

LA 620 LANDSCAPE RESEARCH I: The culture and context of research in landscape architecture

**Department of Landscape Architecture
University of Oregon Winter 2018**

LA 620 (2-4 credits) / Grading: P/N

Prerequisites: conditional MLA or Ph.D. student or Permission of Instructor

Prof. David Hulse / 202a Pacific Hall / Office hours: Wed. 11 a.m. - 12 noon or by appt.

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Time: Tuesdays 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. Location: 231 Lawrence Hall

COURSE DESCRIPTION

In recent decades, critical research has become an integral part of the discipline of Landscape Architecture. We now recognize research as a necessary and demanding aspect of our work as designers and planners, and as one of the valuable ways in which we question our beliefs, admit new understandings, inform design decisions, and adopt new paradigms for professional work. Traditionally, the field has endeavored to merge the rigors of scientific research with the best humanistic insights of introspective art. Within this context, a field of design and planning research has emerged that draws on both science and art, and attempts to bridge the gaps between them.

The term *research* customarily designates an activity designed to permit conclusions to be drawn, and thereby to develop or contribute to generalizable knowledge or experience (expressed, for example, in theories, principles, and statements of relationships). Research is usually described in a formal process of inquiry or protocol that poses a question or sets forth an objective along with a set of procedures designed to answer that question or reach that objective.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

The purpose of this course is to understand the culture and the context of design and planning research as a precursor to conceiving and carrying out your own initial graduate research efforts. As part of this you will explore the role of the proposal in articulating your research intentions, you will explore published literature in landscape architecture and other fields, and examine tools and techniques that range from online literature searches to place analyses.

For the purposes of this course, research means formal, systematic inquiry intended to explore or resolve specific questions. In effect, it is the making of explanations. In a broader context, research is usually designed to test or revise our understanding of some phenomena or process, and in so doing, to contribute toward theory. In this course, research is examined as a means of inquiry rather than as a form of strict adherence to methodological conventions.

By the end of the course, students will have:

- Achieved moderate proficiency in critical reading and thinking about design and planning research.
- Learned techniques for efficiently accessing and sorting through information that can connect their research to the body of critical thinking within environmental design professions and from other fields with relevant knowledge or perspectives.
- Understood how to narrow their thinking from an interest area to a topic to a researchable question, conceive approaches to answering that question, and then reconnect the answer to the broader context of the issue so that the new knowledge can be applied within a larger context of design and planning.

COURSE FORMAT

The course meets weekly. We will explore the culture of design and planning research through various modes: readings, discussion, short writing assignments, team and individual projects. AAA faculty and current graduate students will visit the class to discuss their research and the role of research in their professional development. Doctoral students will meet an additional hour every other week with the instructor, and are expected to contribute an additional 5 hours a week of independent work outside of class in refining their dissertation proposal direction. The scope of this additional work will be defined in consultation with the instructor and, when appropriate, the student's major professor.

REQUIRED TEXTS (available at the UO Bookstore):

The Elements of Style, by William Strunk and E. B. White

Landscape Architecture Research: Inquiry, Strategy, Design, by Elen Deming and Simon Swaffield

OPTIONAL TEXTS

The Craft of Research, 2nd ed. by Wayne Booth, Gregory Colomb and Joseph Williams

Do I make myself clear?: why writing well matters, by Harold Evans (see esp. ch.'s 3 and 12)

ASSIGNMENTS , EVALUATIONS and GRADES

Assignments are designed to help you understand the role of the Master's Project or Dissertation in your graduate education, to start clarifying what a researchable question is, how to know one when you see it, and what a researchable question *of interest to you* might be. In-class discussions, individual assignments and conversations with the instructor and guests will be the principal vehicles used to apprise students of their progress. The gist of the course is preparing for and having the set of experiences that occur during class meeting times. Thus, the following are all necessary to receive a passing grade:

50% of your grade is based on attendance and active participation in *all* class discussions (with reasonable exceptions for emergency absences, no late assignments without PRIOR arrangement with the instructor);

15% of your grade is based on thoughtful and articulate critiques of assigned readings,

