

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

## **Research Methods**

Spring 2021

Wednesday 12:35 – 3:35pm

Synchronous Online

**Instructor:** Anita Bakshi

222 Blake Hall

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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**

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 in most cases. Without a signed proposal submitted to the department, students will be given an incomplete grade.

## RESEARCH METHODS Spring 2021

Instructor: Anita Bakshi

Schedule

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](#)
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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://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2020-06-03/how-to-design-justice-into-america-s-cities>

<https://newcities.org/the-big-picture-open-letter-to-citymakers-10-key-implications-of-the-covid-19/>

<https://unlearningwhiteness.cargo.site/>

<https://www.e-flux.com/architecture/the-settler-colonial-present/352059/contaminated-representations/>

[https://www.archpaper.com/2020/06/cornell-nomas-on-ending-institutionalized-racism/?trk\\_msg=ATLOOCCV5LIK9BMBBBB733SQ1S&trk\\_contact=4FE5KQE737T3L3Q54BMUEC U7IO&trk\\_sid=HO3LE79MG7US798I2O2F55AB44](https://www.archpaper.com/2020/06/cornell-nomas-on-ending-institutionalized-racism/?trk_msg=ATLOOCCV5LIK9BMBBBB733SQ1S&trk_contact=4FE5KQE737T3L3Q54BMUEC U7IO&trk_sid=HO3LE79MG7US798I2O2F55AB44)

<https://dirt.asla.org/2020/06/24/interview-with-walter-hood-black-landscapes-matter/>

<https://dirt.asla.org/2020/07/23/emerging-landscape-architecture-leaders-focus-on-social-justice/>

[https://www.asla.org/uploadedFiles/CMS/PPNs/Landing\\_Pages/StudentsGuide\\_EnvJustice\\_Draft.pdf](https://www.asla.org/uploadedFiles/CMS/PPNs/Landing_Pages/StudentsGuide_EnvJustice_Draft.pdf)

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 Collection 1903-1989

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

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**SPRING BREAK March 13 – 21**

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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 3<sup>rd</sup> 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)**