

LA 607 Introduction to Landscape Literature
2 credits
wednesdays 2-5:20 summer 2014

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office hours:
please contact instructor through email to arrange a meeting



READING (the) LANDSCAPE

introduction to landscape literature

This seminar is a short introduction to the long literature of landscape architectural theory, history, and design. We will cover a broad array of topics and authors during the term. The objective of the seminar is to give you an overall view of the lay of the land, beginning with definitions of landscape and how we understand what we see, and concluding with a few manifestos suggestive of other landscapes. Throughout, we will focus on ways of reading the landscape through what others have written about it, and couple those with your own experiences. Whether a landscape is "found" or built, it is a manifestation of how we perceive the world-at-hand. Landscape entered our common lexicon as a broad view ("-scape"), including not only the land itself, but weather and horizons, the field and the town, the conviviality of a chance meeting and the solitude of an ocean's edge, the otherness of animals and the internality of experience. It is this landscape of ecological, social, and perceptual events that will be the center of our bookish investigations.

A key element in reading landscapes is understanding the feeling of a space and the materials, forms, and events that have made, and continue to make, it. This type of learning emerges most clearly when you have the opportunity to observe spaces and how they are used and perceived. Direct engagement with a variety of landscapes will deepen your understanding of what writer Georges Perec called "species of spaces" and the relationships among scale, material, location, and more ephemeral qualities of expectation, affection, and aesthetics. A recurring assignment will be going outside and writing memos about particular activities and places. Landscape architectural design methodology is built on dynamic conditions; the design process emerges from an understanding of the experiential, temporal, and material aspects of a place or idea. What natural events and systems have formed this place? How is a place revealed through movement? What are the connections between emotions and the spatial field? How do landscape processes change a place over time? Where are the ecological and social boundaries to a given landscape?

Course learning outcomes

Upon completion of this course with a passing grade, students shall:

- Be introduced to an array of landscape architectural ideas and concerns as learned through readings and discussions
- Be able to critically "read" a landscape and express your observations through verbal and written means
- Take initial steps in formulating a practice of reflective observation

Course methodology

Each week of the term you will be assigned 2-3 required readings and be expected to come to class prepared to discuss them. Participation in discussion is essential to doing well in the seminar. Below is a general description of what is entailed in participation. In addition, for this seminar participation in discussion will include coming to class with questions about what you have read, and perhaps images that we might interpret through the lens of a week's readings, or other readings that expand on the topics covered.

As this is a graduate level seminar, you should first make an attempt to answer your own questions. Do some research on the topic (beyond what Wikipedia can tell you!), check out the Oxford English Dictionary if there are words that puzzle you, reflect on why a question or topic interests you.

There will be a number of memos written as both in-class and take-home that will also be the focus on discussion. All readings will either be posted on Blackboard or pdf links will be provided by the instructor.

Course evaluation

Reflections	15%
Mini-Case Study Presentation	15%
Memos	30%
Participation	40%

Following are grade breakdowns and criteria for Excellent, Average and Failing work:

- A 100 – 90 % ---- Excellent. Ideas are clearly stated and developed. Specific examples are appropriate and help develop claims. Student not only demonstrates full knowledge of subject, but also demonstrates insight, invention, critical thought and ability to elaborate.
- B 80 - 89 % ----- Good (satisfactory for graduate level work). Meets expectations for assignments, analysis and critique.
- C 70 - 79 % ----- Average (unsatisfactory for graduate level work). Work is competent. Student demonstrates reasonable awareness and knowledge of subject, but fails to elaborate; work is often not supported by specific examples, analysis or synthesis.
- D 60 - 69 % ----- Inferior. Notably lacking preparation; project/assignment content may be irrelevant or dispersive.
- F 59% or less ---- Failing. Work is incomplete, not understandable or logical, poorly organized. Student doesn't have grasp of information, and can't answer questions about subject.

Grading policy follows the University of Oregon grading system for graduate students:
<http://gradschool.uoregon.edu/policies-procedures/grades>

Participation

Participation in class discussions and critiques is mandatory and a significant aspect of your grade. Criteria for evaluating participation is as follows:

A Student demonstrates excellent preparation through exceptional analysis and synthesis that relates to readings and other material (e.g., readings, course material, discussions, experiences, etc.) and puts together pieces of the discussion to develop new approaches that take the class further; contributes in a very significant way to ongoing discussion through keeping analysis focused, responding very thoughtfully to other students' comments, contributing to the cooperative argument-building, suggesting alternative ways of approaching material, etc.; and demonstrates ongoing and very active involvement.

