



LA 407/507  
F 11:00 - 12:50 am

2 credits  
Lawrence 232

Associate Prof. Roxi Thoren  
Office hours: T, F 9-10

rthoren@uoregon.edu  
Lawrence 476D

What are the roots that clutch, what branches grow  
Out of this stony rubbish? Son of man,  
You cannot say, or guess, for you know only  
A heap of broken images, where the sun beats,  
And the dead tree gives no shelter, the cricket no relief,  
And the dry stone no sound of water. Only  
There is shadow under this red rock,  
(Come in under the shadow of this red rock),

- T.S. Eliot, *The Wasteland*

## Waste Lands

This seminar will examine the concept of waste through the lens of landscape architecture. Through readings, field trips, research, and art, we will explore the relationship between material culture, material flows, and the environment we create – wittingly or no – for ourselves and other species. We will seek to understand the impact on the landscape of our consumer culture – the extraction, transportation, and disposal of goods, and the wastelands that result. In doing so, we will consider landscape architects as form-makers, place-makers and ecosystem engineers; and question our role and capacity as designers to explore, expose, and impact these waste lands.

## Course objectives

Through the seminar, you will:

- Understand material objects as temporary forms within a consumer culture
- Understand the impacts on the landscape of a material object across its life
- Develop a method for identifying significant materials and processes in a landscape and researching the material
- Synthesize research data into spatial infographics using digital tools
- Apply research into an artful expression of the material's invisible processes

## Course Format

Class meets once weekly for two hours. The majority of the sessions will be local field visits to waste landscapes with tours from experts. Three sessions will be in class; in those, the first hour of each session will typically be discussion or review of student work in progress; and the second hour devoted to a guest lecture or presentation.

## Course assignments

### Assignment 1: Material flows

You will select a material used in Lawrence Hall – coffee cups, aluminum cans, chipboard – and research its production, transport, and disposal. Using readings and research, you will produce a critical map for the material, showing how our actions in Lawrence Hall are embedded in a system of use. The maps will show the material's regional or global scope, and how its production and disposal play out over the landscape (transport patterns or mines, for example).

### Assignment 2: "Crossing the narrow abyss of non-comprehension"

Students will develop a design, through sketch models, photo collage, or other media an artwork that incorporates, reveals, or problematizes the selected material. Based on your research, what issues arise around the material's impact on the landscape? What material properties make the product desirable? What unexpected consequences arise from our use of the product? How has your research changed your perception of the product?

### Readings

Each lecture session will have assigned readings, which will be posted on Canvas.

### References

Alan Berger. *Drosscape: Wasting Land in Urban America*, Princeton: Princeton Architectural Press, 2007

Alberto Bertagna, Sara Marini. *The Landscape of Waste*. New York: Skira, 2012

Mira Engler. *Designing America's Waste Landscapes*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004

David Hanson. *Waste Land: Meditations on a Ravaged Landscape*. Reading, PA: Aperture, 1997.

Lucy Lippard. *Undermining: A Wild Ride Through Land Use, Politics, and Art in the Changing West*. New York: The New Press, 2014.

Vittoria di Palma. *Wasteland: A History*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014