Research Methods
Spring 2017
Monday 2:15 – 3:35pm
Wednesday 12:35 – 1:55
Blake 148

Instructor
Anita Bakshi
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Office Hours by appointment

Course Description
This course provides an overview of the role of research in landscape architecture, presents different strategies and approaches for answering research questions, and explores the different types of research practices and methods. The course considers different perspectives on the definitions of research and scholarship in landscape architecture, focusing on these as paths to the generation of new knowledge essential to the progress of landscape architecture.

As a practicality, the class will focus on beginning to equip students for the thesis/project process here in the MLA program. It will familiarize students with both processes to follow and tools to use within them. But, in no way should students expect this to be the ultimate lesson in these skills. The class will also teach students about the larger need for research in landscape architecture and the ways that new knowledge can contribute to the growth of the profession.
Learning objectives:

- Knowledge of the relationship between theory, research, and design
- Meaning of research design
- Familiarity with multiple research methods appropriate to landscape architecture, including their appropriate application, opportunities, and limitations
- Awareness of ethical issues in research, particularly involving human subjects
- Faculty research areas and approaches
- Ability to analyze and critique research reports and publications
- Development of habits conducive to efficient research design, and writing
- Demonstrate independent approach to a research question, research design, and development of research proposal

Outcomes

1. Development of a research ‘notebook’ leading toward thesis topic
2. Working thesis/graduate project topic. There are two important aspects to successful topic selection:
   a. It is a topic that is satisfying to you, and that you want to explore independently;
   b. It is a topic that either demonstrates an innovative application of knowledge (best practices) of the field; critically examines, analyzes and/or empirically test ideas/theories of the field; or creatively explores, synthesizes, expands, and/or develops ideas/theories of the field
3. Determine thesis/project product (research paper, journal article, design demonstration, etc.)
4. Presentation of thesis/project proposal to faculty
5. Completed draft thesis/project proposal that identifies topic, existing knowledge, procedures, and tentative schedule (typ. 8-12 pages)
6. Commitment of thesis/project committee chair and two other supporting members
**Student Expectations**

Student work for this course will include regularly assigned readings, in-class readings, and written assignments. Students are also expected to spend several hours per week on independent reading relevant to a possible thesis/project, and in discussion with potential committee members. While there will be a number of lectures in class, this is a class where student growth has to come significantly from the work of the students. It is only by putting in the time that many of the secrets and thrills of research are realized. However, students should be mindful that the primary expectation in grading their work is in the depth and seriousness and quality it demonstrates, not the time put in. Consider the adage, “It isn’t the time you put into the work, but the work you put into the time.” In the end, you have to put in the time to do well, but you need to make sure that it is time well-invested.

A significant, recurring aspect of the course is student-led discussion about individual progress, concerns and next steps. In accordance with program policy, class attendance is mandatory and expected.

Throughout the semester, student will be visiting the library, meeting with faculty, and exploring different potential paths. Records, notes and information from these experiences should be collected digitally in a folder. Student will be asked to share that folder with the instructor at different points in the semester. Students are welcome to use different tools to get to that final outcome.

**Grading**

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<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preparation for class (readings completed) and participation in discussion</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assignments</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research methods “notebook”</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Topic Poster</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<td>Presentation</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<td>Final thesis/project proposal (on time and signed)</td>
<td>20%</td>
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Having a proposal signed by a committee is mandatory for completion of this class. Without a signed proposal submitted to the department, students will be given an incomplete grade.
## UNDERSTANDING THE FIELD

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>WEEK 1</th>
<th>Lecture (Wednesday)</th>
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<tr>
<td>January 18</td>
<td><strong>Course Introduction</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>MLA Project or Thesis Overview</strong>&lt;br&gt;Visit from Wolfram Hoefer (GPD) – Research Opportunities through CUES</td>
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<tr>
<th>WEEK 2</th>
<th>Lecture (Monday)</th>
<th>MLA Thesis / Project&lt;br&gt;An Overview of Research Methods</th>
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<tr>
<td>Jan. 23, 25</td>
<td><strong>Exploring Space &amp; Memory: Research Methodologies employed in Oakland, CA &amp; Nicosia, Cyprus</strong>&lt;br&gt;Site observation&lt;br&gt;Mapping&lt;br&gt;Site user surveys&lt;br&gt;Archival sources to visual representation&lt;br&gt;Exhibition / presentation design</td>
<td>Exercise 1:&lt;br&gt;Double Entry Notebook</td>
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<td><strong>STUDENT PRESENTATIONS (Wednesday)</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Your Design Research</strong>&lt;br&gt;Class discussion and presentation of the research you have done in your past design studios.</td>
<td>Readings:&lt;br&gt;(for Monday)&lt;br&gt;Bakshi, Anita (2012)&lt;br&gt;The Legacy of Ottoman Building in Nicosia.</td>
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<td>(for Wednesday)&lt;br&gt;Introduction to Primary Research&lt;br&gt;Driscoll, Dana (2011)</td>
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<th>WEEK 3</th>
<th>Lecture (Monday)</th>
<th>Research in LA</th>
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<td><strong>CLASS DISCUSSION (Wednesday)</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Analyzing a Research Paper</strong></td>
<td>Projective Ecologies (2014)&lt;br&gt;Chris Reed &amp; Nina-Marie Lister</td>
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<td>Exercise 2:&lt;br&gt;Analyzing a Research Paper</td>
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### WEEK 4
Feb. 6, 8

**LECTURE** (Monday)

Visual Analysis: Connecting Images to People & Place

**IN CLASS EXERCISE** (Wednesday)

Writing to Prompts

**SEEING, INTERPRETING & WRITING**

Reading:
Murray, Rowena (2002)
Chapter #2: “Starting to Write. In How to Write a Thesis.”

