

New Jersey Institute of Technology – FALL 2024

ARCH 408: Investigation of the Contemporary Landscape

Instructor: Jeffrey Stevens – jeffrey.stevens@njit.edu

Class Time: Mondays 6:00 pm – 8:50 pm - WEST 210

Office Hours: Thursday 5:30-6:30 or by Appointment

Prerequisites: ARCH 211 or ARCH 381 and ARCH 382

COURSE OVERVIEW: This course is designed to actively engage students in contemporary discourse and design practices in landscape architecture. Through selected readings, presentations, class discussions, and in-class charettes, students will explore historical hinge points and contemporary issues in landscape architecture. The course culminates in an independent research investigation that will be presented to the rest of the class and submitted as a final written report.

COURSE DESCRIPTION: Students are expected to read approximately 50 pages per week. In addition to required reading, students will participate in two in-class charettes and prepare three group presentations and one individual presentation of their chosen research topic.

During the first half of the semester, students will be introduced to the history of landscape architecture and critical pivot points in the 20th century.

In the second half of the semester, students will leverage their shared knowledge to evaluate issues and ideas in contemporary landscape practice.

These issues will be explored through presentations and discussions within each class and organized into components of consideration. These components are:

1.) READINGS: Present, discuss, and evaluate selected articles, essays, and other writings that have helped to shape the current discourse.

2.) PEOPLE + PLACES: Present, discuss, and recognize important persons or firms who have defined the contemporary landscape profession. Examples of contemporary landscapes that exemplify current landscape practices.

3.) CHARETTES: Design a landscape for an existing project by experimenting with ideas and methods introduced in class.

4.) GUEST LECTURES: Guest lecturers will present their professional work and/or research. Students will demonstrate their knowledge by engaging with design professionals.

5.) **INDEPENDENT RESEARCH PROPOSALS:** Formulate an investigation of a special topic related to the contemporary practice of landscape architecture.

GROUP PRESENTATIONS REQUIREMENTS: The class will establish seven groups of two people and one of three. The two formats for group presentations are as follows:

PEOPLE + PLACES: (approximately 30-minute duration) This will introduce people who have played an influential role in the modern landscape to help position their ideas within the larger framework of the landscape profession. The group responsible will introduce these people to the rest of the class, characterize their work and their contributions, and do so by sharing critical examples of their work through a slideshow presentation.

READING DISCUSSION FACILITATOR: (approximately 45-minute duration) Discussion Facilitators direct the seminar discussion and should find effective ways (visual imagery, provocative questions, etc.) to ensure that all seminar members participate in it. A selection of readings taken from various authors will introduce a variety of points of view. These will cover specific topics within the broad realm of contemporary landscape discourse. Students are encouraged to make a Miro board to allow the nonlinear presentation of visual aids during the discussion.

INDEPENDENT RESEARCH TOPIC: Each student will independently select a topic to research to expand the scope of thinking about the contemporary practice of Landscape Architecture. This can address some of your academic reasons for taking this elective course. The topic is an opportunity for each student to explore a specific issue or area of interest that might enrich a design studio investigation or other coursework. These findings will be shared with the rest of the class during the second part of the semester.

DESIGN CHARETTES: Le Corbusier's Villa Savoye will be used as a site for the landscape charette. Students will be provided with digital files and printouts of the Plans and Images to sketch perspectives. Students are expected to bring trace paper and design tools to class on these days. In the first draft, students will emulate modernist landscape architects from the class and give the modern house a modern landscape. The second in-class charette allows students to restart or revise, incorporating new methodologies derived from course materials. A final draft with a brief narrative description will be submitted at the end of the semester.

ATTENDANCE AND TARDINESS POLICY: The instructor is not obligated to repeat any information or provide access to lecture notes or presentation materials to students who arrive late or have unexcused absences. Yet it remains the student's responsibility to learn the material

presented. Because attendance is not used as the basis of a grade, participation credit requires active participation in class discussions.

