

**University of Southern California School of Architecture  
Master of Landscape Architecture Program**

**Architecture 538**

**Urban Plant Ecology: Cultural Perspectives**

**4 Units: 3 Hour Lecture + 3 Hour Plant ID Lab per week**

Spring 2015

Tuesday and Thursday 1:00-4:00 p.m.

Robert Perry

(909) 957-9277 (Cell)

[rcperryfasla@gmail.com](mailto:rcperryfasla@gmail.com)

Office hours: Tuesday and Thursday 12:00-1:00 p.m.

**Background:**

An ecological foundation for the study of urban planting design was initiated in Architecture 537. This foundation contains ideas and guidelines for increasing the sustainability of urban landscapes from an environmental perspective. These ideas and guidelines reflect principles and concepts of plant ecology and define how the sustainability of urban landscapes can be increased when designed and maintained as a balanced energy system exemplified in nature. The study of native plant species and communities of Southern California was also pursued to connect the ecological foundation to this region. In essence, environmentally sustainable urban landscapes can be viewed as living systems that fit the environmental conditions of their region and have a net positive flow of energy.

Architecture 538 continues to pursue the foundation of sustainable urban landscape design by bringing attention to the cultural perspective of urban plantings. All urban landscapes can be studied as expressions of cultural values and needs with regard to philosophical, functional, aesthetic and environmental aspects of planting design.

Los Angeles offers an abundance of urban spaces to explore and discover a diverse range of cultural perspectives with regard to urban landscapes and plantings. Numerous field trips throughout this region will be taken to experience and record observations regarding landscape plantings from the cultural perspective. Additionally, weekly campus plant identification walks and field trip activities are organized to study the diverse range of landscape plants that are widely grown in urban areas of Southern California. Together, the study of landscape plants and cultural inquiries will form the basis for preparing planting concepts in urban landscapes with a broadened range of sustainability.

## **Introduction and Purpose:**

Architecture 538 is organized to expand the foundation of urban planting design by (1) exploring cultural ideas and values regarding the functional, aesthetic and environmental aspects of urban landscapes, (2) advance the study of the principal plant species and cultivars that are commonly planted in urban landscapes throughout Southern California, and (3) support the project activities of Architecture 541b Landscape Architectural Design. Learning will be achieved through lectures, field trips, research papers and campus plant identification walks.

## **Course Objectives:**

- a. Develop a framework for assessing the philosophy and cultural values that are expressed through functional, aesthetic and environmental uses of plants in urban landscapes.
- b. Visit 10 urban landscapes in the Los Angeles region and record planting design observations from a cultural perspective.
- c. Study and be capable of identifying approximately 75 of the principal tree, shrub, vine and ground cover species planted in urban landscapes in Southern California.

## **Expected Results:**

Upon completion of this course each student should be able to:

- a. Be capable of preparing conceptual planting design ideas for urban landscapes reflecting functional, aesthetic and cultural criteria and values.
- b. Be capable of identifying a minimum of 75 tree, shrub, vine and ground cover species widely planted in urban landscapes in southern California.
- b. Recognize the cultural influences on 10 urban landscapes located throughout the Los Angeles basin.

## **Course Methodology**

Learning is to occur through:

- a. Lectures and discussions on topics describing cultural, aesthetic and functional uses of plants in urban landscapes of Southern California.
- b. Weekly on-campus and off-campus field trips to visit and assess urban landscapes and study significant landscape species use in this region.
- c. Assigned reading and research, plant profile investigations, and special topic written papers.

## Attendance and Grading:

Attendance is required for all class sessions and field trips. More than one absence can result in the lowering of the course grade by 1/3 for each additional absence. Classroom activities missed during an absence must be completed prior to the next class. All late work must be submitted no later than one week following the posted deadline and can receive a maximum 90% value.

Plant Identification	20%
Field Trip Notes and Observations	20%
Individual Planting Design Projects	30%
Group Planting Design Project	20%
Final Paper	10%

Points are assigned for all exercises, assignments, papers, quizzes and exams. The final grade for the course is based upon the following scale:

94-100%	=	A
90-93%	=	A-
86-89%	=	B+
83-85%	=	B
80-82%	=	B-
76-79%	=	C+
73-75%	=	C
70-72%	=	C-
66-69%	=	D+
63-65%	=	D
60-62%	=	D-

## Academic Integrity:

This course supports the goal of USC to maintain an optimal learning environment. Students are expected to do their own work and follow general principles of academic honesty including respect for the intellectual property by citing sources of information and ideas that are incorporated into written papers and exercises in this course. All students are expected to understand and abide by the Student Conduct Code found in *Scampus*, the Student Guidebook.

## Students with Disabilities

Any student requesting academic accommodations based on a disability is required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester.

A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP. Please be sure the letter is delivered to me as early in the semester as possible. DSP is located in STU 301 and is open 8:30 a.m.–5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. The phone number for DSP is (213) 740-0776.

#### LAAB Conditions for Accreditation

The USC School of Architecture's Master of Landscape Architecture First Professional Degree 6-semester curriculum (+3) and Advanced Placement 4-semester curriculum (+2) have been awarded candidacy status towards becoming an accredited professional degree program. All students can access and review the LAAB Conditions of Accreditation (including the Student Performance Criteria) on the ASLA Website.

[http://www.asla.org/nonmembers/education/pdf/2005\\_LAAB\\_Accreditation\\_Standards\\_Procedures.pdf](http://www.asla.org/nonmembers/education/pdf/2005_LAAB_Accreditation_Standards_Procedures.pdf)

#### **Plant Identification References:**

Bornstein, Carol; Fross, David, and O'Brien, Bart, California Native Plants for the Garden, Cachuma Press

Perry, Bob, Landscape Plants for California Gardens. Land Design Publishing  
Sunset Western Garden Book, latest edition

#### **Garden Design References:**

Hobhouse, Penelope, Plants in Garden History, Pavilion Books LTD., 1992

Keswick, Maggie, The Chinese Garden, Academy Editions, 1978

Jellicoe, Geoffrey & Susan, The Landscape of Man, Thames and Hudson, LTD., 1982

Clark, Emma, The Art of the Islamic Garden, The Crowood Press, LTD., 2004

Brookes, John, Gardens of Paradise, Meredith Press, 1987

Marcus, Clare Cooper & Sachs, Naomi, Therapeutic Gardens, Wiley & Sons, 2014

Realf, Diane, Editor, The Role of Horticulture in Human Well-Being and Social Development, Timber Press, 1992

Bibb, Elizabeth, In The Japanese Garden, Starwood Publishing, Inc., 1991

Harada, Jiro, Japanese Gardens, Brandford Co., 1956

Architecture 538 Spring Term 2017 Bob Perry