Spring 2015

Instructor
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Meeting Times/Places
Lecture: M 10:30 - 11:50 (Blake 245)
Lecture: Th 10:30 - 11:50 (Blake245)
Office Hours: MTh 10:45-11:45 at Blake 220, other times by appointment

Required Text

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

The learning objectives of this course include:

- Knowledge of the relationship of 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. Notebook on research methods 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.

To familiarize students with the format required for the thesis, all written materials should be typed, in 12 point Times Roman or equivalent, double-spaced, and with a consistent style of headings and subheadings. For process documentation, each page should have the student’s name, date of document and page numbers in the page header. To help you answer all formatting and editing issues before submitting work to faculty, please refer to the Style Guide for *Landscape Journal*, which is the editorial standard in the field of landscape architecture.

**Grading**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Weight</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preparation for class (readings completed) and participation in discussion</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assignments</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research methods “folder”</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thesis/graduate proposal, first draft</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Poster graphic (to be posted)</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Presentation</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<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. Without a signed proposal submitted to the department, students will be given an incomplete grade.