

syllabus

INTRODUCTION TO LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE

usp 510 – fall 2008

monday 6:40 – 9.20pm

3 credits

instructors

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We do not have regularly scheduled office hours, but we will gladly arrange appointments outside of class. Please send appointment requests via email, as this will be the primary means of communication outside of regular class hours.

course description

This course will give insight into the process through which landscape architects develop design projects. Through lecture, observation, case study presentation and project work, students will gain an introduction to the theory and practice of landscape architecture. This course will explore a variety of themes which influence the work of landscape architects and the manner in which these theories are translated into physical environments. The course will be interactive, with a combination of in-class lectures, hands-on projects, site visits and discussions, and a final project. The projects will include small-scale activities, as well as a longer project that will span multiple scales and methods of analysis, graphic representation, and design strategies that will culminate in a presentation of a conceptual design to a guest jury.

course objectives

- To gain a general understanding of the history, scope, and cultural contributions of landscape architecture
- To gain knowledge of the process and products of landscape architecture
- The development of critical thinking about contemporary issues in landscape architecture
- To develop presentation, written, and graphic representational skills for landscape architecture

special needs

Every effort will be made to accommodate individuals with disabilities. Please notify the instructors during the first week of class so that any necessary provisions can be arranged.

attendance + participation

Students are required to read all the texts and visit assigned sites prior to class, and are to participate in class projects and discussions. Due to these expectations of participation, it is highly recommended that you avoid missing classes. Missed classes will affect your overall grade as noted. If you must miss a class, make every effort to inform your instructors beforehand; Make-up assignments may be given at the discretion of the instructors.

class materials

REQUIRED TEXT (available in the PSU Bookstore)

- Swaffield, Simon (ed.). *Theory in Landscape Architecture: A Reader*. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002).

Recommended texts:

- Waldheim, Charles (ed.) *The Landscape Urbanism Reader*. (New York: Princeton University Press, 2006)
- Saunders, William S. (ed.) *Nature, Landscape, and Building for Sustainability*. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008)

(Please see the Weekly Assignments for a list of the required readings for each class. Additional readings will be distributed via email or placed on reserve in the library prior to assigned to scheduled classes)

supplies

The following supplies will be necessary for this course. A modest amount of other supplies may be necessary for take-home design projects as the course progresses. These can be purchased at the Portland State University Bookstore, Utrecht Art Supply (1122 NW Everett Street), or most craft stores.

- 1 roll 18" trace paper
- Architectural scale (1/4", 1/8", 1/16" = 1'-0", etc.)
- Engineering Scale
- Scissors
- White Glue (Tacky Glue or Sobo are best for models, but Elmers will work fine)
- X-acto or Utility Knife
- White Foam Core Board, size 20"x30"
- 1 block green florist foam. This can be purchased at Old Town Florist (404 NW Tenth Ave), or from most floral shops.
- Markers/Pens/Pencils
- chipboard

Additional Recommended Items:

- Repositionable drafting dots
- Cutting Board
- Large metal cutting edge/ruler

site visits

For classes 2-9, students will be asked to visit and evaluate a series of designed landscapes in the Portland area. You should visit the site with a critical eye and write about your observations. Below are some suggestions of the types of things that you might want to write about when critiquing a designed landscape – writing assignments will be due in Classes 4, 5, 6, 7, and 9:

- What gives structure to this space?
- How do people move physically/visually through the space?
- Where do people linger?
- How is the landscape changed at different times of year or day?
- How do people use the space? Is it always the same?
- How does this space react to its context?
- How do plantings or material choices inflect the space?
- What is the most successful or least successful part of the design, and why?
- How will this space be changed in 5 years/ 50 years?
- How has the designer addressed (or not) the topic of this week's reading?

written critiques + class discussions

For classes 4-8, a short (1 page or less) but well-considered critical response to the week's reading assignment and site visit is required. The responses are due via email by 4pm Sunday preceding the Monday class and will be used as a springboard for class discussion. Written critiques will be graded according to the following criteria: critical consideration of the assigned text(s), insight and creativity of site observation, substantiation of your reaction (I liked or didn't like the reading/site because....) via observation/comparison/analysis. Responses must be checked for grammar and spelling before being submitted.

