

LANDSCAPE RESEARCH II: Linking questions, literature and methods

Department of Landscape Architecture

University of Oregon Winter 2007

LA 621 (2 cr. Masters students, 4 cr. PhD students) / CRN 22795 / Grading: P/N

Prerequisites: conditional MLA or Land. Arch. PhD candidate or Permission of Instructor

Time: Thursdays 2:00 PM – 3:50 PM Location: TBA

Prof. Bart Johnson / 216 Lawrence Hall / Office hours: Wed. 10 - 12 or by appt.

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

In recent decades, critical research has become an integral part of the discipline of Landscape Architecture. We now recognize research as a necessary and demanding aspect of our work as designers and planners, and as one of the valuable ways in which we question our beliefs, admit new understandings, inform design decisions, and adopt new paradigms for professional work. Traditionally, the field has endeavored to merge the rigors of scientific research with the best humanistic insights of introspective art. Within this context, a field of design and planning research has emerged that draws on both science and art, and attempts to bridge the gaps between them.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

The purpose of this course is to develop skills in conceiving and crafting the framework for a design and planning research project as a precursor to carrying out your own graduate research efforts. As part of this you will explore the published literature in landscape architecture and other fields, develop a researchable topic, and explore it through tools and techniques that range from online literature searches to the potential research methodologies that might be applied.

For the purposes of this course, research means formal, systematic inquiry intended to explore or resolve specific questions. In a broader context, research is usually designed to test or revise our understanding of some phenomena or process, and in so doing, to contribute toward theory. In this course, research is examined as an approach to inquiry rather than as a form of strict adherence to methodological conventions.

By the end of the course, students will have:

- 1) Developed a researchable topic and expressed it in an initial research statement that concisely frames and delimits the research problem you wish to solve and one or more key questions to be investigated in relation to the relevant published literature.
- 2) Revised the research statement several times using critical reading, writing and thinking
- 4) Explored potential methodologies to critically investigate the question(s) posed so as to contribute new perspectives and knowledge to the field
- 5) Use these components to develop a Master's Project Prospectus for submission to the department faculty at the end of the quarter

This course builds on LA 620 Landscape Research I: Students will continue to develop proficiency in critical reading, writing and thinking; to learn to efficiently process diverse sources of information so as to connect their research to the published literature; and to learn how develop a researchable question, conceive approaches to answering it, and connect their answers back to the broader context of design and planning scholarship.

Additional outcomes for this course are that students will have:

- Gained familiarity with standard methodologies and techniques used by environmental design researchers, and be able to determine which techniques are appropriate to a given research design
- Improved their ability to craft a clear, persuasive written argument with logical development and progression of ideas that is targeted to their desired audience

COURSE FORMAT

The course meets weekly. We will explore research design and methodology through various modes: readings, discussion, short writing assignments, and individual projects. You will also learn how to use new information resources. There is a required class meeting with UO librarians. AAA faculty and/or graduate students may also visit the class to discuss their research and the role of research in their professional development. Doctoral students will meet an additional hour per week individually with the instructor, and are expected to contribute an additional 5 hours a week of independent work outside of class in refining their dissertation proposal direction. The scope of this additional work will be defined in consultation with the instructor and, when appropriate, the student's major professor.

REQUIRED TEXTS (available at the UO Bookstore):

The Craft of Research, 2nd ed. by Wayne Booth, Gregory Colomb and Joseph Williams

The Elements of Style, 4th ed. by William Strunk and E. B. White

Rules for Writers, 5th ed. (2004) by Diana Hacker

OPTIONAL TEXTS (available at the UO Bookstore) - **including assigned readings**

Practical Research: Planning and Design, 7th (or 8th) ed. by Paul D. Leedy

Inquiry by Design, revised ed., by John Zeisel

The Shape of reason : Argumentative Writing in College, 3rd ed. by John T. Gage

ASSIGNMENTS, EVALUATIONS and GRADES

Assignments are designed to help you clarify what a researchable question is, how to know one when you see it, what a researchable question *of interest to you* might be, and how one can proceed from problem development to implementation. In-class discussions, individual assignments and conversations with the instructor will be the principal vehicles used to apprise students of their progress.

The gist of the course is the set of experiences that occur during class meeting times. Thus, the following are all necessary to receive a passing grade: attendance and active participation in *all* class discussions (with reasonable exceptions for emergency absences); no late assignments without PRIOR arrangement with the instructor.

