

ARCH 225: THEORY AND DESIGN OF CONTEMPORARY LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE

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Wednesdays, Lectures 9:30 AM -11:30 PM, Tutorials 11:30-12:30 PM



Model studies, Vogt Landschaftsarchitekten

INTRODUCTION

This course introduces theories, precedents, and techniques seminal to the discipline and practice of landscape architecture. Rather than present a comprehensive survey of an expansive field, this course aims to introduce students to *landscape thinking*, or, the generative concepts and strategies that come from engaging the nexus of human and non-human encounter. By necessity and intention, landscape architecture reimagines and grapples with complex biophysical and social systems, reshaping the ground, re-orchestrating flows (of water, sediment, plants, and people), all while articulating cultural ideas and forms. While designed landscapes are definitively constructed – no matter how “natural” they appear – they respond to and operate within forces far beyond a designer’s control. Composed of living organisms, designed landscapes change relentlessly and exquisitely, over days, years, and millennia. Finally, as exterior sites, landscape architecture projects often engage the public realm, where access and claims are dynamic and contested. In consort, these particular disciplinary realities offer a potent realm of ideas and strategies for approaching design, either of the landscape, or more generally. The course asks students to draw from landscape architecture’s unique disciplinary expertise and theoretical body to critically engage and translate these concepts into their own modes of thinking and designing.

Course topics are layered like a landscape. For two to three weeks at a time, we’ll explore the following biophysical systems: geological, hydrological, botanical, and ecological. Lecture topics will engage the practices, theories, and techniques that stem from these different biophysical systems. Each week will explore how these biophysical systems influence and drive the context, materials, concepts and program of landscape design. Focusing on mid-20th century to contemporary contexts, course themes include mid-century modernism and abstraction, practices driven by community activism and environmental justice, postmodern movements in art and simulations of nature, infrastructure, urbanism, and approaches to a

rapidly changing climate. Throughout the semester, we will examine these topics through a cross-referencing of theoretical texts, case study precedents (from lectures and student assignments), and techniques pertinent to the making of landscape architecture. The course is structured to be closely integrated with and supportive of your work in the ARCH293 Design Studio. The aim is that precedent research, botanical studies, and theoretical topics engaged in this course will contribute to your studio work.

OBJECTIVES

The primary objective of the course is to mobilize landscape architectural concepts for design thinking. Through consecutive assignments, students will: analyse precedents (thereby deepening their understanding of landscape architecture's biophysical basis); translate landscape concepts and research into their own studio work; read and develop critical positions surrounding central contemporary debates. The assignments require students to cross-reference and synthesize material from readings, lecture presentations, and peer presentations in order to construct associations between disparate texts and projects.

COURSE FORMAT & REQUIREMENTS

Each class includes a two-hour lecture followed by a one-hour tutorial section (with slight variations to that ratio). Tutorial sessions are meant to complement the lecture format with a smaller-scale discussion of readings and ongoing assignments. In lieu of a final paper, course requirements consist of a series of smaller assignments to be completed steadily throughout the semester.

Assignment 1. Living System Precedent. The first assignment is an in-depth precedent study of a single landscape architecture project which focuses on the geological, hydrological, and botanical dimensions of landscape design. Analyses will foreground the biophysical dimensions of the precedent, focusing on how the project functions in relation to the particular system, and how these are manifest in the conceptualization, construction, and experience of the design.

Assignment 2. Botanical Translation. The second assignment is an extension of your studio work, and involves identifying and sketching a species or set of plant species at the rare Charitable Reserve, and drawing these into your developing studio projects. The aim is to practice plant identification, and begin to use the real-life observation of plants as a basis for developing ideas about planting strategies.

Assignment 3. Contemporary Debates. The final assignment involves the preparation of, and participation in a debate on a contemporary issue in landscape architecture. Students will select their topics early in the term so that they can draw from lectures, readings, peer presentations, and independent research throughout the semester to build their arguments. Each student will work independently and with one or two other students to build a case for their position. At the end of the semester, opposing teams will meet to debate and rebut each other's arguments. The aim of the assignment is to become conversant in the field's seminal questions, to understand the divergent opinions surrounding them, and to make links between these concepts and their physical manifestation in the designed landscape.

