

The Center for Environment and Development Studies, Cemus, is unusual in that it is a student-initiated and student-run university center with the expressed ambition of contributing to a sustainable and more equitable world. For over 15 years, Cemus has offered interdisciplinary courses and a creative forum for undergraduates, PhD students, researchers and teachers at Uppsala's two universities.

The Meeting Place

Throughout the years a fundamental principle of Cemus has been to provide a meeting place for extracurricular activities and to actively encourage students to act on their knowledge as an integrated part of the teaching process. It should be easy to move from theoretical insights to real engagement on the basis of one's new insights, points of view, and values—whatever they may be. In a deeper sense, Cemus should probably be regarded as a democratic project, rooted in the academic ideals of knowledge-seeking and critical thinking. It urges students to take responsibility by acting on their knowledge and conviction—through the support of other students, a building and infrastructure, and an attractive social environment. Students without Borders, solidarity organizations for Burma and Sudan, study groups, student newspapers, student conferences and a plethora of individual initiatives and collaborations have been born and have made use of Cemus as a meeting place over the years.

Research

Toward the end of the 1990s, the idea of a research dimension at Cemus grew stronger and stronger. Earlier generations of students who had been active at Cemus were approaching the end of their undergraduate studies and were experiencing a situation—and a frustration—similar to that which had provided the foundation for courses and for Cemus earlier on. Where could one find the opportunity to tackle the big, integrated issues that did not fit into any established discipline? Once again, a student-driven initiative arose which formulated, discussed, and chiseled out a model for something different—a research school for exactly the type of action-focused and interdisciplinary students who had found their way to Cemus. Students came and went for many years before Cemus Research School, CeRo, could finally be established in 2003. Since its inception, around 50 research students have been affiliated with CeRo and made use of and developed its interdisciplinary environment. Over the past several years, several Cemus employees have also received funding for innovative and interdisciplinary research projects.

CEMUS' MODEL FACILITATES A CREATIVE AND STUDENT-DRIVEN UNIVERSITY EDUCATION

Education for sustainable development involves substantially more than simply supplementing existing educational programs with a few new perspectives or bits of content. It also demands in-depth changes within the form and organization of education. We are forced to challenge traditional conceptions about how education is best organized, what subjects should be covered, and the role of students and teachers in this context. This opens for greater experimentation, for moving outside existing areas of expertise and envisioning ways in which education (and research) can be fun, intellectually sharp and deeply meaningful. Through the years, Cemus has developed a model for creative university education that transcends boundaries not only between students and faculty but also between different academic disciplines. The model makes it possible to organize interdisciplinary, participatory processes of education in which students have the opportunity to practice their skills in communication, collaboration, critical analysis and creative thinking; skills which are crucial to doing well not only in a Swedish knowledge-based economy, but also to be able to contribute to a sustainable and fair development on a global scale.

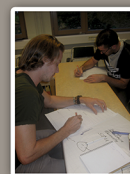


HOW A COURSE IS FORMED

COURSE FORUM:

STUDENTS, EMPLOYEES AT CEMUS AND THE PUBLIC ARE INVITED TO SHARE IDEAS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR NEW AND CURRENT COURSES

REVISION
AND
DEVELOPMENT



A NEW **cemus** COURSE TAKES FORM WITH A COURSE PLAN, EXAMINATION FORMAT AND GOALS

A FINISHED **cemus** COURSE

IS USUALLY STRUCTURED WITH GUEST LECTURES, SEMINARS OR WORK SHOPS, CURRENT LITERATURE AND EXAMINATION IN A VARIETY OF WAYS.

MAIN CHARACTERISTICS

FORM

STUDENTS ARE SEEN AS PRODUCERS AND NOT JUST CONSUMERS OF KNOWLEDGE

PARTICIPATORY AND A WIDE VARIETY OF TEACHING METHODS

RECIPROCITY AND LITTLE HIERARCHY BETWEEN STUDENTS AND TEACHERS

A WIDE RANGE OF LECTURERS FROM DIFFERENT ACADEMIC FIELDS

CONTENT

AN INTERDISCIPLINARY APPROACH

CRITICAL AND CREATIVE THINKING

SYSTEMS THINKING

ETHICS AND VALUES

POWER RELATIONS

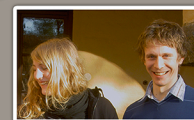
PROBLEM-BASED LEARNING

STUDENTS

TWO STUDENTS ARE HIRED AS

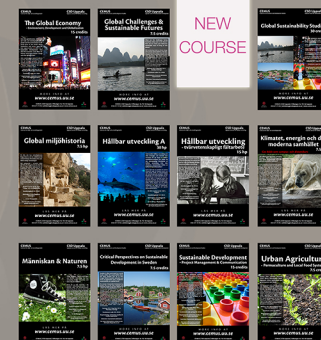
COURSE COORDINATORS

TO PLAN, ADMINISTRATE AND RUN THE COURSE AS A PROJECT. THEY OFTEN WORK WITH A COURSE WHICH THEY THEMSELVES HAVE ALREADY TAKEN. THE COURSE COORDINATORS PLAN THE GENERAL STRUCTURE OF THE COURSE, PUT TOGETHER A READING LIST, AND INVITE GUEST LECTURERS. THEY LEAD SEMINARS AND HANDLE THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE COURSE, AND TO THEIR HELP AND SUPPORT THEY HAVE A



WORK GROUP AND CEMUS' ORGANIZATION

For each course, a work group is formed which consists of researchers, teachers and sometimes also practitioners from different fields and subjects. The course coordinators work in close collaboration with the work group throughout the planning process. The work group comes with suggestions for literature and possible lecturers, and gives feedback on the course coordinator's proposed structure, literature and schedule. The course work group is responsible for the examination of the course.



Consists of a Director of Studies, an Educational Coordinator, Project Assistants, and a Program Director with experience from both teaching and research.



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