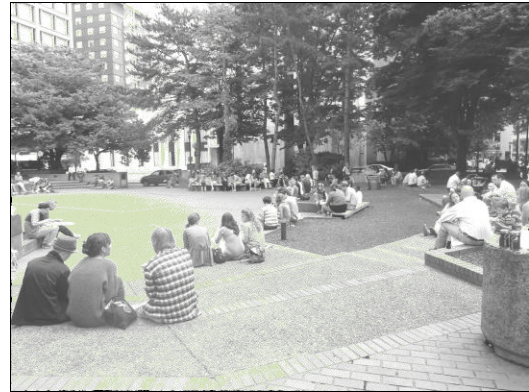


Spring 2017
**LA 550:301: Social and Cultural
Aspects of Design**

3 credits

Professor Laura Lawson
Monday, Thursday 10:55 – 12:15
Blake Hall 128



Office hours: 12:30 – 1:00 Monday and Thursday or by appointment through Gail McKenzie in the Department of Landscape Architecture Office

Description of Course

This course engages students in the complex relationship of people and the environment. The intention is to delve into the design and use of everyday environments as expressions of the individual, community, and civic society. We will consider how our environment shapes our everyday life and how we shape the environment. In this class, students will learn the tried-and-true lessons of decades of environment-behavior research and community-based design, and will be challenged to address ethical debates related to inclusion, participation, diversity, and sustainability. We will approach social and cultural aspects of design and planning through various frames, such as settings (city, garden, home, street, etc.), human evolution and physiology, particular groups’ needs (elderly, physically disabled, children, immigrants), power dimensions (economics, law, environmental justice), race and ethnicity, gender, and sustainability. We will explore our own assumptions about what *should* be and the normative theories that influence landscape architecture. Contemporary cases of contested public spaces, cultural expression, community memory, and user-initiated spaces (i.e. community gardens, vending streets) will complicate perceptions of what is the public landscape and who constitutes the public.

The course engages an interdisciplinary approach to social and historical analyses of people in their physical context, utilizing resources in the social sciences (psychology, geography, anthropology, and sociology) and the design disciplines (landscape architecture, architecture, urban planning). Weekly readings will introduce students to both “classic” and contemporary materials. Students will be encouraged to discuss content of the selected readings as well as the methods of inquiry.

Students will learn methods to analyze how people use space and to gather information about users’ wants and needs that may inform design. Learning to observe, listen, survey, and interview are all essential tools for understanding personal, social, and cultural aspects of design. Students will then apply these methods of data collection and analysis as part of both team and individual projects.

Learning Objectives

In the context of this class, students will be able to assess the relationship among assumptions, method, evidence, arguments, and theory in the social and historical analysis of *everyday environments and the designed landscape*. By addressing these dimensions of study, students will be able to critically evaluate the complex influences of human and social behavior on initial design and programming, social meaning,



use by different groups, and evolution of design and use over time.

- a. Theory and Assumptions: Students will have a foundation in environment-behavior research and community-based design theory and be able to interpret public landscape design and use in terms of individual preference, social processes and cultural practices.
- Physiological / evolutionary
 - Territoriality
 - Personal Space
 - Place and Placelessness
 - Cultural landscape
 - Adaptation, contestation, and inclusion
 - Environmental determinism
 - Normative theories
 - Environmental justice
 - Empowerment
 - Decision maker vs. user
 - User vs. non-user
- b. Evidence and Analysis: Students will be able to analyze intended and actual use of designed spaces in terms of different user groups. Students will understand ways that we influence our environment and how our environment influences our experience.
- Universal / population
 - Ethnicity and race
 - Gender and sexual orientation
 - Class / economic status / poverty
 - Immigrant
 - Seniors / elderly
 - Children / youth /teens
 - Physically disabled
 - Homeless and other unintended users
 - designer
 - decision maker / controller of space
- c. Methods: Students will learn methods to gather information about how people use existing spaces and what the needs and desires are for proposed or redesigned spaces.
- Observation
 - Survey
 - Census
 - Interview
 - Activity diagrams
 - Case Study
 - Ethnography
 - Participatory methods
 - Post occupancy evaluation

Course Preparation, Attendance and Engagement

Given the intention of the course – discovering and discussing the complexity of individual, social, and cultural aspects of design – it is essential that students commit to coming to class prepared and being full participants in class discussions and assignments. The class is designed to build on student reflections from readings and exercises. Students are expected to plan ahead for the course and read the syllabus to make sure they are prepared. All readings assigned for a lecture should be read before the start of that class period. Students should be prepared to discuss the readings, their personal response/reflection to that reading, and raise questions or ideas. The instructor will keep track of participation to assure equity.

There will be a strict attendance policy. Students are expected to arrive on time and attend all classes. Missing more than 1 class will result in a grade reduction. The only acceptable absences beyond one class period are health and family emergencies and both require contacting the professor BEFORE the day of absence.

Course Evaluation

Individual student course grades are based on a possible 100 points.