Reading Discussion and Participation. Engaged participation is an essential dimension of this course. Assignments require cross-referencing of lecture material, readings, and peer presentations and so careful note taking throughout the semester is a fundamental reference. Attendance and in-class participation activities (such as reflections on reading, lecture questions, or other course focused material) will make up 10% of the final course grade. While readings are assigned each week, there are four weeks in which we will have more in-depth discussions of these readings, led by students in tutorial sections. Each student will sign up to present and lead a discussion of one reading during the term, receiving 5% of the final grade. Laptops are permitted for note taking, however all other non-class use of laptops, smartphones or other devices is prohibited, as this is distracting for the class as a whole.

WK	Date	Lecture	Tutorial Session / Assignments Due	Required Reading Due (* denotes student led reading discussion)
1	MAY 08	Introduction <i>Assignment 1 (A1)</i> <i>Hand out</i>	Select Precedents	D.W. Meinig. "The Beholding Eye: Ten Versions of the Same Scene," 1979
2	MAY 15	Geological I	Reading Discussion 1	*Robert Smithson. "Frederick Law Olmsted and the Dialectical Landscape," 1973. *J. Hutton, "Substance & Structure I: The Material Culture of Landscape Architecture," 2013
3	MAY 22	Geological II <i>Assignment 3 (A3)</i> <i>Hand out</i>	Reading Discussion 2	*Elizabeth K. Meyer. "The Expanded Field of Landscape Architecture," 1999 *James Corner, "Terra Fluxus", 2006
4	MAY 29	Hydrological I Guest: Netami Stuart, Waterfront Toronto, Don River Project	Reading Discussion 3	*Anne Winston Spirn. "Restoring Mill Creek: Landscape Literacy, Environmental Justice and City Planning and Design." 2005 *Dilip da Cunha, "Preface" and "Introduction: River Literacy", 2018
5	JUN 05	A1 Due* A1 Presentations (Geological, Hydrological) in Tutorial Sections		
6	JUN 12	Hydrological II	A1 Presentations (Botanical) in Tutorial Sections	Lister, Nina-Marie. "Resilience beyond Rhetoric in Urban Landscape Planning and Design," 2016. Bélanger, Pierre. "Landscape as Infrastructure", <i>Landscape Journal</i> 28 (Spring 2009): 79-95.
7	JUN 19	Botanical I: visit to RARE reserve <i>Assignment 2 (A2) Hand out</i> Draft of A3.1 due		
8	JUN 26	Botanical II	A2 Due Pin-up	James C. Rose, "Freedom in the Garden," "Plants Dictate Garden Forms," and "Articulate Form in Landscape Design," 1938 Joan Iverson Nassauer, "Messy Ecosystems, Orderly Frames," 1995
9	JUL 03	Botanical III	Group Work A3	Marc Treib, "Axioms for a Modern Landscape Architecture," 1993, pp. 36-67 Martha Schwartz, "Landscape and Common Culture" and M. Treib, "Pointing a Finger", 1993.
10	JUL 10	Ecological I	Reading Discussion 4	*Peter Del Tredici, "Spontaneous Urban Vegetation," 2010. *Donna Haraway, "Tentacular Thinking: Anthropocene, Capitalocene, Chthulucene," 2016
11	JUL 17	Ecological II	A3.1 and A3.2 Due Debate Session A	Yu, Kongjian. "The Big-Foot Revolution." 2012 David Leatherbarrow, "Cultivation, Construction, and Creativity, or How Topography Changes in Time", 2004
12	JUL 24	Ecological III	Debate Session B	J. Boswell, "Notes from the Wasteland," 2016 Dipesh Chakrabarty, "The Climate of History: Four Theses," 2009

*Assignments due uploaded to the course Learn site by 11:00 PM on Tuesday evenings, unless otherwise noted.

