory interactive methods, through workshops in Louisiana with hurricane displaced villagers. An initial workshop is planned for January during IAP, for a selected group of students.
- Testing communication tools and techniques for outreach programs: how-to-do handbooks, videos, CDs, models, games.
- Developing business plan awareness for bringing ideas into widespread use, with the preparation of a mini-business plan for disseminating 'Bayou Smart' Green Village concepts.

For more information:

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