ARCH 565
Global History of the Constructed Landscape: ‘Landscape and/as the City’
3 units
Fall 2019, Tuesdays, 2-4:50pm

Location: Harris 115

Instructor: Alison B. Hirsch
Office: Watt Hall #331
Office Hours: Tuesdays, 1-2pm (by appointment)
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Course Description
This global history of the built environment will focus on how the constructed landscape has informed the shape of the city as an embodiment of public life and public values. The course will introduce the evolution of urban landscape history, theory and form, as situated in wide-ranging historical, geographical and cultural contexts. Readings consist of primary sources, as well as subsequent social and cultural histories that reveal shifting receptions and interpretations of our urban inheritance. Cultural attitudes toward Nature will be an integral thematic concern, particularly as Nature is situated in ideological and physical relationship to the city. While the course is tasked with introducing designers to canonical designed landscapes, it simultaneously challenges this “classical canon” with alternative histories that provide a more inclusive reflection on the shaping of urban landscapes throughout the globe.

We will begin with a brief study of historical methods and the role of history in the design curriculum and in practice. In this course, history will be deployed as an interpretive and active engagement of the past and one that is consistently renegotiated. We start the semester studying multiple historical approaches to the constructed landscape, including architectural history, social history, environmental history, as well as cultural geography. We will discuss whether it is our responsibility, as designers, to sustain some palpability of the past.

After this introduction, the course is split into two sections:
I. Design Inheritance: Lectures and readings will begin to trace an inheritance that may seem remote but has impacted our current attitudes toward landscape and the city. Each theme will be studied as embedded in its time and place, but might also force us to reflect on our contemporary urban condition. In addition, readings will include shifting historical perspectives on these particular periods to demonstrate the range and evolution of interpretations of the past. The largely evolutionary narrative will be interrupted by lectures “outside the classic canon” - examining design of landscapes in areas of the world that are underrepresented in standard histories.

II. Common Landscapes + Environmental Histories: The second half will shift to the history of landscape and urbanism predominantly in the United States. This segment will be broken down into sub-themes, such as “Landscape & Democracy” and “Landscape & Ecology,” which trace a broader trajectory than the chronology presented in the first part of the course (“Inheritance”). This segment will focus not only on sites within the city as designed or envisioned by the professional architect, but on the cultural landscape. This includes an examination of public sites as they have been re-valued, re-appropriated and re-shaped over time. It also includes an investigation of other land-shaping forces – federal policies, the culture of capitalism and consumption, shifting public values, etc.

Learning Objectives and Outcomes
1. Responsible Scholarship: Ability to properly cite sources (text and image), demonstrating fullest scholarly integrity and adherence to academic standards.
2. Critical Thinking: Development of critical and interpretive skills (of designs/sites/writings), as expressed verbally and in writing.
3. Language: Development of a strong landscape lexicon (language of landscape and some of its contested terms: Nature, Wilderness, Garden, etc).
4. Disciplinary Knowledge: Understanding both the canon of landscape architectural history and what has been left out.
5. Disciplinary Knowledge: Developing a foundation of knowledge critical to understanding and intervening in the built environment.
6. Disciplinary Knowledge: Recognizing and developing the ability to reference sites and texts critical to the development of the field.
7. Site Interpretation: Understanding how to interpret cultural landscapes.
8. Writing: Developing writing skills (crafting an argument, structuring a thesis and supportive evidence).

Course Notes (structure, materials, etc)
Each class will be structured in two parts. It will begin with a 45-minute interactive lecture followed by a discussion of the lecture and readings. Students will then have a 10-minute break. Then there will be another interactive lecture followed by more discussion (one exception on October 29). Each class you will be handed a lecture handout to follow along (also loaded on Blackboard under ‘Content’). These handouts will include a bibliography of reference readings for that particular lecture.

Completing your weekly reading in advance of class and participation in class is essential to succeeding.
All readings will be available in scanned form on Blackboard (in ‘Content’). All lecture slides will be available on Blackboard after the class (‘Content’). All class correspondence and assignment submissions should occur on Blackboard (latter under ‘Assignments’).

