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## **Australia-based instructors teaching permaculture in Stevens Point**

Geoff Lawton travels the world teaching others how to create landscapes in harmony with nature. The practice is called permaculture and in the past 20 years Lawton has become one of its foremost experts.

Lawton, the managing director of the Permaculture Research Institute (PRI) in Australia, is currently teaching an intensive, two-week course in permaculture design in Stevens Point. The program is hosted by the Global Environmental Management Education Center (GEM), a center within the College of Natural Resources at the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point.

Lawton is co-instructing along with his wife, Nadia Abu Yahia. The class has drawn nine participants, including Stevens Point residents and others from as far as Minneapolis. They will study soil rehabilitation, water management and drought strategies, energy-efficient structures and landscape features, mini-farm and garden design and other aspects of developing sustainable communities and livelihoods in an environmentally conscious manner.

Lawton first came to Stevens Point in May, when he was a featured speaker in the GEM Critical Issues International Seminar Series. His presentation drew a capacity crowd in the Melvin R. Laird Room in the Dreyfus University Center. Given the strong interest in the subject, GEM Director Victor Phillips arranged to have Lawton and his wife return to provide this detailed instruction. Phillips said GEM will be featuring permaculture lessons learned in helping communities in Wisconsin and abroad build a sustainable future.

Course graduates earn the PRI's Permaculture Design Certificate, which is renowned for producing ecological system thinkers and doers with design skills, and connects students to a global network of permaculture contacts and projects. Attaining a PDC is a foundation for further learning in this field, and is a prerequisite to obtaining a diploma in permaculture design, which requires two years of practical application of permaculture in a range of disciplines.

Further information about the GEM Permaculture Design Certificate course is available on the Web at

[www.uwsp.edu/cnr/GEM/PermacultureCourse/PermacultureHome.htm](http://www.uwsp.edu/cnr/GEM/PermacultureCourse/PermacultureHome.htm).

To arrange interviews with course instructors, GEM Director Victor Phillips or other course participants, contact Ron Tschida, GEM Communications Coordinator, at (715) 346-4266; [Ron.Tschida@uwsp.edu](mailto:Ron.Tschida@uwsp.edu).