



The UNIVERSITY of VERMONT

Global Village
RESIDENTIAL LEARNING COMMUNITY

Exploring Culture Through Tea

Abby Johnsen and Laina Lomina, Program Directors

Overview of the Program

In the Exploring Culture Through Tea RLC we will expand our knowledge of several different cultures where tea plays a significant role. We will explore the ways in which tea is experienced, the purpose behind its uses, and how different cultural values and histories are reflected in those practices. Our strategy is to do a lot of experiential programming. We believe the best way to learn is through personal action and ownership, the environment of a RLC being ideal for this objective. Weekly meetings will be held to prepare for programming, build a stable sense of community between suites, and provide space for small scale presentations and activities. Our goal is one of a program working together to bring cultural understanding, social unity, and active awareness to the Living and Learning community through the lens of tea.

Learning Objectives

I. Members will be knowledgeable about the different teas and tea practices of regions where tea has a significant cultural position. We hope to gain insight into aspects of the cultures of these regions through experiencing their tea practices. We also hope to share this knowledge and insight Living and Learning and UVM community.

Action Steps:

- A) Members will independently research from a variety of sources throughout the year. We have a small library of tea, and tea culture related literature.
- B) Members will work in small groups periodically to research specific teas and the cultures related to them to be presented at small and large scale program events. For instance this fall semester one of our members performed an

informal Chinese Tea Tasting Ceremony for the group during one of our weekly meetings. We are also thinking about having a High Tea as one of our weekly meetings.

C) Members will work as a group to coordinate presentations, or events in places such as the Fireplace lounge to share our findings with the Living and Learning and broader UVM community. Examples include:

-semester kick off International Tea Tastings in collaboration with Global Village.
-a meal focused on a specific culture such as the Dim Sum event we co-hosted with AASU this winter, and the Moroccan Tea and Dinner we are planning for spring 2009.

D) As a group we will try to attend any relevant programming we are aware of such as the Japanese Tea Ceremony hosted by Japanese House this fall. We would also like to attend one of the workshops in tea preparation held at Dobra Tea.

II. Members will have an understanding of the different mental, physiological and medicinal uses of teas across different cultures.

Action Steps:

A) Members will independently research from a variety of sources throughout the year. Specifically, we have the book 20,000 Secrets of Tea, which focuses on the many different uses and properties of different teas.

B) During finals week members of the program will work together, possibly in collaboration with the Center for Health and Wellbeing to host an Finals De-Stress Session in the fireplace lounge. We will provide tea and information on the different benefits of tea, specifically relaxation, and energizing properties.

C) We would like to grow our some herbs (on a small scale) for use in herbal teas and potentially our Calming Teas Workshop in collaboration with the Green House RLC.

III. We aim to use programming as a tool to bring together the different communities within L/L. Through the use of both collaboration with other programs, and events open to L/L and UVM we hope to create a greater sense of community. Our goal is to not only foster a sense of social unity, but also an awareness and responsibility to social and political issues locally and global.

Action Steps:

A) As a Global Village program we will host a Wednesday Night Gathering. In fall 2008 we hosted a Chai Off. At this event we presented on Masala Chai as it is experienced traditionally in India, and everyone was able to prepare their own Chai blend. Some ideas for future Wednesday Night Gatherings include a Green Tea Ice Cream Social for which members would make green tea ice cream and treats. We will present on the process and invite the Global Village to come try our goods. Other ideas include a “VerbosiTea” and a Calming Tea Workshop. Inspired by “Apples to Apples,” at our “VerbosiTea” attendants would create a tea to embody one of three adjectives such as rambunctious, dysfunctional, or touchy-feely. At a Calming Tea Workshop we would present on the calming properties of several herbal teas. We would also give attendants the opportunity to prepare their own blend of a calming herbal tea such as chamomile.

B) In collaboration with InGEAR we would like to host an “EqualiTea”. This would be a discussion and tea hour focusing on a specific event, or topic, related to gender equity.

C) Possibly in collaboration with Global Social Justice and China House, we would like to the documentary “All In This Tea”. This documentary is about the changes underway in the Chinese Tea Industry and the plight of the small tea farmer. We would present this documentary in conjunction with a discussion afterwards.

