



**LA: 11:550:440 and 16:550:552**

## **Case Studies in Landscape Architecture: 1850 to the Present**

M-W 3:00 to 4:20

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Office Hours: Monday 4:30 - 5:30 (or by appointment)

### **SAS, SEBS and Landscape Architecture Program Goals:**

- Explore, describe, and critique the design history and spatial relationships of socially vibrant and culturally inclusive spaces.
- LA 11:550:552 fulfills the SAS and SEBS requirements for writing in the discipline

### **Course Description:**

This seminar course meets twice weekly and it engages the historical and theoretical underpinnings of landscape architecture from 1850 to present. Through a combination of topics and selected projects the lectures, readings, and discussions assemble a wide-ranging collection of observations and design interpretations that relate the history of the profession to concepts of nature, landscape, science, art, and social justice as conceived by the leading protagonists in the field. The intent is to examine design inspiration, including how certain ideas gain traction, become central to design thinking and are never fully discarded but are instead amended in response to social, scientific, and technological change. The visual representations associated with this historical discourse and their impact on the way contemporary designers perceive their agency, position their proposals, and frame their actions are central to this exploration. More broadly, the course seeks to promote a discourse of advocacy that students of landscape architecture can carry forward into their careers. The politics of practice and the way a project engages the landscape have always been of critical interest in landscape architecture, but it has become especially so now, as landscape designers and their allies seek to process profound social, cultural, political, technological and environmental challenges.

Questions of interest include: What is landscape and how has it been historically defined and represented? How does the designed landscape, as both an objective fact and subjective experience, inform our understanding of the tectonics of form and space? What does the designed landscape, as a symbolic system and purveyor of ideology, say about economics and social equity, political authority and practices of cultural privilege? What does the designed landscape, as a system of material interests say about pollution and environmental equity, socio-spatial coherence and sustainability, resource use and anthropogenic climate change? What does the designed landscape, as an embodied practice say about self-identity, visual desire, spiritual delight, and commensurate living?



Who is the profession designing for? The client? The public? The environment? Itself? And who, or what, do these different, yet coterminous groupings include or exclude from their particular vision of the designed landscape?

Case studies presented by the instructor address the site-specific particulars of these questions.

Assigned readings and student-led discussions engage broader historical and geographic perspectives that situate the designs and designers within the context of the world in which they lived. Although emphasis is paid to important design figures and their built work, alternative visions are explored.

## **Lecture Topics:**

Week 1: Seeing Landscape

Week 2: The Picturesque: Central Park and Contemporary Practice

Week 3: The Technological Sublime: Civic Design, Infrastructure and Spectacle

Week 4: Subdividing Visions & Topographies of Difference: Urban Renewal and Suburban Enclaves

Week 5: Street Life

Week 6: Childhood Play

Week 7: Environmental Design: Assemblies of Art and Science

Week 8: Interpretive Games, Layered Fields and Tactical Scenarios

Week 9: Earthworks: Dialectical Dilemmas, Reciprocal Interactions, Entropic Voids

Week 10: Meanings Made & Remade

Week 11: Topographic Interpretations: Revealing Forms and Flows

Week 12: Memorials, Monuments and Memory

Week 13: Modern Gardens and Visionary Dreams

Week 14: Letting Others Speak: Post-Humanist Ecologies

## **Course Learning Objectives:**

- Provide students with a foundation in the contemporary history of landscape architecture from the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century to the present, inclusive of the designers and design trends in the field and their relationship to larger cultural, social, political, economic and environmental contexts.
- Prepare students to social and ecological interactivity in the designed landscape as expressed through form, space and time.
- Enable students to synthesize multiple sources and multiple points of view to produce a clearly articulated written argument on the history and practice of landscape architecture, supported by figures, figure citations, reference citations and bibliography.



## **Course Field Trips:**

Schedule permitting, the course includes an all-day field trip to observe the designed landscape.

## **Course Requirements:**

Students will be expected to attend all classes, read all material and complete all assignments.

### **Weekly Class Discussions:** (20% of grade)

Reading and entering into dialogue with the work of others is key to both seeing, thinking and describing in a thoughtful manner. The course lectures, case studies and weekly readings provide background material and context for this dialogue, as well as a range of viewpoints, writing styles, and research methods for students to discuss and compare. Well-crafted essays by prominent writers, theorists and practitioners have been selected to: illustrate the ideas that have historically animated the field of landscape architecture; assist students explore and respond to these ideas as they develop and change over time; increase reading comprehension by engaging students in “conversations” with notable practitioners and theorists in the fields of landscape architecture and urban planning; and to consider how the profession’s discourse is presented and structured, both visually and verbally.

Weekly discussions will be led by students, and, as noted above, they will not simply recapitulate the material, but will instead examine the assigned readings for what they say, how they say it, and how they position landscape design and planning within a larger cultural, social, political, economic and environmental discourse. To facilitate this exchange each student will bring a question(s) to class compiled from the assigned readings. Grades will reflect the ability of the questions to prompt discussions of important themes and arguments presented by the authors in the weekly readings, and active participation in these discussions.

