COURSE DESCRIPTION

City, Landscape, Ecology is a thematically driven course which examines issues and polemics related to landscape, land settlement and ecology over the past two centuries. The course is made up of discussion sessions and lectures. The purpose is to better understand the role that territorial and ecological organization plays in the construction of social practices, human subjectivities, and technologies of power.

City, Landscape, Ecology is divided into three parts: Part 1 (Landscape), explores various episodes in the history of landscape: Picturesque garden theory, notions of “wilderness” as epitomized in national and state parks in the United States, and the prevalence of landscape in the work of artists in the 1960s and 70s. Part II concludes with a session on “Modern and Postmodern Landscapes.” We will turn to ecology and related issues of climate, urbanization and sustainability in Part II. Here we will examine the rise of ecological thinking in the 1960s; approaches to the environment that were largely based on the systems-thinking of the era. We will look at the work and theories of John McHale, Buckminster Fuller and Stewart Brand and place these approaches within a larger context of environmental awareness advanced by such pioneers as Rachel Carson, Gregory Bateson and Murray Bookchin. We also will examine ecological innovative approaches to building developed from the 1970s until today.

The course concludes with Part III (Hybrid Landscapes). At this important juncture in the course, we will ask the timely question: What is to be done today? Here we examine the work of contemporary theorists, architects, landscape architects, policy makers and environmentalists who have channeled some of the lessons of the past and claim to have some lasting solution to our land management and ecological impasse.
LECTURE SUMMARY

1. INTRODUCTION

PART I: LANDSCAPE
2. THE INVENTION OF WILDERNESS
3. MODERN AND POSTMODERN LANDSCAPES
4. TECHNOLOGY, TERRITORY AND POWER
5. LAND ART AND ENVIRONMENTAL SCULPTURE

PART II: ECOLOGY
6. FROM CONSERVATION TO ENVIRONMENTALISM
7. THE RISE OF ECOLOGICAL CONSCIOUSNESS
8. RADICAL AND DEEP ECOLOGIES
9. Field Trip

PART III: HYBRID LANDSCAPES
10. CONTEMPORARY ECOLOGIES
11. WASTELANDS
12. Guest Lecture + Thanksgiving Holiday
13. Presentations
14. Presentations

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

15. Attendance: Attendance to all course meetings is mandatory. An attendance sheet will be distributed at each meeting. More than two unexcused absences will lead to a reduction of one letter grade. More than four unexcused absences will lead to an automatic failure in the course. If you have a good reason for missing class, please inform the professor by email beforehand.

16. Readings: There will be approximately 60-80 pages of reading a week. The readings will be posted online. All readings must be completed the night before the relevant seminar.

17. Writing Center: I strongly recommend that students with even minor difficulties with writing set up an appointment with the Barnard Writing Center before handing in assignments. http://writing.barnard.edu

18. Course Assessment and Grading:
Participation and Attendance ................................................................. = 10%
Weekly Reading Responses .............................................................................. = 10%
Weekly Reading Presentation .............................................................................. = 10%
Term Paper Presentation .................................................................................. = 15%

Term Paper Midterm Submission (1000 words) .............................................. = 15%
  • Deadline: Thurs. Oct. 15: 1 paper copy to the writing fellow. 1.5 line spacing.
  • Deadline: Thurs. Oct. 29: Revised copy to me. Emailed as MAC pages or MS Word document.

Term Paper Final Submission (~3000 words) ................................................ = 40%
  • Deadline for final paper. Submission to writing fellows: Nov. 19.
  • Deadline for final revised paper (approx. 3000 words) submission to me: Dec. 14.

[Discussion Participation]
Students are expected to attend all Tuesday lectures and Thursday seminars, to do all seminar readings, to wisely and consistently contribute to the weekly seminar discussions. Discussions will cover explicit and implicit questions concerning landscape and ecology in modern culture, and should be used as an open forum for questioning. The discussions are also intended to foster student responsibility for self-directed learning.

[Weekly Reading Responses]
Weekly Reading Responses are due Wednesday nights at midnight. I will set up online discussion boards for each week on coursework. You will be able to see your classmates’ responses only once you have added your own response to the forum. Once you have added your response, I recommend that you read some of the other responses on the forum.

For each of the 10 weeks of the course, you are asked to:
• write a 200-300 word response (no less, no more) to issues and polemics encountered in the readings for that week. In responding to the readings, you will need to briefly summarize the arguments that you feel are central to the week’s theme.
• End your response with one question. The question should not seek a factual answer (how much..., when did.... etc.) but should address what you see as the main points of debate in the readings.

