



## **Environmental Design Analysis (EDA)**

**11:550:230, Fall 2025**

Asynchronous lectures, **IN-PERSON MEETINGS & Field Trips Wednesday 12:10 pm – 1:30 pm EST**  
3 Credits

### **Core Curriculum**

SEBS: Humanities and Arts

Core: AH, #p: Analyze arts and /or literatures in themselves and in relation to specific histories, values, languages, cultures, and technologies.

Core: 21<sup>st</sup> Century Challenge: 1. Analyze the degree to which forms of human difference shape a person's experiences of and perspectives on the world, 2. Analyze a contemporary global issue from a multidisciplinary perspective, 4. Analyze issues of social justice across local and global contexts.

**Instructor:** Alexis Lo  
Blake Hall, Department of Landscape Architecture  
[AJL240@sebs.rutgers.edu](mailto:AJL240@sebs.rutgers.edu)  
Office hours by appointment

### **Description of Course**

Developing impactful communities and practices are important challenges for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. In Environmental Design Analysis (EDA), you will explore how your everyday experience is situated in a landscape of cultural and environmental significance. In seeking to understand the necessary changes to enable more sustainable communities, we must first understand the meanings, values, and processes that shape our homes, gardens, streets, neighborhoods, cities, parks, and farms, and wilderness. Students will learn about the theories and evolution of designed spaces in a global and local context. We will consider the city of New Brunswick our living laboratory. Although lectures will be asynchronous, **expect to meet in person Wednesday for in-class activities OR in the field for mandatory site visits and field trips.**

Design, by its very nature, is multi-disciplinary, incorporating the creative arts, social science, environmental science, political science, and other perspectives. Through lectures, readings, discussions, and assignments, students will be encouraged to study their own needs, assumptions, and preferences for particular kinds of places while at the same time realizing that other people may have different assumptions, needs, and preferences. Differences in terms of class, race and ethnicity, immigration, ability, gender, and age shape access to, use of, and values/meanings of everyday places. Embedded throughout will be discussions of environmental and social justice in accessing resources, enabling choice, and enabling civic activism. Sustainability – both ecological and social –involves not only

understanding environmental conditions but also the necessary social engagement to encourage better practices and stewardship.

### **Learning Goals**

In order to assess student learning, the following learning objectives will be assessed through class interactions exams, exercises, and class discussions.

Learning goal (21<sup>st</sup> Century Challenges 1, 2, 4; Ah-p):

*Analyze the degree to which forms of human difference shape a person's experiences of and perspectives on the world.*

- ✓ Analyze personal behaviors and preferences in use of everyday space
- ✓ Investigate how physiological, psychological, cultural, social, political, economic, and environmental factors shape an individual's access to and experience of everyday places (past, present, and future).

*Analyze a contemporary global issue (in EDA: sustainable design) from a multidisciplinary perspective.*

- ✓ Analyze social and ecological implications of past and current ideals of everyday places – home, garden, community, parks and open space, agriculture, and city.
- ✓ Identify and critique intended design (the theoretical ideals and/ or value-based impulses that shape decision-makers' and designers' intentions) to actual use (how users appropriate and change space over time).
- ✓ Investigate barriers and potential for behavior change and adoption of sustainable design concepts.

*Analyze issues of social justice across local and global contexts.*

- ✓ Analyze and critique class, race, ethnicity, and physical ability as relates to the meaning and use of everyday space.
- ✓ Investigate impact of participatory process and social action in design and planning decision making

*Analyze arts and /or literatures in themselves (in EDA: Environmental design) and in relation to specific histories, values, languages, cultures, and technologies.*

- ✓ Analyze evolution of urban form, park and open space design, home and garden design in the United States.
- ✓ Investigate professional development of architecture, landscape architecture, and urban planning.
- ✓ Develop skills in observation and analysis of environmental design.
- ✓ Explore creative expression through sketching, mapping, and design



### **Academic Integrity Policy**

Every member of that community bears a responsibility for ensuring that the highest standards of academic integrity are upheld. Only through a genuine partnership among students, faculty, staff, and administrators will the University be able to maintain the necessary commitment to academic integrity. Please look at the full description at <http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/>. The website includes definitions of cheating, plagiarism, paraphrasing, multiple submission, fabrication, facilitating cheating or plagiarism, denying others access, and fair use of citations and common knowledge.

### **Communication: Canvas and Email**

The class Canvas website serves as the clearinghouse for materials and announcements. Please make sure to check it regularly. The instructor may send out email announcements occasionally.

#### **Lectures:**

All lectures will be pre-recorded videos found in the Module page on Canvas. Weekly lectures will be available Mondays by 12pm EST and will be related to a wide variety of topics within environmental design. Lectures will be given by the instructor and various professors within the Landscape Architecture Department and SEBS.