ADDITIONAL EXPECTATIONS OF Ph.D. STUDENTS

This course occurs in the second term of a Ph.D. student's time in the Department. Beyond the set of required peer-reviewed articles listed on the accompanying schedule that will be read, critiqued in writing and discussed in class, Ph.D. students will, in addition, meet weekly one-on-one with the instructor at a mutually agreeable time to jointly create an annotated bibliography for an additional set of readings tailored to the student's emerging dissertation interests. These readings, and discussion of them with the instructor, will explore contextual, theoretic, and methodological approaches used by others conducting research aligned with the student's dissertation interests. The student will prepare critical summaries of these readings and bring them to the additional weekly discussions with the instructor. While there is no absolute page limit, the expectation is that these additional readings will address 2-3 peer-reviewed publications per week (~60-80 pages). At the conclusion of the course, the Ph.D. student will have synthesized three key dimensions of a researchable topic. These are: 1) developed and delimited a researchable topic, 2) completed an advanced literature review related to this topic and incorporated these understandings into a scholarly narrative focused on their topic, and 3) proposed one or more methodological approaches that could be used to answer the research problem they have posed and specified how they would be applied. These advanced understandings will be incorporated into their class exercises, and in particular to an expanded version of Exercise 3, the final assignment. Although the topic investigated may or may not become the topic of their dissertation research, the goal of these exercises is for the student to learn how to develop a research proposal and to refine their interests. Finally, the student will continue their identification of content areas that are necessary components of their Course of Ph.D. Study, a process begun in LA 620.

INFORMATION FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

If you have a documented disability and anticipate needing accommodations in this course, please arrange to meet with the instructor as soon as possible and request that the Counselor for Students with Disabilities send a letter verifying your disability.

COURSE SCHEDULE

WEEK ONE

Thursday
Jan. 11 **Course Introduction**

Read: Hacker: TOC and p. 1-25 (planning and initial drafting)
Strunk and White: Entire book. Minimum: Introduction, Chapter 2 and Chapter 5.
Booth: TOC, preface p. xi-(top)xiii, prologue (p. 3-8), and skim Ch. 1-2 for useful ideas
Due: Turn in notes or diagram on current ideas for master's project

WEEK TWO

Thursday
Jan. 18 **Developing a Research Question**

Read: Booth, Chapter 3 Topics to Questions; Chapter 4 Questions to Problems;
Leedy, Chapter 3 The Problem: The Heart of the Research Project
Gage, Chapter 5 Asking Questions, Generating Ideas
Due: Exercise #1 Steps A, B C due Mon. 1/22 5:00 PM

WEEK THREE

Thursday
Jan. 25 **Crafting a Masters Project**

Read: Strunk and White, Chapter 2 Elementary Principles of Composition;
Booth, Chapter 5 From Problems to Sources; Chapter 6 Using Sources;
Leedy, Chapter 4 Review of the Related Literature;
Due: Exercise #1 Step D Peer-Review
Assigned: Exercise #1 Step E – Research Statement Revision

WEEK FOUR

Thursday
Feb. 1 **Locating Sources/Building Cases**
Library and Electronic Resources
Ed Teague, Head, AAA Library

****Meet at Knight Library Edmiston Electronic Classroom****
Read: Booth, Part III: Making a Claim and Supporting It; Hacker p. 457-460
Avoiding Plagiarism
Due Exercise #1 Step E
Assigned: Exercise #2: Methodological Development

WEEK FIVE

Thursday
Feb. 8 **Harnessing Methodologies to Problems**

Read: Zeisel, Chapter 5 Research Methodologies Approaches, Designs, Settings;
Leedy, Chapter 5 Planning Your Research Design; *Skim:* Leedy Chapters 7-11:
and Zeisel Research Methods: Chapters 8-14. Then read carefully a minimum of
one chapter from each book.
Due: Exercise #2 Step 1
Assigned: Email paragraphs on Westmacott "Pattern and practice in traditional
African-american gardens" and Nassauer "Messy Ecosystems, Orderly Frames"
(AAA Reserve) to BJ by Mon. 12 PM

WEEK SIX

Thursday
Feb. 15 **Reading Discussion and Problem Solving**

Discuss: Westmacott and Nassauer articles
Due: Exercise #2 Step 2
Assigned: Exercise #3 – Master's Project Prospectus
Email paragraphs on Ribe "A test of uniqueness and diversity visual assessment
factors using judgement-independent measures" and Francis "Urban Open Spaces"
(AAA Reserve) to BJ by Mon. 12 PM.

WEEK SEVEN

Thursday
Feb. 22 **Reading Discussion and Problem Solving**

Discuss: Ribe and Francis articles
Read: Booth Chapter 13 Revising Organization and Argument, Chapter 16
Revising Style, Chapter 14 Introductions (optional); Gage Chapter 8 Revising
and Editing

WEEK EIGHT

Thursday
Mar. 1 **Student presentations of Ex. #3**

WEEK NINE