The purpose of weekly responses is three-fold:
• to demonstrate that you’ve read the assigned readings for the week.
• To show that, beyond simply reading the texts, you’ve thought about the central arguments and themes, that you’ve been able to draw connections between that week’s various readings (and possibly, the readings from previous weeks), and finally, that you’ve been able to scale-up your thinking and consider some of the larger social / political / personal … stakes involved.
• To prepare you for the Thursday seminar discussions. This is especially the case for the questions that I’m asking you to include at the end of your reading response. In seminar, I may ask you to read your questions to the class.

Your responses don’t need to discuss all of the week’s readings, although they should address most of them (at least two or three of the readings). The responses will be graded on a total of 1 point. In order to get a full 1 points, your response needs to demonstrate that you’ve read the readings and been able to focus on the main issues and arguments they present. For summaries that are poorly written, incomplete or do not demonstrate an adequate grasp of the material, students will get an R for the first couple of weeks, meaning that they’ll need to resubmit the response within a week’s time.

Late responses cannot be accepted.

[Weekly Reading Presentations]
Each of you will be required to present once during seminar over the term. Depending on class size, there may be two presenters per seminar. Presenters for a given week will have to meet together and divide up the reading material in an equal and coherent way. Furthermore, as presenters you must each choose at least one building, urban scheme, or visual project to illustrate the main themes and questions addressed in the readings. You and your co-presenters will prepare a common powerpoint presentation that will integrate all material that might help foster a better class discussion and better dramatize the theories and ideas presented. You should provide comprehensive visual material (sketches, plans, maps, elevations etc...) for the building, urban scheme or visual project that you choose to present. Presentations should last a total of 15-20 minutes (for all presenters).

Presentations will be graded qualitatively according to this set of criteria:
• Clarity of thought: how well you can describe some of the more difficult and nuanced ideas and arguments in the readings. It is absolutely essential to gain a good grasp of the main themes elaborated in the readings. You’ll probably need to read some essays twice and do additional research in order to get a proper handle on the material. Please take a look at the list of
additional readings at the end of the syllabus. You may want to read some of them before your presentation.

- Visual presentation: Your presentation needs to be organized in a coherent way. You'll be marked on how well you can connect the ideas elaborated in the readings with the projects you choose to present.

- Originality and Unity of Thought: Your presentation should not follow the pace and narrative of the readings too strictly. In other words, you should identify the main themes and arguments (thesis) of each reading and state them at the onset of your presentation rather than tediously going through every element of the author’s argument. A great presentation will have clearly stated the main themes, arguments and will have identified the stakes of such arguments (Why is this important? What is the context? How does this argument/idea differ from other possible interpretations?).

[Term Paper and Term Paper Presentations]
Each student will prepare a 12 page term paper (approx. 3000 words) based on the theme or topic of the student's choice.
You must all set up an individual appointment with me to discuss your paper topic ideas before Oct. 8.

**GRADING SCALE**

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<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tr>
<td>A+</td>
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<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>92.5 - 97.4</td>
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<td>A-</td>
<td>90.0 - 92.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87.5 - 92.4</td>
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<td>B</td>
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<td>B-</td>
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<td>C+</td>
<td>77.5 - 87.4</td>
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**LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

Upon successful completion of this reading and writing intensive course, the student will be able to:

1. Develop a critical understanding and awareness of some of the decisive ideas, theories and debates relating to landscape and ecology over the past two centuries.
2. Understand the role that territorial, landscape and ecological organization play in the construction of social practices, human subjectivities and political awareness.
3. Understand the way that discourses traditionally seen as external to the discipline of architecture inform and elucidate its practice and production.
4. To understand the ideological shifts in history that have shaped our notions of nature, landscape, and ecology.
5. Demonstrate the ability to read texts critically and to relate issues encountered in these texts to contemporary architectural discourse and practice.
6. Develop research, writing, and critical thinking skills through the research and writing of a series of reading summaries and a term paper that use textual and visual evidence to state a meaningful thesis.

**FILMS ON LANDSCAPE, ENVIRONMENTAL HISTORY AND ECOLOGY**


**On Netflix:**

- Eco-Pirate: The Story of Paul Watson. Directed by Trish Dolman, USA, 2011

**On Vimeo:**

On Amazon Prime:
- DamNation. Directed by Ben Knight and Travil Rummel. USA, 2014.