EVALUATION, OFFICE HOURS, SUBMISSIONS

Assignment	%	Due
Assignment 1. Living Systems Precedents	30%	WK5 June 5
Assignment 2. Botanical Translations	20%	WK8 June 26
Assignment 3. Contemporary Debates	35%	
3.1: Debate Preparation Document Draft	[5%]	WK7 June 19
3.1: Debate Preparation Document (individual)	[25%]	WK11 July 17
3.2: Debate (in pairs)	[5%]	WK11 July 17
Participation	15%	
Reading Presentation and Discussion	[5%]	WK 2,3,4, or 10
Engagement in lectures and tutorials	[10%]	All weeks

Office Hours. By appointment

Submissions and Late Submissions. All assignments will be submitted to the course Learn site, note that all assignments are due the night before by 11:00 PM. This allows the teaching team to organize and incorporate your work into the following day's discussion. Late assignments will be marked down by 4% per day.

All submissions should be named according to the following format:

ARCH225_S19_Last name_first name_Assignment number

READINGS

Required (*) and Supplemental (Suppl.) Readings. There are two required readings per week, which will be discussed in class and in tutorial sections. Supplemental readings are also listed for those wanting further references. Readings are available as PDFs on the course Learn site.

WK1 Introduction

D.W. Meinig. "The Beholding Eye: Ten Versions of the Same Scene," in *The Interpretation of Ordinary Landscapes: Geographical Essays*, edited by D. W. Meinig and John Brinckerhoff Jackson. New York: Oxford University Press, 1979.

Suppl.

Brian Davis, "Wider Horizons of American Landscape," *Landscape Journal*, 34:1, 2015, pp. 79-95.

WK2 Geological I

*Robert Smithson. "Frederick Law Olmsted and the Dialectical Landscape," *Artforum*, 1973. pp. 117-128.

*Jane Hutton. "Substance and Structure I: The Material Culture of Landscape Architecture," *Harvard Design Magazine*, 36, 2013, pp. 116-123.

Suppl.

Simon Bell. "Landform Patterns and Processes" in *Landscape: Pattern, Perception, and Process*, Routledge, 2012, pp. 143-179.

Elizabeth Colbert, "Enter the Anthropocene: Age of Man," in *Making the Geologic Now: Responses to Material Conditions of Contemporary Life*, edited by Elizabeth Ellsworth and Jamie Kruse (Brooklyn: Punctum Books, 2012), 28-32. http://www.geologicnow.com/1_Kolbert.php

WK3 Geological II

*Elizabeth K. Meyer. "The Expanded Field of Landscape Architecture," in George F. Thompson and Frederick R. Steiner (eds), *Ecological Design and Planning*, (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1997), p. 45-79.

*James Corner. "Terra Fluxus," in Charles Waldheim, ed. *The Landscape Urbanism Reader*, Princeton Architectural Press, 2006, pp. 54-80.

Suppl

William Moorish, *Civilizing Terrains: Mountains, Mounds, and Mesas*. (Los Angeles : William Rees Morrish and William Stout Publishers, 1989).

John Beardsley, "Monument and Environment, The Avant-Garde 1966-1976", *Earthworks and Beyond*, (London: Abbeville Press, 2006).

WK4 Hydrological I / rain terrain, water and justice

*Dilip da Cunha, "Preface" and "Introduction: River Literacy", in *The Invention of Rivers: Alexander's Eye and Ganga's Descent, Forthcoming*, (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2018), p. ii-vi, 1-14.

*Anne Winston Spirn. "Restoring Mill Creek: Landscape Literacy, Environmental Justice and City Planning and Design." *Landscape Research*, 2005, vol. 3, issue 3, p. 395-413.

Suppl.

Emma Mendel, "Fluid Reciprocity: Alternative infrastructure to ensure access to clean drinking water at Shoal Lake 40 First Nation," https://oala.ca/ground_issue/ground-35-edges/fluid-reciprocity-alternative-infrastructure-ensure-access-clean-drinking-water-shoal-lake-40-first-nation/

Susan Herrington, "Designing with Water above the Arctic Circle: East Three School," *Landscape Journal*, Autumn, 2013, pp. 44-51.

WK6 Hydrological II / infrastructure

Nina-Marie Lister. Resilience beyond Rhetoric in Urban Landscape Planning and Design. In: George F. Thompson, Frederick R. Steiner and Armando Carbonell (eds) *Nature and Cities: The Ecological Imperative in Urban Design and Planning*. Cambridge, MA: Lincoln Institute of Land Policy, 2016.