MEANS OF EVALUATION:

10% Discussion Leadership 01	10% Discussion Leadership 02
10% People and Places Presentation	20% Class Participation
10% Design Charette 01	10% Design Charette 02
10% Charette Final Submission	20% Independent Research Project

GRADE SIGNIFICANCE:

A	Superior	B+	Excellent
B	Very Good	C+	Good
C	Acceptable	D	Minimum
F	Inadequate	AU	Audit
I	Incomplete. Grade deferred--given in rare instances to students who would normally have completed the course work but who could not do so because of special circumstances. If this grade is not removed during the next regular semester, an F grade will result.		
W	Withdrawn	S	Satisfactory
U	Unsatisfactory S or U Satisfactory or Unsatisfactory		
P	Passing for Master's Thesis or Doctoral Dissertation		

LEARNING AND TEACHING CULTURE POLICY: In addition to the overarching values and ethics of the university, the New Jersey School of Architecture (NJSoA) is dedicated to optimism, diversity and solidarity, professional conduct, constructive evaluation and instruction, collaborative community, health and wellbeing, time management and school-lifework balance, respectful stewardship and space management, and well-rounded enrichment. The pedagogy of architecture and design is as complex as it is rewarding and as dynamically evolving as the people who learn and teach it. This understanding resides at the core of the NJIT Learning and Teaching Culture Policy: <https://design.njit.edu/learning-and-teaching-culture-policy>

WEB ACCESS AND SOFTWARE:

CANVAS: This course will utilize the learning management system CANVAS as the repository for all assignment postings, including readings, templates, and additional digital resources. Additionally, all work you produce, including presentation slides, must be uploaded to the appropriate assignment folders and modules. You must have a UCID account with NJIT to access Canvas.

OBSIDIAN + ZOTERO: I encourage students to adopt a version of the Zettelkasten method system for taking source notes and extracting permanent notes from readings. This method allows

students to make connections across papers, themes, classes, and subjects. Zotero and Obsidian's free software facilitates this method. Efforts toward this methodology will not be graded, but students who adopt this method often reap rewards for years to come.

ZOOM: Zoom will be used in case of emergency and verified student illness. Recording any portion of any class is strictly forbidden.

KEPLER: All files must be resized, renamed, and saved as jpgs and PDFs. The filename should be saved according to the following naming convention: <Last name, First name ##.jpg>. Students will not receive their final grade until they have posted all the required Kepler files. Consult Kepler's FAQ for further details.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY: The NJSOA maintains that academic integrity and honesty are of paramount importance. Cheating and plagiarism will not be tolerated. The NJIT Honor Code will be upheld, and any violations will be dealt with by the department or brought to the immediate attention of the Dean of Students. All students are responsible for upholding the integrity of NJIT by reporting any violation of academic integrity. The identity of the student filing the report will remain anonymous. All students are expected to adhere to the University Code on Academic Integrity: <https://www.njit.edu/dos/academic-integrity> and to the Code of Student Conduct: <https://www.njit.edu/dos/policies/conductcode/index.php> HCAD librarian Maya Gervits has assembled excellent resources for students use on using images, citing, and plagiarism:

<https://researchguides.njit.edu/c.php?g=671665&p=4727920>

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE POLICY: It is a violation of university policy to misrepresent work that you submit or exchange with your instructor by characterizing it as your own, such as submitting responses to assignments that do not acknowledge the use of generative AI tools. Please feel free to reach out to me with any questions you may have about the use of generative AI tools before submitting any content that has been substantially informed by these tools.

PLAGIARISM: It is extremely important that students familiarize themselves with a proper way to cite visual and intellectual sources. Plagiarism, whether deliberate or inadvertent, will not be tolerated. Simply put, plagiarism is using visual or intellectual material created by others without proper attribution, including AI-generated work. Even the use of one's own material for more than one assignment can also be considered plagiarism. Students should not do so without the expressed consent of all instructors involved.

SPECIAL ACCOMMODATION: It is the school's moral, ethical, and legal obligation to provide

appropriate accommodation for all students with physical and/ or learning disabilities. If students need accommodation related to disabilities, all official documentation must be filed with the Dean of Students and the Disability Support Service Office. It is the responsibility of the student to notify the instructor at the beginning of the semester if accommodation is warranted.

Dean of Students: <https://www.njit.edu/doss/>

Disability Support Service: <https://www.njit.edu/studentssuccess/disability-support-services-0/>

NAAB STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOME OBJECTIVES:

Refer to the National Architectural Accreditation Board (NAAB) Conditions for Accreditation, 2020 Edition, February 10, 2020 Section 3.1 (Program Criteria) and Section 3.2 (Student Criteria)

PC.1 Career Paths—How the program ensures that students understand the paths to becoming licensed as an architect in the United States and the range of available career opportunities that utilize the discipline’s skills and knowledge.

