



Synergia Institute



3-Week Study Program “Transition to Co-operative Commonwealth: Pathways to a New Political Economy”

**September 4 – 23, 2016
Monte Ginezzo, Tuscany**



Overview

Around the world today, there is a universal sense that we are living through a unique moment in history. Rarely before has the need for systemic change been more obvious or more urgent.

The economic and social crisis that continues to unfold across the globe requires a new vision of political economy that can offer a truly progressive alternative to the neoliberal paradigm that is undermining the civil and democratic foundations of our societies and the economic and social well being of individuals and their communities.

For change makers the world over, the challenges to be faced are global – yet the solutions must be effective locally. The interface of global knowledge with local practice has thus become the nexus for transformative social change in our time.

Synergia is an international network of individuals and organizations that unites academics, social activists, practitioners and policy makers in a common effort to articulate, advocate, and implement models of economic and social practice that transition societies to a new model of political economy. One that is sustainable, democratic, socially just, and based on the principles of co-operation and the common good.





Synergia Summer Institute's Course:

Located on Monte Ginezzo outside the Etruscan hill town of Cortona in Tuscany, the Synergia Summer Institute for Commonwealth Transition offers an intensive program of exploration, instruction, dialogue, and practical training on transition models for the realization of an ethical economy. The Synergia Summer Institute applies the knowledge and practice of co-operation, economic democracy, and the commons to address the central issues of sustainability and social wellbeing at local, regional and global levels.

The overarching focus of the Synergia program is to answer the question: What is the ethical economy and how does it work? The course will provide a critical overview of the contours of this new political economy and the mechanisms required for its realization.

Pedagogically, the Synergia program seeks to maximize collaboration among participants, to promote horizontal relationships of dialogue, debate, knowledge sharing and learning, and to offer the broadest possible access and sharing of knowledge and resources. Above all, the course is designed to facilitate the application of ideas and learning to practical use.

A key feature of the course is the blending of **lectures** and **workshops** with **site visits** to leading co-operatives and commons activities in Tuscany and Emilia Romagna – home to one of the most sophisticated co-operative economies in the world.

The course unites the global with the local through the diffusion of ideas, models, and practices that advance game-changing solutions in the following areas:

- Co-operative capital and social finance; Alternative currencies
- Co-op and commons-based housing and land tenure; Community Land Trusts
- Renewable energy; Community-owned energy systems
- Local & sustainable food systems; Community supported agriculture
- User-controlled health and social care; Social and community Service Co-ops
- Co-operative & commons-based governance
- Platform co-operatives, digital commons, and peer-to-peer production systems
- Convergence and the new political economy – principles, propositions, and practices

A key purpose of the course is to provide a global context for these issues and to link models, practices, expertise, and action horizontally across these fields. The creation of new networks, relationships, and action alliances among change makers and program participants is also a primary objective of this program.

In the spirit of co-operation, participants will be asked to share in the day-to-day activities of the summer institute by contributing to cleaning, cooking, gardening, and other tasks related the operation of the program and the development of the site.





Our Instructors

The Synergia Summer Institute is very privileged to offer **some of the very finest minds and practitioners in their respective fields of study and practice**. Acknowledged internationally as leaders in their fields our confirmed instructors include the following individuals.

Michel Bauwens: Founder, P2P Foundation; Co Author, Network Society and Future Scenarios for a Collaborative Economy.

Pat Conaty: Fellow, New Economics Foundation; Research Associate, Cooperatives UK; Co Author, *The Resilience Imperative*.

Renate Goergen: President, Le Mat Europe; Board Member, European Social Franchise Network (ESFN).

Christian Iaione: Associate Professor of Public Law, Guglielmo Marconi University of Rome; Fellow, Urban Law Center at Fordham University; Director, LabGov – Laboratory for the Governance of the Commons.

Mike Lewis: Executive Director, Canadian Centre for Community Renewal; Co Author, *The Resilience Imperative*.

Julie MacArthur: Assistant Professor, Environmental Politics & Public Policy, University of Auckland; Author of *Empowering Electricity: Sustainability Co-operatives and Power Sector Reform in Canada*.

Robin Murray: Fellow, Cooperatives UK; London School of Economics.

Jason Nardi: Co-ordinator, RIPESS Europe.

John Restakis: Executive Director, Community Evolution Foundation; Adjunct Professor, Simon Fraser University; Author, *Humanizing the Economy – Co-operatives in the Age of Capital*.

Marco Tulli, Emiliano Cecchino, Davide Bonsignore: Off Grid Academy.





Other Details

Timeframe, Hours & Instruction

The Synergia Summer Institute is **3 weeks in duration**. It will take place from **September 4 – 23, 2016** at Monte Ginezzo in Tuscany. The total number of course hours is 100, making the course **eligible for university course credit**. The course instruction will be in English.

Location

The centre is located on Monte Ginezzo, and situated on a 300 hectare protected forest and bird sanctuary overlooking the Val di Chiana and Lake Trasimeno. It is approximately 17 km outside the Etruscan hill town of Cortona and is easily reachable by car. The Camucia-Cortona train station is on the main rail route connecting Rome to Florence. Cortona is 2.5 hours from Rome and only 45 minutes from Florence.

Accommodation

Monte Ginezzo provides **shared accommodation** to all program participants as part of your registration fee. Guests share comfortable rooms with up to two other guests, with no more than three guests to a room. Space is also available for those who wish to camp.

Meals

Monte Ginezzo will provide traditional **home-cooked Italian meals** as part of the registration cost.

Recreation

Monte Ginezzo offers guests access to a swimming pool, numerous hiking and biking trails, horse back riding, and trail bikes for rent on site. Also available are guided tours to Cortona and other destination points in the region including world famous wine tours and archeological sites. On weekends, culinary courses are available. And near the Centre there are a number of excellent restaurants. As well, Cortona is approximately 15 minutes by car and offers visitors a rich variety of eateries, cafés, wine bars and shopping.

Getting Here and Getting Around

Visitors to Monte Ginezzo will arrive at Camucia-Cortona train station, which has regular service from both Rome and Florence throughout the day.

For train schedules: www.trenitalia.com/tcom-en

Car rentals are available in Camucia at: www.sixt.com/car-rental/italy/cortona

Travel Agency Tuscan Magic: www.tuscanmagic.net





Program Cost

Early registration for the Synergia Summer Institute is 2,600 Euros, which includes accommodation, travel to site visits, and meals for the full 3 weeks (except weekends). Registration after July 30 is 2,700 euros.

Registration

Register by contacting John Restakis at synergia institute@gmail.com.

Payment will be accepted via Paypal.

Note: A minimum of 15 registrants must be confirmed by August 5 for the course to proceed. Should this number not be registered at that time, the registration fee will be refunded to the applicants.

Additional Information

For additional information on the Synergia Institute please visit:

synergia institute.wordpress.com/synergia-summer-institute/

Follow us on Facebook for regular updates on the program:

www.facebook.com/synergia institute/

Any other questions, please contact John Restakis at:

synergia institute@gmail.com