RELEVANT MUSEUMS, VISITS AND EXHIBITIONS
- Metropolitan Museum of Art:
  - Navigating the West: George Caleb Bingham and the River (June 17–September 20, 2015)
  - Emergence of the Hudson River School, 1815–50. In Gallery 759.
- Storm King Art Center, New Windsor, NY
- Dia Beacon, Beacon NY
- Ford Foundation Atrium. Design by Daniel Urban Kiley. 320 East 43rd Street, NY, NY.

RELEVANT EVENTS AT GSAPP THIS SEMESTER
- Lecture by Kate Orff, of SCAPE: Sept. 21, 6:30pm, Wood Auditorium, Avery Hall.
- Symposium: “Information Fall-Out”: Buckminster Fuller’s World Game, Sept. 18, 2pm, 200 Fayerweather.
- Lecture: Vo Trong Nghia, Monday, September 28, 2015 6:30pm.
- Symposium: Climate Change and the Scales of the Environment. Dec. 4, 10AM, Wood Auditorium, Avery Hall.

STATEMENT FROM THE WRITING FELLOWS PROGRAM
One of the requirements of this course is working with a Barnard Writing Fellow. The Barnard Writing Fellows Program (founded in 1991) is designed to help students strengthen their writing in all disciplines. We believe that writing is a process; it happens in stages, in different drafts. Often the most fruitful dialogues about your writing occur with your peers, and the Writing Fellows are just that. They are not tutors or TAs; they are Barnard undergraduates who participate in a semester-long workshop in the teaching of writing and, having finished their training, staff the Barnard Writing Center and work in courses across the disciplines. It is not their role to comment on the accuracy of the content of your papers, nor to grade your work. They are not enrolled in your course. You will probably know more about the course’s specific material than they do, and your papers must therefore be written clearly enough so that the non-expert can understand them.

Two dates are listed for each piece of writing assigned. You will hand in your first draft to your instructor on the first date, who will pass it on to your Writing Fellow. The Writing Fellow will read it, write comments, and conference with you on it, after which you will have a week to revise the paper and hand in a final version on the second date.

Sign up for your Writing Fellow in class when you first hand in your paper. Conference locations will be indicated on the sign-up sheet. Please make a note of when and where you have scheduled your conference. Also, please make sure to record your Writing Fellow's email and phone number when you sign up for your conference in case you need to contact her.
WEEK 1

Tues. 9/08
Thurs. 9/10

WEEK 2

Tues. 9/15
Thurs. 9/17

WEEK 3

Tues. 9/22
Thurs. 9/24
WEEK 4

Tues. 9/29

Thurs. 10/01

WEEK 5

Tues. 10/06
- Robert Morris, "Notes on Art as/and Land Reclamation", in October, vol. 12 (Spring, 1980), pp. 87-102
- Rosalind Krauss, "Sculpture in the Expanded Field," October 8 (Spring 1979), 30-44.

Thurs. 10/08
Deadline: You must have met with me to discuss your essay topic before Oct. 8

WEEK 6

PART II: ECOLOGY

Tues. 10/13
- Additional Reading TBA

Thurs. 10/15
Due: Draft version of first 1000 words of your term paper to your writing fellow.
WEEK 7
Tues. 10/20
Thurs. 10/22

THE RISE OF ECOLOGICAL CONSCIOUSNESS

- Peter Sloterdijk, “Introduction: The Allies; or, the Breathed Commune,” in Bubbles: Spheres Volume I: Microspherology (Semiotext(e) / Foreign Agents, 2011), 17-83.

WEEK 8
Tues. 10/27

RADICAL AND DEEP ECOLOGIES


Thurs. 10/29

Due: Revised version of first 1000 words of your term paper to me.

