

DESIGN ACTIVISM

Exploring social and environmental justice in Landscape Architecture

LA 410 (2 credits)

Winter 2015

Tuesdays 12:00pm-1:50pm

Instructor: Keegan Oneal (koneal@uoregon.edu)

Office Hours: TBD

Course Description

Landscape Architects and others in the design world have a tremendous opportunity to lend their technical skill and expertise toward a greater social good. By embracing an activist attitude, designers have the chance to catalyze public discourse and policy change as well as dramatically improve the quality of life for the world's population.

This course is a survey of landscape architecture and design interventions that address outstanding social and environmental problems in the United States and abroad. We will discuss design theories and frameworks that characterize design activism, covering both historical and contemporary case studies. As a class, we will consider how projects can be approached with a proactive design process that promotes social and environmental justice.

Course Format

The general format of the class will be lecture and discussion. During weeks seven and eight, students are expected to complete and present a thorough Direct Action proposal of their own.

Course Objectives

Students will be expected to gain the following upon completion of the course:

- Understanding of social problems that can be addressed through landscape architecture
- Familiarity with theories that characterize design activism
- Knowledge of precedent studies and projects in the realm of design activism
- Ability to think critically about landscapes from a social justice perspective
- Ability to discuss issues of social and environmental justice with potential clients, stakeholders, and community members in a culturally sensitive way.

Expectations, Assignments, and Evaluation

Students are expected to complete assigned weekly readings and come prepared for group discussion. Six reading reflection assignments will be assigned, and students will be responsible for facilitating group discussions throughout the course.

As a final project, students will be expected to assemble and present a proposal for a Direct Action landscape intervention of their own.