

LA 407 / 507 Spatial Justice Seminar
Landscape Architecture and the Myth of the Natural
CRN 32443

Agnes Denes, Wheatfield—A Confrontation



Time T | 1.00pm to 4.50pm

Location 231 Lawrence

Credits 3

Instructor Jean Yang
Landscape Architecture
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Class Description America has had a schizophrenic relationship to nature. We cannot decide whether to dominate nature in the name of civilization, or to worship it, untouched, as a means of escape from civilization. We tend reflexively to assume that nature and culture are intrinsically opposed, engaged in a kind of zero-sum game in which the gain of one entails the loss of the other. In an essay in Harvard Design Magazine No 4, Pollan wrote that “Any culture whose literature takes for granted the moral superiority of wilderness will find it hard to make great gardens. Its energy will be devoted to saving wilderness rather than to making and preserving landscapes.”

From Thoreau to Spurr and Tsing, this course will review historic and contemporary readings that have shaped contemporary conversations about nature. Framed through LAF's 1966 Declaration of Concern and the New Landscape Declaration, the 10-week course will seek to understand the role that Landscape Architecture can play in connecting concepts of nature and culture.