PC.2 Design—How the program instills in students the role of the design process in shaping the built environment and conveys the methods by which design processes integrate multiple factors, in different settings and scales of development, from buildings to cities.

PC.3 Ecological Knowledge and Responsibility—How the program instills in students a holistic understanding of the dynamic between built and natural environments, enabling future architects to mitigate climate change responsibly by leveraging ecological, advanced building performance, adaptation, and resilience principles in their work and advocacy activities.

PC.4 History and Theory—How the program ensures that students understand the histories and theories of architecture and urbanism, framed by diverse social, cultural, economic, and political forces, nationally and globally.

PC.5 Research and Innovation—How the program prepares students to engage and participate in architectural research to test and evaluate innovations in the field.

PC.6 Leadership and Collaboration—How the program ensures that students understand approaches to leadership in multidisciplinary teams, diverse stakeholder constituents, and dynamic physical and social contexts, and learn how to apply effective collaboration skills to solve complex problems.

PC.7 Learning and Teaching Culture—How the program fosters and ensures a positive and respectful environment that encourages optimism, respect, sharing, engagement, and innovation among its faculty, students, administration, and staff.

PC.8 Social Equity and Inclusion—How the program furthers and deepens students' understanding of diverse cultural and social contexts and helps them translate that understanding into built environments that equitably support and include people of different backgrounds, resources, and abilities.

SC.1 Health, Safety, and Welfare in the Built Environment—How the program ensures that students understand the impact of the built environment on human health, safety, and welfare at

multiple scales, from buildings to cities.

SC.2 Professional Practice—How the program ensures that students understand professional ethics, the regulatory requirements, the fundamental business processes relevant to architecture practice in the United States, and the forces influencing change in these subjects.

SC.5 Design Synthesis—How the program ensures that students develop the ability to make design decisions within architectural projects while demonstrating synthesis of user requirements, regulatory requirements, site conditions, and accessible design, and consideration of the measurable environmental impacts of their design decisions

CLASS SCHEDULE:

Week 01 Introduction - No Readings

09/09 Agenda: Syllabus Review
Class Introduction

02 Landscape and Culture

09/16 Agenda: Reading Discussion: Group 01 + Group 02
People: Andre le Norte, Gertrude Jekyll, Fredrick Law Olmstead

03 Painting to Modernism

09/23 Agenda: Reading Discussion: Group 03 + Group 04
People: Garrett Eckbo, Dan Kiley, James Rose, Burle Marx

04 Modernism Origins and Actors

09/30 Agenda: Reading Discussion: Group 05 + Group 06
People: Lawrence Halprin, Luis Barragan, Thomas Church

05 Charette 01 + McHarg to Landscape Urbanism

10/07 Agenda: Charette: A Modern Landscape for a Modern Icon
Reading Discussion: Group 07 + Group 01

06 Ecological Design

10/14 Agenda: Reading Discussion: Group 02 + Group 03
People: SCAPE, Field Operations, turenscape

07 Art Based Practice

10/21 Agenda: Reading Discussion: Group 04 + Group 05
People: Andrea Cochran, Martha Schwartz, MVVA, Ken Smith,

**** RESEARCH PROPOSAL DUE BEFORE CLASS 08 ****

08 Charette 02 + Engaging Critically with Landscapes

- 10/28 Agenda: Reading Discussion: Group 06
Charette: Revisited/Revised
Guest Lecture
- 09** **Special Topic: Nativist Plants**
- 11/04 Agenda: Reading Discussion: Group 07 + Group 01
Guest Lecture
- 10** **Special Topic: TBD**
- 11/11 Agenda: Reading Discussion
Guest Lecture
- 11** **Special Topic: TBD**
- 11/18 Agenda: Reading Discussion
Guest Lecture
- 12** **Student Presentations**
- 11/25 Agenda: Students Present their Research Project
- 13** **Student Presentations**
- 12/02 Agenda: Students Present their Research Project
- 14** **Student Presentations**
- 12/09 Agenda: Students Present their Research Project
- 15** **RESEARCH PROJECTS DUE**
- 12/16 **CHARETTE FINAL SUBMISSION**

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