

# Catalyst: Video as an Ecological Design Tool

## *Envisioning the Sustainable Campus*

*Integrating carbon, energy, and water management strategies toward zero- and net-positive design*



W. Byrd, stormwater interventions, UVA



Aerial view of campus



Center for Urban Agriculture, Mithun

*“It’s all a question of story. We are in trouble just now because we do not have a good story. We are in between stories. The old story, the account of how we fit into it, is no longer effective. Yet we have not learned the new story.” - Thomas Berry, Eco-theologian*

*The process of creating a video has an uncanny ability to focus efforts and attention on a subject area or area of study. When presenting information (particularly complex ideas) different elements of a story come from many experts and locations. Each has just one part of the message, part of the story. Video can present aspects of a subject as a unified presentation with many different parts - patching together elements of a subject into a quilt-like whole. – Jeff Sylvestre, Producer, Blue Moon*

### Guest Instructor

**JEFF SYLVESTRE: PRODUCER / DIRECTOR / COMPOSER**

**Blue Moon Productions, <http://www.blumoonpro.com/>**

Jeff has produced and directed video programs for regional and national organizations for over twenty years. He is one of three principle owners and producers at *Blue Moon*, a Twin Cities-based media production firm. Blue Moon specializes in artistic media that is powerful, compassionate and intelligent. Blue Moon produces marketing, educational, documentary and dramatic projects. Their services include creative direction, writing, producing, directing, SD/HD video production, video editing, audio recording, music composition, and interactive authoring. Clients include Heifer International, Medtronic, Hazelden, U of M, Target, and The Institute of A Sustainable Future, to name a few.

### Hosts

**Mary Guzowski**, Associate Professor, School of Architecture

**Loren Abraham**, AIA, LEED AP, Adjunct Assistant Professor

*Landscape professors Barry Lehrman and Kristen Miller and the GDII L.A. students have been invited to participate in the catalyst (to be determined).*

## Why Video?

### VIDEO AS A DESIGN AND COMMUNICATION TOOL On Video: Jeff Sylvestre, Blue Moon Productions

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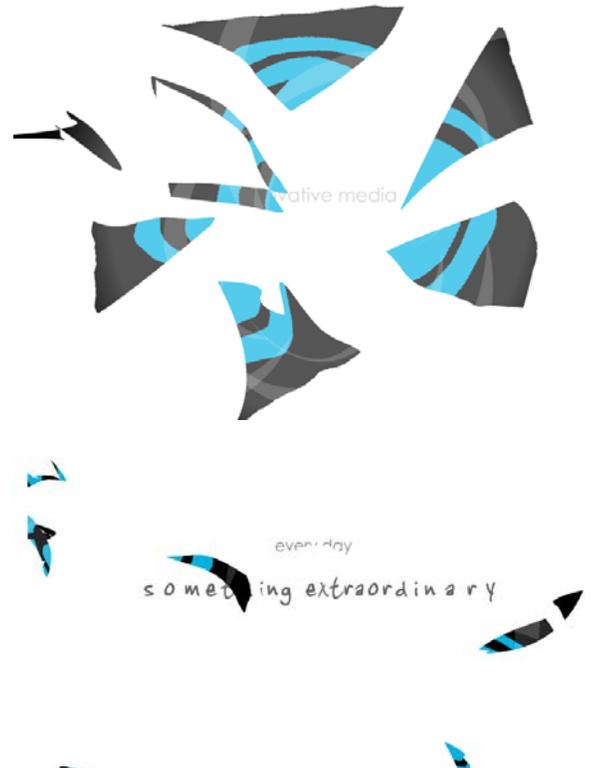
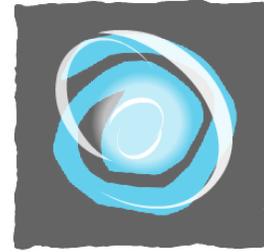
*Video allows for presenting information in many modes - visually, aurally, narratively, graphically, experientially, emotionally. They tend to be better at reaching different types of learners.*

*The power of video often flows from first person testimonials. The best presenters have a passion for what they are talking about. You can tell on video when someone is speaking from the heart. You get a "sense" of what a person is saying not just by listening to words but through non-verbal cues.*

*Videos are fun to watch. They go beyond lecture, PowerPoint, or the printed page. They can engage the heart as well as the mind (combining visuals, text, music, testimonial, narrative = emotionally response as well as intellectual. They peak curiosity on many levels.*

*Videos can be experiences alone or in large or small groups. They can stand alone or spark discussion in a larger presentation. They are not tied to a timeline. When you are ready, you watch it. They are easily repeated.*

