RESEARCH IN THE LANDSCAPE: METHODS AND PRACTICES
A48.575
Tu 3pm-6pm
Givens 115
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Description
This course is intended to cultivate the research methods essential to practice and study in the landscape today. As the culmination of the landscape history/theory sequence, we will build on prior curricular study and experience in research to create coherent frameworks for the theory and practice of research. In such a way, we will form an overview of the varied ways by which useful information can be derived from existing sources in order to advance the design and study of landscapes.

Students will engage and practice a variety of research activities including archival research, textual and visual interpretation, on-site environmental analysis, and social survey. Working with a high degree of independence and initiative, students will engage scholarly works both as objects of critical reflection and as potential models for their own explorations. Though open to all design students, this course will optimize prior experience with ecology, GIS, and the discipline of landscape architecture. The course also counts as a History/Theory elective.
Assignments and Activities

Individual Project
Throughout the semester, you will be developing a moderately-scaled research project based on your own interests. Depending on your degree track, you will be able to use this as:

- a draft for your final studio project
- a guideline for an independent study or personal project

Group Project
A case study exploration of a local landscape, using textual, archival, geographical, and on-site research, conducted as a short collaborative exercise.

Exercises
Students will be assigned open-ended exercises most weeks, stemming from the required reading but necessitating further study to explore in depth. This material will be brought into class and form the basis for discussion.

Working Groups
In the last part of the course, we will convene as smaller working groups in order to discuss issues that arise with your on-going research.

Guests
We will have frequent visits from and with guests. Reading assignments will be coordinated with the guests; be prepared to ask guests informed questions to get the maximum value from your time with them.

Evaluation
Grades are based on: 15% participation, 20% group project, 15% project part 1, 20% project part 2, 30% project part 3. All assignments are due by noon on the day of class.

Resources
The following books are of general interest for the course and have been placed on reserve at the Art & Architecture Library.


COURSE POLICIES

Attendance
Attendance is mandatory. More than one unexcused absence will constitute grounds for the reduction of your grade for the course. Arriving more than 10 minutes late or leaving early, unless authorized by the instructor, will be considered an unexcused absence.

As soon as you know of any potential events that interfere with your attendance and full participation in the class, you must communicate them to me.
Contact
I prefer contact via email, and will answer all questions and requests within 24 hours. My email is jscherma@samfox.wustl.edu. I will hold office hours in my Steinberg 210 on Tuesdays from 1 to 3. I encourage you to stop by, with or without an appointment, to discuss any matters pertaining to the studio or your academic life.

You can contact me via cell phone in extreme circumstances only (for example, a last minute emergency preventing you from attending class, or being lost on a site visit). My number is 617-877-6308.

Caveat
The schedule and assignments of this course are subject to change.

Academic Integrity
Effective learning, teaching and research all depend upon the ability of members of the academic community to trust one another and to trust the integrity of work that is submitted for academic credit or conducted in the wider arena of scholarly research. Such an atmosphere of mutual trust fosters the free exchange of ideas and enables all members of the community to achieve their highest potential.

In all academic work, the ideas and contributions of others must be appropriately acknowledged, and work that is presented as original must be, in fact, original. Faculty, students, and administrative staff all share the responsibility of ensuring the honesty and fairness of the intellectual environment at Washington University.

All Washington University in St. Louis undergraduates are governed by the Undergraduate Academic Integrity policy:


Graduate School of Architecture and Urban Design students are currently governed by the conduct policy:

http://www.samfoxxschool.wustl.edu/files/Final_12-6_Architecture%20Graduate%20AI%20Policy-I_final2.pdf

When using any form of others’ work, whether published or another student’s, the source must be cited properly. Plagiarism is unacceptable and could lead to dismissal. If you are not certain what constitutes plagiarism, please ask your instructor.

PART I: THE LANDSCAPE IN TEXT

WEEK I
8/27
A SHORT HISTORY OF RESEARCH IN LANDSCAPE/ BEST PRACTICES IN RESEARCH

WEEK 2
9/3
THEORIES AND METHODS OF RESEARCH
WEEK 3  
9/10  
LITERATURE REVIEW/TEXTUAL ANALYSIS: CONTENT, CONTEXT, RHETORIC  

WEEK 4  
9/17  
THE PROCESS OF WRITING AND EDITING/RESEARCH OPPORTUNITIES  
Guest: Enrique Von Rohr  

PART II: THE LANDSCAPE AS TEXT

WEEK 5  
9/24  
GEOGRAPHICAL RESEARCH  
Guest: Jennifer Moore  

DUE: initial abstract/bibliography

*Maggie Breslin health and interaction seminar: 9-12 Saturday the 28th*

WEEK 6  
10/1  
METHODS FROM SOCIAL SCIENCE  

WEEK 7  
10/8  
CASE STUDIES AND EVALUATION/GROUP PROJECT FORMULATION  

WEEK 8  
10/15  
SITE VISIT  
PART III: ENCAPSULATING THE LANDSCAPE

WEEK 9
10/22
GROUP PROJECT REVIEW/EXPERIMENTS, QUASI-EXPERIMENTS, AND MODELING

DUE: draft group project pamphlet

WEEK 10
10/29
HISTORICAL INQUIRY AND HISTORIOGRAPHY
Guest: Seng Kuan

DUE: final group project pamphlet

WEEK 11
11/5
ARCHIVES VISIT: STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY, ST. LOUIS

DUE: precedents, case studies, draft project

WEEK 12
11/12
WORKING GROUPS/DESIGN AND ADVOCACY RESEARCH
Guest: Susanne Cowan

WEEK 13
11/19
WORKING GROUPS/CLASSIFICATION AND INTERPRETATION
Guest: Esley Hamilton

**WEEK 14**  
11/26  
**WORKING GROUPS**

**WEEK 15**  
12/3  
**INDIVIDUAL PRESENTATIONS**

*DUE:* final draft of project and presentation