The following selection of templates from the text *They Say/I Say* by Graf and Birkenstein illustrate different ways to structure thoughts, organize commentary and respond to colleagues during the class discussions. As students become more comfortable and confident in the expression of their ideas, they will be encouraged to expand and modify these templates:

*In discussions of X, one controversial issue has been \_\_\_\_\_. On the one hand \_\_\_\_\_, argues \_\_\_\_\_. On the other hand, \_\_\_\_\_ contends \_\_\_\_\_. Others even maintain \_\_\_\_\_. My own view is \_\_\_\_\_.*

*Though I concede that \_\_\_\_\_, I still insist that \_\_\_\_\_.*

*My feelings on the issue are mixed. I do support X’s position that \_\_\_\_\_, but I find Y’s argument about \_\_\_\_\_ to be equally persuasive.*

*These conclusions, which X discusses in \_\_\_\_\_, add weight to the argument that \_\_\_\_\_.*



### **Reading Responses and Peer Review Comments:** (80% of grade)

The class will be divided into two groups for the reading responses. Each group is required to produce eight short essays (seven with 2-3 pages of text with illustrations and footnotes, and the last one with 6-8 pages of text, interpretive diagrams, illustrations, footnotes and bibliography). The responses, in keeping with the reading discussions, should not simply recapitulate the content of the assigned articles, but should instead discuss the material through a particular framework or question(s) of interest. The dates of the reading responses for each group are noted in the course lecture schedule and assigned reading list. Reading responses will be uploaded to Canvas in word format (not pdf), along with two printed copies. One copy for the instructor and one copy distributed for peer review.

To supplement the review and written feedback by the instructor, the student group providing the reading response will share their work with one (or more) students from the other group, who will then provide peer-review comments. The intent is to provide multiple opportunities for feedback for submitted work, which transforms the bi-weekly writing responses into a semester-long project of reading, synthesis, writing, and critique of landscape architecture and its historical canons. Once completed, a copy of the peer review comments will be given to the student who wrote the paper and to the instructor. No peer review comments are assigned for the first (week 1) and last (week 14) reading responses.

Thoughts to consider in the reading response include but are not limited to:

- The key words and phrases designers and critics use to state their position and express their ideas.
- The ideas and arguments of others that support their position.
- How they structure their written argument to anticipate and respond to alternative opinions.
- What primary and secondary sources they use, and how they cite them.
- What quotations and images they select to visually support their argument.

Grades will reflect the clarity of writing and argument presented, the use of images to support the argument, the inclusion of images and captions and citations, and the inclusion of reference citations. Students are encouraged to reference essays not provided by the instructor.

#### **Bibliography Book Example:**

- Rudofsky, Bernard. *Streets for People: A Primer for Americans* (New York: Doubleday, 1969), 15-58.

#### **Bibliography Journal Example:**

- Levine, Caroline. "The Paradox of Public Art: Democratic Space, the Avant-Garde, and Richard Serra's Tilted Arc" *Philosophy & Geography* vol. 5 no.1(2002): 51-68.

#### **Additional Information on Bibliography Citations:**



- To avoid interrupting the flow of the written argument on the page, students are encouraged to use end notes and/or footnotes. This citation method enables the inclusion of important ancillary material that supports the argument. Variations in endnote and bibliography formatting exist. Be consistent.
- The abbreviation Ibid. (from *ibidem*, “in the same place”) refers to a single work cited in the immediately preceding footnote or end note.
- Web page citations include author, title, URL, and date of access.
- Bibliography entries appear in alphabetical order.

#### **Writing Resources and Reference Material:**

- Graff, Gerald and Cathy Birkenstein. (2014) *“They Say/I Say”*: *The Moves That Matter in Academic Writing* (New York: W. W. Norton).
- Williams, Joseph M. 1995. *Style: Toward Clarity and Grace* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press).

## **Grading Procedures & Academic Integrity Polices:**

When an assignment is a number out of 100 it corresponds to these grades:

A	90 and above	C	70 to 75
B+	86 to 89	D	60 to 69
B	80 to 85	F	59 or less
C+	76 to 79		

Grades and feedback for assignments will be provided on a timely basis. Students should be aware of their course average and contact the instructor if there are discrepancies or concerns. If personal circumstances inhibit your ability to fulfill the course requirements, contact the instructor. Any student with a special need should make an appointment with the instructor the first week of classes.

**The syllabus and course schedule are subject to change.** Changes will be announced in the lecture periods. It is your responsibility to stay informed!

#### **Violations of the University Academic Integrity Policy:**

Plagiarism: Plagiarism is the representation of the words or ideas of another as one's own in any academic work. Proper paper citations avoid plagiarism.

**Rutgers Academic Integrity Policy:** <http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/integrity.shtml>.

## **Health Hygiene & Mask Requirements:**

To protect all members of our community, when sick or recovering from an illness, please wear a mask that cover the wearer’s face in in-person class meetings. The University has posted information on proper masks and the proper way to wear them. This information follows the Center for Disease Control guidelines:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/about-face-coverings.html>