Jeff Sylvestre  
Blue Moon Productions



<http://www.bluemoonpro.com/>

## Catalyst Objectives

This catalyst will use off-the-shelf digital video and editing software to envision the interrelationships of energy, waste, water and carbon emissions across the building and site scales on the University of Minnesota Campus. Video will be used to both observe and assess existing ecological design conditions on campus and to visual possible ecological design interventions. The primary goal of the catalyst is to explore the creative design potential and opportunities of video as a temporal and spatial ecological design tool. Students will work in teams to investigate ecological design solutions and interventions that can move the University of Minnesota towards becoming a zero emissions, zero-energy, zero water, zero runoff, and zero-waste campus. The catalyst objectives are to:

1. Explore digital video production as an ecological design and communication tool.
2. Use digital video to both define ecological design challenges/opportunities and to frame ecological design interventions across scale, issues, space, and time.
3. Consider the unique integrative and experiential design opportunities of video.

## Catalyst Outcomes

Working with film producer and guest instructor Jeff Sylvestre, the students will collaborate in small teams to produce a 5-minute video production. The design challenge will be to investigate the sustainable design opportunities of the University of Minnesota Campus. The digital video will be used to define an ecological design challenge and present possible ecological design interventions. A public video festival, for viewing and critique of the video explorations, will be hosted the last day of the catalyst. The video will be graphically documented for the student's portfolio.

*Digital video will be used to:*

- Assess existing ecological conditions at the University of Minnesota (a select site or sites will be determined by the students).
- Visualize energy, water, and resource flows and integrated ecological relationships on campus.
- Present design concepts and interventions to reduce ecological impacts (e.g. water and energy consumption, greenhouse gas emissions, waste generation, stormwater runoff, urban heat island, pollution, and biodiversity) through ecologically strategic design interventions.



From ARCH 8561: Student work: Babst, Choi, Christian, Sanchez Rodriguez

## **Tentative Schedule**

### **VIDEO AS AN ECOLOGICAL DESIGN TOOL**

#### **Monday: Catalyst kick-off**

Framing the Problem: Jeff Sylvestre: Video for Storytelling and Communication  
Orlyn Miller, Director, Campus Planning (CPPM): The Sustainable Campus

#### **Tuesday: Framing the Problem**

Morning session: On-site: Campus observations through the lens  
Afternoon session: Team critiques and discussion  
Evening session: Jeff Sylvestre: Framing the Story: Video design

#### **Wednesday: In-process Critique**

Morning session: On-site: Campus interventions through the lens  
Afternoon session: Work period  
Evening session: Jeff Sylvestre: Focusing the Story: Editing & Multi-media Methods

#### **Thursday: Video Production and Editing**

Morning and afternoon sessions: Work periods  
Evening session: Team critiques and editing

#### **Friday: Video Screening**

Morning session: Work period and editing  
Afternoon session: Video Festival and discussion

## **Reading**

Select readings will be provided through e-reserve:

- Reed, Bill. "The Trajectory of Environmental Design, *Integrative Design Collaborative*," Regenesys, Inc., and IDP, Inc. [http://www.integrativedesign.net/files/ul/Trajectory\\_EnvironmentallyResponsibleDesign.pdf](http://www.integrativedesign.net/files/ul/Trajectory_EnvironmentallyResponsibleDesign.pdf), pp. 1-10.
- Center for Ecoliteracy, "Systems Thinking," <http://www.ecoliteracy.org/education/sys-thinking.html>.
- Living Building Challenge V2.0, <http://ilbi.org/the-standard/version-2-0>
- Holmgren, David. *Permaculture, Principles & Pathways Beyond Sustainability*, Principle 1, "Observe and Interact" pp-13-20 and Principle 7: "Design from Patterns to Details" pp-127-130. Victoria, Australia, Holmgren Design Services, 2002.

## **Grading**

Grading for this course is S/N. For team work a *passing* or *no passing* grade will be given to the team, and it is important that work is coordinated between individuals and that each team member participates fully. Criteria for passing or no passing grade includes: level of engagement with instructor's agenda, provocative addition of students' agenda, demonstrated understanding of methodology proposed by instructor, overall attitude of "high risk/high reward".

## **BIOGRAPHY**

### **JEFF SYLVESTRE: PRODUCER / DIRECTOR / COMPOSER**

Jeff has produced and directed video programs for regional and national organizations for over twenty years. He is one of three principle owners and producers at *Blue Moon*, a Twin Cities-based media production firm. Through his broad base of experience in all phases of production, he combines creative expertise with effective project management. Jeff has won national and international awards for his work including the International Television Association Silver and Bronze Awards. Jeff is also a talented musician, composer and audio engineer. He creates compelling soundtracks for film, video, and new media including the score for the feature film, *WELLSTONE!*

#### **Blue Moon Productions, Inc.** <http://www.bluemoonpro.com/>

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