Pierre Belanger. "Landscape as Infrastructure", *Landscape Journal* 28 (Spring 2009): 79-95.

Suppl

Jim Burns, "The How of Creativity: Scores & Scoring," in *Lawrence Halprin: Changing Places*, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 1986, pp. 40-59.

Liat Margolis and Aziza Chaoui, "Are We Out of Water?" in *Out of Water: Design Solutions for Arid Regions*, 2015, pp. 14-27.

WK8 Botanical II

James C. Rose, "Freedom in the Garden," "Plants Dictate Garden Forms," and "Articulate Form in Landscape Design," (Reprinted from *Pencil Points, 1938*) in *Marc Treib, ed, Modern Landscape Architecture: A Critical Review*, MIT Press, 1993, pp. 66-75.

Joan Iverson Nassauer, "Messy Ecosystems, Orderly Frames," *Landscape Journal*, 1995, pp. 161-165

Suppl.

José Tabacow, "The Science of Perception", in Lauro Cavalcanti, *Modernity of Landscape: Roberto Burle Marx*, Cité de l'architecture & du patrimoine and Actar, 2011, pp. 63-68.

WK9 Botanical III

Marc Treib. "Axioms for a Modern Landscape Architecture," in *Marc Treib, ed, Modern Landscape Architecture: A Critical Review*, MIT Press, 1993, pp. 36-67

Martha Schwartz, "Landscape and Common Culture," and Marc Treib, Pointing a Finger at the Moon: The Work of Robert Irwin," in *Marc Treib, ed, Modern Landscape Architecture: A Critical Review*, MIT Press, 1993, pp. 260-283.

Suppl.

Sonja Duempelmann, "Planting Civil Rights: Street Tree Plant-Ins in New York City," *Landscape Architecture Magazine*, Dec. 2015, pp. 116-124.

WK10 Ecological I

*Peter Del Tredici, "Spontaneous Urban Vegetation: Reflections of Change in a Globalized World," *Nature and Culture*, Dec. 2010, pp. 299-315.

*Donna Haraway, "Tentacular Thinking: Anthropocene, Capitalocene Chthulucene"; in *Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene*, Duke University Press: Durham, 2016, p. 30-57.

Suppl.

Kate Kennon and Niall Kirkwood, "Fundamentals" and "Phytotopologies" in *Phyto: Principles and Resources for Site Remediation and Landscape Design*, Routledge, 2015, pp. 26-59, 200-245.

Thomas Rainer and Claudia West, "Principles of Designed Plant Communities," in *Planting in a Post-Wild World: designing Plant Communities for Resilient Landscapes*, Timber Press, 2016.

Alex Felson, Emily Oldfield, Mark Bradford & Robert Warren. "Constructing Native Urban Forests as Experiments to Evaluate Resilience," in *Scenario 04: Building the Urban Forest*, Spring 2014, <http://scenariojournal.com/article/forests-as-experiments/>

WK11 Ecological II

Yu, Kongjian. "The Big-Foot Revolution." In William Saunders, ed, *Designed Ecologies: The Landscape Architecture of Kongjian Yu*, Birkhauser, 2012, pp. 42-49

David Leatherbarrow, "Cultivation, Construction, and Creativity, or How Topography Changes in Time", (also for context, "Introduction: The Topographical Premises of Landscape and Architecture") in *Topographical Stories: Studies in Landscape and Architecture*, (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004).

Suppl.

Wenche E. Dramstad, James D. Olson, and Richard T. T. Forman. "Part I: Principles," in *Landscape Ecology Principles in Landscape Architecture and Land-Use Planning*, 1996.

WK12 Ecological III

Jacob Boswell, "Notes from the Wasteland: Competing Climatic Imaginaries in the Post-Apocalyptic Landscape," in James Graham, ed, *Climates: Architecture and the Planetary Imaginary*, Lars Muller Publishers, 2016.

Dipesh Chakrabarty, "The Climate of History: Four Theses," *Critical Inquiry*, Vol. 35, No. 2 (Winter 2009), pp. 197-222

Suppl.

