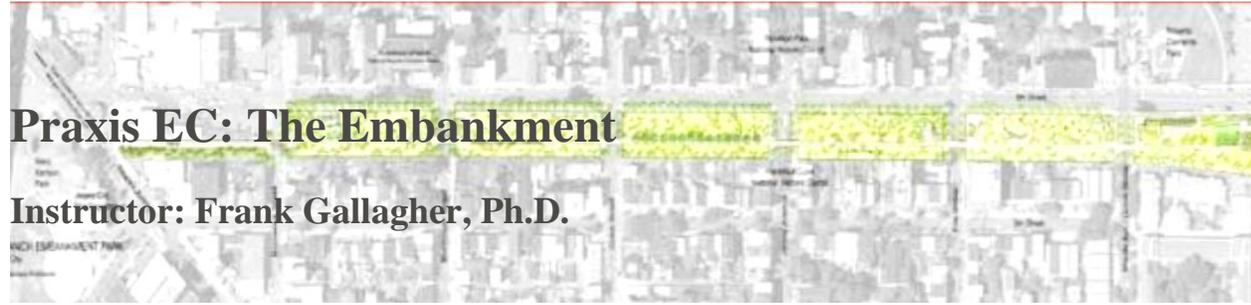


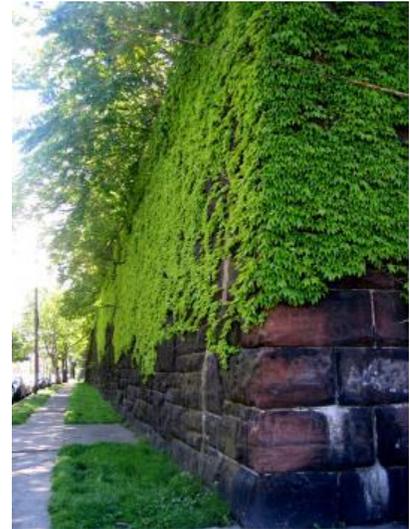
# Praxis EC: The Embankment

Instructor: Frank Gallagher, Ph.D.



**Site:** The Harsimus Branch Embankment is a massive, segmented stone structure that runs for six blocks through Downtown Jersey City parallel to Sixth Street. It was once part of the Pennsylvania Railroad system that connected the waterfront of Jersey City to the rest of the Country. The historic Embankment played a key role in shaping the Downtown and in the development of the Port of New York and New Jersey. Now a boundary of the National Historic districts of Hamilton Park and Harsimus Cove in downtown Jersey City, and a state, national, and municipal landmark in its own right, the Embankment is an important part of the future of the community and the region<sup>i</sup>.

**Client:** The Embankment Preservation Coalition is working with the City of Jersey City and others to preserve the structure and its longer right of way for a habitat-oriented linear park, part of the East Coast Greenway Maine-to-Florida trail, and for potential light rail. This grass roots project will expose students to the real world issues surrounding the adaptive reuse of past industrial infrastructure so critical to the revitalization of the “urban core”. As such it also satisfies the School of Environmental and Biological Sciences requirement for experienced based education.



*Photo: Edward Fausty*



*Photo: Sean Gallagher*

**Design Challenge:** We are now at the beginning of the ‘Urban Millennium,’ and there is the growing realization that over the next century existing and developing urban environments will expand dramatically. Within this context the Embankment offers the opportunity to explore the nexus between the adaptive reuse of historic industrial fabric, as public open space and the facilitation of novel urban ecologies. By considering the structure and function of urban “novel” vegetative communities and their associated ecosystem services, we will find new ways to ecological identities.

<sup>i</sup> <http://www.embankment.org/learn>