#### **Weekly Discussion Responses:**

Students are expected to post weekly lecture-based discussion posts under the 'Discussions' tab on Canvas. Posts will be due Wednesday's at 10 am EST. The discussion posts will be related to the current week's readings, videos, and lecture. Students will post a short response linked to course material that they found interesting or thought provoking. Weekly discussion posts are a requirement for the course.

#### **Wednesday Class Sessions: 12:10 am – 1:30 pm EST**

Wednesday sessions are in the field and/or in the classroom (check the course calendar and Announcements for location). Field trips will visit our landscape features around New Brunswick. Classroom meetings will include discussions on the lectures, overviews of upcoming assignments, breakout groups, and interactive exercises. Students will have the opportunity to conduct peer discussions based on weekly topics and ask the instructor questions related to course material. Laptops will be required for some in-class activities. ***These sessions are mandatory.***

#### **Office Hours**

You are always welcome to make an appointment to meet with me. Please reach out over email.

## Reading Material

Reading material supports lectures, independent work, and exercises. All reading material is available on the Canvas website or through a link in the syllabus or on the assignment handout. There is no required textbook to purchase.

## Excused Late Work Policy

If you encounter any personal circumstances that inhibit your ability to fulfill the requirements of this course, you should **contact the instructor immediately**. While this would include a bad viral infection, it applies to other unavoidable circumstances as well. Likewise, any student with a special need, circumstance or disability should make an appointment with the instructor during the first week of class.

The most important thing is that you communicate with me about it. Otherwise, all late work will be penalized.

## Course Evaluation and Grades

In order to keep grading up to date, **no late work** will be accepted unless by prior approved request. In addition to weekly **discussion posts** related to the lectures, you will receive points for **in-class activities** which are designed to orient you to the homework and get you started.

Module	Assignment(s)	Points
Semester	Discussion Posts – online discussions on each module + Group Readings	60
Module 1	Exercise 1: Places from Memory	10
Module 2	Exercise 2: Mood Map	20
Module 3	Exercise 3: Urban Agriculture Map & Diagram	20
Module 4	Exercise 4: Transit Hub Analysis	20
Module 5	Exercise 5: Forest Exercise	20
Module 6	Exercise 6: Park Audit + Observations	25
Module 7	Exercise 7: Unpacking Place: Observations, Discoveries, and Hidden Histories	10
Module 8	Exercise: 8: Climate Literacy – Reflections & Outcomes	10
Module 9	Exercise 9: Documenting the Past: River	20
Module 10	Exercise 10: From Redlining to Today	20
Module 11	Exercise 11: Charrette Game + Questions	10
Module 12	Exercise 12: The Trees	20
Module 14	Mapping Complexity Final Assignment Pt. 1	20
Module 15	EDA in Review 2024 Final Assignment Pt. 2	50

Extra credit opportunities may arise. These will be special assignments with an expected product (i.e. short paper) submitted by a pre-determined deadline.

Final Grades include: A (90-100%), B+ (86-88.9%), B (80-85.9%), C+ (76-79.9), C (70-75.9), D (60-69), F (59.9 or less). The Department of Landscape Architecture uses the following guidelines for understanding appropriate grading in its courses:

A – Outstanding –This not only means fulfilling the requirements, but impressing and going beyond the initial expectations and assigned elements of the project. The student has demonstrated a superior grasp of the subject matter coupled with a high degree of creative or logical expression, individual initiative, and a strong ability to present these ideas in an organized and analytical manner.

B – Very Good – The student has demonstrated a solid grasp of the material with an ability to organize and examine the material in an organized, critical, and constructive manner. The projects and in-class performance reveal a solid understanding of the techniques, issues and related theories, with some additional work completed.

C – Acceptable –The student has shown a moderate ability to grasp concepts and theories for the class, producing work that, while basically adequate, is not in any way exceptional. The performance in class displays a basic familiarity with the relevant literature and techniques.

D – Unacceptable – The work demonstrates a minimal understanding of the fundamental nature of the material or the assignment with a performance that does not adequately examine the course material critically or constructively. Students cannot graduate from the Landscape Architecture program with 2 D's in required 550 classes.

F – Failure – The student has demonstrated a lack of understanding or familiarity with course concepts and materials. Their performance has been inadequate. Failure is often the result of limited effort and poor attendance which may indicate that the student is not in the proper field of study.



### Tentative Schedule (subject to change)

Check the modules on canvas.rutgers.edu for the lecture videos, final reading assignments and due dates. Modules will be posted on the Monday of each week. Lectures each have Discussion Questions to answer.