As a class we will discuss the assigned readings and site visit. The written critique is a good way to summarize discussion topics.

case study preparation & presentation

Each student will be asked to present a case-study analysis of an important work of landscape architecture to the rest of the class. A list of potential case studies will be randomly assigned during the first week. Case study presentations should last approximately 8-10 minutes and will be graded according to the following criteria: historical/contextual positioning of the project and its contribution to the profession of landscape architecture, description of design concept and major design elements to the class through drawings and photographic images, thoroughness of research, and verbal presentation. A handout with case study key elements will be handed out in the first class. Although not required, Powerpoint is highly recommended as a presentation format.

guest lectures

There will be periodic guest lectures from the design community and landscape architecture profession to round out discussion topics.

projects

Projects will include small-scale activities, as well as a longer final project that will span multiple scales and methods of analysis, graphic representation and design strategy. Projects will be graded according to the following criteria: originality and representation of conceptual idea, concept development, and level of craft. By craft we mean the level of neatness, care and thought evidenced in the drawings and models. A handout with more detail will accompany each design project.

Charrette 1:

2-D Drawings Exercise/Figure Ground

After being introduced to some basic design elements (point, line, field, etc.), this quick in-class exercise will give students the opportunity to create evocative figure/ground images.

Charrette 2:

2-D Montage/Collage

Students will use elements of collage (repetition, abstraction, juxtaposition, color, texture, etc.) to critically assess a work of landscape architecture. This will require some in-class and out of class time.

Charrette 3:

3-D Project

Students will explore the interaction of topography and built elements by manipulating a three dimensional representation of a landscape. The model will be used to illustrate the conventions of section and elevation, as well as topographic line drawings/landscape grading.

Charrette 4:

Create Seating Node for the PSU Urban Studies Plaza

This design problem will build on the previous exercises by adding site context, design function and materiality to the equation. Students will be asked to start with a conceptual design idea, explore that concept through drawing, and then communicate the idea in the form of a scaled model.

Design Project

Major Design Project – Site Analysis & Design for an Urban Location

This three-part design problem will start with an in-depth site analysis, then progress with concept exploration and design development to culminate in a landscape design proposal for an urban site. Students will explore methods of communication, as well as use drawings, montage, and model to illustrate their design process. The final project open-house will be in lieu of a final exam.

grading

| | | | |
|-----------------------------------|-------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Attendance + Active Participation | 10% | (10 classes x 10 points ea.) | = 100 pts |
| Written Critiques | 15% | (5 Assignments x 30 points each.) | = 150 pts |
| Case Study Presentation | 20% | | = 200 pts |
| Design Charrettes | 15% | (4 Assignments 30, 30, 40, 50 pts) | = 150 pts |
| Design Project | 40% | | = 400 pts |
| Total | 100% | | 1000 total points |

- *All written assignments must be submitted by email to both instructors by 4pm Sunday before the next class meeting.*
- *Each phase of a take-home design assignment is to be complete at the beginning of the next class, unless otherwise noted.*
- *Late work will be automatically marked down 10 points each day, unless prior arrangements have been made with instructors.*

SCHEDULE SUMMARY

| | Theme | Lecture Content | Project | Reading/Site | Due in Class |
|--------------------------|--|---|--|--|--|
| 1 09.29.08 | Landscape Architecture? | Introductions Class Syllabus & Structure Landscape Architecture: Myths & Realities | Site Visit Lawrence Halprin Parks & Plazas near PSU <i>(in-class)</i> | Discuss: Halprin Parks Introduce and Reading and Site Investigations Assign Wk 2 Visit/Reading | Select Case Study |
| 2 10.06.08 | Historical Connections to Landscape + 2-D Design Process | The History of Landscape Architecture in 45 minutes... Design Processes 2D Form/Space/Order | Charrette 1 2-D Design – Figure Ground <i>(in-class)</i> | Discuss: Downtown Park Blocks Assign Wk 3 Visit/Reading | Group 1 Case Study Presentations |
| 3 10.13.08 | Topography & Grading + 3D Design Process | Land & Environmental Art, Earthworks, Topography, Grading & Hydrology Design Processes 2D Color/Texture/Material | Charrette 2 2-D Design Montage & Collage of <i>(take home)</i> | Discuss: Eastbank Esplanade and Waterfront Park Assign Wk 4 Visit/Reading for Writing Assignment 1 | Group 2 Case Study Presentations |
| 4 10.20.08 | Urban Design & Public Spaces | Placemaking & Urban Form <i>Guest Lecture: TBA</i> Design Processes 3D Slope/Contour/Landform | Charrette 3 3-D Design – Topographic Sculpture <i>(in-class)</i> | Discuss: Pioneer Courthouse Square and Jamison Square Assign Wk 5 Visit/Reading for Writing Assignment 2 | Presentations of Charrette 2 Final Montage/Collage Writing Assignment 1 Due |
| 5 10.27.08 | Ecological Systems & Green Building | Ecological Design <i>Guest Lecture: TBA</i> Stormwater, Biomimicry, Habitats, Green Building, Sustainable Sites, Veg.itecture | Charrette 4 Create Seating Node for the PSU Urban Studies Plaza <i>(in-class + take home)</i> | Discuss: Tanner Springs & Water Pollution Control Laboratory Assign Wk 6 Visit/Reading for Writing Assignment 3 | Writing Assignment 2 Due |
| 6 11.03.08 | Connecting Scales: Site, to Region | South Waterfront District <i>Guest Lecture: TBA</i> SoWa Neighborhood Park Neighborhoods | Design Project 1.1 Site Analysis | Discuss: South Waterfront District Assign Wk 7-8 Visit/Reading for Writing Assignment 4 | Presentations of Charrette 4 Final Design Solutions Writing Assignment 3 Due |
| 7 11.10.08 | Holiday (no monday class) | Potential Informal Discussion Period for Major Design project | | | |
| 8 11.17.08 | Landscape Infrastructure & Post-Industrial Sites | Landscape as Infrastructure <i>Guest Lecture: TBA</i> Reclamation & Reuse; Post-Industrial Sites | Design Project 1.2 Preliminary Design Concepts | Discuss: Multnomah Green Roof & Hotel Modera Green Wall Assign Wk 9 Visit/Reading for Writing Assignment 5 | Presentations of Design Project Site Analysis Writing Assignment 4 Due |
| 9 11.24.08 | Landscape Urbanism: Theory Informing Practice | Landscape as System <i>Guest Lecture: TBA</i> Overview of Theory + Landscape Urbanism | Design Project 1.3 Final Design Concepts & Representation | Discuss: Park Block 5 & Ankeny Plaza Construction Projects Assign Wk 10 Readings | Progress of Design Concept for Desk Crits Writing Assignment 5 Due |
| 10 12.01.08 | Nuts/Bolts: Professional Practice | Professional Practice, Construction Documents | In-Class Desk Crits & Discussion Continue Final Design Representation & Development | | |
| Final 12.10.08 | Putting it all Together | In-Class Open House Presentations | | | |

