southern exposure
WHAT'S NOW, NEW AND NEXT AT SOUTHERN OREGON UNIVERSITY

The Rogue Valley Is Our Classroom

Welcome back to Fall 2026! As always, The Farm is dedicated to providing the best educational experience possible. The primary principles and core values outlined in Southern Oregon University's Vitality Plan inform the changes happening across campus, and serve as points of inspiration for courses at The Farm. At the heart of the plan is a simple idea: the Rogue Valley is our classroom, mentorship is our method, and practical, experiential work is our curriculum. This fall, both of our courses reflect that vision in everyday ways.

In Sustainable Food Systems (ES120), students explore the food system through gardening, farming, and culinary arts, with a focus on harvesting and food preservation. They learn to freeze-dry and can the fall harvest, reflect weekly on their place in the food system, and work in groups to research and design an on-farm project that improves The Farm's educational, ecological, or functional value. It is a living example of the plan's principle that work produces work, and that place itself can be the syllabus.

Similarly, our Pest Management course (SA103) emphasizes the hands-on skills needed to identify and address agricultural and horticultural pests. Students build integrated pest management plans and weigh the environmental and health impacts of the strategies they choose, exercising the ethical reasoning and judgment the plan hopes every SOU graduate will carry forward.

Both classes meet outdoors at The Farm, regardless of weather, and rely on collaboration, discussion, and peer review. Students are encouraged to develop leadership through engaging discussions, echoing the plan's principles of compassion, belonging and inclusion, and humility. Their instructor's office is at The Farm too, so mentorship happens right alongside the work.

As we look ahead, we do so with transparency and humility, grateful for the community that continues to grow alongside us. Even if you are not enrolled in a course, we welcome tours and other inquiries at https://farm.sou.edu/. We hope to see you this fall!