

LA 240 Fundamentals of Landscape Design Process
Spring 2006
Tuesdays and Thursdays 2:10 P.M. to 4:50 P.M.
Shepardson 118 and the West Studio

Professor

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 Office Hours:
 Wednesday 12:00 P.M. to 2:00 P.M.
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Teaching Assistant

Kaitlin Beatty
 West Studio
 If she is at her desk or in the computer lab
 and not wearing headphones, she is available.

Catalogue Course Description

LA 240 04 (1-4-1)
 Prerequisite: LA230.
 Initiation of formal exploration of design elements,
 materials, and principles, and introduction of design
 process as a defensible methodology.

Further Course Description

This course focuses on building a strong foundation for the designed landscape. By studying and using design principles, processes and techniques students develop a visual and verbal language with which to build their design and presentation skills. The primary vehicle for learning is the production of design work in the studio. Lectures, readings, and student presentations will supplement studio work.

Academic Goals

- Understand fundamental design principles, language and process
- Use design methods to develop, evaluate and convey design ideas
- Develop associated technical skills to achieve effective design process

Course Schedule and Grading

Week	Subject	Method	Topics
1 to 4	Design Fundamentals - 20%	Lectures, readings, a series of design studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design principles, standards and process • Drawing and model building • Utilizing resources
5 to 12	Design Projects – 40%	A series of design problems that focus on specific aspects of design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design principles, applied • Design across scales and among perspective, plan, section and model
13 to 16	Final Design Project – 20%	Develop a conceptual design demonstrating your process from inspiration to proposal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design process & presentation • Use inspiration to design an effective space and memorable experience

The remaining 20% of your grade is based on ongoing work contributing to your Sketchbook and Design Booklet.

Required Supplies

- Replenish drafting materials used in LA 230
- Sketchbook, 5" x 8" or bigger
- One roll of 24" tracing paper, yellow or white

- Additional supplies as needed

Required Texts

Ching, Francis D.K. 1996. *Architecture: Form, Space and Order*, New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold Company.

Lauer, David A. and Stephen Pentak. 2005. *Design Basics, Sixth Edition*, California: Wadsworth/Thomson Learning.

Recommended Texts

Lockard, William Kirby. *Design Drawing*. Arizona: Pepper Publishing. (or similar)

Landscape Architecture Magazine

Murphy, Michael D. 2005. *Landscape Architecture Theory: An Evolving Body of Thought*. Illinois: Waveland Press.

Motloch, John L. 2001. *Introduction to Landscape Design*. New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc. (Also often used in your next semester for Joe McGrane's LA 360)

The Dirt: Landscape Architecture News Digest online newsletter - <http://www.asla.org/land/dirt.html>

Course Requirements

- On-time attendance and remaining in class/studio for the full time period
- A journal with design thoughts and 50 pages of additional sketches.
- A Design Booklet
- In- and out-of-class readings, studies and projects
- In class presentations and discussions

Evaluation of Student Performance

The instructor will provide frequent, in-class reviews of work in progress. Outside reviewers and fellow students may be asked to critique your work. You are encouraged to discuss your work with any student...keeping in mind that you are ultimately responsible for your product.

Grading Scale

The instructor will use her best professional judgment in evaluating each student's performance. Highest grades are reserved for those who exhibit the highest quality work.

" A " Submittals are of distinctive thoroughness and quality.

" A- " Submittals are of distinctive thoroughness and quality with minor alterations.

" B " Submittals are of distinctive thoroughness and quality with moderate alterations .

" C " Submittals are of distinctive thoroughness and quality with major alterations .

" D " Submittals lack redeeming qualities & thought relative to the assignment.

" F " Student is actively disengaged from the course.

" I " - Student's inability to complete course is unanticipated & beyond control of student.

Late Work

All assignments will be worth one half letter grade less each week that they are turned in late. Week one begins after class on the assignment's due date.

Attendance

Attendance is mandatory for the entire period of all course sessions unless arrangements are made in advance with the instructor. Because written and verbal instructions for new assignments will be given regularly, it is essential to be in class. If a student misses class

(without an excuse) and therefore does not receive information about an assignment, he/she should get the information from a reliable classmate.

Policy Regarding Academic Honesty / Dishonesty

In addition to "General Policies for Landscape Architecture Courses" refer to the University statement on academic honesty in the General Catalogue, section "Student Rights and Responsibilities." If you are caught cheating you will automatically receive an F for the course, you will be subject to maximum penalties of the University and you will be barred from participation in the course for the remainder of the semester.

