



## Story of Place™ Course Syllabus

Around the planet, there is a growing need to develop regenerative capacity and resilience in social and ecological systems. *Regenerative development* works to reverse the degeneration of the earth's natural systems and to design human structures and systems that can co-evolve with natural systems, generating mutual benefits and greater overall expression of life and resilience.

This co-evolution can only happen in particular places, using approaches as unique as the places themselves. For this reason, a deep understanding of place as a living system is the necessary starting point for regenerative development. Story of Place is a proprietary methodology developed by RegenesiS to provide this understanding. This course offers an opportunity to actively apply this methodology as a way to become familiar with it. The Story of Place course has been designed for working practitioners seeking to evolve themselves and this particular aspect of their practice.

Our work together will emphasize concrete, experiential practice rather than theoretical knowledge. Along with the faculty, you will be working live with a team of other participants to understand a specific place. The collective understanding we develop will be offered as a gift to local stakeholders in support of the work they are doing to improve their own community. Along the way, you will engage with powerful systemic frameworks and processes that use living systems thinking to integrate social and ecological dynamics. It is our intention that everything you learn will be immediately applicable not only to the community we are studying, but to your own work and life as well.

### Outcomes

The Story of Place course will help you develop the following capabilities:

1. New approaches to correlating and integrating streams of information from across multiple, seemingly unrelated disciplines;
2. Increased ability to “read” and interpret complex living systems;
3. Experience with getting to the core of essential patterns operating behind surface phenomena;
4. Insights into the strategic and design implications that a Story of Place reveals; and
5. Strategies for integrating this approach into a successful regenerative practice, supported by participation in a collaborative learning community of peers and colleagues who share your commitment to creating profoundly innovative work in service to a healthier world.

## Course Structure

The Story of Place course consists of ten sessions held over video conference and a five-day, in-person workshop. The course launches with an online meet-up, which includes a brief orientation to the series and gives participants an opportunity to become acquainted with one another before delving into content and teamwork.

The meet-up is followed by eight sessions, scheduled over a two-month period, with a one-week break at the midpoint. These sessions will focus on developing a body of research and understanding about the place that is the subject of our study. For the purposes of this research, participants will be divided among smaller learning teams who will work together to unearth, discuss, and summarize new information about the place, sharing their findings with the large group during the plenary sessions. Each of these teams will focus on understanding a key value-adding process of critical importance to the place we are studying.

Alongside the practical research, the faculty will also introduce a set of thinking capabilities that support the shifts in perspective that are necessary for the practice of Story of Place.

After the first nine sessions, the group will gather for a five-day, in-person intensive workshop in the community being studied. The purpose of this visit is to provide an embodied experience of place that tests and evolves the thinking developed through research. The site visit will enable participants to explore key dimensions of the systems of place, along with opportunities to interact with knowledgeable community stakeholders.

The course will close with a final online session for reflection and conversation about how to put what has been learned into practice.

## Course Materials

The coursework involves three different types of reading assignments.

The *session readings* are PDFs prepared by Regenesi faculty to orient you to the work of each of the course's sessions. These PDFs are posted to the materials page each week.

The *research materials* are materials drawn from various sources that we'll use to deepen our collective understanding of the place. Some of these materials will be assigned by course faculty while others will be identified and sourced by you, the participants, through the research process.

The *supplementary readings* are drawn from Regenesi's book, *Regenerative Development and Design: A Framework for Evolving Sustainability*, and are optional. These readings are intended to give a larger context for the Story of Place methodology as a foundational element of a regenerative practice. The book can be purchased on Amazon and other online booksellers as a hard copy or Ebook.

## Session Topics

Session 1—Definitions and basic concepts. What is a Story of Place? Why is it important? How does one do it? How does it fit within the practice of Regenerative Development?

Session 2—Data: land form, geology, watershed, climate, soils. Thinking capability: seeing tracks/patterns/energies.

Session 3—Data: ecological history. Thinking capability: non-attached openness.

Session 4—Data: social dimensions. Thinking capability: going to essence.

Session 5—Data: looking for correspondences. Thinking capability: seeing potential within nested systems.

Session 6—Data: iterating research with regard to everything learned so far. Thinking capability: awakening and aligning will through storytelling.

Session 7—Data: beginning to discern core patterns. Thinking capability: grounding toward manifestation.

Session 8—Data: preparation for site visit. Thinking capability: setting aims.

Session 9—Reflections and implications.

## Schedule

*Meet-up (orientation):* Thursday, June 15 from 1:00 – 3:00 pm MDT

*Sessions 1-8:* Thursdays from 1:00 – 3:00 pm MDT: June 22, June 29, July 6, July 13, July 27, August 3, August 10 and August 17. (Note that we take a week off halfway between the eight sessions.)

*Intensive: September 4 – 9.* We'll meet for a 6:00 pm – 9:00 pm dinner on Monday September 4, from 9 to 5 with a lunch break Tuesday – Friday, and from 9 to noon on Saturday, September 9.

*Reflection Session:* Thursday, September 28 from 1:00 – 3:00 pm.

## General Information

*Video Conferencing:* The meet-up and all sessions are conducted by online video conferencing. We will send you access information a few days before the meet-up. Access information will be the same for all sessions.

*Assignments:* Prior to each session, you are expected to do some reading as described above as well as complete an assignment. Generally, the assignments will be done with your team. Please allow 2-4 hours a week for this work.

*Materials Web Page:* Session readings (links to pdf documents), assignments, and other materials will be available online at the SOP materials page. You will receive a URL and password for accessing the materials page prior to Session 1.

*Sharing Information:* Maps, photos, and other visual information can be shared by any participant during a session by using the “Share Screen” function of the video conference service. In addition, we will create a materials archive online where research can be collected and shared during the course.

*Recordings:* A link and password to a video recording of each session will be posted at the materials page within 48 hours of the end of the video conference. You are always welcome to make up a missed session by watching the video.

*Travel information* to assist you with travel arrangements for the intensive will be posted on the materials page a few weeks into the course.