

Assessing Sustainability of Organic Farms in Europe *[Clear project title]*

Statement of Justification: I am choosing to do an independent study while travelling through Italy and Greece to different farms through the WWOOF program. WWOOF stands for worldwide opportunities on organic farms. ENVS 191 is a required class for Sustainability Studies, the concentration I am pursuing through the Environmental Program in the Rubenstein School. This trip is the perfect opportunity to complete this course. At each farm I will assess how sustainable it is according to a set of guidelines I have created. After I have visited each farm, I will write a comparison paper. The importance of this is to learn about organic farming, and most importantly sustainable agriculture, and to learn what methods are most sustainable. This relates to my curriculum because it will improve my understanding of sustainability and extend my knowledge that I will be able to use when addressing the challenges we face in sustaining the health of our life support systems.

*[Introduction should describe the organization the internship is with, how it relates to curriculum, site location, and its importance]*

Learning Objectives: From this project I hope to gain knowledge and skills that will be useful in my future. More specifically to learn about sustainable agriculture, organic farming and food systems. I also hope to better understand specific organic frameworks. Also, to learn about the controversies involved with sustainability in another part of the world. For example, to assess how important sustainability is, and how much interest and involvement there is to better the planet Another important learning experience is to be exposed to new cultures and languages.


*[Should outline SPECIFIC goals]*


Project Goals: The end result of this project will be a time log, assessments of each individual farm, a paper comparing the farms, and a reflective paper of my experiences. The activity will be complete when I have completed the final assessment of the last farm that I visit. I will know that the work is successful if I have learned enough about each farm to write an adequate and complete comparison.


*[Describes very specific products of practicum: time log, assessments, comparative paper, reflection]*


Statement of Methods: I expect to look at each farm critically coming from a sustainability studies perspective. I will critique each farm with a set of guidelines that I have created. The guidelines of how sustainable a farm is includes: whether or not they are certified organic, if they use petroleum based pesticides, if permaculture is incorporated, how energy is acquired and how much is consumed (on the farm, in the house, heating, machinery, etc), where goods are exported (local or international?), how much waste is produced (human, food, and animal) and whether or not there is composting, whether or not the farm is self sufficient (how much goods must be imported to function), what tools and technology are used, and finally, water consumption.

*[Clear explanation of the "how"]*

Evaluation: I will be able to convince someone that I was successful in my learning objectives by presenting the final data, and more importantly, the final comparison paper. Rick Paradis will complete the evaluation.  *[States advisor]*

Description of Final Product: The final product will be a compilation of a time log, assessment of each farm, a comparison paper and a reflective paper about my endeavours.  *[Repeats final products]*

Time Frame: The project will take place from January 20, 2010 to April 22, 2010. The final project will be submitted in the Fall of 2010, and the evaluation will take place during the semester of Fall 2010.  *[Discusses time frame]*

Number of Credits Requested: I am requesting three credits upon the completion of this project. I will be abroad for thirteen weeks, and taking one week off for independent travel in Italy, so will be working a total of twelve weeks. The overall agreement for a WWOOFer is that you are required to work five days each week for 4-6 hours daily. This is an incredible learning opportunity that could not be achieved through a classroom. This will be an invaluable experience, and I think that three credits is an acceptable request.  *[Provides rationale for getting credit]*