

DEPARTMENT OF LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE
University of Oregon
Spring 2013

GRADUATE SEMINAR: NATIONAL PARKS

LA 510 | CRN: 34144

Professor Robert Z. Melnick
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MEETINGS:

- Tuesdays/Thursdays, Noon-2:00

It has been argued that the national parks are a major contribution of this country to international society and culture. They are, in many respects, a physical embodiment of the democratic ideal. First conceived of in the early nineteenth century, the parks are a “democratization” of landscape -- places that all people can enjoy, if they can get there. As public landscapes, however, the parks are subject to many of the same pressures as the rest of our society: overcrowding, changing mandates, climate change, crime, political pressures, and various sets of conflicting values. Still, survey after survey shows that the parks are valued across American society, as much as for their ideal as for their reality.

This seminar explores, in detail, some of the many issues which the parks have faced in the past, and which they face today. We will consider historic events that to the establishment of the first parks, some historical trends, and some key issues, which present both opportunities and challenges for national parks of the present and the future. We will think chronologically and thematically about the parks, their development and role in American history and American life, and the challenges they now face.

This course is for graduate students only and requires permission of instructor to enroll.

Previous coursework in landscape architectural history, architectural history, historic preservation, historical geography, environmental studies and/or related fields will be beneficial, but not required.

***** Attendance is required at all class meetings.**

Requirements, in addition to attendance and participation, students will be required to complete all assigned course readings, lead a class discussion based on term paper topics, and complete an original term paper.