Research Methods
Spring 2021
Wednesday 12:35 – 3:35pm
Synchronous Online

Instructor: Anita Bakshi
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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. 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
· 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.
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. 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 reading about their proposed topics, meeting with faculty, and exploring different potential paths. Records, notes and information from these experiences should be collected digitally in a research “notebook” / folder.

**Grading**

<table>
<thead>
<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>
</tr>
<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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<tr>
<td>Presentation</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<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 in most cases. Without a signed proposal submitted to the department, students will be given an incomplete grade.
WEEK 1   January 20
Course Introduction
MLA Project or Thesis overview with GPD

Lecture: A Practical Introduction to Research Methodologies
Site observation / Mapping / User Surveys / Archival sources /
visual representation / exhibition / community intervention

Readings & Discussion: Readings to be completed for today’s class
Anita Bakshi, Topographies of Memories, Chapter #6 “Modes…”
Dana Driscoll, Introduction to Primary Research

WEEK 2   January 27
Research in Landscape Architecture / Designing Research

Lecture: Overview of Prevalent Research Themes

Readings & Discussion:
Themes in Landscape Architecture Publishing (2015)
Projective Ecologies (2014)
Sustaining Beauty (2008)

Exercises Due: Exercise #2 – Double Entry Notebook
Student presentations on research done in design studios

WEEK 3   February 3
Visual Analysis / Research for Design

Lecture: Image Analysis & Visual Representations of Research

Readings & Discussion:
Steffen Nijhuis, Visual Research in Landscape Architecture (quick skim)
James Corner, The Thick and Think of It
Annette M. Kim, Sidewalk City (Critical Cartography Primer Section)

Exercise Due: Exercise #3 - Presentations on Research Design
Choose from list
- Public Life & Urban Justice in NYC’s Plazas
- Mapping America’s Legacy Cities
- The Shallows: Bay Landscapes as Ecological Infrastructure
- A Colorado Legacy: I-25 Conservation Corridor Master Plan
- From Pixels to Stewardship: Advancing Conservation Through Digital Innovation
- Atlas for the End of the World - Atlas for the Beginning of the Anthropocene
- Design with Dredge: Resilient Landscape Infrastructure in the Chesapeake Bay
- Urban Aquatic Health: Integrating New Technologies and Resiliency into Floating Wetlands
- Homeplace: Conversation Guides for Six Communities, Rebuilding After Hurricane Matthew
- The FloMo: A Mobile Messenger for Sea Level Rise
- A Living, Breathing Movement: An Introduction to the Dakota Access Pipeline Issue
- What's Out There Cultural Landscapes Guides
- EnvisionColumbus.org: A Conduit for Alignment & Empathetic Outreach in Community Building

WEEK 4 February 10
Visual Exploration Presentations & Discussion of Research Topics

Exercise Due: Exercise #4 - Visual Exploration

WEEK 5 February 17
Building Arguments in Dialogue – What’s Next for Landscape Architecture? Why?

Exercise Due: Exercise #5 - In-class Debate

Readings & Discussion:
https://newcities.org/the-big-picture-open-letter-to-citymakers-10-key-implications-of-the-covid-19/
https://unlearningwhiteness.cargosite/
https://www.archpaper.com/2020/06/cornell-nomas-on-ending-institutionalized-racism/trk_msg=ATLOQCCV5LJK9BMBBBB733SQ1S&trk_contact=4FE5KQE737T3L3Q54BMUEC
U7IO&trk_sid=HO3LE79MG7US7982O2F55AB44
https://dirt.asla.org/2020/07/23/emerging-landscape-architecture-leaders-focus-on-social-justice/
WEEK 6    February 24
The Social and Cultural Background of Native Plants / In-class writing workshop

Discussion: Native Plant Politics

Readings & Discussion:
Stephen Jay Gould, *An Evolutionary Perspective on Strengths, Fallacies, and Confusions in the Concept of Native Plants*
Groening & Wolshke-Bulmahn, *Some Notes on the Mania for Native Plants*
Bakshi & Gallagher, *Design with Fourth Nature* (draft)

Rowena Murray, Chapter #2: “Starting to Write.” In *How to Write a Thesis.*

IN CLASS WRITING WORKSHOP: An introduction to writing to prompts

WEEK 7    March 3
Consulting Primary & Secondary Sources

Lecture: Finding Relevant Materials & Scholarship

Visit to Rutgers Library Special Collections with Tara Mahagan

Visit to Special Collections –  Sinclair New Jersey Collection
New Jersey Master Plans 1931-2004
New Jersey Postcard Collection1903-1989

WEEK 8    March 10
Research with Human Subjects
Community Based Participatory Research & Ethical implications

Lecture: Research with Human Subjects
Case studies: Akwesasne Health and Food Systems Study
Ringwood Mines Superfund Site Project discussion

Readings & Discussion: Elizabeth Hoover, *The River is in Us*

Exercise Due: Exercise #6 – Annotated Bibliography

SPRING BREAK March 13 – 21
WEEK 9  March 24
Research Notebook Presentations

Exercise Due: Exercise #7 – Research Notebooks
Exercise #1 - CITI certification

WEEK 10  March 31
Diversity & Design
Charles L. Davis II - Guest Speaker ???

Lecture: Charles L. Davis II is an assistant professor of architectural history and criticism at the University at Buffalo
https://raceandarchitecture.com/

Readings: Charles Davis, Race and Modern Architecture
Exercise Due: Prepare questions for seminar with Charles Davis

WEEK 11  April 7
Topic Poster Presentations
Writing Workshop: Preparing for the Proposal

Exercise Due: Exercise #8 – Poster

ROUGH DRAFT DUE on Friday 9 April

WEEK 12  April 14
Closed Session – Discussion with 3rd year grads

WEEK 13  April 21
Organizational Tools for Research
Create Work Charts & Timelines

WEEK 14  April 28
Thesis and Project Topic Presentations to Faculty

Final Proposal and signed committee forms due around May 11 (final date TBD)