Description and Assessment of Assignments

I. Critical inquiries
Starting on September 3rd, BEFORE each class, upload to Blackboard (and write down for class) a question you wish you could ask the author of each of the required readings. It should not be a clarification or factual question but a thoughtful inquiry into the primary ideas as they are situated in context. It should both demonstrate that you are engaging in the readings and sharpening your critical thinking skills. You will be provided with strong examples (see ‘Syllabus’ tab in Blackboard).

II. Interpretive assignments (a separate assignment sheet will be provided for each)
For writing assignments, you are expected to cite your sources according to accepted standards (see Chicago Manual of Style: http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html).

Assignment #1 (essay): HISTORY: On the role of history; DUE: SEP 24
The first writing assignment (800-1200 words plus bibliography) should:
- Define landscape history (this is your interpretive definition based on readings and your own thoughts)
- Discuss the value of different approaches to history (historiography)
- Situate and discuss the study of history in the design curriculum
- Address how designers might interpretively or critically engage the past (you might also argue whether this is a designer's obligation or not)
In addition to footnotes or endnotes, please generate a bibliography, which should include at least one source that is not listed on the syllabus.

Assignment #2 (presentation+writeup): DESIGN INHERITANCE: OUTSIDE THE CLASSIC CANON: Site analysis; DUE: Presentation: OCT 29 / Writeup (approx. 1000 words): NOV 5
With a partner, conduct an investigation and choose a designed site (garden, town square/town plan, park, etc) – outside of Western Europe and the U.S. – that exhibits landscape design principles unique to its place (designed before 1950). The purpose of this assignment is to aid in expanding the historiography of designed landscapes so try to avoid the obvious. The site can be, however, within the colonized world where a world power might have imposed their own design traditions on a place within their imperial reach and the outcome is a hybrid between climatic demands and vernacular traditions of the colonized nation and transported formal ideals of the colonizing power (see Macau, Philippines, India, North/West Africa, Republics of the USSR, Latin America, etc).
You will be writing these analyses as part of a course wiki (or wordpress, TBD). It is intended to start a library of references that expand the historical canon and will be built upon in subsequent years and made accessible to all. In addition, you will be presenting these case studies in class in 10-minute presentations on October 29. Both the written content and the presentation should cover:

- Introduce site (the first presentation slide should include location, dates, designer(s), patron(s), purpose/use)
- Culminate the introduction with a thesis about the site’s relationship to its cultural context (consider how I situate sites in the lectures, but propose your own argument) and how it might adopt and adapt traditions from abroad, in places featured in course lectures
- Describe the physicality of the site by examining/presenting visual material (maps, plans/sections, photographs, paintings/drawings/prints). This should be an exercise in looking and reading sites and their representations. You should tie this section into your thesis rather than treat it in isolation.
- Using this physical description, dedicate the remainder to arguing your thesis – how does the physicality and use of the site relate to the social, economic, political and/or ecological (etc) context in which it is embedded?

The written content should include footnotes or endnotes and a bibliography with at least three peer-reviewed sources that are not listed on the syllabus. If you are unsure whether a source is peer-reviewed, please ask.

**BY OCTOBER 8 – CHOOSE YOUR SITE AND EMAIL A DESCRIPTION TO ABH FOR APPROVAL.**


**Assignment #3 (essay): COMMON LANDSCAPE: Reception study; DUE: December TBD**

For the final paper (1200-1800 words plus bibliography), you should:

- Choose a site (park, plaza, residential development, campus, boulevard, etc) in North or South America that is at least 50 years old [e.g. Brasilia, Yosemite National Park, Disneyland, Cuba’s Malecon, etc]
- Interpret its “reception” (its “afterlife” or how it has been “constructed” in social imagination) over time by looking at 3 (minimum) representations of that site from 3 different periods of time
  - “representations” include: literary descriptions, maps, postcards, paintings, tourist material; one can be contemporary media such as a blog (these three items must span the lifetime of the site so will take a little investigating to find)
- By looking/reading these representations or mediated sources that convey certain values about a place, what can you argue about the site’s evolution over time? Use this as an overall thesis before interpreting the 3 sources.

