Introduction to Environmental Design II (11:550:232)  5 Credits

What is a site, and how should it be designed?

Spring 2015
Instructors: Kathleen John-Alder and Andrew Opt Hof

Lecture: Wednesday 2:15 - 3:35
Studio: Tuesday and Thursday 2:15 – 5:15
Common Lecture: Wednesday 3:55 to 5:15

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Course Description
Developed as a continuation of LA 11:550:231, this introductory environmental design studio further explores the concept of site as an amalgam of the existing and the designed, and as a terrain of action for environmental processes and social interactions. Exercises, projects and discussions will examine different approaches to site interpretation and program development with the intent of illustrating how existing physical conditions and spatial context, in conjunction with an iterative questioning of conceptual ideas and proposed usage, can work in concert to create visually memorable and socially relevant spatial configurations. During the semester students will be asked to define program, engage geologic and hydrologic processes, explore design systems and frameworks, express temporality, and manipulate the terrain, plants and structures to shape form, function, and space.

Questions addressed will include: What are the critical ecological and social issues inherent to the site and its context? Who are the client and user groups? What are the intended uses and what might be some unintended but equally valuable ones? What inspires your design? How do you develop and represent that inspiration physically and socially in terms of form and activities? Will the space change over time, or seasonally? And, how might your initial design inspiration change and evolve as you examine the above questions? Each of these questions is answerable, but there is no single correct answer. The above series of questions suggests there is no single correct answer. Instead, your proposed answers reflect an on-going process of questioning, critical assessment and formal resolution that is integral to design. As such, the successful completion of the course requires preparation, thinking ahead, and thoughtful, intentional design development for every class.

Learning Objectives
1. The students will develop an understanding of site as a material terrain for environmental and social activities and actions.
2. The students will develop an understanding of how to translate environmental and social activities
into spatial programs, physical designs and material expressions using plants, structures and landforms.

3. The students will develop an understanding of design as an iterative exploratory process that necessitates critical assessment and revision.

4. The students will develop an understanding of how to explain their design proposals using technically correct and visually expressive graphics, and succinct text and oral presentation.

5. The students will develop an understanding of the importance of professionalism in the design studio, including the importance of teamwork, respectful interaction with others, completing assignments on time, and maintaining clean facilities.

Course Format

- Design studio
- Readings
- Lectures/Presentations (Note: Attendance at Common Lecture is mandatory)
- In-studio exercises and project reviews
- Homework
- Representation Library
- Studio Professionalism
- Mid-Term and Final Design Presentations

Instructors will assign studio desk locations.

Design Studio: Much of your learning will occur in the studio. As such, active engagement in studio – both during class and while working at your studio desk during non-class time – is essential. Moreover, you are expected to engage in all studio activities, including site visits and analysis, design exercises, readings, individual desk crits, group pin-ups, and project reviews. Project development will occur over a series of weeks, but continued development of the design is expected on a daily basis.

Readings: You are expected to read selected materials prior to class. Required readings will be posted on the class Sakai website.

Lectures/Presentations: The studio lectures are project-specific, topic-based and geared toward the general knowledge and technical skills needed for the project in question. You are expected to take notes during the presentation and to explore topics independently as suggested by the readings, lectures, and design discussions. This also applies to information provided during the Common Lecture and the spring Cekada lecture.

In-Studio Exercises and Project Reviews: Studio exercises and project reviews are opportunities to explore issues, present work, respond to questions, consider other interpretations, and gather feedback. You are expected to complete all in-studio exercises and attend all reviews for the entire period.

Homework: Daily design progress is part of your studio grade. Design development is required homework for the studio. Assigned readings are required homework for lectures. In addition, studio instructors will suggest personalized design approaches during desk critiques, which students are expected to research and incorporate into their thinking prior to the beginning of the next studio.

Representation Library: Visually effective plans and sections require accurate and expressive graphics. To help students in this endeavor, this semester-long project creates a presentation library of hand drawn and computer generated images of people, plants, birds and cars in both plan and section. The library is intended as a design and graphic support for projects in this studio, and future projects in the
department. But it should also be seen, much like an article library, as a resource that students can continue to develop for the remainder of their professional careers.

Studio Professionalism: Reflects the care taken in maintaining the workspace and projects. This will include respect each student takes in their workspace and projects, and in the workspace and projects of others in the studio. Studio Professionalism will be graded weekly and assesses Learning Objective 5.

Mid-Term and Final Projects: Mid-term and final reviews reflect the totality of work completed to fulfill the stated aims of assigned projects. The reviews illustrate your understanding of the site, its context, and the way the proposed physical form and materials reflect intended social use — in effect the reviews reflect the totality of work completed to fulfill the stated aims of the studio. The reviews also gauge the student’s ability to effectively communicate complex ideas and thoughts to others.

**Studio Grading / Evaluation**

Grades reflect the student’s development of design ideas over the course of the semester, their participation in-studio and lectures, their completion of in-studio and homework assignments, studio professionalism, the representation library, and the mid-term and final representations and presentations. **Steady progress in the studio will be rewarded, as will risk-taking and creativity.**

- **Mid-Term (Project 1)** 35%
- **Final (Project 2)** 35%
- **Readings, In-Studio Exercises & Progress Reviews** 15%
- **Representation Library** 10%
- **Studio professionalism** 5%

**Mid-Term (Project 1) and Final (Project 2) Review:** The grade includes required and self-directed homework, sub-assignments, presentations. It also reflects the student’s ability to develop design ideas over the duration of the project; the neatness, legibility, and expressive quality of progress and final drawings; and the logical clarity of the written text and oral presentation as outlined in Learning Objectives 1, 2, 3 & 4.

**Readings, In-Studio Exercises and Project Reviews:** The grade includes required and self-directed work and peer interaction, and reflects the student’s ability to follow directions, creatively explore technical issues, and complete projects in a timely manner as outlined in Learning Objectives 1, 2 & 3.

**Representation Library:** The Representation Library will assessed four [4] times during the semester. The grade includes self-directed work and reflects the student’s ability to develop technically correct drawings as outlined in Learning Objective 4.

**Studio Professionalism:** Studio Professionalism will be assessed weekly. This grade includes self-directed work and peer interaction, and reflects the student’s ability to follow directions, maintain a safe and collegial work space as outlined in Learning Objective 5.

The following scale applies:

- **A** > 93% Outstanding
- **B** > 83% Very Good
- **C** > 70% Acceptable
- **D** > 60% Unacceptable
- **F** ≤ 60% Failure
**Departmental Grading Guidelines**

While the assignment of grades is ultimately the purview of the instructor, the department uses the following guideline for understanding appropriate grading in its courses:

- **A** – Outstanding – This not only means fulfilling the requirements, but impressing and going beyond the initial expectations of the project. The student has demonstrated a superior grasp of the subject matter coupled with a high degree of creative or logical expression, and strong ability to present these ideas in an organized and analytical manner.
- **B** – Very Good – The student has demonstrated a solid grasp of the material with an ability to organize and examine the material in an organized, critical, and constructive manner. The projects and in-class performance reveal a solid understanding of the issues and related theories or literature.
- **C** – Acceptable – The student has shown a moderate ability to grasp concepts and theories for the class, producing work that, while basically adequate, is not in any way exceptional. This performance in class display a basic familiarity with the relevant literature and techniques.
- **D** – Unacceptable – The work demonstrates a minimal understanding of the fundamental nature of the material or the assignment with a performance that does not adequately examine the course material critically or constructively. Students cannot graduate from the Landscape Architecture program with 2 D’s in required 550 classes.
- **F** – Failure – The student has demonstrated a lack of understanding or familiarity with course concepts and materials. Their performance has been inadequate. Failure is often the result of limited effort and poor attendance which may indicate that the student is not in the proper field of study.

