

Planting Design 11:550:340

4 credits

Spring 2026 Syllabus

Class time: Tuesday, Friday, 8:30-11:30. Room 147

Holly Nelson, room 116

hgrace@sebs.rutgers.edu

TA: Laura Gilkey

lg887@scarletmail.rutgers.edu

Partners:

Brian Clemson, University Landscape Architect

Jason Grabosky, Professor in Urban Forestry

Patty Oemke, Director of Wellness, SEBS



Figure 1 Semi-open forest canopy

Program Goals

Students gain a functional understanding of plants as a design material and develop the ability to creatively design space and spatial relationships with plant material.

1. Analyze physical features (soil conditions, hydrology, existing plant communities, etc.).
2. Understanding of social and environment contexts relative to species selection.
3. Familiarization with planting industry standards.
4. Application of design principles appropriate to social and environmental contexts.
5. Professional communication of planting design (planting plan and schedule, plant palette, bloom diagrams) in a portfolio-quality manner.
6. Learn planting design software (Land FX) with an option to use it to draw a planting design.

Learning Objectives

1. Achieve a level of professional competency in planting design.
2. Develop planting designs at multiple scales that provide ecological services and contribute to health and wellbeing, including the eight dimensions of financial, social, emotional, spiritual, intellectual, physical, and environmental wellness.
3. Appreciate the many roles that plants play in planting design, including their narrative possibilities concerning cultural traditions, aesthetic qualities, medicinal capabilities, etc.

Course Description

Planting design plays a key role in the art of landscape architecture by merging functional and aesthetic knowledge of plant material to site problems and client concerns. Projects require the incorporation and synthesis of knowledge from lectures and reading assignments, research, site observation and analysis, and group project critiques.

Students gain a functional understanding of plants as a design material and develop the ability to creatively design space and spatial relationships with plant material. Learn how to research proper plant selection, design using appropriate plants, quantify and spatialize plants, use plants for aesthetic and academic purposes, to promote health and wellness, and to amplify landscape performance.

Expectations for Student Participation

Much of your learning will occur through the active engagement with your peers. You are expected to participate in all class activities (including site visits, group activities, and project presentations) and being prepared for each class and open to the ideas and challenges that unfold.

Contact: All students are given the same updates and information. Some of this will be delivered in class. Please check your email regularly for important course updates.

Site Visits: Mandatory. Includes **bus trip to Scott Arboretum March 27**-- the Friday after spring break. *Plan to return to campus by 4pm. Please notify me of any class conflicts so I can assist.*

Readings: Required readings are either printed out or posted on Canvas.

Printing and Pinups: Expect to print each project for feedback and revision. As a professional, much of your work will be communicated with printed drawings. In an office, your work will be reviewed and revised prior to meeting with the client. OPTIMIZE your electronic submissions.

Grading/ Evaluation:

Final grades are based on the following:

Project Assignments	200 points
Martin Hall--Health + Wellbeing Garden	100 points
Campus as Arboretum Masterplan	100 points
Detail Area Final Drawings	240 points

Departmental Grading Guidelines

While the assignment of grades is the purview of the instructor, the department uses the following guideline for understanding appropriate grading in its courses:

A – Outstanding – This not only means fulfilling the requirements but impressing and going beyond the initial expectations of the project. The student has demonstrated a superior grasp of the subject matter coupled with a high degree of creative or logical expression, and 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 issues and related theories or literature.

C – Acceptable – The student has shown a moderate ability to grasp concepts and theories for the class, producing work that, while adequate, is not in any way exceptional. This 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 sufficiently 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.

Final Letter Grade Scale:

$x \geq 90$	A
$90 > x \geq 87$	B+
$87 > x \geq 80$	B
$80 > x \geq 77$	C+
$77 > x \geq 70$	C
$70 > x \geq 60$	D
$x < 60$	F

Attendance: Class attendance is mandatory. If a circumstance arises and you cannot attend class, please notify the instructor 24 hours prior to class and an alternate arrangement will be made for *substantive* excuses, according to University policy:

<https://studentsupport.rutgers.edu/services/absence-and-verification-notice>.

Students must self-report their absence: <https://sims.rutgers.edu/ssra/>

Reporting a missed class does not excuse missed or late work.

More than 3 unexcused absences results in a step reduction in your final grade. Additional absences result in further grade drop. Please note that attendance is taken at the beginning of class, and arrivals later than 10 minutes will be marked as absent.

