Spring 2020  
LA 550:301: Social and Cultural Aspects of Design  
3 credits  
Monday, Thursday 10:55 – 12:15  
IFNH 101

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Office Hours by appointment

This course satisfies Core Learning Goal: Writing in the Discipline (WCd)  
Communicate effectively in modes appropriate to a discipline or area of inquiry; evaluate and critically assess sources and use the conventions of attribution and citation correctly; and analyze and synthesize information and ideas from multiple sources to generate new insights.

Description of Course  
This course engages students in the complex relationship of people and the environment. Our discussions focus on the design and use of everyday environments as expressions of the individual, community, and civic society. We consider how our environment shapes our everyday life and how we shape the environment.

Students are introduced to environment-behavior research and community-based design and invited to explore ethical debates related to inclusion, participation, diversity, and sustainability. We 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 explore our own assumptions about what should be and the normative theories that influence environmental design. Contemporary cases of contested public spaces, cultural expression, community memory, and user-initiated spaces complicate perceptions of what is a public space and who constitutes the public.
The course engages an interdisciplinary approach to social and historical analyses of people in their physical context, utilizing theories and methods from the social sciences (psychology, geography, anthropology, and sociology) and environmental design (landscape architecture, architecture, urban planning). Weekly readings introduce students to “classic” and contemporary materials. Students learn methods to gather information about users’ wants and needs that may inform design. Students engage in reflective and group exercises to address designer biases and assumptions. Students process theory and analysis through written and graphic projects.

Course learning objectives include:

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.
   - Personal bias
   - Territoriality
   - Personal Space
   - Place/Placelessness
   - Cultural landscape
   - Insurgent space
   - Environmental determinism
   - Normative theory
   - Environmental justice
   - Empowerment
   - Participation
   - Design activism
   - Safety / crime prevention

b. People in space: Students will be able to analyze intended and actual use of designed spaces in terms of different user groups.
   - Class / economic status / poverty
   - Immigrants
   - Seniors / elderly
   - Children / youth
   - Vulnerable populations
   - Ethnicity and race
   - Gender
   - Physical disability / ADA
   - Homeless

c. Evidence and Analysis: Students will be able to inventory and analyze social use of space through methods that communicate processes to be used to meet educational, discussion, and design goals.
   - Ethics in research
   - Self reflection
   - Observation
   - Survey / questionnaire
   - Census
   - Interview
   - Activity settings/behavior diagrams
   - Cognitive mapping
   - Case Study
   - Ethnography
   - Participatory methods
   - Design charrette
   - Post occupancy evaluation

d. Professional report and documentation of design: Students will generate clear professional reports that summarize issues, findings, and develops appropriate planning and design guidelines.
   - Framework / storyboarding
   - Diagrams and graphics
   - Coordination of graphic and written material
   - Writing group discussions
   - Formatting
   - Peer critique
   - Revision
   - Rubric for assessment

**Required Readings**

Additional readings will be posted on Canvas.
Required Materials
Please bring sheets of blank paper (8 ½ x 11) to class for exercises and attendance diagrams. Do not rip them out of notebooks.

Course Preparation, Attendance and Engagement
The course is designed to engage students in active learning through discussion, exercises, and assignments. All course material is available on Canvas. Each week is considered as a module that includes lecture, preparatory readings, and exercises.

Lectures: All lectures will be made available on Canvas as notes.
Workshops: Thursdays will be used for applied exercises. Some class periods will be used to complete a specific exercise while others provide preparation for independent work completed outside of class time.

It is essential that students come to class prepared to be full participants in class discussions and assignments. 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. The class is designed to build on student reflections from readings and exercises.

There will be a strict attendance policy. Students are expected to arrive on time and attend the entire class period. The only acceptable absences are health and family emergencies, and both require contacting the professor BEFORE the day of absence.

Assignments and Grading
All work is expected to be turned into Canvas on or before the assigned due date. Please note the date and time that Canvas will be set to NO LONGER ACCEPT WORK as on time. Do not wait until last moment. Late work may be submitted on Canvas but will only be accepted and graded with prior written approval from the instructors and will receive a reduction in points per day that the submission is late. Repetitive late submissions reflect a larger issue to address and will result in significant grade reduction.

The course is graded on points, totaling 400 for the course. Points are assigned to each exercise and project.

Attendance Diagrams: Each Monday lecture will begin with a sketch or diagram exercise that will be collected to note attendance and cannot be made up. These are worth 5 points each, 75 points total.
Exercises: Exercises align with Modules to support class lectures and to build content for Projects 2 and 3. All are available on Canvas. Exercises will be graded according to a rubric provided on Canvas.
Projects: Projects reflect larger, cumulative assignments.
  • Project 1: Environmental Autobiography
  • Project 2: Introducing Community to Itself
  • Project 3: Learning Center Makeover (final report)

Please note that work completed as exercises will be regraded as part of Projects 2 and 3. This is a writing course and requires students to do iterations of work that show progress and improvement. Incomplete work will have a compounding impact on the final course grade.

Extra credit: there may be a couple extra credit assignments created. These will be added to final grade at end of semester.
**Academic Integrity Policy**

Every member of the community bears a responsibility for ensuring that the highest standards of academic integrity are upheld. Only through 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.

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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.

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**Learning Centers**

The Learning Centers provide centralized academic support services to cultivate students’ skills, strategies, and behaviors that lead to academic persistence and lasting success.

If you need help with writing, you may find the Learning Center Writing Coaching programs useful. [https://rlc.rutgers.edu/student-services/writing-coaching](https://rlc.rutgers.edu/student-services/writing-coaching).

Please note that the Writing Center does not support courses that are not part of the Writing Program (Expository Writing and Basic Composition).

**Student Wellness Services**

Just In Case Web App: [http://codu.co/cee05e](http://codu.co/cee05e). Access helpful mental health information and resources for yourself or a friend in a mental health crisis on your smartphone or tablet and easily contact CAPS or RUPD.

Counseling, ADAP & Psychiatric Services (CAPS): (848) 932-7884 / 17 Senior Street, New Brunswick, NJ 08901/ [www.rhscaps.rutgers.edu/](http://www.rhscaps.rutgers.edu/). CAPS is a University mental health support service that includes counseling, alcohol and other drug assistance, and psychiatric services staffed by a team of professional within Rutgers Health services to support students’ efforts to succeed at Rutgers University. CAPS offers a variety of services that include: individual therapy, group therapy and workshops, crisis intervention, referral to specialists in the community and consultation and collaboration with campus partners.
Violence Prevention & Victim Assistance (VPVA): (848) 932-1181 / 3 Bartlett Street, New Brunswick, NJ 08901 / www.vpva.rutgers.edu/. The Office for Violence Prevention and Victim Assistance provides confidential crisis intervention, counseling and advocacy for victims of sexual and relationship violence and stalking to students, staff and faculty. To reach staff during office hours when the university is open or to reach an advocate after hours, call 848-932-1181.

