

Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey
Landscape Architecture **16:550:582**

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

Preparation for class (readings completed) and participation in discussion	15%
Assignments	30%
Research methods "notebook"	10%
Topic Poster	5%
Presentation	20%
Final thesis/project proposal (on time and signed)	20%

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.

RESEARCH METHODS Spring 2016
 Instructor: Anita Bakshi
 Schedule

UNDERSTANDING THE FIELD		
WEEK 1 January 18	LECTURE (Wednesday) Course Introduction MLA Project or Thesis Overview Visit from Wolfram Hoefler (GPD) – Research Opportunities through CUES	
WEEK 2 Jan. 23, 25	LECTURE (Monday) Exploring Space & Memory: Research Methodologies employed in Oakland, CA & Nicosia, Cyprus Site observation Mapping Site user surveys Archival sources to visual representation Exhibition / presentation design	MLA THESIS / PROJECT An Overview of Research Methods Exercise 1: Double Entry Notebook Readings: (for Monday) Bakshi, Anita (2012) The Legacy of Ottoman Building in Nicosia. (for Wednesday) <i>Introduction to Primary Research</i> Driscoll, Dana (2011)
	STUDENT PRESENTATIONS (Wednesday) Your Design Research Class discussion and presentation of the research you have done in your past design studios.	
WEEK 3 Jan. 30 & Feb. 1	LECTURE (Monday) An Overview of Research in Landscape Architecture	RESEARCH IN LA Readings: (for Monday) <i>Themes in Landscape Architecture Publishing</i> Cushing & Renata (2015) <i>Projective Ecologies</i> (2014) Chris Reed & Nina-Marie Lister Meyer, Elizabeth (2000) <i>The Post-Earth Day Conundrum: Translating Environmental Values into Landscape Design.</i> Exercise 2: Analyzing a Research Paper
	CLASS DISCUSSION (Wednesday) Analyzing a Research Paper	

WEEK 4 Feb. 6, 8	LECTURE (Monday) Visual Analysis : Connecting Images to People & Place	SEEING, INTERPRETING & WRITING Reading: Murray, Rowena (2002) Chapter #2: "Starting to Write. In <i>How to Write a Thesis</i> .
	IN CLASS EXERCISE (Wednesday) Writing to Prompts	
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
	STUDENT PRESENTATIONS (Wednesday) Visual Explorations	
ESTABLISHING YOUR COMMITTEE		
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 _____."	QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH TOOLS AND APPARTUS Readings: As assigned by guest speakers
	GUEST SPEAKERS (Wednesday) Kate John-Alder & David Smith History & Theory & Mapping	
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 _____."	HISTORY, THEORY, COMMUNITY Readings: As assigned by guest speakers
	GUEST SPEAKERS (Wednesday) Richard Alomar & Holly Nelson Community Engagement	

WEEK 8 March 6, 8	GUEST SPEAKERS (Monday) Tobiah Horton & Richard Bartolone Material Systems	AGRICULTURAL, TECTONIC & MATERIAL SYSTEMS Readings: As assigned by guest speakers
	GUEST SPEAKERS (Wednesday) Laura Lawson, Arianna Lindbergh & Merideth Taylor Urban Agriculture & Food Systems	
SPRING BREAK March 11-19 FINDING YOUR TOPIC		
WEEK 9 Mar. 20, 22	TBD Speaker from Library / Research on Human Subjects	OBSERVING SITES & PEOPLE Reading: Jacobs, Allan (1985) <i>Looking at Cities</i> Exercise 4: Double Entry Notebook @ your site
	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 Mar. 27, 29	LECTURE (Monday) Finding Current Literature IN CLASS EXERCISE Smart Goals – 1st time WRITING TO PROMPTS: " The research/design methodology that most interests me is _____." " This is an effective strategy for my topic because _____." " I am interested in working with X because _____."	LITERATURE REVIEW Exercise 5: Annotated Bibliography
	TBD Speaker from Library / Research on Human Subjects	
WEEK 11 April 3, 5	STUDENT PRESENTATIONS (Monday) Research "Notebooks"	REFINING YOUR SEARCH DECIDING ON A TOPIC Exercise 6:

	STUDENT PRESENTATIONS (Wednesday) Research “Notebooks”	Research “Notebooks” Present 4 items from Notebooks: - Questions - Photographs - Relevant Paper Wild card of your choice
FINAL STEPS		
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	Exercise 9: Work Chart & Timelines Exercise 10: Proposal Drafts due this weekend for markup & comment
	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	
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	

