

# LA 4/507 | Spatial justice seminar: Parks and equity in the urban landscape

Winter 2024



(Images: Ellee Stapleton)

<b>Time</b>	Tuesday & Thursday, 10:00-11:20
<b>Location</b>	Lawrence Hall 231
<b>Credits</b>	4
<b>Prerequisites</b>	None
<b>Instructor</b>	<b>Elizabeth (Ellee) Stapleton</b> (she/her/hers, they/them/theirs) Visiting Assistant Professor Lawrence Hall 311 estaple2@uoregon.edu Office hours: W 11am-12 pm & Th 12-1pm (sign up using Calendly)

## Course Description

How can public landscapes support justice within our cities? In this seminar course, students will explore the role of parks in creating healthy, livable urban environments and consider the factors that impact equity in park systems. Throughout this exploration, we will consider both spatial questions (“how are park and open space amenities physically distributed and who has access?”) and sociocultural questions (“Whose values and interests are served by parks and the park design and planning process?”). These questions will be grounded in a critical examination of societal power dynamics, including assumptions of who constitutes “the public,” and who has a “right to the city.”<sup>1</sup>

As a seminar course, we will primarily rely on readings, discussion, and applied projects to consider:

- Theoretical and historical perspectives on the sociopolitical role of parks in cities
- Spatial dynamics of park access and quality through time and space
- Contemporary issues in park and open space planning and design
- Novel, transgressive, and empowered reimaginings of public space

## Learning Objectives

After participating in this seminar, students will be better able to:

- Describe key historical and contemporary concepts related to urban open space
- Evaluate park systems based on various equity considerations
- Propose and advocate for measures which improve equity in the urban environment
- Critically examine personal and societal assumptions about public open space and equity

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<sup>1</sup> “Right to the City” is a phrase coined by Marxist philosopher Henri Lefebvre. If you don’t know Lefebvre, you will after this seminar!