

# Syllabus: History of Landscape Architecture

Course number: 11:550:250

HST Historical Analysis Core Curriculum, 3 credits

Mondays and Thursdays, 10:20am – 11:40am, Blake Hall 128



## Instructor

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Office Hours: Mondays, 3:00pm – 5:00pm in Blake Hall 218 or via Zoom by appointment only

## Mode of Instruction

Twice weekly in-person lecture, small field trips on campus during class time.

One-day field trip to Central Park in NYC, November 23 (rain or shine).

## Catalog Course Description

*Historical analysis of landscape design theory and practice; design as a physical expression of environmental and cultural determinants.*

## Course Website

Once registered for this course, you will have access to the course on Canvas.

The Canvas Website has detailed weekly modules with the weekly learning objectives, learning materials (mainly readings and videos) as well as learning activities (essays, quizzes, drawings and other assessments).

## Description

In this course you will learn about the history and theory of designed landscapes. You shall grasp the history of humans shaping their environment. The course explores the evolution of the Western landscape from the Minoan civilization to the contemporary period. From the large scale of natural or cultivated landscapes to small-scale gardens, you will learn the historical periods of different types of designed landscapes and their general cultural and historical contexts.

The challenge of the course is to introduce you to the canon of forms of Western landscape architecture and at the same time to break the canon by inserting the "counter-histories" of oppression and exploitation that are also mirrored in Western landscape architecture history.

The principles of *topology* as a theoretical framework and method to recall the potentials of landscape architecture will guide us through the centuries. Topology aims to have an effect on how you perceive the current natural and built environment and provides you the opportunity to tie in with a continuity gained from centuries of learned skills and care with regard to the shaping of nature and landscapes.

## Learning Goals

### In a Nutshell...

Below you find the extensive learning goals of the course that will be broken down into the modules of the different weeks. You shall take away the following from this course:

1. Our environment (landscapes, designed landscapes, built environment) has been shaped over time. Form, function (agricultural and other practices), and meaning (spiritual practices, traditions, cultural values) go together. They cannot be dissociated from each other.
2. By taking the framework of *topology*, we learn to critically analyze our environment. During the course we investigate which designed landscapes enhanced the well-being of people over the centuries: Why do some places work well for people? Why do others not?

*Topology* is about a return to the terrain, about understanding a designed landscape as a product of historical and cultural interaction, and about integrating meaning into design.

### Core Curriculum for History

#### ***Learning Goal 1: Historical Analysis (HST1h). Understand the basis and development of human and societal endeavors across time and place.***

Learning objectives associated with this learning goal:

- 1a. Students will explore the impact different forms of knowledge – from the sacred to the technical – had on the shaping of landscapes and gardens up to the contemporary period. (HSTh)
- 1b. Students will be introduced to the art of place making as it was taught in different civilizations throughout the centuries. They will gain an understanding of why specific landscapes were chosen for settlements and how these settlements were organized with regard to the relationship between the natural and the built environment. (HSTh)

#### ***Learning Goal 2: Historical Analysis (HST1k). Explain the development of some aspect of a society or culture over time, including the history of ideas or history of science.***

Learning objectives associated with this learning goal:

- 2a. Students will be introduced to the connection and interaction between landscape design, architecture, art, and literature. They will be able to identify the ideas and basic forms of landscape designs throughout the centuries. They will also be able to read a historic plan, describe a designed landscape and roughly date it. (HSTk)
- 2b. Students will explore place making, landscape design and garden art as creations that appeal to all human senses. They will investigate what makes a designed landscape successful and accepted by its users. In addition, what role the subjective human experience plays in this process. They will understand that aesthetic experience is not absolute but also dependent on cultural imprints. (HSTk)

## Class Topics and Schedule

Copied from the Fall 2025 Canvas Page. Each week has a full module set up on Canvas that you can access once you are enrolled in the course.

### 1) FUNDAMENTALS IN HISTORY, THEORY, AND DESIGN (Weeks 1-4)

- Week 1, September 4: Introductions by the instructor. Why history? Topology in Landscape Architecture.
- Week 2, September 8: Introductions the students: The Landscape of my Childhood Week 2, September 11: Cook/Douglass Campus: how is it designed?
- Week 3, September 15: What is nature? What is a landscape? The Land as Palimpsest Week 3, September 18: Review and Outlook: Topology and Biophilia
- Week 4, September 22: Archetypes in Landscape Architecture

