



Become a Folk School Instructor

Updated December 1, 2023

What is a Folk School?

The Folk School model is an ecosystem rooted in the lived experience and collaboration of its participants. We each take on different roles in that ecosystem at different times - sometimes you are the teacher, the student, the leader, or the helper. By nurturing a skill share ecosystem - our community is nourished, strengthened, and more resilient.

Your lived experience belongs here.

As social creatures, we learn from others. Instructors are a vital part of our community of lifelong learning and handcraft. Why not share your skills with others in a fun, safe, non-competitive space? Instructors are paid for their time and our team supports you along the way from class development to registration to day of support. Consider joining our community of life long learners!

Contents of this packet:

- Class Types and Topics
- Class Venues
- DFS and Instructor Roles
- Class Fees and Instructor Pay
- Logistics and Class Planning Tools

Contact us anytime via email or in person:

Email

info@duluthfolkschool.com

In Person:

Staff share space with Dovetail Cafe at
1917 W Superior Street, Duluth, MN 55803





Class Types and Topics

Hundreds of different classes have been taught at Duluth Folk School since its founding. We focus on nurturing social wellbeing and community cohesion through handcrafting, art, and life skills. We welcome class topics or experiences that support those things. Class participants and community members have asked for the following topics and levels of instruction.

- Introductory and informational classes in woodworking, sewing, knitting, crochet, foraging, painting, music, plant care, natural history, paper arts, beading, sustainability, and weaving
- Project classes in fiber arts, woodworking, printmaking, painting, upcycling, food preservation, winter recreation, and jewelry
- Advanced or multi-day classes in herbalism, home repairs, fiber arts, and gardening

When considering what you would teach at Duluth Folk School, we encourage you to think about which type of class fits your topic, experience, and goals. Classes can be offered as adult only (18+) or intergenerational (7+ or 13+). We welcome instructors to select the audience that best aligns with the topic and their comfort level/experience.

Try-it: A one-hour class or demonstration that provides a taste of a skill or project.

Introduction or informational: 1-3 hour classes that introduce a topic or skill with hands-on instruction and student practice of the skill. Students may or may not complete a finished product in an introductory class. No experience is necessary to participate.

Project: 3-8 hour classes where students apply skills to a particular project or application (e.g. apply sewing skills to quilting or banner fabrication). Prior experience may or may not be necessary to participate.

Advanced: 1-2 day classes that include some introduction to the topic, significant hands-on instruction and participation, and in some cases a certification.

See what is on the current calendar by visiting: duluthfolkschool.com/calendar/





Class Venues

Learning happens everywhere! The Folk School is open to hosting classes in a wide variety of locations. There are also a few well established venues available to instructors. Please feel free to contact us at info@duluthfolkschool.com with questions about which space would work best for your proposed class or experience.

Main Hall

The Main Hall is a large space (20 ft x 35 ft) shared with Dovetail Cafe & Marketplace. This space has movable tables, several large work benches, a stage, a sound system, and is accessible directly from Superior Street. Scheduling classes or demonstrations in the Main Hall should take into account the activity, noise level, and time of day.



Library

The library is a small classroom on the second floor of the building. It can accommodate up to 12 people at tables or up to 16 people in a circle without tables. This space is equipped with a screen, projector, sturdy work tables, chairs, bookcases, and windows that open. A utility sink is located on the same level. There is no elevator or lift to this level.



239 McDonnell Road

This 20 acre rural property on the north side of Duluth has an unheated garage, fields, and woods with trails. A portable restroom is available seasonally.





Folk School Roles

Staff, volunteers, participants, and instructors collaborate to bring a course to life. Instructors are expected to prepare a learning experience that is appropriate for the audience, prerequisite skill level, space, and timeframe. Instructors also prepare or purchase any materials needed for the class unless other arrangements are made with Folk School staff.

Compensation for materials and preparation time are wrapped into the class price. In some cases, learners may be asked to bring materials from home (e.g. scissors, old t-shirts, inspiration images). Duluth Folk School also may provide some tools or materials as requested by the instructor for use during the class (e.g. mugs, hand planes, pencils).

Duluth Folk School learners seek to learn and refine skills and connect with classmates and the instructor. The instructor is expected to encourage conversation, support participants in asking questions, navigating frustration, and finding solutions. Duluth Folk School instructors welcome learners' personal experience with the class topic and adapt class material to the unique needs of the group. We support lifelong learning and seek feedback from participants and instructors to celebrate successes and foster growth.

Duluth Folk School staff and volunteers provide the following:

- Course development and planning support
- A venue that fits your course needs (e.g. classroom, kitchen, or outdoor space) complete with liability insurance
- Course marketing, registration, and payment processing
- A host on the day of classes to welcome participants, support set-up and clean-up, assist during class, and help carry materials.
- Feedback from class participants

Examples of Supplies or Tools Available for Classes:

- Yarn (many types)
- Fabric (many types)
- Brayers
- Clamps
- Hand Planes
- Hand Saws
- Hammers
- Mugs
- Pencils
- Projector
- Felting Needles
- Scissors
- Wood Carving Tools
- Paper Quilling Tools
- Cardstock
- Embroidery Hoops
- Hearing Protection
- Beginner Looms
- Clay Carving Tools
- Latch Hooks
- Punch Needles



Class Fees and Instructor Pay

Class rates include separate tuition fee and materials fees. The tuition fee is based on a standard base rate per instructional hour. The Folk School aims to be fair to both teachers and learners while covering the overhead that makes the Folk School possible. The final tuition fees paid by participants will be split 50-50 by Duluth Folk School and the instructor. Instructors may choose to donate their portion of the tuition to the Folk School as a tax-deductible contribution. Instructors must complete a W9 in order to be paid by Duluth Folk School. This income is taxable if it is more than \$600 annually.