Gavin Pocock and David Jones, "Indigenous Landscape Change and Climate Change: The Historical Transformation of the Port Phillip Bay from an Indigenous and Landscape Architectural Perspective," *Proceedings of the 10th International Urban Planning and Environment Association Symposium, 2013*, pp. 129-147.

Mirko Zardini. "After the Environment," in Lev Bratishenko and Mirko Zardini, eds, *Its All Happening So Fast: A Counter-History of the Modern Canadian Environment*, Canadian Centre for Architecture: Jap Sam Books, 2016, pp. 14-51

Extended References. Many of the books listed below are available at Musagetes Library

Landscape Architecture Monographs and Compilations

Agence Ter. *Territories: from landscape to city*. Basel : Birkhauser, 2009.

Amidon, Jane. *Michael Van Valkenburgh Associates: Allegheny Riverfront Park*. New York : Princeton Architectural Press, 2005.

Balmori, Diana. *A Landscape Manifesto*. New Haven : Yale University Press, 2010.

Berger, Alan. *Reclaiming the American West*. New York : Princeton Architectural Press, 2002.

Berrizbeitia, Anita. *Roberto Burle Marx in Caracas: Parque del Este, 1956-1961*. Philadelphia : University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005.

Berrizbeitia, Anita, Amidon, Jane. *Michael Van Valkenburgh Associates: reconstructing urban landscapes*. New Haven, Conn. : Yale University Press, 2009.

Corner, James. *Taking measures across the American landscape*. New Haven : Yale University Press, 1996.

- Czerniak, Julia. *Case: Downview Park Toronto*. Cambridge: Harvard Design School, and Munich: Prestel, 2001.
- Eckbo, Garrett. *Landscapes for Living. Process Architecture #90*.
- Foxley, Alice and Gunther Vogt. *Distance and Engagement: Field Trips to Landscapes*. Lars Muller, 2010.
- Hargreaves, George. *Hargreaves: the alchemy of landscape architecture*. London: Thames & Hudson, 2009.
- Hood, Walter. *Walter Hood: Urban Diaries*. Spacemaker Press, 1997.
- Jacques, Michel, Neve, Annette. *Yves Brunier: architect paysagiste*. Basel: Birkhauser, 1996.
- Kiley, Daniel Urban, Amidon, Jane. *Dan Kiley : the complete works of America's master landscape architect*. Boston : Little, Brown, and Company, 1999.
- Kim, Mikyoung. *Mikyoung Kim*. Washington D.C. : Editions Ariel, Grayson Pub., 2002.
- Levy, Leah. *Kathryn Gustafson: sculpting the land*. Washington D.C. : Spacemaker Press, 1998.
- Lin, Maya Ying. *Maya Lin : systematic landscapes*. Seattle : Henry Art Gallery, Univ. of Washington, 2006.
- Mathur, Anu, Cunha, Dilip Da. *Mississippi Floods: designing a shifting landscape*. London : Yale University Press, 2001.
- Orff, Kate. *Toward an Urban Ecology: SCAPE / Landscape Architecture, Monacelli Press, 2016*.
- Reed, Douglas, Gary R Hilderbrand, Eric Kramer, and Reed Hilderbrand Associates. *Visible, Invisible: Landscape Works of Reed Hilderbrand, 2012*.
- Reed, Peter. *Groundswell: constructing the contemporary landscape*. New York: MoMA, 2005.
- Simon, Jacques. *Articulture: Jacques Simon, paysagiste*. Oostkamp : Stichting kunstboek, 2006.
- Smith, Ken. *Ken Smith: landscape architect*. New York : Monacelli Press, 2009.
- Tiberghien, Gilles, Desvigne, Michel. *Intermediate natures: the landscapes of Michel Desvigne*. Basel : Birkhauser, 2009.
- Trieb, Marc (Ed). *Modern landscape architecture: a critical review*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 1993.
- Vogt, Gunther. *Miniature and Panorama: Vogt Landscape Architects, Projects 2000-2012*. Lars Muller, 2014.
- Weilacher, Udo. *Syntax of Landscape: the landscape architecture of Peter Latz partners*. Basel: Birkhauser, 2008.
- Walker, Peter, Simo, Melanie. *Invisible Gardens: the search for modernism in the American landscape*. Cambridge, MA : MIT Press, 1994.
- Smelik, Fanny. *West 8: Mosaics*. Basel : Birkhauser, 2008.
- van Blerck, Henk, Dettmar, Jorg. *Nine + One: Young Dutch Landscape Architects*. Rotterdam: NAI Publishers, 1999.
- Yu, Kongjian. *Designed Ecologies: The Landscape Architecture of Konjian Yu*. Birkhauser, 2012.