WEEK 9
Tues. 11/03
Thurs. 11/05

No Classes - Election Day

Guest Lecture: Meredith Gaglio on Appropriate Technology.
PART III: HYBRID LANDSCAPE

WEEK 10
Tues. 11/10
Thurs. 11/12
- William McDonough and Michael Braungart, excerpt from Cradle to Cradle: Remaking the Way We Make Things (New York: North Point Press, 2002)

WEEK 11
Tues. 11/17

Due: draft of complete version of the term paper submitted to your writing fellow

WEEK 12
Tues. 11/24
Thurs. 11/26
Field Trip: Tour of a Passive House Project in NYC.
No Classes - Thanksgiving Holiday

WEEK 13
Tues. 12/01
Thurs. 12/03
TERM PAPER PRESENTATIONS
TERM PAPER PRESENTATIONS

WEEK 14
Tues. 12/08
Thurs. 12/10
TERM PAPER PRESENTATIONS
TERM PAPER PRESENTATIONS

Mon. 12/14
Due: Final version of the term paper submitted to your instructor.
CASE STUDIES AND ADDITIONAL READINGS

PART I: LANDSCAPE

THE INVENTION OF WILDERNESS

CASE STUDIES:
[Buttes de Chaumont, Greenwood Cemetery, Central Park, U.S. State and National Parks, Gertrude Jekyll, F.L. Olmsted]

ADDITIONAL READING:
• Uvedale Price, excerpts from Essays on the Picturesque, as Compared with the Sublime and the Beautiful, Vol. I (J. Mawman, 1810), pp.21-29; 37-67; 68-86.
• Clarence J. Glacken, “Reflections of the History of Western Attitudes to Nature,” GeoJournal 26, no. 2 (1992), 103-111.
• Simon Schama, Landscape and Memory (Vintage Books, 1995).

TECHNOLOGY, TERRITORY AND POWER

CASE STUDIES:
[Yangtze River dam;]

ADDITIONAL READINGS
• Watch: DamNation. Directed by Ben Knight and Travil Rummel. USA, 2014.
• Mike Hodson and Simon Marvin, Urbanism in the Anthropocene: Ecological Urbanism or Premium Ecological Enclaves? *City: analysis of urban trends, culture, theory, policy, action* 14, no. 10 (2010).

**LAND ART AND ENVIRONMENTAL SCULPTURE**

**CASE STUDIES:**
[ G. Kepes; R. Smithson; N. Holt; M. Heizer; W. De Maria; R. Serra; Christo and Jeanne Claude; R. Long; M. Lin; J. Turrell ]

**ADDITIONAL READINGS:**
• Udo Weilacher, "Introduction", in *Between Landscape Architecture and Land Art* (Birkhauser, 1996), pp. 9-34

**MODERN AND POSTMODERN LANDSCAPES**

**CASE STUDIES:**
[ Le Corbusier, Luis Barragan, Burle Marx, Christopher Tunnard, Garret Eckbo, Daniel Urban Kiley, Lawrence Halprin, Bernard Tschumi, P. Eisenman / J. Derrida, R. Koolhaas ]

**ADDITIONAL READINGS:**
• Caroline Constant, “The Once and Future Park: From Central Park to OMA’s Parc de la Villette,” in *The Modern Architectural Landscape* (Minneapolis; London: University of Minnesota Press, 2012).

PART II: ECOLOGY

FROM CONSERVATION TO ENVIRONMENTALISM
CASE STUDIES:
[National and State Parks . . . Love Canal,
ADDITIONAL READINGS:

THE RISE OF ECOLOGICAL CONSCIOUSNESS
CASE STUDIES:
[R.B. Fuller; John McHale; Reyner Banham; Stewart Brand ]
ADDITIONAL READINGS:

RADICAL AND DEEP ECOLOGIES
CASE STUDIES:
[1970s off-the-grid eco-houses, contemporary eco-experiments, especially those that suggest a new social/political framework... ]
ADDITIONAL READINGS:

- Giovanna Borasi and Mirko Zardini, eds., *Sorry, Out of Gas: Architecture’s Response to the 1973 Oil Crisis*
- Stewart Brand, *Whole Earth Catalog*

PART III: HYBRID LANDSCAPES

CONTEMPORARY ECOCITIES

CASE STUDIES:

[ MVRDV, Pig City; B. Ingels; P. Rahm; Terreform One . . . ]

ADDITIONAL READINGS:

• Allenby Braden, "Complexity- the New Frontier," in *Reconstruction Earth: Technology and the Environment in an Age of Humans*
• N. Katherine Hayles, "Simulated Nature and Natural Simulations: Rethinking the Relation between the Beholder and the World," in *Uncommon Ground: Rethinking the Human Place in Nature*

**WASTELANDS**

**CASE STUDIES:**
[ Ian McHarg, Robert Irwin, Field Operations and Diller and Scofidio, the High Line; Downsview Park Competition; Fresh Kills Competition; Weiss/Manfredi]

**ADDITIONAL READINGS:**