



Spring 2018

LA 550:301: Social and Cultural Aspects of Design

3 credits

Monday, Thursday 10:55 – 12:15

Ruth Adams 206

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Course office hours are after class, Monday, 12:15 – 1:00, or by appointment (contact Laura Mitchell to schedule: lmitchell@sebs.rutgers.edu)

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Office Hours:

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.

In this class, 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 landscape architecture. Contemporary cases of contested public spaces, cultural expression, community memory, and user-initiated spaces (i.e. community gardens, vending streets) 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 introduce students to both “classic” and contemporary materials. Students are encouraged to discuss content of the selected readings as well as the methods of inquiry.

Students learn methods to analyze how people use space and how to gather information about users' wants and needs that may inform design. Students engage in reflective exercises to address designer biases and assumptions. Learning to observe, listen, survey, interview, and reflect are all essential tools for understanding personal, social, and cultural aspects of design. Students 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
 - Participation / non participation
 - Public / multiple publics
 - Safety / crime prevention

- 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
 - Vulnerable populations
 - 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.
 - Self reflection
 - Observation
 - Survey
 - Census
 - Interview
 - Activity diagrams
 - Case Study
 - Ethnography
 - Participatory methods
 - Post occupancy evaluation

Required Readings

De La Pena, David, Diane Jones Allen, Randy Hester, Jeff Hou, Laura Lawson, and Marcia McNally. *Design as Democracy: Techniques for Collective Creativity*. Washington: Island Press, 2017.

Additional Readings on Sakai

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.

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 and are listed in the syllabus by date. Timely completion of these exercises is critical to the success of the aligned lecture and class discussion. Please submit in the appropriate Forum in Sakai by 9:00 a.m. the day of the class, unless otherwise noted in the syllabus. LATE EXERCISES WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED. Submit all as PDF files with name formatted as follows:

Your last name_exercise number_name
 Examples: Lawson_1_SomeoneWho
 Nelson_2_PopularTaste).

exercise	title	points	due date
1	I am someone who...	1	1/22/2018 9:00 a.m.
2	Popular Taste	2	1/25/2018 9:00 a.m.
3	Design Inspiration (in class)	1	in class
4	What I see...	2	1/29/2018 9 a.m.
5	Finding yourself in the census	2	2/1/2018 9 a.m.
6	Public Space	1	in class
7	Environmental Autobiography in review	2	1/15/2018 9 a.m.
8	Activity Setting	5	2/26/2018 9 a.m.
9	Listening	2	tba
10	Asking Good Questions	2	PT 1: 2/26/2018 9 a.m.; PT2: 3/1
11	IRB certification	5	3/19/2018 9 a.m.
12	Design Charrette	1	3/9/2018 5 p.m.
13	Pattern Language	2	3/22/2018; 9 a.m.
14	Accessibility Challenge	1	3/30/2018; 5 p.m.
15	Safety, Security, and Design	1	tba
16	Environmental Justice	1	tba
17	Power mapping	1	in class
18	Revisit Exercises	3	3/16/2018 9 a.m.
19	You are the teacher...	4	4/26/2018 9 a.m.
20	social media	1	in class

Project 1: 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. Evaluation will include demonstration of analysis, effort in graphic representation (not in terms of beauty but content), and quality of writing.

Due 2/12/2018 in Sakai by 9:00 a.m.; bring paper copy to class

Project 2: Social Study

The goal of the social study is to use the theory and ideas discussed in class to analyze a campus space. This project will have multiple components that require field work and use of methods discussed in class. Students will be expected to connect the study of a social space to themes and discussions in class. Evaluation will include quality of fieldwork and analysis as expressed in diagrams, maps, and written description; incorporation of relevant class topics, discussions, readings; and clarity of work.

Progress reports: 3/26 and 4/12

Due 4/26 in Sakai by 9 a.m.; bring paper copy to class

Course Evaluation

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

Exercises & Reading discussions	40 points
Project 1: Environmental Autobiography	25 points
Project 2: Social Study	35 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.

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 2018 (subject to change)

Week	Monday	Thursday
WEEK 1	MLK Jr. Day – no class	1/18 Introduction
WEEK 2	1/22 Environment-Behavior Research Overview Reading (prior to class): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> De la Peña et al., <i>Design as Democracy</i>. Pp: 1-10. <p>Exercise 1: Technique 1.2 – I am Someone Who... Submit in Forum on Sakai by 9 a.m., prior to class)</p> <p>Project 1: Environmental Autobiography, based on Technique 1.4 - hand out; due 2/12</p>	1/25 Who is the Designer? Professional and Popular Design Reading (prior to class): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Atkinson, Paul. "Do It Yourself: Democracy and Design." <i>Journal of Design History</i>, 19, 1 (2006). <p>Exercise 2: Popular Taste (submit prior to class, to discuss)</p> <p>Exercise 3 (in class): Design Inspiration</p>
WEEK 3	1/29 Interpretation: What We See / What We Assume Reading (be prepared to discuss in class): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meinig, "The Beholding Eye." <i>The Interpretation of Ordinary Landscapes</i>. NY: Oxford, 1979" 33-47. Lewis, "Axioms for Reading the Landscape." <i>The Interpretation of Ordinary Landscapes</i>. NY: Oxford, 1979): 11-27. Recommended: Mitchell, Don. "New Axioms for Reading the Landscape: Paying Attention to Political Economy and Social Justice," <i>Political Economies of Landscape Change</i> (2008): 29-50. <p>Exercise 4: What I see</p>	2/1 Demographic Information and How to Analyze It. Readings: none Exercise 5: Finding Yourself in the Census (technique 1.5 in <i>Design as Democracy</i>)
WEEK 4	2/5 Who is the Public? Normative Design Readings: <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. Loukaitou-Sideris, "Urban Form and Social Context/Parks," <i>Journal of Planning education and Research</i> 14 (1995): 89-102. <p>Exercise 6: Public Space (in class)</p>	2/8 - <i>Lawson at NJ Agricultural Convention</i> Public Space Reading: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> CDC, Healthy Community Design Other tbd
WEEK 5	2/12 Didactic Landscapes / Landscapes that Mean Project 1: Environmental Autobiography – presentations and discussion Readings: None Exercise 7: Environmental Autobiography in Review (due in sakai by 9:00 a.m., 2/15)	2/15 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: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1981. Pp. 89-136. De la Peña et al., "Experting," pp. 73-99. (skim) <p>Exercise 8: Activity Setting, handed out, due 2/26 for discussion in class</p>

