

LANDSCAPE RESEARCH II: Linking questions, literature and methods

Department of Landscape Architecture

University of Oregon Winter 2014

LA 621 (2 cr. Masters students, 4 cr. PhD students) / Grading: P/N

Prerequisites: conditional MLA or Land. Arch. PhD candidate or Permission of Instructor

Time: Thursdays 10:00 – 11:50 AM Location: 222 Lawrence

Prof. Bart Johnson / 216 Lawrence Hall / Office hours: Thurs. 1:00 – 3:00 PM or by appt.

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

Critical research has become an integral part of the discipline of Landscape Architecture. We now recognize research as a necessary and demanding aspect of our work as designers and planners, and as one of the valuable ways in which we question our beliefs, admit new understandings, inform design decisions, and adopt new paradigms for professional work. Traditionally, the field has endeavored to merge the rigors of scientific research with the best humanistic insights of introspective art. Within this context, a field of design and planning research has emerged that draws on both science and art, and frequently attempts to build bridges between them. It does so to develop analytical or experiential understanding of landscapes, and apply them toward prescriptive solutions to place-based issues.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

The purpose of this course is to develop skills in conceiving and crafting a landscape design and planning research project as part of conducting your own graduate research efforts. You will explore the published literature in landscape architecture and other fields, identify a researchable topic, and explore it through tools and techniques that range from online literature searches to identifying and exploring potential research methodologies that you might apply.

For the purposes of this course, research means formal, systematic inquiry intended to explore or resolve specific questions. In a broader context, research is usually designed to test or revise our understanding of some phenomena or process, and in so doing, to contribute toward theory. In this course, research is examined as an approach to inquiry rather than as a form of strict adherence to methodological conventions.

By the end of the course, students will have:

- 1) Developed a researchable topic and expressed it in an initial research statement that builds on your Master's Project Prospectus from LA620 to concisely frame and delimit the landscape research problem you wish to investigate; identifies one or more key questions to be explored through your own processes of inquiry; and draws from the relevant published literature to help frame and contextualize the work to be performed.
- 2) Revised the research statement several times using critical reading, writing and thinking
- 4) Explored potential methodologies to critically investigate the question(s) posed so as to contribute new perspectives and knowledge to the field

This course builds on LA 620 Landscape Research I: Students will continue to develop proficiency in critical reading, writing and thinking; to learn to efficiently process diverse sources of information so as to connect their research to the published literature; and to learn how develop a researchable question, conceive approaches to answering it, and connect their answers back to the broader context of design and planning scholarship.

Additional outcomes for this course are that students will have:

- Worked iteratively among a) problem definition and delimitation; b) consideration of appropriate, tractable investigative methodologies; and c) gleaning and incorporating understanding from the relevant literature so as to craft a landscape research project that is compelling to you and your intended audience, and feasible within the limits of your time and resources
- Gained familiarity with standard methodologies and techniques used by environmental design researchers, and be able to determine which techniques are appropriate to a given research design
- Improved their ability to craft a clear, persuasive written argument with logical development and progression of ideas that is targeted to their desired audience

COURSE FORMAT

The course meets weekly. We will explore research design and methodology through various modes: readings and discussion, presentations by the instructor and peers, and short written assignments directed toward developing your own project prospectus. You will also learn how to use emerging information resources and literature search tools. AAA faculty and/or graduate students may visit the class to discuss their research and the role of research in their professional development. Students will receive feedback on their research statement development from both their Master's Project Development Advisor (M.L.A. students) or Major Advisor (Ph.D. students). Doctoral students will meet an additional hour per week with the instructor and later with their major advisor, and are expected to contribute an additional 5 hours a week of independent work outside of class in refining their dissertation proposal directions. The scope of this additional work will be defined in consultation with the instructor and, when appropriate, the student's major advisor.

REQUIRED TEXTS (available at the UO Bookstore):

The Craft of Research, 2nd or 3rd ed. by Wayne Booth, Gregory Colomb and Joseph Williams

The Elements of Style, 4th ed. by William Strunk and E. B. White

Rules for Writers, 5th or 6th ed. by Diana Hacker

OPTIONAL TEXTS (available at the UO Bookstore) - **including assigned readings**

Practical Research: Planning and Design, 7th, 8th or 9th or 10th ed. by Paul D. Leedy

- There are assigned readings (three chapters to read and 5 to skim for specific methods). A useful book to have, and if you don't have access to one, you'll need to check it out from AAA reserve (1 copy). Not required only because of expense.

Inquiry by Design, revised ed., by John Zeisel

- A good book linking design and research with a number of detailed chapters on design research methods

The Shape of reason : Argumentative Writing in College, 4th ed. by John T. Gage

- A good book about the fundamentals of argumentative writing

ASSIGNMENTS, EVALUATIONS and GRADES

Assignments are designed to help you clarify what a researchable question is, how to know one when you see it, what a researchable question *of interest to you* might be, and how one can proceed from problem identification to problem development to research implementation. In-class discussions, individual assignments and conversations with the instructor will be the principal vehicles used to apprise students of their progress.

