

American Cultural Landscapes



ARCH/LAND 524, Fall 2017
Fridays 8:30-11:30AM
Room: 6214 Forsyth Boulevard, Room 203

Instructor: Michael Allen

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Office hours by appointment.

Description

The history of land is the history of land use, land rights, land surveying, tourism, conquest, taxation, engineering and land management. American places constituted through their symbolic, utilitarian, architectural, scenographic or personal meanings rather than traditional attributes of landscape or urban design are more central to shaping the Americans' understandings of the places of their lives. Most landscapes in fact are hybrid terrains that fuse nature, design and human culture. From roadsides to homesteads to tourist attractions to landfills to urban neighborhoods, vernacular landscapes define the image of America to large extent. This course examines this intersected space of the "cultural landscape" through a series of thematic reviews of types of landscapes. Along the way, course readings and experiences (including field work) will examine American landscapes including the appropriated and mythologized lands of First Americans, the Gateway Arch grounds, a radioactive landfill, the neighborhoods of Detroit, cemeteries and vacant lots in St. Louis, the hills of Kentucky, the mighty Mississippi, and other sites of memory and meaning.

Throughout the semester, the course will interrogate the concept of vernacular landscapes, more broadly defined as landscapes of everyday life. Readings will draw on the work of geographers, historians, writers, preservationists and artists. The course will pose a taxonomy of the types of cultural landscapes while presenting various methods for decoding, recording, interpreting, preserving and altering these places. Field experiences and course discussions will unpack the contingencies between design, economics, cultural politics, agriculture, consumption and technology that inscribe culture across the land.

1.0 Readings

Students should obtain copies of these books, which will be read in entirety or near entirety:

- Dora Apel, *Beautiful Terrible Ruins: Detroit and the Anxiety of Decline* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 2015)
- bell hooks, *Belonging: A Culture of Place* (New York: Routledge Press, 2009)
- J.B. Jackson, *Discovering the Vernacular Landscape* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984)
- Lucy Lippard, *Undermining: A Wild Ride Through Land Use, Politics and Art in the Changing West* (New York and London: The New Press, 2014)
- Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz, *An Indigenous Peoples' History of the United States* (Boston, Mass.: Beacon Press, 2014)

All other required and suggested readings are accessible on Blackboard (<http://bb.wustl.edu>). None of the required books will be posted on Blackboard.

2.0 Seminar Requirements

2.1 Seminar: *Oxford English Dictionary* definition 1.1: "A class at university in which a topic is discussed by a teacher and a small group of students." Origin: Late 19th century: from German Seminar, from Latin seminarium (see seminary).

In this course, each of us is responsible for producing discussion. There will be some lectures, but most of the course time will be driven by students' bringing their responses to and questions about readings, sites and concepts. Reading on the syllabus is posted to provide background for your participation, so you have ideas against which to form your own. All readings are strongly encouraged. There will be no quizzes on content, so read with free curiosity.

2.2 Field Trips: Field work is indispensable for the subject matter, and several course sessions will involve field work outside of class. Students will provide their own transportation, and may carpool if there are any issues. Some field sessions will begin at a site, and students should arrive at the class start time. Students will have to sign waivers supplied by the Sam Fox School.

2.3 Attendance: All students should attend each class session, take notes and participate in discussions. Only one unexcused absence is allowed. A second unexcused absence will result in automatic drop of one half-letter grade for the final course grade. If a student cannot attend a session due to a conflicting academic requirement, that student should notify the instructor in writing at least one day prior to the session that will be missed. Leaving class late or arriving later than 15 minutes after start will constitute an unexcused absence.

3.0 Assignments

3.1 Response Papers: Students will complete assigned response papers, which will address distributed prompts. Due to the short nature of the summer course, the papers will be brief. If any student needs an extension on one of these assignments, the student should ask for one at the start of the class *before* which the paper is due. One extension will be granted, but only if it is requested according to the requirement listed on this syllabus. Late assignments will lose 3 grade points for each day they are not submitted. Email submission is strongly encouraged.

3.2 Short Presentations: In the second course session, students shall briefly present to the class an example of a cultural landscape through a documentation – a painting, a song, a book, a map, a poem, a photograph or even a meal. This exercise will not be graded, and will help students think through how cultural landscapes are made evident.

3.3 Glossary: There will be a weekly glossary word or term selected by one student (all will participate, some perhaps twice depending on enrollment) that will be presented to the course as an exercise in observing the term. The word or term shall come from readings, viewings or field trips. Students shall define the word in a single paragraph. The glossary assignment will not be graded, but facilitates reflection.

3.4 Final Project: Final projects will be developed in The Ville neighborhood of St. Louis, a historically African-American area where significant cultural institutions were concentrated. Today The Ville has endured vacancy and demolition, alongside depopulation. Our work will intersect with efforts to develop a community heritage trail, collection of residents' stories and documentation of historic sites. Students will work in teams to tackle aspects of documentation, conservation and curation of the cultural landscape. The final project assignment will be distributed in class on November 10.

4.0 Grading

4.1 Grade Distribution

Assigned Papers	30%
Final Project	40%
Course Attendance and Participation	30%

4.2 Grades

A (excellent) exceptional performance; strongly exceeding the requirements of the course, showing strong academic initiative and independent resourcefulness.

B (good) performance above the norm; accurate and complete; beyond the minimum requirements of the course; work demonstrates marked progress and initiative.