B Student demonstrates good preparation for class discussion through reading, critical thinking and analysis; offers interpretations and analysis of case material (more than just facts) to class; contributes to discussion through volunteering interpretations and analysis, responding to other students' points, and through demonstrating ability to think and consider suggestions that may be counter to the majority opinion; is consistently involved in the class discussions.

C Student demonstrates adequate preparation for discussion; knows basic case or reading facts and offers straightforward information (e.g., straight from the case or reading), but does not show evidence of trying to interpret or analyze it; does not often offer to contribute to discussion, but contributes to a moderate degree when called on.

D Student is present in class and not disruptive; student does not offer much when called on and demonstrates very infrequent involvement in discussion.

F Absent or disruptive

Criteria for evaluating grades and participation are adapted from the University of Virginia Teaching Resource Center

Attendance

Consistent and informed participation is crucial to a successful seminar. Students are expected to attend all class sessions and to come to class prepared to participate actively in discussions. Planned absences should be discussed in advance with the instructor. Students are allowed one absence; two or more unexcused absences will result in a lowered grade of one letter grade for each missed class.

Academic honesty policy

The University Student Conduct Code (conduct.uoregon.edu) defines academic misconduct. Plagiarism is taking and using as one's own the ideas, concepts, analysis and writings of another without giving appropriate credit through proper documentation. "Proper documentation" includes quotation marks, foot- or endnotes, or noting that a sentence or paragraph is paraphrased (with references to where the original information was found). Providing assistance to another student who is attempting to cheat or plagiarize is also considered academically dishonest.

If there is any question about whether an act constitutes academic misconduct, it is the student's obligation to clarify the question prior to taking any action. Principles of academic honesty and professional ethics also apply to any use of computers associated with the class.

This includes observing all software licensing requirements and respecting copyrights of intellectual property published on the Internet.

Students with disabilities policy

The University of Oregon is working to create inclusive environments. If there are aspects of the instruction or design of this course that result in barriers to your participation, please notify the instructor as soon as possible, or contact the UO Accessible Education Center at 541.346.1155 or uoaec@uoregon.edu.

Course schedule

- 1** Species of spaces
June 25
Introduction to course | syllabus review | course criteria
Assignment: *Reflection on landscape architecture, I (in-class)*
8 Versions of the Same Scene Memo
Reading: J. B. Jackson, "The Word Itself" and "A Pair of Ideal Landscapes" (1984)
D. W. Meinig, "The Beholding Eye: Ten Versions of the Same Scene" (1976)

- 2** The forest
July 2 **field trip to the H. J. Andrews Experimental Forest**
Assignment: *Distant/Near Memo*
Reading: Alan McQuillan, "Cabbages and Kings: The Ethics and Aesthetics of 'New Forestry'" (1993)
Frederick Law Olmsted, "Yosemite and the Mariposa Grove" (1865)

- 3** The view from within
July 9
Discussion: readings from weeks 1 and 2
Assignment: *Near/Distant Memo*
Reading: none (other than readings for weeks 1 and 2!)

- 4** The architecture of landscape
July 16
Assignment: *Walking memo*
Reading: Patrick Condon, "Cubist Space, Volumetric Space, and Landscape Architecture" (1988)
Ben Jacks, "Reimagining Walking: Four Practices" (2004)
Joan Nassauer, "Messy Ecosystems, Orderly Frames" (1995)

- 5** Ensembles of practice
July 23
Assignment: *Mini-case study of a landscape architectural strategy (students responsible for individual powerpoint presentation)*
Reading: each student will be responsible for readings linked to an individual study of a design or planning strategy practiced in landscape architecture

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The others

July 30

Assignment: *Sitting memo*

Reading: Gilles Clement, "Working with (and never against) Nature" (2007)
Kristina Hill, "Biodiversity and Climate Change in Cities" (2013)
Peter Del Tredici, "Brave New Ecology" (2006)

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Manifestos of a sort

August 6

Assignment: *Reflection on landscape architecture, II* (due at start of class)

Reading: James Corner, "Not Unlike Life Itself: Landscape Strategy Now" (2004)
Kenneth Helphand, excerpts from *Defiant Gardens* (2008)
Elizabeth Meyer, "Sustaining Beauty: The Performance of Appearance" (2008)