**BY NOVEMBER 26 – CHOOSE YOUR SITE AND EMAIL A DESCRIPTION TO ABH FOR APPROVAL.**


**Grading Breakdown**

| Critical inquiries: | 25% |
| Assignment #1: | 15% |
| Assignment #2: | 25% (15% written / 10% presentation) |
| Assignment #3: | 20% |
| Participation in discussion: | 15% |
| **TOTAL:** | 100% |

**Grading Scale**

Course final grades will be determined using the following scale

- A+ 95-100
- A  90-94
- B+ 87-89
- B  83-86
- B- 80-82
- C+ 77-79
- C  73-76
- C- 70-72
D+ 67-69
D  63-66
D- 60-62
F  59 and below

Assignment Rubrics
Assignment rubrics will be provided on your separate assignment sheets, with the first distributed on September 3rd (for Assignment #1).

Assignment Submission Policy
Critical Inquiries should be submitted before class time on Blackboard. Assignments #1-3 should be uploaded to Blackboard (under ‘Assignments’) by 5pm on the due date.

Grading Timeline
Assignments will be graded and comments sent to each student within 10 days of submission. Critical Inquiries will not be returned but will receive a final grade. If I detect a consistent issue with the inquiries I will contact the student directly. Again, examples are provided on Blackboard.

Additional Policies

Electronic Devices: No computers, phones or tablets are to be used during class-time. I expect you to be taking notes and sketching by hand. If you have a particular circumstance that would make access to these devices necessary, please speak with me first.

Attendance: The School of Architecture’s attendance policy is to allow a student to miss the equivalent of one week of class sessions (so one class session for ARCH 565) without directly affecting the student’s grade and ability to complete the course. If additional absences are required for a personal illness/family emergency, pre-approved academic reason/religious observance, the situation should be discussed and evaluated with the faculty member and appropriate Chair on a case-by-case basis. For each absence over that allowed number, the student’s letter grade will be lowered 1/3 of a letter grade (e.g., A to A–).

Any student not in class within the first 10 minutes is considered tardy, and any student absent (in any form including sleep, technological distraction, or by leaving mid class for a long break) for more than 1/3 of the class time can be considered fully absent. If arriving late, a student must be respectful of a class in session and do everything possible to minimize the disruption caused by a late arrival. It is always the student’s responsibility to seek means (if possible) to make up work missed due to absences, not the instructor’s, although such recourse is not always an option due to the nature of the material covered.

Being absent on the day a project, quiz, paper or exam is due can lead to an “F” for that project, quiz, paper or exam or portfolio (unless the faculty concedes the reason is due to an excusable absence for personal illness/family emergency/religious observance). A mid term or final review is to be treated the same as a final exam as outlined and expected by the University.

Late Assignments: Any assignments that are received after the deadline will be docked 1/3 of a letter grade for every day late.

Non-native English speakers: It is recommended that you make an appointment and visit the Writing Center: https://dornsife.usc.edu/writingcenter/ for each written assignment due. Note that these 25-minute appointments are for best practice instruction and some guidance on written work but is not an editorial service.
Course Schedule: A Weekly Breakdown

**Week 1 (August 27): History and Landscape Historiographies (A Course Introduction)**
Lecture and discussion of readings, then research methods + academic integrity review.

**Required Reading:**
*Architectural History, Urban History, Environmental History, Garden History – Landscape History*

**Part I: DESIGN INHERITANCE**

**Week 2 (September 3): Landscape + the City in Western Antiquity (The Greek Polis / The Roman Town + Villa)**

**Required Reading:**
*Rus in urbe (The Roman Villa)*
- Pliny the Younger, “Letter to Gallus” (Book 2, Letter 17) and “Letter to Domitius Apollinaris” (Book 5, Letter 6), in *The Letters of the Younger Pliny*, vol. 1, London, 1972, pp. 75-79 and 139-144.

**Week 3 (September 10): Landscapes of Paradise, Production, Piety (Medieval / Islamic Landscapes)**

**Required Reading:**

**Week 4 (September 17): OUTSIDE THE CLASSIC CANON: Pre-Modern Water Infrastructures**

**Required Reading:**

**Week 5 (September 24): The City and the Villa in Early Modern Italy: Utopian Visions**

**REQUIRED:** Lecture by Julian Raxworthy, Sep 23, Watt 1 at 6pm

**DUE:** Assignment #1

**Required Reading:**

**Week 6 (October 1): Extended Horizons (Baroque Cities, Gardens and Landscape in the Age of Enlightenment)**

**Required Reading:**
- James Corner, "A Discourse on Theory I: Sounding the Depths," Landscape Journal 9/2 (Fall 1990), pp. 61-78.