Assessment: Fundamentals

### 2) EARLY SETTLEMENTS AND IMPACT ON WESTERN CULTURE (Weeks 4-7)

- Week 4, September 25: Minoan and Mycenaean Settlements and Landscapes
- Week 5, September 29: Classic Greek Settlements: Sacred Landscapes Week 5, September 29: Greek and Roman Gardens I (with in-class assignment)
- Week 6, October 6: Greek and Roman Gardens II (with in-class assignment) Week 6, October 9: The Organization of the Roman Territor
- Week 7, October 13: ZOOM-Lecture and Discussion:  
Counter-histories: Indigenous Landscapes. Wisdom and Ecological Knowledge of First Nations Peoples (with extra credit opportunity)  
Landscape Architecture Students are at ASLA (October 10-13)
- Week 7, October 17: Medieval Gardens: Orient and Occident
- Assessment Early Settlements and Designed Landscapes
- Warning Grade Period ends October 17

### 3) RENAISSANCE TO LANDSCAPE GARDENS. FORM AND EXPLOITATION (Weeks 8-11)

- Week 8, October 20: Renaissance: New Territories and the Early Colonialism & Globalism of Mapping  
Week 8, October 23: The Garden Culture of the Renaissance Villa - large and small garden
- Week 9, October 27&30: Baroque Gardens. Geometry and Power
- Week 10, November 3&6: English Landscape Gardens: Gravity and Picturesque I  
Counterhistories: The Landscapes of Slavery. Freedom and Resilience. Legacies (extra credit opportunity)
- Week 11, November 10: English Landscape Gardens: Gravity and Picturesque II  
Week 11, November 13: English Landscape Gardens on the Continent, 18th-19th Century

Assessment of Renaissance to Landscape Gardens (Quizz)

Continue to Weeks 12-15

#### 4) MILESTONES OF THE NINETEENTH AND TWENTIETH CENTURIES (Weeks 12-15)

- Week 12: November 17 & 20: Nineteenth Century Promenades in the New Metropolis F. L. Olmsted, Calvert Vaux, and the Grand Tour to Europe
- November 23 (rain or shine): One-day visit of Central Park with group work, Guest: Sara Cedar Miller, Author of *Before Central Park*
- Week 13, November 24: Presentation of the groups. Discussion on what we learned on the field trip and from assigned readings (with in-class assignment)  
*Assessment of Nineteenth Century Promenades through group project and discussion / small in class-assignment*
- Week 13, November 25 - Thanksgiving Week: Thursday Classes become Tuesday Classes  
Counterhistories: Women Gardeners entering the profession: Gertrud Jekyll, Martha Brookes Hutcheson, Beatrix Farrand
- Week 14, December 1: Landscape Modernism in the US: James Rose (focus), Garret Eckbo, Dan Kiley  
Week 14, December 4: Modernism and Postmodernism
- Week 15, December 8: Ecology and Design

### Course materials

#### Textbooks for the course:

- Christophe Girot, *The Course of Landscape Architecture. A History of our Designs on the Natural World, from Prehistory to the Present*, London: Thames & Hudson 2016  
ISBN: 978-0-500-34297-8  
Reserved at Chang Library throughout the course.
- Rogers, Elizabeth Barlow. *Landscape Design: A Cultural and Architectural History*. New York: Harry N. Abrams, 2001.  
Online available: React App ([lsi-island-react.herokuapp.com](http://lsi-island-react.herokuapp.com))
- Penelope Hobhouse, *Gardening Through the Ages. An Illustrated History of Plants and Their Influence on Garden Styles - From Ancient Egypt to the Present Day*, New York: Simon & Schuster, 1992. ISBN: 0-671-72887-3
- Way, Thaïsa. *Unbounded Practice: Women and Landscape Architecture in the Early Twentieth Century*. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2009. ISBN: 978-0-813-93482-2
- Dümpelmann, Sonja, and Bearsley, John (Eds). *Women, Modernity, and Landscape Architecture*. London and New York: Routledge, 2015. ISBN 978-0-415-745-888  
All reserved at Chang Library throughout the course.

#### Other:

All course materials (lecture slides and presenter notes, supplemental readings, videos, audio are provided within the learning management system (Canvas) in the respective modules.

## Policies for Exams, Assignments, Attendance, and Grading

### Student Responsibilities

You are kindly asked to:

- Show up for class in time.
- ***Have your reading assignments ready for class discussion.***
- Log in to Canvas for your course on a regular basis.
- Check for any announcements, update to the syllabus, assignments, and/or discussions and respond accordingly.
- Actively participate in the discussion forum.
- Complete the assigned readings and/or media.
- Complete the assigned exercises and projects.
- Adhere to all due dates.

