



Praxis Behavior and Landscape: Design of outdoor spaces for the Rutgers Day School

An engaged collaboration with the SEBS Plant Biology (Horticultural Therapy), Landscape Architecture (Planting Design) and University Behavioral Health Care.

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This Praxis studio, **Behavior and Landscape: Design of outdoor spaces for the Rutgers Day School**, will focus on the programming and design of open spaces for a school that serves children and young adults with behavioral issues. The studio will collaborate with the Planting Design Studio and Horticultural Therapy to develop designs that address the RDS's need for therapeutic outdoor space.

Introduction

Landscape Architecture is the design of outdoor spaces to achieve environmental, social-behavioral or aesthetic outcomes. The definition is broad, reflects the complexity of the profession and allows us to **explore with more acuity the social-behavioral aspects of landscape architecture**. This studio will bring together students, landscape faculty and specialists in behavioral sciences and horticultural therapy to better understand how to design outdoor spaces that account for the emotional, physical and educational needs of people who have behavioral issues, specifically: **ADHD, Anxiety, Depression, Autism Spectrum Disorder, OCD, Psychosis, Oppositional Defiant Disorder and Complex Trauma**.

Why is this important?

The concept of Nature Deficit disorder espoused by Richard Louv, is not recognized by medical and research communities as a specific disorder, but does bring to the forefront the potential effects of limiting children's exposure to natural spaces. Work by Claire Cooper Marcus, Gayle Souter-Brown and others have explored the social **benefits of developing green spaces for health and well-being** based on landscape architecture's basic understanding that green space is good for all.

What is not well documented is **how to engage teaching institutions, mental health professionals and horticultural specialists** in a process that will produce a buildable design that incorporates behavioral theory, horticultural techniques and spatial design.

The studio will address the following questions:

How can we design outdoor spaces that acknowledge and challenge the needs of the Rutgers Day School Community?

How can a multidisciplinary and engaged approach to design help designers understand the needs of the Rutgers Day School user group?

How can we document the process and work to provide a foundation to other designers?