In this model, instructors and DFS will share the opportunity and responsibility of promoting and filling a class. Acknowledging that some classes require more than just an hour of prep time - we are shifting to a model where prep time is reimbursed at a rate of \$30/hour and divided amongst the minimum number of students.

If the instructor is purchasing class materials - the reimbursement per student for materials will also be included in the instructor's final pay. We understand that some teaching artists may have standard rates for classes that are based on a fee per student or fee per class. Folk School staff welcome conversation about how best to price and market specific experiences or classes.

Example: 3 hour project class for 12 students (max);
4 students (min) with \$10 in materials cost and 2
hours of instructor prep time

	Class Fee per Student	DFS Receives	Instructor Receives
Tuition (\$15 per class hour)	\$45	--- Split 50-50 ---	
Prep Time (# hours x \$30 divided by class minimum)	\$15		✓
Materials Cost (\$ per person)	\$10		✓
Total (maximum class size of 12)	\$70	\$270	\$450
Total (minimum class size of 4)	\$70	\$90	\$190



Become an Instructor

When you join the Duluth Folk School as an instructor, you are joining a community of creative life long learners. Thank you for sharing your skills and life experience! The following pages include resources and forms related to proposing and scheduling a class. Reach out to our team at info@duluthfolkschool.com with questions at anytime. We are excited to welcome you to the Duluth Folk School community.

Class Planning Resources:

[Background Information on Folk Education](#)

[How Adults Learn](#)

[Folk School Class Planning Worksheet](#) available in Google Drive and attached as hardcopy

Class Proposal Form:

Go to www.duluthfolkschool.com/become-an-instructor to complete the class proposal form or email the following information to info@duluthfolkschool.com

Here are some of the things we need to know to get your class up and running!

- Name and Contact Information
- A bit about your teaching and subject matter experience
- A brief blurb about yourself
- Class title and description (What will folks learn or do in your class? Will people go home with something in particular?)
- Audience (Who is the class for? Is a certain skill level required? Appropriate ages? What is the min/max of learners for the class?)
- Categorize your class as a Try-it or Demo, Introduction to an artform or skill, Project class (where you finish a specific project), or Advanced class (multi-day or upper level course)
- Material costs (estimates are ok)
- Preparation time for class materials by instructor prior to class (hours)
- Class times and dates preferred
- Location/Venue
- (Where would you like to teach? At the Folk School in the library or main hall? In a city park?)
- Lead time for registration to close
- (Do you need a certain amount of time to prep materials before class? Should registration stay open right up until the day of class?)
- A photo of you and a photo of class topic to use in marketing the class

Duluth Folk School - Class Planning Tool

Duluth Folk School classes are hands-on and participatory, nurture community connections, and honor the lived experience of everyone present. This type of learning ecosystem is rooted in grace, respect, curiosity, and support for each person's unique experience. We leave space for each participant to be both teacher and student and recognize the on-going nature of learning through life. This tool is one way to think through planning a Folk School class.

There are many other ways to make a plan for guiding an experience, hosting an event, or teaching a skill. If you have questions, would like support, or have ideas to share - please reach out to us at info@duluthfolkschool.com. Thank you.

Goal or Purpose - Why are we here together?

Materials List	Source of Materials		
	Instructor	Folk School	Student
Each person needs			
Ex. scissors			✓
The class shares			
Ex. ironing board	✓		

Space/Venue Circle one or more

Main Hall Library McDonnell Road Other:

Furniture needs? Accessibility considerations? Draw a layout of the space you need.

Connection

How will you build rapport with and between the people in the class? What feels natural to you? How will you learn about the people in the space, their hopes, and what they bring with them to the learning community? What will you share about your own learning journey and life experience?

Navigation

What is the outline of the plan? Where are you trying to get to? How will you know you have arrived? Working backwards from that point - what are the steps or phases of the class or project that will support the group in getting to that place?

The final destination should be based on the class description, your expectations, and the group's expectations. What are some ways the class may change course from the plan? What are some signs that this may be needed that you can watch for? What happens if things do not go as planned?

Communicating the big picture plan for the time together can put people at ease. This can be done verbally, on a hand-out or board. If there are particular time sensitivities, it would be important for the class to know ahead of time (e.g. the bread must rise for 1 hour so we need to get it to that point by X o'clock). If it's a project class - show an example of the final product. Leave room for the unexpected and new ways of doing things. If folks will be finishing their project outside of class - communicate this at the beginning to lessen time anxiety.

Lead by Example

How will you demonstrate the skill, technique, or steps of the project? In-person? A recorded video? As a large group or individually? Will everyone gather around or can they see from where they are sitting/standing? Will you demonstrate all of the skills at once or throughout the course of the class as needed?

If this is the first time that you have taught this class - it would be worthwhile practicing this demonstration a few times with a friend or family member. You may find that more or less detail is needed in your explanation or demonstration of the skill or project work.

Encourage Practice

It takes practice to learn new things. We know this but it can still be challenging to try and fail as adults. How will you nurture a supportive and collective learning environment? What are stories of your own learning journey that you could share? How can you use humor, patience, peer support, and step-by-step instructions as needed to keep the positive practice energy going?

Closing

How will you recognize the end of your time together? What are the signs that the class or event is winding down? What would you like to know about the experience from the other people in the room? Are there specific instructions for transporting, using, or finishing a project at home? How will you encourage people to pause and reflect before diving back into the world outside of the space you've created? Consider ways to celebrate the learning that has happened during the class or event. What connections to ideas, skills, or people exist that were not there before? What have YOU learned as part of this time?

Resources

What books, websites, suppliers, YouTube channels, artists, instructors, events, or project ideas would you recommend to the group?