Week 7 (October 8): Eastern Gardens + their reception in the West
DUE: Site choice for Assignment #2 (email to ABH)

Required Reading:
- William Chambers, excerpts from Designs of Chinese Buildings, etc. (1757), and from A Dissertation on Oriental Gardening (1772), in John Dixon Hunt and Peter Willis eds., The Genius of the Place, Cambridge, MA, MIT, 1988, pp. 283-288, 318-322.

Week 8 (October 15): Aesthetics and the Picturesque

Required Reading:

Week 9 (October 22): Western Industrialization / Modernist Response

Required Reading:

Week 10 (October 29):
OUTSIDE THE CLASSIC CANON: Landscape and Power: Colonialism and its Aftermath
DUE: Assignment #2 (presentation)

Required Reading:

Part II: COMMON LANDSCAPES + ENVIRONMENTAL HISTORIES

Week 11 (November 5): Landscape + Democracy (American Pastoralism / Frederick Law Olmsted + his Legacy)
DUE: Assignment #2 (writeup)

Required Reading:

**Week 12 (November 12): Landscape + Ecology**  
* (The Conservation Ethic / Regionalism + Ecological Planning / Landscapes of the New Deal)*

**Required Reading (choose 3 for inquiries):**

**Week 13 (November 19): The Landscape of Los Angeles: An Environmental History**

**Required Reading:**

**Week 14 (November 26): The Postwar Landscape**  
**DUE: Site choice for Assignment #3 (email to ABH)**

**Required Reading:**

**Week 15 (December 3): Landscape + the Modern City**

**Required Reading:**
Statement on Academic Conduct and Support Systems

Academic Conduct:

Plagiarism – presenting someone else’s ideas as your own, either verbatim or recast in your own words – is a serious academic offense with serious consequences. Please familiarize yourself with the discussion of plagiarism in SCampus in Part B, Section 11, “Behavior Violating University Standards” policy.usc.edu/scampus-part-b. Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in SCampus and university policies on scientific misconduct, policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct.

Support Systems:

Student Health Counseling Services - (213) 740-7711 – 24/7 on call
engemannshc.usc.edu/counseling
Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention.

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline - 1 (800) 273-8255 – 24/7 on call
suicidepreventionlifeline.org
Free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Services (RSVP) - (213) 740-4900 – 24/7 on call
engemannshc.usc.edu/rsvp
Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender-based harm.

Office of Equity and Diversity (OED) | Title IX - (213) 740-5086
equity.usc.edu, titleix.usc.edu
Information about how to get help or help a survivor of harassment or discrimination, rights of protected classes, reporting options, and additional resources for students, faculty, staff, visitors, and applicants. The university prohibits discrimination or harassment based on the following protected characteristics: race, color, national origin, ancestry, religion, sex, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, age, physical disability, medical condition, mental disability, marital status, pregnancy, veteran status, genetic information, and any other characteristic which may be specified in applicable laws and governmental regulations.

Bias Assessment Response and Support - (213) 740-2421
studentaffairs.usc.edu/bias-assessment-response-support
Avenue to report incidents of bias, hate crimes, and microaggressions for appropriate investigation and response.

The Office of Disability Services and Programs - (213) 740-0776
dsp.usc.edu
Support and accommodations for students with disabilities. Services include assistance in providing readers/notetakers/interpreters, special accommodations for test taking needs, assistance with architectural barriers, assistive technology, and support for individual needs.

USC Support and Advocacy - (213) 821-4710
studentaffairs.usc.edu/ssa
Assists students and families in resolving complex personal, financial, and academic issues adversely affecting their success as a student.

Diversity at USC - (213) 740-2101
diversity.usc.edu
Information on events, programs and training, the Provost’s Diversity and Inclusion Council, Diversity Liaisons for each academic school, chronology, participation, and various resources for students.

USC Emergency - UPC: (213) 740-4321, HSC: (323) 442-1000 – 24/7 on call
dps.usc.edu, emergency.usc.edu
Emergency assistance and avenue to report a crime. Latest updates regarding safety, including ways in which instruction will be continued if an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible.