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Tim Foster's Regenerative Craft Website

Tim Foster
Western Washington University

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DESIGN.ECOLOGY.CRAFT

These three studies have directed my college path, and I would love to explain why they are crucial for regenerating our beautiful planet, lives and communities.

WHO AM I?

My name is Tim Foster (He/Him) and I am a graduate of Western Washington University’s Fairhaven College of Interdisciplinary Studies. My concentration was titled Regenerative Design, Ecological Solutions & Craft.

WHAT IS AN INTERDISCIPLINARY CONCENTRATION?

It is a self-guided major offered through Western Washington University’s Fairhaven College of Interdisciplinary Studies. It allows students to design their own unique major outside of traditional academic pathways.

WHAT DO I MEAN BY DESIGN, CRAFT & FUNCTIONAL ART?

Here are a few examples...

CONFLUENCE

This hanging lamp made for a sophomore industrial design lighting project was inspired by Lidar images of river geomorphology.

PERMACULTURE HOMESTEAD

A redesign of a local park into a self-sustaining homestead based on permaculture principles.

SKETCHES & RENDERS

Examples of my sketching and rendering work from industrial design courses.
ABOUT ME

Born near Akron Ohio in 1999, I grew up as the youngest of 5 children in the suburban sprawl of the Midwest. As my father was a graduate professor, my parents valued education very highly. With this at the forefront of their priorities, I was homeschooled alongside my siblings through seventh grade, after which I began attending a small private school, graduating in 2017. Throughout childhood my parents pressured me to pursue classical cello and piano and focus on school, but I found far more fulfillment in outdoor activities and sports. From soccer to fishing, skateboarding, hockey and eventually rock climbing I attempted a broad range of hobbies, always searching for that which challenged both my mind and body.

Faced with the decision to choose a university, I repressed my desire to take time off from school and began searching for a college that offered an industrial design degree and easy access to outdoor recreation. With these criteria, Western Washington University quickly appeared as an obvious option. My interest in WWU was heightened by the romantic notion I held of the west coast as I grew up among the tame normalities of suburban life. Accepting my admission to Western, it was with hope and excitement that I moved to Bellingham to pursue the industrial design program within the university and rock climbing outside of it.

Additionally, I have been privileged to travel around the west coast from British Colombia to Utah to southern California and many places between. During this period, I have grown in my passions for rock climbing, trail running, skiing, fly fishing, crafting, gardening, and history. Above all else I am incredibly grateful for all those I have met through this period of growth, who have encouraged, challenged, and taught me.

As my freshman year progressed, my optimistic attitude regressed. Though I had managed acceptance into the industrial design pre-major, I was quickly becoming disillusioned with the program as my environmental ethics clashed with the field’s principles. Thus, it was with great relief that I decided to take a couple quarters off from school my sophomore year. After working all summer at a used car dealership in Akron to pay off my college debt, I flew to California to travel and rock climb with my older brother. After a few months filled with mishaps and injuries contrasted by good and extremely formative experiences, I decided to return to WWU for spring quarter of 2019. With a break from school and a fresh outlook on life, I was excited to be back in the university environment, finish the classes offered within the industrial design pre-major and move on to Fairhaven college to create a regenerative design concentration.

Two and a half years later I find myself wrapping up these plans as graduation races towards me. Though little in this process has gone exactly to plan, especially considering the eruption of COVID-19, I am proud to see my Fairhaven concentration in Regenerative Design, Ecological Solutions, and Craft through to completion. Yet earning my diploma does not begin to encapsulate all that I have learned and experienced along this slightly unconventional collegiate path. I have worked a diverse array of jobs including graphic designer, self-employed landscaping and carpentry contractor, organic farm laborer, route setter and climbing wall attendant, climbing instructor, gear store attendant, and baker.

As I transition out of college, I am excited for what lies ahead as I look forward to gaining new skills and experiences. I am planning to spend the next winter in Mazama Washington where I will work at a gear store and eagerly anticipate traveling through the desert Southwest the following spring. After that I am motivated to take whatever opportunities come my way with a special interest directed toward working as a route setter or within a small scale production operation, pursuing further educational opportunities within agriculture, and traveling.
CONTACT ME HERE

First name

Last name

Email

Phone

Message

SUBMIT
It was the last class of the quarter and our professor had asked us to reflect on the role of grief in our futures. I had some thoughts, but nothing coalesced poetically enough to warrant a contribution. Just as the professor began wrapping up, some rough idea came through. But her back was turned, she didn't see my slightly raised hand, I let it go. Tossing my headphones back over my ears, I wondered if anyone in the class would have enjoyed hearing my opinion. They were stuck there, but you don’t have to keep reading, so here’s my thought.

I’ve had grief in my life, certainly not as much as many, but enough to grow familiar with its icy stare. Really, I’ve had enough to begin to believe I’ll always have some. I know it sounds grim, but this acceptance makes me feel like I don’t have anything to lose.

If regardless of what I face I’m still going to have to deal with some grief, then there cannot be much harm in hope. If I’m stuck down here, I might as well keep my eyes peeled for those sunny days in December.

Fly fishing for salmon in western Washington is a grim prospect, especially if you are as poor at it as me. Salmon populations are quickly declining, those that remain are mostly hatchery fish, and a cold drizzle engulfs nearly every day of the season. During the fall of 2020 I created an independent study within my undergraduate program to explore the habit & ecology of local salmonids. It was one of the most informative classes I’ve ever taken. That fall was a particularly rough year for Coho, the only species of Pacific salmon I had any chance of catching. I spent many hours standing waist deep in cold, slick currents, cast, swing, strip and repeat.

On my way out that night I passed a young couple with a dog and a small child that didn’t want to be left behind. They were there to be alone, but you don’t have to keep reading, so here’s my thought. I’ve had grief in my life, certainly not as much as many, but enough to grow familiar with its icy stare. Really, I’ve had enough to believe I’ll always have some. I know it sounds grim, but this acceptance makes me feel like I don’t have anything to lose.

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WRITING EXAMPLES
A selection of writing from throughout my college career which displays my experience with various styles and demonstrates the scope of my academic pursuits

"SALMONIDS IN THE NOOKSACK & SKAGIT"
A research paper on the condition of Salmon in two local rivers of northwest Washington

"BARBED WIRE AND THE AMERICAN PLAINS"
This essay explores the role of barbed wire in transforming the American west from a reciprocal Indigenous economy into a mass capitalist agricultural system

"GMO SEEDS A COLONIAL INDUSTRY"
I wrote this essay for a Food, Environment & Power class during the fall of 2021 addressing the issue of genetically modified crops and the corporate seed industry

"THE HOUSE ON THE HILL"
A literature review written for a political science class, this essay attempts to answer the question "Is America a Democracy"

"CONCENTRATION PROPOSAL"
Written in the fall of 2020, this document outlines my interdisciplinary major at Fairhaven College

"SUMMARY & EVALUATION"
In this work from my last quarter in an undergraduate program I reflected over my time in college
DESIGN WORK

A selection of work from design and art classes and personal projects which demonstrate and contextualize my skills, interest, and experience with design.

SOPHMORE ID 1

In this first studio design class I took, we focused on modeling and design techniques through projects with foam, metal, wood and plastic.

SOPHMORE ID 2

Part of the second year curriculum for Western's industrial design pre-major, the projects for this studio class focused on designing and modeling 3D designs with wood, plastic and fabric.

PERSPECTIVE & RENDERING

This class in the industrial design program focuses on building fundamental skills in conveying accurate perspective and rendering through hand drawing.

PERMACULTURE HOMESTEAD

As a project for an Agroecology & Permaculture Design course I created a proposal for redesigning a local park into a self-sustaining homestead based on permaculture principles.

ART & IDENTITY

In this art class I explored the connection between identity and the act of crafting.

ARTIST'S STATEMENT

Inspired by pieces of old growth Douglas Fir I found at the local used materials store, this table is a response to the struggle between functional craft and expressive art. It argues that there is meaning and identity inherent to everything we create. To see something built by a human is to see a little of them, that their time, care and beauty are absorbed into the work and therefore shine through it.

WOVN SKIS LOGO

During an internship at this small, local ski manufacturer, I developed a new logo and other branding materials for the company.