D) Much of the programming from other learning objectives also aim to foster this idea of community. We hope the success of our International Tea Tastings in 2008-2009 as social kick-offs for the semesters will be repeated. We hope to help host the Finals De-Stress Session with the Center for Health and Wellbeing. This event too would draw a large social crowd and provide opportunity for community building.

**In order to accomplish these learning objectives members will be expected to attend all weekly meetings and all planned events, barring direct academic or work time conflicts. Members are also expected to be prepared for and engaged in programming to the extent that was expressed to the group.

Community Service

We plan on focusing our energy on unifying the Global Village Community and Living and Learning community. We hope do this through events such as the Internatioal Tea Tasting. Also we plan on bringing some relaxation to our community during finals week through the Finals De-Stress Session. We would also like to participate as a group in a community service event such as Empty Bowls, a UVM Habitat for Humanity, or Green Up Day.

Plans for Interactions with Other Programs

1. EqualiTea w/ InGear
 2. Finals De-Stress Session w/ L/L and Center for Health and Wellbeing
 3. “All in This Tea” documentary and discussion w/ Global Social Justice and China House
 4. “Cups and Clay” tea ware making w/ Pottery House
 5. “Cozy in the Cold” tea cozy making w/ Fiber Arts and Cultural Patterns
 6. Dim Sum w/ AASU
 7. Themed Dinner w/ Ecological World Cuisines
 8. Herb Garden w/ Green House RLC
-



About the Global Village

This program is part of the Global Village Residential Learning Community (RLC). For UVM students interested in exploring other cultures, studying abroad, or pursuing lives and careers in an increasingly interconnected world, the Global Village may be just the place for you! Drawing on the resources of the Living/Learning Center and its dynamic network of student- and faculty-led programs, the community of learners that make up the Global Village will be engaged in coursework, lectures, concerts, exhibits, faculty and peer mentoring, social connections with international students, group meals, and trips that:

- Explore the many connections among language, art and culture at regional, national, and international scales.
- Share disciplinary expertise within an environment that values a holistic approach to “living and learning.”
- Encourage formal and informal contacts among students, faculty, and staff within the Global Village, the Living/Learning Center, the other Residential Learning Communities, and the university as a whole.
- Aim to be a complement to existing international and cross-cultural programs at UVM.
- “Think globally and act locally” by outreach to the international community at UVM and within the greater Burlington area.

More information about the Global Village RLC can be found at: <http://www.uvm.edu/globalvillage>

GRS 095/096: The Global Village Seminar

GRS 095/096: The Global Village Seminar is a largely self-paced, one-credit course designed to help you get the most out of your experience as a citizen of the Global Village Residential Learning Community. All new Global Village residents **must** enroll in GRS 095 for one credit during the fall semester or GRS 096 for the spring semester. (Returning Global Village students who have not yet satisfactorily completed the class must enroll in GRS 095 during the fall semester.) This course will be graded on a “Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory” basis. The course will be partly comprised of a series of “Common Hour” community gatherings held on Thursday afternoons. The primary purpose of the Common Hour meetings is to build a stronger sense of community among the members of the many Global Village houses and programs. As well, the Common Hour gatherings will help Global Village citizens build a common knowledge and skill set, including such topics as intercultural communication, globalization, etc. A variety of program offerings will take place during Common Hour meetings, such as special guest lectures, interactive dialogue and social gatherings. During weeks when the Common Hours are not held, you are

expected to participate in one educational event or activity with a global cultural theme. We'll provide you with a list of suggested events and activities, or you can identify other events/activities with a global cultural theme; you choose which ones you wish to attend.

We'll provide you with a Global Village Passport; use it to keep track of your activities and explorations. In addition to documenting participation in Common Hours and the educational events/activities, you will need to do reflective writing in the form of five short journal entries on the cultural/educational events that you participated in, along with a lengthier essay looking back on your most meaningful experience of the semester within the Global Village.

Returning Global Village students are also invited (but not required) to enroll in GRS 095 during the fall semester. Enrollment in GRS 096 for one credit during the spring semester is optional and encouraged for all students.

If you anticipate a problem with fulfilling this course expectation (such as if you will already be enrolled in 18 credits), please contact Prof. Joseph Acquisto, Faculty Director of the Global Village, at Joseph.Acquisto@uvm.edu

For more details about this course, visit: <http://www.uvm.edu/~gvrlc/passport/GRS095096.pdf>