WEEKLY ASSIGNMENTS

09.29.08 1: Introduction to Landscape Architecture

Assigned Visit for Week 2: South Park Blocks

Assigned Readings for Week 2:

- *'How to Study Landscape'*, JB Jackson – (Swaffield, pp.11-18); *'The RSVP Cycles'*, Lawrence Halprin – (Swaffield, pp.43-48); Spirn, Ann, "The Language of Landscape" (Swaffield, pp. 125-130); Hunt, John Dixon "Reading and Writing the Site" – (Swaffield, pp. 131-136)
- *'Where the Revolution Began'* (brochure, handed out in first class)
- *'Constructing Nature: The Legacy of Frederick Law Olmsted'*, Spirn – (in Uncommon Ground: Rethinking the Human Place in Nature, Cronon, , pp.91-113)
- *'Towns' + 'The Garden'* (in Siftings, Jens Jensen pp 89-110)

10.06.08 2: Historical Connections to Landscape & 2-D Design

Assigned Visit for Week 3: Eastbank Esplanade and Tom McCall Waterfront Park

Assigned Readings for Week 3:

- *'Form, Meaning, and Expression'*, Laurie Olin – (Swaffield, pp.77-80); *'Cubist Space, Volumetric Space'*, Patrick Condon – (Swaffield, pp.84-87); *'Minimalist Landscape'*, Peter Walker – (Swaffield, pp.87-88); *'Must Landscapes Mean?'*, Marc Trieb – (Swaffield, pp. 89-101); Corner, James, *'Representation and Landscape'* – (Swaffield, pp. 144-165)
- *'Frederick Law Olmsted and the Dialectical Landscape'*, Robert Smithson. (in Robert Smithson: Collected Writings, pp.157-171.)

10.13.08 3: Topography & Grading + 2-D Design

Assigned Visit for Week 4: Pioneer Courthouse Square and Jamison Square

Assigned Readings for Week 4:

- *'Landscape Narratives'*, Potteiger & Purinton – (Swaffield, pp.136-144); *'Community Design'*, Randolph Hester – (Swaffield, pp.49-56); *'Systems, Signs, and Sensibility'*, Catherine Howett – (Swaffield, pp.108-115); *'De/Re/In[form]ing Landscape'*, Peter Jacobs – (Swaffield, pp.116-122)
- *'Visual Order: its limitations and possibilities'* (in *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, Jane Jacobs, pp. 372-391)
- *'The Design of Spaces'* (in City: Rediscovering the Center, William Whyte, pp. 103-131)

10.20.08 4: Urban Design & Public Spaces + 3-D Design

Assigned Visit for Week 5: Tanner Springs Park & Water Pollution Control Laboratory

Assigned Readings for Week 5:

- *'Gray World, Green Heart'*, Robert Thayer – (Swaffield, pp.31-36); McHarg, Ian, "An Ecological Method" (Swaffield, p. 39); Spirn, Ann, "The Granite Garden" - (Swaffield, p. 173); *'Messy Ecosystems, Orderly Frames'*, Joan Nassauer; (Swaffield, pp. 196-206); *'Infrastructure as Landscape'*, Gary Strang – (Swaffield, pp.220-226)
- *'Beyond Wilderness and Lawn'*, Michael Pollan – (Harvard Design Magazine, Winter/Spring 1998, pp 1-7; *Also in Saunders, pp. 66-81*)
- *'Not Unlike Life Itself'*, James Corner – (Harvard Design Magazine, Fall 2004, pp 1-3)

10.27.08 5: Ecological Systems & Stormwater Design

Assigned Visit for Week 6: South Waterfront District

Assigned Readings for Week 6:

- *'Principles of Regional Design'*, Michael Hough – (Swaffield, pp.209-213); *'Signature-Based Landscape Design'*, Woodward (Swaffield, pp.213-216); *'Garden's from Region'*, Terry Harkness – (Swaffield, pp.216-219); Lyle, John T. "Design for Human Ecosystems" – (Swaffield, p178.); Krog, Steven, "Creative Risk Taking" – (Swaffield, p58.)
- *'Beautiful Infrastructure'*, William Morrish – (in Sustainable Urban Landscapes: The Surrey Design Charrette, Condon, pp.79-86)
- *'The Art of Site Planning'*, Lynch, Kevin and Hack, Gary. – (Swaffield, pp.)

11.03.08 **6: Connecting Scales – Site, Neighborhood, Region**

Assigned Visit for Week 7-8: Multnomah County Green Roof & Hotel Modera Green Wall

Assigned Reading for Week 7-8:

- *'Here Come the Hyperaccumulators'*; Niall Kirkwood – (in [Harvard Design Magazine](#), Fall 2002/Winter 2003, pp. 1-4; Also in Saunders, pp.170-184)
- *'Neocreationism and the Illusion of Ecological Restoration'*, Peter del Tredici – (in [Harvard Design Magazine](#), Spring/Summer 2004, pp 1-3; Also in Saunders, pp.179-184)
- *'A Field of Dreams: Green Roofs, Ecological Design and the Future of Urbanism'*, William McDonough (in [Green Roofs: Environmental Design and Construction](#), Earthpledge, pp. 12-15)
- *'From Grey to Green: Environmental Benefits of Green Roofs'*; EarthPledge Staff and Katrin Scholz-Barth (in [Green Roofs: Environmental Design and Construction](#), Earthpledge, pp. 16-21)
- *'Foreword' + 'Integration of Architecture and Landscape'* (in [Green Architecture](#), by James Wines; pp.11-15; 69-77.

11.10.08 **7: No Class**

Due to holiday Monday we will not have class – there will an opportunity to discuss the Design Project (TBD)

11.17.08 **8: Greening Buildings – Inside and Out**

Assigned Visit for Week 9: Park Block 5 & Ankeny Plaza Construction Projects

Assigned Readings for Week 9:

- *'Origins of Theory' + 'Theory in Crisis'*, James Corner – (Swaffield, pp.19-21)
- *'Landscape as Urbanism'*, Waldheim – (in Waldheim, pp.35-53)
- *'Looking Back at Landscape Urbanism: Speculations on Site'*, Czerniak – (in Waldheim, pp.105-123)
- *'Drosscape'*; Alan Berger - (in Waldheim, pp. 197-217)
- *'Snafu'*, Lewis, Tsurumaki, Lewis – (in [Pamphlet Architecture 21](#), pp.4-14)

11.24.08 **9: Theory Informing Practice**

Assigned Readings for Week 10:

- *'Leave No Child Inside'*; Richard Louv – (from [Orion Magazine](#) March/April 2007)
- *'Beauty is the Standard'* David Orr – (from [Resurgence](#), Jan. 2003)
- *'A Word for Landscape Architecture'*; John Beardsley – (in [Harvard Design Magazine](#), Fall 2000, pp. 1-6; Also in Saunders, pp.185-197)

12.01.08 **10: Nuts and Bolts: Professional Practice**

Lecture on professional practice, design & construction process; Construction Documents; and Q&A on anything related to Landscape architecture; In Class Desk Crits and Discussion about Final project presentations; Class Evaluations

Assigned Project for Week 10: Completion of Final Design Concept and Materials for final presentation. Be prepared to pin-up and discuss your project, analysis, concept, and development with a group of invited design critics in an informal setting... bring everything you need.

12.10.08
(WED) **Final: Putting it all Together**

In-Class Open-House Presentation of Final Design projects - 2.5 hours of final critiques with invited guests in an information setting; pin up, and discussion in open house format.