### Grade Components / Assessment

<u>Individual student course grade possible:</u>	<u>100 points / 100%</u>
Core HIST 1:	30 points / 25%
Core HIST 2:	30 points / 35%
Presence (1 point per session, 2 intro)	30 points / 30%
Participation (min. 5 positive interactions):	10 points / 10%
<u>Extra credit opportunities:</u>	c.a. 30 points

### Details of Assessment

Presence: 1 point for each presence, (28 sessions) + 2 points for self-introduction 9/9

For excused absences: post reflection on the missed class (study lecture manuscript and readings) in the discussion forum.

Participation: 10 points. You should make a minimum of 5 enriching contributions to the course (2 points each) in person or with a reflection

Extra credit opportunities: there will be questions to start all reflections / posted on discussion forum

## Details of Assessment (cont.)

1) Historical Analysis: Student is able to... explain the development of some aspect of a society or culture over time. (30 points)

<p>1a) Students will explore the impact different forms of knowledge – from the sacred to the technical – had on the shaping of landscapes and gardens up to the contemporary period. (HST-1)</p>	<p>Assessment 1 - Reading Assignments and Homework on Topology, The Land as Palimpsest, Archetypes, due September 29</p>	<p>15 points</p>
<p>1b) Students will be introduced to the art of place making as it was taught in different civilizations throughout the centuries. They will gain an understanding of why specific landscapes were chosen for settlements and how these settlements were organized with regard to the relationship between the natural and the built environment. (HST-1)</p>	<p>Assessment 2 - In-class assignments (09/29 and 10/06) and answers to readings (before class of 10/16). All must be in October 16, 2pm. Warning Grade period ends October 17, 5pm.</p>	<p>10 points</p>

2) Historical Analysis: Student is able to... Employ historical reasoning to study human endeavors, using appropriate assumptions, methods, evidence, and arguments. (30 points)

<p>2a) Students will be introduced to the connection and interaction between landscape design, architecture, art and literature. They will be able to identify the ideas and basic forms of landscape designs throughout the centuries. They can read a historic plan, describe a designed landscape and roughly date it. (HST-2)</p>	<p>Assessment of Content Renaissance Mapping to English Landscape Gardens, opens November 13 after the end of the Thursday class, closes November 20 before the start of the Thursday class.</p>	<p>15 points</p>
<p>2b) Students will explore place making, landscape design and garden art as creations that appeal to all human senses. They will investigate what makes a designed landscape successful and accepted by its users. In addition, what role the subjective human experience plays in this process. They will understand that aesthetic experience is not absolute but also depended on cultural imprints. (HST-2)</p>	<p>Assessment Nineteenth Century Parks: Field trip to Central Park on November 23 (rain or shine) with group work presented in class on November 24. Small in-class assignment on November 24</p>	<p>25 points</p>

Additional opportunities to earn extra credit will be announced.

## University Policies

## Absence Policies / Covid-19 Protocol

Students are expected to attend all classes; if you expect to miss a class, you must use the University absence reporting website <https://sim.rutgers.edu/ssra/> to indicate the date and reason of your absence. An email is automatically sent to me. If not reported, the absence is unexcused. More than two unexcused sessions will be reflected in downgrading.

**Under any circumstance: stay at home when you are sick.**

For Rutgers' Covid-19 protocol see: <https://coronavirus.rutgers.edu/>

## Academic Integrity Policy

Academic Integrity. You are responsible for understanding the [RU Academic Integrity Policy](#). I will strongly enforce this Policy and pursue all violations. For all examinations and assignments, you will be required to uphold the RU Honor Pledge, which states, “On my honor, I have neither received nor given any unauthorized assistance on this examination or assignment.” For all written assignments, we will screen your work through an automated plagiarism detection service that compares your work against a large database of past work.

## Special Needs Accommodations

Rutgers University welcomes students with disabilities into all of the University's educational programs. In order to receive consideration for reasonable accommodations, a student with a disability must contact the appropriate disability services office at the campus where you are officially enrolled, participate in an intake interview, and provide [documentation \(Links to an external site.\)](#) <https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/documentation-guidelines> [\(Links to an external site.\)](#) [\(Links to an external site.\)](#) [\(Links to an external site.\)](#).

If the documentation supports your request for reasonable accommodations, your campus's disability services office will provide you with a Letter of Accommodations. Please share this letter with your instructors and discuss the accommodations with them as early in your courses as possible. To begin this process, please complete the [Registration form on the ODS](#) ([Links to an external site.](#))[Links to an external site.](#) website (<https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/registration-form> ([Links to an external site.](#))[Links to an external site.](#)).

## Office of Disability Services contact and address

**Lucy Stone Hall, Livingston Campus, 54 Joyce Kilmer Avenue, Suite A145,  
Piscataway, NJ 08854-8045.**

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