Week + Date	Module Topic	Readings	Class Activity/ Field Trip	Exercises/ Assignment
W1 Sept. 2-5	Intro: What is EDA?	Lippard, L. R. (1997). The lure of the local: Senses of place in a multicentered society. [Chapter: On and Off the Map]	IN CLASS Ex.1: Places from Memory	Ex.1: Upload + Response
W2 Sept. 8-12	Individuals and the Environment	Prospect — refuge theory by Esther Sugiarto  Lang, Jon. "Privacy, Territoriality, and Personal Space." In Creating Architectural Theory. NY: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1987. SKIM  Video: NPR, "How different cultures handle personal space" (video 9 minutes)	Meet @ the Yard on College Ave.	Ex.2: Mood Map of Easton Ave and CA
W3 Sept. 15-19	Physical and Social Environments	Low, S. (2022). Why public space matters. (Chapter 1)  Stilgoe, J. R. (1999). Outside lies magic: Regaining history and awareness in everyday places. Bloomsbury Publishing USA.	TBD	Ex. 3: Urban Agriculture Map and Diagram
W4 Sept. 22-26	The City – Legibility	Kevin Lynch, excerpt from Image of the City. Cambridge: MIT, 1960.	Meet @ NB Train Station for walk	Ex. 4: Transit Hub
W5 Sept. 29-Oct. 3	Pre- Colonial Landscapes	Sanderson, E. (2014, March 15). New York—before the City: [Video]. TED Conferences. <a href="https://www.ted.com/talks/eric_sanderson_new_york_before_the_city?language=en">https://www.ted.com/talks/eric_sanderson_new_york_before_the_city?language=en</a>  Emily W. B. Russell , Vegetation of Northern New Jersey Before European Settlement	TBD: Visit to Rutgers Eco Preserve	Ex. 5: Forest
W6 Oct. 6-10	Parks + Histories	Prescribing Parks for Better Health, NRPA, 16pp Video: ASLA, "Design for Active Living" (video 4 minutes)  Marcus, C. C., & Francis, C. (Eds.). (1997). People places: design guidelines for urban open space. John Wiley & Sons.	Meet @ Donaldson Park in Highland Park	Ex. 6: Park Audit + Observations
W7 Oct. 13-17	Hidden Histories  Film: <i>The Price of Silence</i>	Fuentes, M., & Gray White, D. (2016). Scarlet and Black: Slavery and dispossession in Rutgers history. Rutgers University Press.	Meet @ Downtown NB	Ex. 7: Unpacking Place: Observations, Discoveries, and Hidden Histories

W8 Oct. 20-24	Climate and Design	"Climate Change & Landscape Architecture" by Jason King  "The Role of the Landscape Architect in the Fight against Climate Change" BY ETHAN OLSON	IN CLASS Exercise 8: Climate Literacy – Reflections + Outcomes	Ex. 8: Climate Literacy
W9 Oct. 27-31	Environmental Justice	ASLA- Environmental Justice + Landscape Architecture, Student Guide	IN CLASS	Ex. 9 Documenting the Past: River
W10 Nov.3-7	Roots of Racism: Redlining, Segregation, Activism  Lawson	Video: Silkworm, Segregated by Design <a href="https://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=video+segregated+by+design&amp;view=detail&amp;mid=7460AA8A77D17BB494D07460AA8A77D17BB494D0&amp;FORM=VRDGAR">https://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=video+segregated+by+design&amp;view=detail&amp;mid=7460AA8A77D17BB494D07460AA8A77D17BB494D0&amp;FORM=VRDGAR</a>  Rios, Michael. "Cultural Insurgency in Public Realm." In <i>Insurgent Public Space</i> , edited by Jeff Hou. London: Routledge, 2010: 99-110.  Lawson, L. and J. Sorensen. "When Overwhelming Needs Meet Underwhelming Prospects." In <i>Insurgent Public Space</i> , edited by Jeff Hou. London: Routledge, 2010: 255266.	IN CLASS  Group Project: Gentrification & Redlining	Exercise 10: From Redlining to Today
W11 Nov. 10-14	Community Design  Alomar	Arnstein, Sherry. "Ladder of Participation." <i>Journal of American Planning Association</i> , 1969: 216-224.	IN CLASS  Community Design – Charrette Game	Exercise 11: Charette Game Questions
W12 Nov. 17-21	Landscape Architecture	The Trees Film	IN CLASS  Ex. 12: The Trees	
W13 Nov. 24-228	Mapping Overview	NO CLASS – Thanksgiving  Mapping Tutorial	Discussion Post: Course Reflection	Final Assignment Part 1: Suitability Analysis
W14 Dec. 1-5	NO LECTURE  Final Assignment prep		IN CLASS  Final Assignment Part 1: Suitability Analysis	
W15 Dec. 8-12	NO LECTURE + NO SCHEDULED FINAL EXAM		IN CLASS  Final Assignment Part 2: EDA In Review	Final Assignment Part 2: EDA In Review DUE Friday Dec. 19 <sup>th</sup> 11:59 pm