Academic Integrity

The University's policy on Academic Integrity is available at

<http://academicintegrity.rutger.edu/academic-integrity-policy>. The principles of academic integrity require that a student:

- Properly acknowledge and cite all use of the ideas, results, or words of others
- Properly acknowledge all contributors to a given piece of work
- Make sure that all work submitted as his or her own in a course or other academic activity is produced without the aid of impermissible materials or impermissible collaboration

- Obtain all data or results by ethical means and report them accurately without suppressing any results inconsistent with his or her interpretation or conclusions
- Treat all other students in an ethical manner, respecting their integrity and right to pursue their educational goals without interference. This requires that a student neither facilitate academic dishonesty by others nor obstruct their academic progress
- Uphold the canons of the ethical or professional code of the profession for which he or she is preparing

Adherence to these principles is necessary in order to ensure that:

- Everyone is given proper credit for his or her ideas, words, results, and other scholarly accomplishments
- All student work is fairly evaluated, and no student has an inappropriate advantage over other
- The academic and ethical development of all students is fostered
- The reputation of the University for integrity in its teaching, research, and scholarship is maintained and enhanced

Failure to uphold these principles of academic integrity threatens both the reputation of the University and the value of the degrees awarded to its students. Every member of the University community therefore bears a responsibility for ensuring that the highest standards of academic integrity are upheld.

It is a violation of academic integrity for a student to aid others in violating academic integrity. A student who knowingly or negligently facilitates a violation of academic integrity is as culpable as the student who receives the impermissible aid, even if the former student does not benefit from the violation. As a result, any copying and/or sharing of exercises or projects will be treated as Level 2 violations and is subject to the sanctions as outlined in the integrity policy:

1. A failing grade on the assignment
2. A failing grade for the course
3. Disciplinary warning or probation

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

Disability Services (848) 445-6800 / Lucy Stone Hall, Suite A145, Livingston Campus, 54 Joyce Kilmer Avenue, Piscataway, NJ 08854 / <https://ods.rutgers.edu/>

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: <https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/documentation-guidelines>. 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 web site at: <https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/registration-form>.

Student Wellness Services

Just In Case Web App: <http://codu.co/cee05e>

Access helpful mental health information and resources for yourself or a friend in a mental health crisis on your smartphone or tablet and easily contact CAPS or RUPD.

Share A Concern: <http://studentconduct.rutgers.edu/do-something-to-help-share-a-concern/why-share-a-concern/>

There are times when people may observe a behavior and feel concerned. These concerns may be part of a larger story for a student facing challenges. Thus, it is important to **Do Something** and share your concerns so that the student can get assistance as soon as possible before the issues grow too large. If the concern is immediate, call 9-1-1.

Counseling, ADAP & Psychiatric Services (CAPS)

(848) 932-7884 / 17 Senior Street, New Brunswick, NJ 08901 / www.rhscaps.rutgers.edu/

CAPS is a University mental health support service that includes counseling, alcohol and other drug assistance, and psychiatric services staffed by a team of professional within Rutgers Health services to support students' efforts to succeed at Rutgers University. CAPS offers a variety of services that include individual therapy, group therapy and workshops, crisis intervention, referral to specialists in the community and consultation and collaboration with campus partners.

Violence Prevention & Victim Assistance (VPVA)

(848) 932-1181 / 3 Bartlett Street, New Brunswick, NJ 08901 / www.vpva.rutgers.edu/

The Office for Violence Prevention and Victim Assistance provides confidential crisis intervention, counseling, and advocacy for victims of sexual and relationship violence and stalking to students, staff, and faculty. To reach staff during office hours when the university is open or to reach an advocate after hours, call 848-932-1181.

Scarlet Listeners

(732) 247-5555 / <http://www.scarletlisteners.com/>

Free and confidential peer counseling and referral hotline, providing a comforting and supportive safe space.

SEBS Inclusive Learning Environment Statement

It is our intention that students of all backgrounds will be well served by this course. We will work to create an environment of inclusion which respects and affirms the inherent dignity, value, and uniqueness of all individuals, communities and perspectives. We are lucky to have a diverse university. Diverse voices and life experiences enhance the learning process and we welcome students to share their personal experiences. We will not tolerate disrespectful language or behavior against any individual or group. If you feel as though you have been disrespected or treated unfairly by the instructors or any other individual please let us know. You may speak with the instructors in person, over email or report anonymously via the Office of Academic Programs. In addition, you may also report bias to the Rutgers Diversity and Inclusion initiative using this link: <http://inclusion.rutgers.edu/report-bias-incident/>.