

# ***LANDSCAPE RESEARCH II: Linking questions, literature and methods***

**Department of Landscape Architecture**

**University of Oregon Winter 2013**

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 concisely frames and delimits 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
- 5) Use these components to develop a Master's Project Prospectus for submission to the department faculty at the end of the quarter

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. 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 ed.* by Paul D. Leedy

- There are significant and important readings (three chapters to read and 5 to skim for specific methods). A useful book to have, and if you don't own it, you will need to be checking 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 4

**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 11

**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 18

**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 25

**Methods Discussion and Problem Solving**

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

**WEEK FIVE**

Thursday  
May 2

**Methods Discussion and Problem Solving**

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

**WEEK SIX**

Thursday  
May 9

**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 16

**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 23

**Student presentations of Ex. #3**

**WEEK NINE**

Thursday  
May 30

**Students' presentations of Ex. #3**

**WEEK TEN**

no class

**Review Week**

**Due Thursday June 6, 5:00 PM:** Exercise #3/Prospectus