**Students Obligations and Expectations**

1. Come to class on time and be in attendance the entire class session. **Late arrivals greater than ten [10] minutes will be marked as a full absence.**
2. Complete all studio and homework assignments on time, as directed, and on the designated due dates. **Late homework will be marked down one full grade for each day they are past due.**
3. Be open to the ideas and design challenges that unfold. Contribute to the learning of your peers through conversations and critiques during and outside of studio time. You should plan a minimum of 10 hours per week outside of class to read, develop designs, prepare for desk crits, and finalize presentations. Above all, each student is expected to be self-directed and able to pace himself/herself to complete project deliverables in the allotted timeframe.
4. Ask questions. Read the syllabus in order to become aware of required readings, upcoming lectures, and due dates.
5. Take notes during class presentations to help retain knowledge. The instructor will not repeat any content that was missed due to a student’s absence or tardiness. **Therefore, your attendance will be directly related to your success in class.**
6. Computers are to be used for class assignments only. **Students are NOT allowed to access the internet to work on non-course related topics during class time.**
7. **Turn OFF all mobile devices during class time.** Mobile devices are not to be used during class time. This includes cell phone calls and texting. Offenses will be noted in the Studio Professionalism grade.
8. Most updates and information will occur during class lectures, but the instructors will also rely on Sakai announcements via email to the students. You are expected to check your Rutgers email regularly.

**Ownership of Student Work**

It is the intent of this course to return as much work as possible to each student; however, it is also the case that examples of work must be kept by the Department for its professional accreditation and for purposes of exhibition. Should the Department retain your drawings, you will be given the opportunity
to obtain a print, scan, or photographic record of your work. Department files are OFF LIMITS to students.

**Use of Facilities and Equipment**

Studio cannot be taught without reliable facilities. We expect you to use the facilities and equipment (projection equipment, department cameras, drafting equipment) responsibly with particular regard to the clearly established rules about their use as specified in the student handbook: [http://landarch.rutgers.edu/current_students/policies_st.html](http://landarch.rutgers.edu/current_students/policies_st.html) These rules cover access to studio, vandalism, table assignments, personalization of workspace, smoking and drinking, use of the lockers, access to the reference collection, and basic rules governing the use of the computer lab. Failure to observe rules may result in loss of access.

**Attendance**

The Department of Landscape Architecture requires attendance in all of its classes. The individual student’s development as a landscape architect is largely dependent upon two aspects of education. The first aspect is the exposure to and assimilation of a body of information that relates to the field. The second aspect is the application of this knowledge through studio projects and problem-solving skills developed through critiques, reviews, and interactions.

The Rutgers Landscape Architecture curriculum is designed to develop both areas. Attendance and participation in all lectures and studios are essential if the student is to achieve his/her maximum potential. **More than three unexcused absences in a term will result in a full step reduction in your semester grade (i.e. A to B).** Each additional absence will result in another step reduction.

A minimum level of participation is defined as being in attendance for the entire duration of a class session. Attendance and participation in critiques and reviews is mandatory for the entire term. **Students on academic probation have NO ALLOWABLE UNEXCUSED ABSENCES.**

**Creation of a Studio Community: Studio Space and the Use of Shared Facilities**

The design studio environment should reinforce and deepen the design theories and methods taught by the instructors. Following the professional standards of practice established by the America Society of Landscape Architects, it is expected that students will work together, learn from one another, respect each other’s work, and respect the studio space held in common by all. One of the most important ways of ensuring a culture of civility is to maintain a clean workspace, keeping desks and floors clean and property undamaged. For purposes of safety, **the use of power tools is prohibited in the building,** and **all spraying of adhesive or paint materials must occur outdoors.** For purposes of safety, the use of power tools is prohibited in the building. The drafting tables are covered with a vinyl board covers (the trademark name is Borco) that provide a smooth drawing surface. **Anyone who damages a surface—by cutting into it, marking it with ink, ruining the surface with adhesive glue, etc.—will be held responsible for the replacement cost of $150.**