10% of your grade is based on Exercise 1

25% of your grade is based on Exercise 2 (1/2 for Ex. 2a and 1/2 for Ex. 2b)

ADDITIONAL EXPECTATIONS OF Ph.D. STUDENTS

This course occurs in the second term of a Ph.D. student's time in the Department. Beyond the set of required peer-reviewed articles listed on the accompanying schedule that will be read, critiqued in writing and discussed in class, Ph.D. students will, in addition, meet regularly with their Major Advisor at a mutually agreeable time to jointly create an annotated bibliography for an additional set of readings tailored to the student's emerging dissertation interests. These readings, and discussion of them with the Major Advisor, will explore contextual, theoretic, and methodological approaches used by others conducting research aligned with the student's dissertation interests. The student will prepare critical summaries of these readings and bring them to the additional discussions with the Major Advisor. While there is no absolute page limit, the expectation is that these additional readings will address 2-3 peer-reviewed publications per week (approx 60-80 pages). At the conclusion of the course, the Ph.D. student will have begun their literature review, critiqued no fewer than four distinct methodological approaches useful for their research topic, and identified content areas that are necessary components of their Course of Ph.D. Study, which must be submitted to the Department for approval at the conclusion of their first year in the program.

The University of Oregon is working to create inclusive learning environments. If there are aspects of the instruction or design of this course that result in barriers to your participation, please notify me as soon as possible. You are also welcome to contact Disability Services in 164 Oregon Hall at 346-1155 or disabsrv@uoregon.edu

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Culture and Context
Prof. David Hulse

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COURSE SCHEDULE

WEEK ONE		
Tuesday Jan. 9	Introduction To Design and Planning Research	Discuss: What's a Master's Proj/Dissertation, role of Colloquium, proposal, committee, committee chair & "Most Important Questions" in Reader, AAA Reserve Assigned: Exercise #1 Proposal Critique , Deming&Swaffield pp. 1-64.
WEEK TWO		
Tuesday Jan. 16	The Culture of Research and the Worlds of Researchers	Landscape Architecture faculty and student guests offer perspectives on their own research, student teams formed for Ex. #1
WEEK THREE		
Tuesday Jan. 23	What makes a good proposal?	Proposal Critique - pin-up Ex. 1 and discuss, disc. leader sign-up Assigned: Exercise #2a What makes a good Master's Proj. due 2/13 and #2b Master's Proj. Prospectus due 2/27 or 3/6; Ph.D. students Ex. #2 Literature Review, due 2/20
WEEK FOUR		
Tuesday Jan. 30	Library and Electronic Resources Ed Teague, Head, AAA Library	Assigned: Read: Martin, "Back-alley as community landscape" and Girling, "Pedestrian Pocket" (AAA Reserve), 1-2 pages on Martin&Girling readings e-mailed to DH by Fri. Feb. 2 at 12 noon Master's Student Teams assigned a Master's Project to critique for Exercise 2a.
WEEK FIVE		
Tuesday Feb. 6	Reading Discussion	Discuss: Martin and Girling readings; Master's students choose preferred presentation date for Exercise 2b. Read: Hulse, "Planning alternative future landscapes" and Moudon "A catholic approach to organizing what urban designers should know"(AAA Reserve) Assigned: 1-2 pages on Hulse&Moudon readings e-mailed to DH by Fri. Feb. 16 at 12 noon.
WEEK SIX		
Tuesday Feb. 13	What makes a good Master's Project?	Master's Project Critique – Team Presentations of Exercise 2a
WEEK SEVEN		
Tuesday Feb. 20	Reading Discussion	Discuss: Hulse and Moudon readings Ph.D. student literature review presentations
WEEK EIGHT		
Tuesday Feb. 27	Students' presentations of Prospectus (Group 1 presents)	Group 1 Present and Discuss: Exercise 2b
WEEK NINE		
Tuesday Mar. 6	Students' presentations of Prospectus (Group 2 presents)	Group 2 Present and Discuss: Exercise 2b
WEEK TEN		
no class	Review Week	