

Syllabus
Winter 2024

LA 459/559

Synthetic Landscapes:

Designing Ecological Infrastructure for Landscape Performance



Roemer Plaza
Boston, MA
Klopfert Martin Design Group

Time Thursday | 12:00 pm - 2:50 pm

Office Hours Tuesday | 12:00 - 2:00 pm

Location White Stag Building, Room TBD

Credits 4

Instructor Michael Geffel
Department of Landscape Architecture
Lawrence Hall, Room 306
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Prerequisites LA 366 **OR** ARCH 4/561 **OR** IARC 4/571

Course Description Over the last two decades, green infrastructure has been a growing market sector in landscape architecture as municipalities and developers seek to mitigate the environmental impacts of new construction and add landscape amenities in dense urban environments. The benefits of ecological infrastructure are diverse and well-known, with various incentives subsidizing construction based on the ecological concerns of the region. With this growth in popularity has come a standardization of the industry, allowing for easier – albeit more generic – design and construction. But beyond these “off the shelf” products, ecological infrastructure is highly technical, synthetic and site-specific; where landscape becomes its most architectural.

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As a point of departure, students will study industry standards and critique pre-packaged “green infrastrucure” systems while drawing their own designs for Highland Hall. Through weekly drawing exercises, the designs will be developed at finer and finer scales to reveal the complexity of these landscapes. Planting will be covered – as will walls, earthworks, paving, waterproofing, furnishings, drainage, and maintenance. By the end of the term, each student will have a unique set of details to represent how their landscape is constructed – and how it functions in relation to the structures adjacent and below.

Eligibility This seminar is open to all upperclass undergraduate students (junior year and above) and all 2nd and 3rd year graduate students at the School of Architecture and Environment who have completed their introductory tech sequence. 1st year graduate students concurrently taking ARCH 561 Structures may also enroll.

Class Format Class meeting times will be organized around presentations and detail workshops. Outside of class time, students are required to review readings, research selected topics and case studies, and complete assigned projects.

Learning Objectives By the end of this course, you will have:

1. Become familiar with the industry standards and design context of stormwater infrastructure and landscapes on structure.
2. Researched the essential components of these systems and important case studies to the field.
3. Detailed and represented a landscape for Highland Hall.

Readings There is no required textbook for this class. Readings will be provided digitally on Canvas and key references will be on reserve in the Design Library.

Grading This class is offered for a letter grade and qualifies as an Advanced Tech Elective in Architecture

Assessment 25% Phase 1 - Schematic Design
25% Phase 2 - Enlargement Plan and Sections
25% Phase 3 - Detail Development
25% Phase 4 - Design Rendering and Completion of Details

Graduate students will also be responsible for presenting research on a particular topic of interest and an associated case study. This assignment will be worth 20% of their grade.