Disability Services: (848) 445-6800 / Lucy Stone Hall, Suite A145, Livingston Campus, 54 Joyce Kilmer Avenue, Piscataway, NJ 08854 / https://ods.rutgers.edu/. Rutgers University welcomes students with disabilities into all of the University’s educational programs. In order to receive consideration for reasonable accommodations, a student with a disability must contact the appropriate disability services office at the campus where you are officially enrolled, participate in an intake interview, and provide documentation: https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/documentation-guidelines. If the documentation supports your request for reasonable accommodations, your campus’s disability services office will provide you with a Letter of Accommodations. Please share this letter with your instructors and discuss the accommodations with them as early in your courses as possible. To begin this process, please complete the Registration form on the ODS web site at: https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/registration-form.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Module Topic</th>
<th>Monday (5 pts)</th>
<th>Thursday</th>
<th>Method/Technique</th>
<th>Writing Component</th>
<th>Readings</th>
<th>Exercises and Assignments</th>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Due (check Canvas for updates)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Jan 27 &amp; 30</td>
<td>Environment behavior research</td>
<td>Lecture: environment-behavior research overview</td>
<td>Small group workshop: developing aspirational concepts to guide design</td>
<td>guidelines; brainstorming diagram (aka spider diagram)</td>
<td>documentating a process</td>
<td><em>Design as Democracy</em>, chapter 1</td>
<td>Exercise 2: Spider diagramming; Hand out Placemaking Study overview</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Sunday, Feb. 2, 11:59 p.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Feb. 3 &amp; 6</td>
<td>Everyday Place</td>
<td>Lecture: Reading the Landscape</td>
<td>Trip to Learning Center (Lawson away)</td>
<td>Diagram space - physical and programmatic</td>
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<td>Meinig, &quot;The Beholding Eye,&quot;; Lewis, &quot;Axioms for reading landscape&quot;</td>
<td>Exercise 3: Reflection on Reading the Learning Center</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Sunday, Feb. 9, 11:59 p.m.</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Feb. 10 &amp; 13</td>
<td>Observation and Self-reflection</td>
<td>Lecture: Observation and Diagramming (NJASLA)</td>
<td>Student pin-up of Project 1: Environmental Autobiography</td>
<td>Intended versus actual use of space; Diagramming human activities in space</td>
<td>Conveying images from memory; annotation; captioning</td>
<td>Project 1: Env. Autobiography</td>
<td>Exercise 4: Finding myself in the census</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>Pin-up on Feb. 13; due Feb. 16, 11:59 pm.</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Feb. 17 &amp; 20</td>
<td>Demographics</td>
<td>Lecture: Demographic information and representation</td>
<td>Diagramming People in Place: Activity Setting Workshop</td>
<td>census data; sociopetal v sociofugal space; territoriality; personal space</td>
<td>presenting data in tables and diagrams</td>
<td><em>Design as Democracy</em>, chapter 2: Going to the People’s Coming</td>
<td>Exercise 5: Activity Setting Scavenger Hunt</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Sunday, March 8, 11:59</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Feb. 24 &amp; 27</td>
<td>Participant as Expert</td>
<td>Lecture: Listening and Learning from People</td>
<td>Workshop: Asking a Good Question; IRB; discuss census findings</td>
<td>Ethics; Questionnaire</td>
<td>IRB (video)</td>
<td><em>Design as Democracy</em> chapter 3: Experting</td>
<td>Exercise 6: Questionnaire</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>March 12, 8 a.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>March 2 and 5</td>
<td>Goal setting and research</td>
<td>Guest: Learning Center from an Expert's perspective</td>
<td>Workshop: maps and analysis</td>
<td>expert advisors; taking interview notes</td>
<td>Citations</td>
<td>Kevin Lynch, excerpt from <em>Image of the City</em></td>
<td>Exercise 7: Contextual Analysis</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Sunday, March 22, 11:59 p.m.</td>
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<td>Week</td>
<td>Dates</td>
<td>Module Topic</td>
<td>Monday (5 pts)</td>
<td>Thursday</td>
<td>Method/Technique</td>
<td>Writing Component</td>
<td>Readings</td>
<td>Exercises and Assignments</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>March 9 and 12</td>
<td>Participatory Design</td>
<td>Lecture: Participatory</td>
<td>Workshop: Design Charrette</td>
<td>Charretting; design games</td>
<td></td>
<td>Design as Democracy, ch 4: Calming and Evoking</td>
<td>Exercise 8: Reflection on design charrette</td>
<td>Friday, March 13, 11:59 p.m.</td>
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<td>spring break March 14-22</td>
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<td>Storytelling</td>
<td>Design and Exemplars</td>
<td>and advocacy design</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>Mr 30; Apr 2</td>
<td>Inclusive Design: Gender and Age</td>
<td>Lecture: Gender and Age</td>
<td>Workshop/pin-up: Introducing Community to itself</td>
<td>Pulling it all together into one document</td>
<td></td>
<td>Klinenberg, Eric. &quot;Learning Together,&quot; in Places for the People. Recommended LAM article.</td>
<td>Project 2: Introducing Community to Itself</td>
<td>April 2, 8 a.m., in Canvas</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>Apr 6 &amp; 9</td>
<td>Design Guidelines</td>
<td>Guest: Julie Ritter: Immersive Spaces</td>
<td>Workshop: guidelines and rubrics</td>
<td>guidelines; rubrics; peer review</td>
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<td>exercise 10: peer review</td>
<td></td>
<td>Thursday, April 9, 11:59 p.m. unless otherwise noted</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>Apr 13 &amp; 16</td>
<td>Inequality, Power, and Inclusive Design</td>
<td>Lecture: Structural Inequalities and Inclusive Design</td>
<td>workshop: dotting i’s and crossing t’s in report writing</td>
<td>final revisions; formatting</td>
<td></td>
<td>excerpt from Why Are all the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria; Klinenberg, &quot;Safe Space,&quot; in Palaces for the People</td>
<td>Exercise 11: Guidelines and Rubrics</td>
<td>Thursday, April 23, 1159 p.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>April 20 &amp; 23</td>
<td>Accessibility</td>
<td>Lecture: safety, accessibility, ADA</td>
<td>Fieldtrip: ADA exercise</td>
<td>Design as Democracy, chapter 9: Putting Power to Good Use; Lerner, LAM article.</td>
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<td>Exercise 12: ADA Reflection</td>
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<td>Sunday, April 26, 11:59 p.m.</td>
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<td>14</td>
<td>Apr 27 &amp; 30</td>
<td>Homelessness</td>
<td>Lecture: Home and</td>
<td>Workshop/ pin-up: Learning Center Make-over</td>
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<td>Project 3: Learning Center Make-over</td>
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<td>April 30, 8 a.m., in canvas and paper copy to class</td>
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<td>15</td>
<td>4-May</td>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>Lecture: Conclusion</td>
<td>NO CLASS</td>
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