WEEK 6	<p>2/19 Listening and Learning from People Using a Place</p> <p>Reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> De la Peña et al, “Going to the People’s Coming,” <i>Design as Democracy</i>, 45-71. <p>Exercise 9: Listening</p> <p>2/21 – special class: Join Science + Art Discussion at Zimmerli, Wednesday evening.</p>	<p>2/22 Engaging People Ethically and Effectively: Surveys, Interviews, and IRB</p> <p>Reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Zeisel, “Asking Questions: Topics and Formats,” <i>Inquiry by Design</i>. <p>Exercise 10: Asking Good Questions (part 1 due by Monday 9:00)</p> <p>Exercise 11 handed out: IRB certification (5 points; certificate submitted in sakai by 3/19)</p>
WEEK 7	<p>2/26 So much data, now what?! Processing information to inform and inspire design</p> <p>Reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> De la Peña et al., “Calming and Evoking,” and “Yeah, that’s what we should do,” <i>Design as Democracy</i>, pp. 101-164. <p>Discuss Exercise 6 (Activity Setting) Discuss Exercise 10 (Asking Good Questions); revise and due by Thursday 9:00</p>	<p>3/1 Evaluation: 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>Hand out Project 2: Social Study</p>
WEEK 8	<p>3/5 Participatory Design</p> <p>Reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> De la Peña et al., “Co-generating” <i>Design as Democracy</i>, pp. 133-192. 	<p>3/8 Participatory Design Charrette</p> <p>Exercise 12: Design Charrette (due by Friday, 5 p.m.)</p>
SPRING BREAK (3/12-16)		
WEEK 9	<p>3/19 Thoughtful Design in the Making and Details</p> <p>Reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alexander, excerpt from <i>A Pattern Language</i> De la Peña et al., “Engaging the Making,” <i>Design as Democracy</i>, 195-223. <p>Exercise 11 (IRB Certification) due in Sakai by 9 a.m.</p> <p>Special class: Art+Science discussion at Zimmerli</p>	<p>3/22 Materiality / Biophilia (Light, Wind, Water, Earth)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Excerpt from Winterbottom, <i>Therapeutic Gardens</i> Recommended: Munch et al., “The effect of light on humans” and Solt et al., “Daylight and the Built Environment.” <i>Science</i> <p>Exercise 13: Pattern Language</p>
WEEK 10	<p>3/26 Accessibility</p> <p>(class may split and switch between 3/26 and 3/29)</p> <p>Reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fair Housing Act guidelines <p>Exercise 14: Accessibility Challenge (due by Friday, 5 p.m.)</p> <p>Submit progress report on Social Study</p>	<p>3/29 Safety, Security, Vulnerability</p> <p>(class may split and switch between 3/26 and 3/29)</p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tbd <p>Exercise 15: Safety, Security and Design</p>

<p>WEEK 11</p>	<p>4/2 Environmental Justice; Structural Inequalities and the Consequences in Communities of Color</p> <p>Reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DiChiro, "Nature as Community: The Convergence of Environment and Social Justice." In <i>Uncommon Ground</i>. pp. 298-320. • Recommended: Bullard et al., <i>Toxic Wastes and Race at Twenty, 1987-2007</i>. UCC. • Recommended: Dalton Conley. "Wealth Matters," in <i>Being Black and Living in the Red</i>. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999. <p>Exercise 16: Environmental Justice</p>	<p>4/5 Landscape and Memory: Charleston, SC Guest: Anita Bakshi, Dept. of Landscape Architecture</p> <p>Reading: TBA</p>
<p>WEEK 12</p>	<p>4/9 Gender and Age</p> <p>Reading: TBA</p> <p>Reminder: Cekada lecture on Wednesday evening; will be discussed Thursday</p>	<p>4/12 Inclusion and Power</p> <p>Reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • De la Peña et al., "Putting Power to Good Use," <i>Design as Democracy</i>, pp. 261-302. <p>Exercise 17: Power Mapping (in class)</p> <p>Submit Progress Report on Project 3</p>
<p>WEEK 13</p>	<p>4/16 Climate Change, Stewardship and Sustainability</p> <p>Progress Report on Project 3</p> <p>Exercise 18: Revisiting exercises</p>	<p>4/19 Home and Homelessness Guest: Abbilyn Miller, U.S. Housing and Urban Development</p> <p>Exercise 19: You are the teacher... (due 4/26)</p> <p>Reminder: Earth Day on Sunday, April 22</p>
<p>WEEK 14</p>	<p>4/23 Social Media and the Landscape</p> <p>Exercise 20: Social media (in class)</p>	<p>4/26 Project 3 due; discussed in class</p>
<p>WEEK 15</p>	<p>4/30 Conclusion</p> <p>Reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • De la Peña et al., "Conclusion," <i>Design as Democracy</i> <p>Discuss exercise 19 (You are the Teacher)</p>	