The core of the course is the set of experiences that occur during class meeting times. Thus, the following are all necessary to receive a passing grade: attendance and active participation in *all* class discussions (with reasonable exceptions for emergency absences); successful completion of all assignments; no late assignments without PRIOR arrangement with the instructor.

ADDITIONAL EXPECTATIONS OF Ph.D. STUDENTS

This course occurs in the third term of a Ph.D. student's time in the Department. Beyond the set of required readings and assignments described below, Ph.D. students will, in addition, develop an annotated bibliography for an additional set of readings tailored to the student's emerging dissertation interests, and explore selected articles, methodologies, and proposals intended to assist them in working out the scope, directions and approaches for their dissertation. Toward this end, doctoral students will meet weekly with the instructor, and later in the quarter, with their major advisor, at a mutually agreeable time to explore contextual, theoretic, and methodological approaches used by others conducting research relevant to the student's dissertation interests. The student will prepare critical summaries of these readings and bring them to the additional weekly discussions. While there is no absolute page limit, the expectation is that these additional readings will address 2-3 peer-reviewed publications per week (~60-80 pages). At the conclusion of the course, the Ph.D. student will have synthesized three key dimensions of a researchable topic. These are: 1) developed and delimited a potential researchable topic, 2) completed an advanced literature review related to this topic and incorporated these understandings into a scholarly narrative focused on their topic, and 3) proposed one or more methodological approaches that could be used to answer the research problem they have posed, and specified how they would be applied. These advanced understandings will be incorporated into their class exercises, and in particular to an expanded version of Exercise 3, the final assignment. Although the topic investigated may or may not become the topic of their dissertation research, the goal of these exercises is for the student to learn how to develop a research proposal and to refine their interests. Finally, the student will continue their identification of content areas that are necessary components of their Ph.D. Program of Study, which must be submitted to the Department for approval at the conclusion of their first year in the program.

INFORMATION FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

If you have a documented disability and anticipate needing accommodations in this course, please arrange to meet with the instructor as soon as possible and request that the Counselor for Students with Disabilities send a letter verifying your disability.

COURSE SCHEDULE

WEEK ONE

Thursday
April 3

Course Introduction

Read: Hacker: TOC and p. 1-25 (planning and initial drafting)
Strunk and White: Entire book. Minimum: Introduction, Chapter 2 and Chapter 5.
Booth: TOC, preface p. xi-(top)xiii, prologue (p. 3-8), and skim Ch. 1-2 for useful ideas
Assigned: Exercise #1 and Exercise #2

WEEK TWO

Thursday
April 10

Developing a Research Question

Read: Booth, Chapter 3 Topics to Questions; Chapter 4 Questions to Problems;
Leedy, Chapter 3 The Problem: The Heart of the Research Project
Gage, Chapter 5 Asking Questions, Generating Ideas
Due: Top 3 choices for Exercise 2
Due: Exercise #1 Steps A and B are due, as is a draft of Step C for discussion

WEEK THREE

Thursday
April 17

Harnessing Methodologies to Problems

Read: Zeisel, Chapter 5 Research Methodologies Approaches, Designs, Settings;
Leedy, Chapter 5 Planning Your Research Design; *Skim:* Leedy Chapters 7-11:
and Zeisel Research Methods: Chapters 8-14. Then read carefully a minimum of
one chapter from each book
Due: Exercise #1 Steps A, B C final version – bring two copies to class
Assigned: Exercise #1 Step D Peer-Review
Assigned: Exercise #1 Step E – Research Statement Revision

WEEK FOUR

Thursday
April 24

Methods Discussion and Problem Solving

Due: Exercise #1 Step D Peer Review Critique (2 copies)
Exercise 2 Team Presentations
Due: Exercise 2 (half the teams)

WEEK FIVE

Thursday
May 1

Methods Discussion and Problem Solving

Exercise 2 Team Presentations
Due: Exercise 2 (half the teams)

WEEK SIX

Thursday
May 8

Crafting a Masters Project

Read: Booth Chapter 13 Revising Organization and Argument, Chapter 16
Revising Style, Chapter 14 Introductions (optional); Gage Chapter 8 Revising and
Editing
Due: Exercise #1 Step E – Research Statement Revision
Assigned: Exercise #3 – Master's Project Prospectus

WEEK SEVEN

Thursday
May 15

Locating Sources/Building Cases

Read: : Booth, Chapter 5 From Problems to Sources; Chapter 6 Using Sources;
Leedy, Chapter 4 Review of the Related Literature; Booth, Part III: Making a
Claim and Supporting It; Hacker p. 457-460 Avoiding Plagiarism

WEEK EIGHT

Thursday
May 22

Student presentations of Ex. #3

WEEK NINE

Thursday
May 29

Students' presentations of Ex. #3

WEEK TEN

no class

Review Week

Due Thursday June 5, 5:00 PM: Exercise #3/Prospectus Revision