Exercises	20 points
Environmental Autobiography	10 points
Observation Walk	10 points
Activity Setting Booklet	20 points
Final project	40 points

Academic Integrity policy

Every member of that community bears a responsibility for ensuring that the highest standards of academic integrity are upheld. Only through a genuine partnerships among students, faculty, staff, and administrators will the University be able to maintain the necessary commitment to academic integrity. Please look at the full description at <http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/>. The website includes definitions of cheating, plagiarism, paraphrasing, multiple submission, fabrication, facilitating cheating or plagiarism, denying others access, and fair use of citations and common knowledge.

Assignments

All work is expected to be turned in at the beginning of class on the assigned date. If there is a truly significant reason for work to be late, please talk with the professor. Late work will be marked down.

Exercises and Class Participation

Exercises are designed to support class lectures and discussions. Timely completion of these exercises is critical to the success of the aligned lecture and class discussion. Exercises are due at the beginning of the class indicated on the syllabus or are completed during class. Exercises will be evaluated based on effort, use in class discussion, and completion in a timely manner for use in appropriate lecture.

Environmental Autobiography

In this exercise, students will reflect on personal experience and how it shapes preferences and design ideas. This exercise requires several hours of reflection followed by several hours of drawing and writing.

Observation Walk

This exercise involves an afternoon walking through a neighborhood with colleagues to observe and ask questions. The purpose is to hone your skills in observation and gain a better understanding of the evolution of place over time.

Activity Setting Booklet

The goal of the Activity Setting booklet is to document everyday human-environment interactions that you witness during this semester. Students are expected to keep a journal and develop at least 2 drawings/diagrams per week that document an observation. These will be discussed in class. Each student will be expected to submit 20, along with descriptive text.

Final Project

The final project engages students in social-spatial analysis by utilizing various methods discussed in class. Site to be determined.

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.

Schedule for 2017 (subject to change)

Week	Monday	Thursday
WEEK 1	MLK Jr. Day – no class	1/19 Topic 1: Introduction Exercise 1 (In-class): Class Goals Questionnaire
WEEK 2	1/23 Topic 2: Environment-Behavior Research Overview Reading (prior to class): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sommer, “Mutual Interests...” in <i>Social Design</i>, 1983. Exercise 2: Your Design Education and Inspiration Hand out Exercise 3 (due next class) Environmental Autobiography - hand out	1/26 Topic 3: Designer View and Popular Design Reading (prior to class): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pierce Lewis, “The Making of Vernacular Taste: The Case of <i>Sunset</i> and <i>Southern Living</i>.” In <i>Vernacular Garden</i>. Edited by John Dixon Hunt and Joachim Wolschke-Bulhman. Washington DC: Dumbarton Oaks, 1993. (skim) Atkinson, Paul. “Do It Yourself: Democracy and Design.” <i>Journal of Design History</i>, 19, 1 (2006). (skim) Prior to class, spend about 30 minutes exploring the HGtv website Exercise 3: Popular Taste and Design
WEEK 3	1/30 Topic 4: What We See / What We Assume Reading (to be discussed by students in class): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meinig, “The Beholding Eye.” <i>The Interpretation of Ordinary Landscapes</i>. NY: Oxford, 1979. Lewis, “Axioms for Reading the Landscape.” <i>The Interpretation of Ordinary Landscapes</i>. NY: Oxford, 1979). 	2/2 Topic 5: Observation and Diagramming Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> John Zeisel, “Observing Physical Traces” and “Observing Environmental Behavior.” In <i>Inquiry by Design</i>. NY: WW Norton and Company. Pp. 89-136. Jacobs, “Starting to Look.” In <i>Looking at Cities</i>. Cambridge: Harvard Press, 1985 (just read pp. 1-13; rest is for Observation Walk exercise) Activity Mapping Booklet – hand out
WEEK 4	2/6 Topic 6: Body and Space Reading: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lang, “Privacy, Territoriality, and Personal Space,” and “Social Interaction and the Environment,” from <i>Creating Architectural Theory</i> NY: Van Nostrand Reinhold 1987. Exercise 4: seats (prior to class) Exercise 5: Measuring Body, Personal Space, and Territoriality (in class)	2/9 Topic 7: Childhood Reading: TBD