Guidelines for Ongoing Projects

Sketchbook

- Set aside 50 pages in your sketchbook for sketches unrelated to your design work.
- You will be given time in class to complete approximately half of these sketches.
- A page may contain any of these: several sketches describing one place, one detailed sketch, several sketches of one thing, etc.

Criteria:

- One third minimum of the subject matter includes the space and content of exterior spaces such as seating areas with people in them, details of hardscape, park activities, etc....
- Informative, annotated
- Variety of drawing styles, scales, and format
- Improvement

Design Booklet

- Create a durable, beautiful versatile vessel that can neatly hold at least an inch of 8.5' x 11" paper
- Throughout the semester, add to it all design reference material (handouts, websites, noteworthy firms, projects, books, informative diagrams and sketches, materials, products, etc....) you amass.

Criteria:

- Effective and beautiful vessel and mechanism for containing design information
- Full of material amassed from class and outside sources

TENETS OF DESIGN PROCESS

Create

Landscape architecture is a creative field; there are no pre-determined, correct answers to problems. Infinite variations in individual interpretation and application are possible. However, all problems are similar in that a creative solution is desired.

¹cre-a-tive, adj

1 : marked by the ability or power to create : given to creating

2 : having the quality of something created rather than imitated

¹cre-ate, verb

1 : to produce through imaginative skill

2 : to make or bring into existence something new

A creative solution is one that is imaginative, fresh or unusual. The successful solution to a landscape problem is due, of course, to a good idea. "How do I get an idea?" It is doubtful that anyone can truly explain why or how an idea arises. The relevant question is, "What sort of activities can I consciously do to stimulate a creative process that will yield a good solution to the problem at hand?"

Drawing is Tangible Contemplation

The new student of design often has many questions to which he/she expects the instructor, as an authority, to provide appropriate and correct answers. Students beyond preschool age increasingly believe that education is about finding the right, preconceived answer instead of discovering or revealing their best answer. However, the result of striving toward preconceived solutions is less than creative design. Students who excel at design find time and time again, that in design most of the questions asked verbally of an instructor are better raised and answered visually by the student.

Visual Thinking and Communication

Learn to manipulate the visual tools and to rely upon them - upon relationship of form and line and color and light and shade and so on - using them whenever possible in studying design problems and revealing alternative solutions.

Visual Inquiry

Learning the skill of asking yourself the right questions throughout the design process is key to developing a strong design approach. Therefore, a primary goal of your schooling is to develop the skills with which you will evaluate the effectiveness of your own design. As you draw, collage and construct the form of your ideas, step back from your desk; look at the ideas you have articulated. Consider the bigger picture; zoom in to consider the details; scrutinize and develop your proposal further by creating more studies at different scales, in different drawing formats, to reveal your creation from many perspectives. Sooner or later you will see, for instance, that the "right" proportion and scale for you can best be determined by concretely visualizing the idea. No amount of talking about the proportion and scale will be as helpful in achieving the "rightness" that you seek.

Verbal Communication

While visual skills are critical to your design process, verbal skills are also necessary. Typically, a client is unable to convert a verbal idea into visual form, and they rely on a designer to do so. Throughout a design process, your design will be evaluated, problems will be identified and improvements proposed. Through verbal communication, you will be required to assure the client that the visual form will follow their verbal vision. Additionally, you will often be working collaboratively and will need

to communicate with other designers in your shared language. And, if you become famous, you will need to articulate the nuances of your process and your work to students at LA Days.

METHODS FOR DESIGN

The design process is iterative. To utilize the component most effectively, it is imperative to be willing to cycle through them repetitively, allowing them all to influence each other.

I. Research

1. Issues
2. Precedents
3. Goals and Objectives
4. Program
5. Inventory
6. Analysis

1. Issues: It is at this stage of the project that a mutually beneficial "partnership" is formed between the designer and the client(s). Issues depict the client and designer's perceptions and intentions for the project. Brainstorming is one method of identifying current and future issues.

Issues are items that initially define and inform the project. They may be developed as "problems" and "needs." Quantitative problems and needs, such as, vehicular/pedestrian conflict or need for seating for 20 people, are only a portion of the issue. Qualitative problems and needs, such as, absence of human interaction with the landscape or need for sun control for human comfort, bring to the project the visual, tactile and form-generating issues critical to the success of a project.