### WEEK 5
Feb. 13, 15

**STUDENT PRESENTATIONS** (Monday)

Visual Explorations

**REFINING YOUR QUESTION / TOPIC THROUGH VISUAL EXPLORATION**

Exercise 3:
Visual Exploration of your topic
11x17 sheets printed for pin-up

### WEEK 6
Feb. 20, 22

**GUEST SPEAKERS** (Monday)

David Tulloch & Anette Freytag
Research and Analysis

WRITING TO PROMPTS:

“**My research question is** ____________.”

“**There is work to be done on** ____________.”

“**My contribution will be** ____________.”

**GUEST SPEAKERS** (Wednesday)

Kate John-Alder & David Smith
History & Theory & Mapping

**QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH TOOLS AND APPARTUS**

Readings:
As assigned by guest speakers

### WEEK 7
Feb 27 & March 1

**GUEST SPEAKERS** (Monday)

Frank Gallagher & Jean Marie Hartman

WRITING TO PROMPTS:

“Researchers/designers who have looked at this subject are____.”

“They argue that ____________.”

“My research/design is closest to X in terms of ____________.”

**GUEST SPEAKERS** (Wednesday)

Richard Alomar & Holly Nelson
Community Engagement

**HISTORY, THEORY, COMMUNITY**

Readings:
As assigned by guest speakers
| WEEK 8 | GUEST SPEAKERS (Monday)  
Tobiah Horton & Richard Bartalone  
Material Systems | AGRICULTURAL, TECHTONIC & MATERIAL SYSTEMS  
Readings:  
As assigned by guest speakers |
|---|---|
| March 6, 8 | GUEST SPEAKERS (Wednesday)  
Laura Lawson, Arianna Lindbergh & Merideth Taylor  
Urban Agriculture & Food Systems |
| WEEK 9 | TBD  
Speaker from Library / Research on Human Subjects | OBSERVING SITES & PEOPLE  
Reading:  
Jacobs, Allan (1985)  
Looking at Cities  
Exercise 4:  
Double Entry Notebook @ your site |
| Mar. 20, 22 | LECTURE (Wednesday)  
Identifying and Analyzing Visual Cues: Cities, Landscapes, Spaces, and the People that Use them  
WRITING TO PROMPTS:  
"My contribution will be ____________________."  
"This is a contribution in the sense that ____________________."  
"This research/design shows / reveals / confirms ____________________." |
| WEEK 10 | LECTURE (Monday)  
Finding Current Literature  
IN CLASS EXERCISE  
Smart Goals – 1st time | LITERATURE REVIEW  
Exercise 5:  
Annotated Bibliography |
| Mar. 27, 29 | TBD  
Speaker from Library / Research on Human Subjects |
| WEEK 11 | STUDENT PRESENTATIONS (Monday)  
Research “Notebooks” | REFINING YOUR SEARCH  
DECIDING ON A TOPIC  
Exercise 6: |
| WEEK 12 | April 10, 12 | IN CLASS EXERCISE (Wednesday)  
Developing a Timeline  
WRITING TO PROMPTS:  
"The key steps to completing this project are ________."  
"In order to prepare I need to _______ soon _________."  
"In the interest of time, I may need to reduce the scope of ______."  
PRESENTING YOUR TOPICS  
Exercise 8:  
Topic Posters  
STUDENT PRESENTATIONS (Monday)  
Topic Posters Due |
| WEEK 13 | April 17, 19 | IN CLASS EXERCISE (Monday)  
Review of Timelines and Charts  
IN CLASS EXERCISE (Wednesday)  
Preparing for the Proposal  
WRITING TO PROMPTS:  
"My research question is ... (50 words)"  
"Researchers who have looked at this subject are ... (50 words)"  
"They argue that ... (25 words)"  
"Debate centers on the issue of ... (25 words)"  
"There is work to be done on ... (25 words)"  
"My research is closest to that of X in that ... (50 words)"  
"My contribution will be ... (50 words)"  
ROUGH DRAFT DUE  
Exercise 9:  
Work Chart & Timelines  
Exercise 10:  
Proposal Drafts due this weekend for markup & comment |
| WEEK 14 | April 24, 26 | IN CLASS EXERCISE (Monday)  
Final Presentations  
IN CLASS EXERCISE (Wednesday)  
Final Presentations |
| WEEK 15 | May 1 | Final Poster & Proposal Due |