

Syllabus
Spring 2020

LA 4/510 Unruly Materials: *Ecologies, Properties, and Futures*



Clay Processing I
Raquira I Boyacá I COLOMBIA
Image Credit: Jacob Moginot

Time T | 2:00pm - 3:50pm

Location TBD

Credits 2

Instructor Zannah Matson
Department of Landscape Architecture
Lawrence Hall, Room 316 [Office Hours Tuesday 1:00 - 3:00pm]
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Course Description As designers, the materials that we use in both the representation and construction of projects are central to achieving our design intentions, creating spatial atmospheres, and connecting projects to their environments. In addition to the significance of materials to our design process, each material can be understood as a part of a more complex set of relations that connect to particular ecologies, cultural significance, and structures of labor. Starting with significant material categories used in architecture and landscape architecture, this seminar will map the connection between materials and their ecological and cultural landscapes, test material properties, explore commercially available products, and consider the futures of these materials in the context of sustainability and equitable production. The course will make use of the University of Oregon Material Resource Center, systematic research on extraction, and consideration of potential future uses and material processes to consider materials across and between scales in ways that weave together their ecological, cultural, and economic values and impacts.

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Prerequisites	None.
Curricular Context	This class is an elective open to all students.
Learning Objectives	<p>The content and evaluation for this course has been assembled and designed with the following learning objectives in mind. If you feel as though you could be better supported to achieve these objectives, please contact the instructor to discuss accommodations that can be made in the course materials or classroom.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• To critically engage with significant writing on materials and develop well-articulated and supported position on the critical debates within theoretical materials literature.• To map the complex relationships that materials have with sites of extraction, production, distribution, and consumption.• To become familiar with the materials sourcing and selection process.• To design and execute material experiments to better understand material properties and speculate on how these properties could be incorporated into designs.• To imagine more sustainable material futures.
Modes of Inquiry	As an exploration of materials, this class will bring together readings and critical discussions in a seminar-style context. Working in groups on project deliverables, students will use mapping, drawing, and material experiments to understand categories of materials. As a class, we will work with the Materials Resource Center to better understand the materials procurement process and the role of selecting materials in the design process.
Class Format	This is a seminar class that meets once weekly and this time will be divided between group discussions and student presentations of their material explorations and experiments. Students will be working in groups on the major assignments for the class.