Issues help the designer identify and explore precedents that will greatly contribute to the design of the current project.

2. Precedents: Two main categories of precedents exist: direct and indirect. Direct precedents are other projects with similar programs. Indirect precedents range from technical to artistic items that serve to focus the project to meet its specific objectives.

Precedents benefit from being labeled with at least two pieces of information as follows: (1) name and location (what it is); and (2) a sentence discussing its relevance to this project (why it is a precedent for this project). This second item is extremely useful toward developing and writing goals and objectives.

3. Goals and Objectives: Goals and objectives are a designer's prose. What is desired in the design is the goal. How it will be achieved is the objective. Goals and objectives are established in response to issues and, with good precedents, are often 'lifted' from the previous item 'why it is a precedent for this project.' It is an extraordinary project that would have less than two or more than four goals. Goals are typically broad and may stand as a personal design philosophy).

Sample Goal: To establish, through effective design, a sensorial interface between humans and physical environment.

Each goal may have several to many objectives. Objectives are typically direct interpretations of the direct and indirect precedent landscapes and influences.

Sample Objectives:

A. Incorporate regional landscape vocabulary and pattern.

- B. Use specific visual, auditory, and tactile elements of moving water.
- C. Incorporate specific visual and tactile elements of native grasses and forbs.
- D. Incorporate indigenous geologic strata.
- E. Extend grid pattern of the immediate cultural landscape.

Goals and objectives and precedents combine to inform and establish the project program.

4. Program: The project program defines what is needed in the new landscape. Program is comprised of activities, settings, quantities and materials.

Activity: Paints a picture of what the user will do in the landscape ("sitting" is an incomplete activity). An activity is typically described in a phrase, e.g. taking a break in a relaxation nook, gathering for a ceremony, or walking through a sequence of educational themes.

Setting: Typically is discussed in complete sentences and paragraphs and describes the form, style, and character of the landscape encompassing one or more activities.

Settings often evolve directly from precedents, goals and objectives. Sketches may effectively enrich a written description of an idea for a setting.

Quantity: Provides an estimate of general quantifiable items for each setting. This item is useful as an indicator of project costs.

Materials: Useful in predicting cost and typical materials, indicates landscape elements.

5. Inventory: Inventory identifies existing conditions through documentation of on- and off-site natural and cultural landscape systems, infrastructure, and form.

6. Analysis: Analysis identifies how the existing conditions affect your program and vice versa. Analysis drawings may be made clearer with establishment of homogenous units corresponding to characteristics of the landscape. Such units are then analyzed individually for ability and appropriateness to accommodate quantities and qualities proposed in the program (as in GIS applications).

II. Conceptual Design

1. Theme
2. Parti
3. Functional Diagram
4. Schematic Design Sketches
5. Perspectives, Sections/Elevations, Axonometrics
6. Master Plan

1. Theme: Theme is written in descriptive, philosophical prose about the form, meaning, and expression of landscape. Design expression, including monumental and/or intimate form and meaning are described with landscape terminology.

2. Parti: The parti is drawn in descriptive, philosophical visual imagery describing the form, meaning, and expression of landscape. It is typically a monolithic, metaphorical drawing that may serve as the project's logo.

3. Functional Diagram: Two valid types of functional (or bubble) diagrams analyze spatial relationships: 1) a diagram delineated without relevance to site 2) a diagram drawn on a site plan. The first type places an emphasis on the visual and tactile relationship of activities and settings to each other. The second type simultaneously considers the relationships of activities and settings to each other and to the landscape. In both cases, amorphous bubbles, arrows, and symbols are used to explore and analyze spatial relationships. While the plan in the second type is to scale, the symbols are not.

4. Schematic Sketches: Loose design exploration. Drawn quickly with increasing concern for accuracy of scale. Masses and voids exploring/analyzing/describing/portraying the proposed landscape volume/form/pattern. Very loose process drawings often with labels and annotations.

5. Perspectives, Section/Elevations, Axonometrics: Design exploration continues. Multi-dimensional views to scale, exploring/analyzing/ describing/portraying the landscape as it would be. Depict experience, character, and imagery; label and annotate.

6. Master Plan: The depiction of the proposal for the entire site. Drawn as if seen from overhead with shadows and showing the character of the place; label and annotate.

III. Design Development/Contract Document

1. Layout Plan
2. Demolition Plan
3. Grading Plan
4. Planting Plan
5. Irrigation Plan
6. Electrical Plan
7. Design Details
8. Specifications