WEEK 5	<p>2/13 Topic 8: Environmental Autobiography – presentations and discussion</p> <p>Exercise 6: Blank Slate</p> <p>Exercise 7: IRB (due 3/9 – warning: this will take several hours and is best to be done in phases)</p>	<p>2/16 Topic 9: Accessibility</p> <p>Reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fair housing act guidelines <p>Exercise 8: Accessibility Challenge</p>
WEEK 6	<p>2/20 Topic 10: Public Space William Whyte, “Social Life of Small Urban Spaces” or Austin Allen, “Claiming Open space” (professor may be absent)</p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jacobs, “Sidewalks” in <i>Death and Life of Great American Cities</i>. NY: Random House, 1961. (skim) 	<p>2/23 Topic 11: Public Life, Public Realm</p> <p>Reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Margaret Crawford. “Blurring the Boundaries: Public Space and Private Life.” In <i>Everyday Urbanism</i>. New York: Monacelli Press, 1999. Pp. 22-35. Hood, “Improvisation in West Oakland.” In <i>Everyday Urbanism</i>. Dolores Hayden. “Contested Terrain” and “Place Memory and Urban Preservation.” In <i>The Power of Place</i>. Cambridge: MIT Press, 1995. <p>Exercise 9: EDRA and LAF</p>
WEEK 7	<p>2/27 Topic 12: Participatory Design</p> <p>Reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hester, “Refrain with a View,” <i>Places</i> 12, 2 Lawson, “Dialogue by Design,” <i>Landscape Journal</i> 24, 2 (2005). 	<p>3/2 Topic 13: Participatory Design (2)</p> <p>Exercise 10: Design Charrette</p>
WEEK 8	<p>3/6 Topic 14: Demographic Data</p> <p>Readings: Go to the US Census website and explore what you can find out.</p> <p>Exercise 11: Find yourself in the census (prior to class; discussed in class)</p> <p>Hand out Observation Walk assignment (due 4/10)</p>	<p>3/9 Topic 15: Asking Good Questions: Surveys and interviews; Ethics and IRB</p> <p>Reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Zeisel, “Asking Questions: Topics and Formats,” <i>Inquiry by Design</i>. Sommer, B. and Sommer, R, “Ethics in Behavioral Research.” In <i>A Practical Guide to Behavioral Research</i>. NY: Oxford University Press, 1991. <p>Exercise 12: Questionnaire (in class and continued).</p> <p>Exercise 7: IRB certification due at beginning of class</p>
SPRING BREAK (3/13-18)		
WEEK 9	<p>3/20 Topic 16: Case studies, POEs, and Design Guidelines</p> <p>Reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Francis, <i>A Case Study Method for Landscape Architecture</i> Clare Cooper Marcus and Carolyn Francis, <i>People Places</i> excerpt <p>Continue work on exercise 12: Questionnaire Hand out final project description</p>	<p>3/23 Topic 17: Parks and Open Space</p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cranz, “Four Models of Park Design,” in <i>Denatured Visions</i> NY: Museum of Modern Art, 1991. Cranz and Boland, “The Ecological Park as an Emerging Type.” <i>Places</i> 15, 3. TPL materials

WEEK 10	3/27 Topic 18: Biophilia and Therapeutic Landscapes Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beatley, excerpt from <i>Handbook of Biophilic City Planning and Design</i>. Island Press, 2016. • Cooper Marcus and Barnes, excerpt from <i>Healing Gardens</i>. • Visit Therapeutic Landscapes Network (http://www.healinglandscapes.org/gardens/) 	3/30 Topic 19: Community Open Space / Community Gardens Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Francis and Hester, introduction to <i>Meaning of Gardens</i>. Cambridge: MIT, 1990. • Lawson and Sorensen, "When Overwhelming Need Meets Underwhelming Prospects," in <i>Insurgent Public Space</i>. Routledge, 2010. • Lawson, "Planner in the Garden," <i>Journal of Planning History</i>, May 2004.
WEEK 11	4/3 Topic 20: Race, Ethnicity, and Class Reading: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dalton Conley. "Wealth Matters," in <i>Being Black and Living in the Red</i>. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999. • DiChiro, "Nature as Community: The Convergence of Environment and Social Justice." In <i>Uncommon Ground</i>. pp. 298-320. <p>Exercise 13: Power Spectrum</p>	4/6 Topic 21: Contested Open Space Reading: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loukaitou-Sideris, "Urban Form and Social Context/Parks," <i>Journal of Planning education and Research</i> 14 (1995): 89-102. • Rios, "Claiming Latino Space: Cultural Insurgency in the Public Realm" in <i>Insurgent Public Space</i> (NY: Routledge, 2010).
WEEK 12	4/10 Topic 22: Observation Walk Presentations <p>Observation Walk assignment due at beginning of class</p>	4/13 Topic 23: Thoughtful Design in the Making and Details Reading: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alexander, excerpt from <i>A Pattern Language</i> • Excerpt from <i>Reform, Re-form</i> manuscript • TBD
WEEK 13	4/17 Topic 24: Housing as Social Space Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • APA building types guide • Cooper-Marcus and Sarkissian, excerpt from <i>Housing as if People Mattered</i>. University of California Press, 1986. • Hunter, excerpt from <i>Ranches, Rowhouses and Railroad Flats</i>. NY: Norton, 1999. 	4/20 Topic 25: Homelessness and Non Traditional Approaches to Housing Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bozorg and Miller, "Tiny Homes in the American City," <i>Journal of Pedagogy, Pluralism and Practice</i> 6, 1 (2014). • tbd
WEEK 14	4/24 Topic 26: Final Project discussion, including presentations related to ongoing work	4/27 Topic 27: Neighborhood Reading: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sidney Brower, <i>Good Neighborhoods</i> Westport, CT: Praeger, 1996. • Lynch, excerpt from <i>Good City Form</i>.
WEEK 15	5/1 Topic 28: Conclusion <p>Activity Setting Booklets due and discussed</p>	
Finals	FINAL PROJECT DUE May 5 by noon	