Ecology, Materials References

- Dirr, Michael. *Dirr's Encyclopedia of Trees and Shrubs*. (Portland, Or. : Timber Press, 2011).
- Harris, Charles W, Nicholas T Dines, and Kyle D Brown. *Time-saver Standards for Landscape Architecture: Design and Construction Data*. (New York : McGraw-Hill, 1998).
- Margolis, Liat, Robinson, Alexander. *Living Systems: innovative materials and technologies for landscape architecture* (Basel : Birkhauser, 2007).
- McLeod, Virginia. *Detail in Contemporary Landscape Architecture*. Lawrence King Publishing, 2012.
- Rainer, Thomas, and Claudia West. *Planting in a Post-Wild World: Designing Plant Communities for Resilient Landscapes*. Portland Or.: Timber Press, 2015.
- Zimmerman, Astrid. *Constructing Landscape: Materials, Techniques, Structural Components*. Birkhauser, 2015.

Journals

- Landscape Journal*
- Journal of Landscape Architecture*
- Landscape Architecture Magazine (ASLA)*
- Landscapes/Paysages (CSLA)*

Ground (OALA)

Landscape and Urban Planning Conservation Biology Ecological Applications Ecological Monographs

Landscape Ecology

Ecological Engineering Restoration Ecology

Online Resources for Landscape Scholarship and Projects

Landezine

Scenario Journal

Scapegoat: Architecture, Landscape, Political Ecology

Places Journal

The Dirt: ASLA Blog on Landscape Architecture

Landscape Performance Research, Landscape Architecture Foundation

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY, GRIEVANCE, DISCIPLINE, APPEALS, AND STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

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Grievance: A student who believes that a decision affecting some aspect of his/her university life has been unfair or unreasonable may have grounds for initiating a grievance. Read [Policy 70, Student Petitions and Grievances, Section 4](#). When in doubt, please be certain to contact the department's administrative assistant who will provide further assistance.

Discipline: A student is expected to know what constitutes academic integrity to avoid committing an academic offence, and to take responsibility for his/her actions. [Check [the Office of Academic Integrity](#) for more information.] A student who is unsure whether an action constitutes an offence, or who needs help in learning how to avoid offences (e.g., plagiarism, cheating) or about "rules" for group work/collaboration should seek guidance from the course instructor, academic advisor, or the undergraduate associate dean. For information on categories of offences and types of penalties, students should refer to [Policy 71, Student Discipline](#). For typical penalties, check [Guidelines for the Assessment of Penalties](#).

Appeals: A decision made or penalty imposed under [Policy 70, Student Petitions and Grievances](#) (other than a petition) or [Policy 71, Student Discipline](#) may be appealed if there is a ground. A student who believes he/she has a ground for an appeal should refer to [Policy 72, Student Appeals](#).

Note for students with disabilities: [AccessAbility Services](#), located in Needles Hall, Room 1132, collaborates with all academic departments to arrange appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities without compromising the academic integrity of the curriculum. If you require academic accommodations to lessen the impact of your disability, please register with [AccessAbility Services](#) at the beginning of each academic term.

Turnitin.com and alternatives: Plagiarism detection software (Turnitin) will be used to screen assignments in this course. This is being done to verify that use of all material and sources in assignments is documented. In the first week of the term, details will be provided about the arrangements for the use of Turnitin and alternatives in this course.

Note: students must be given a reasonable option if they do not want to have their assignment screened by Turnitin. See [Academic Integrity - Guidelines for Instructors](#) for more information.