C (average) satisfactory work that adequately meets minimum requirements and demonstrates satisfactory comprehension, communication skills, and effort; demonstrates little initiative to investigate the problem without substantial prodding of the instructor; work shows little improvement.

D (inferior) unsatisfactorily meets minimum requirements; demonstrates minimum comprehension, communication skills, and effort at an inferior level; initiative lacking; improvement not noticeable.

F (failing) does not meet minimum requirements; fails to adequately demonstrate comprehension, communication skills, and effort.

4.3 Academic Integrity: You are responsible for adhering to the university's academic integrity policies. Specifically you are expected to produce your own work, to avoid inappropriate collaboration (especially on the written assignments), and to avoid various other forms of academic dishonesty, including falsification of data and misrepresentation of sources. Failure to cite and formally acknowledge your sources constitutes plagiarism, and will result in a failing grade (and likely disciplinary action within the bounds of Washington University's usual policies). You should produce work that is *very clear* in its acknowledgement of others' work – not only quoted material, but ideas and language as well

4.4 Citations and Formatting: All work for the course should use the Chicago Style or MLA Style. Please use an 11-point font, double space your work, and provide page numbers, appropriate references and a works cited or bibliography at the end. Papers should also have a title, which can be generic or simply a statement of theme.

Schedule

* Denotes a reading posted as PDF on Blackboard. Additional readings may be assigned or recommended.

Friday, September 1 (Looking at Land)

Introductions

Film in Class:

Koyaanisqatsi (1983; Godfrey Reggio, director)

Suggested Reading:

Robinson Meyer, "Koyaanistocksi: A Modern Classic Recreated With Stock Footage," *The Atlantic* (April 8, 2016).

<https://www.theatlantic.com/technology/archive/2016/04/koyannistocksi-the-modern-classic-recreated-with-stock-footage/477543/>

Friday, September 8 (Defining the Cultural Landscape)

Brief Student Presentations

Film In Class:

Buffalo Common (2001; Bill Brown, director)

True Stories (1988; David Byrne, director)

Reading:

J.B. Jackson, "The Necessity for Ruins," *The Necessity for Ruins* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1980)*

Peirce F. Lewis, "Axioms for Reading the Landscape: Some Guides to the American Scene," *The Interpretation of Ordinary Landscapes* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979)*

D.W. Meinig, "The Beholding Eye: Ten Versions of the Same Scene," *The Interpretation of Ordinary Landscapes* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979)*

Mona Domosh, "An Uneasy Alliance?: Tracing the Relationships Between Feminist and Cultural Geographies," *Social Geography* 1.37 (2005).

Friday, September 15 (Cultural Landscapes in Heritage Law)

Field Trip In Class: Forest Park Monuments

Reading:

Kim Bell and Celeste Bott, "Confederate Monument will be gone from Forest Park by Friday under new agreement," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* (June 27, 2017).

http://www.stltoday.com/news/local/govt-and-politics/confederate-monument-will-be-gone-from-forest-park-by-friday/article_f5ffd027-64fe-5483-8f71-871c517b4f9f.html

Patrick Strickland, "Debate Over US Confederate Monuments Intensifies," *Al Jazeera* (June 28, 2017).

<http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2017/06/debate-confederate-monuments-intensifies-170619082627175.html>

National Park Service, *Preservation Brief 36: Protecting Cultural Landscapes: Planning, Treatment and Management of Historic Landscapes*.

<https://www.nps.gov/tps/how-to-preserve/briefs/36-cultural-landscapes.htm>

Quebec Declaration on the Preservation of the Spirit of Place (2008).*

Suggested Reading:

George McCue, "The Blue and the Gray and the Bronze," *Sculpture City: St. Louis* (St. Louis: Laumeier Sculpture Park, 1988).*

Burra Charter: <http://australia.icomos.org/publications/charters/>

Friday, September 22 (Origins of the US Cultural Landscape)

Film In Class:

Dakota 38 (2012)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1pX6FBSUyQI&t=3966s>

Reading:

Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz, *An Indigenous Peoples' History of the United States*, p. 1-116.

Suggested Reading:

Sam Durant, *Proposal for White and Dead Indian Monuments* (2005, art project)

<http://samdurant.net/index.php/project/proposal-for-white-and-indian-dead-monuments/>

Native Land (website to review – look up your home town): <http://native-land.ca>

Paper #1 Due

Friday, September 29 (Cultural Contests, Cultural Constructs)

Field Trip In Class: Big Mound Site and Jefferson National Expansion Memorial

Reading:

Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz, *An Indigenous Peoples' History of the United States*, p. 117-218.

Suggested Reading:

St. Louis Mound Group and Big Mound

<http://www.modot.org/ehp/sites/BigMound.htm>

Jefferson National Expansion Memorial

<https://tclf.org/sites/default/files/microsites/kiley-legacy/JeffersonNEM.html>

Friday, October 6 (Land Uses and Abuses)

Film Excerpt In Class:

Tar Creek (2009)

Guest Lecture:

Sage Dawson, visual artist (sagedawson.com)

Reading:

Lucy Lippard, *Undermining*. Full text.

Friday, October 13 - NO CLASS

Friday, October 20 (Vernacular Landscapes)

Film In Class:

The Other Side (2006; Bill Brown, director)

Reading:

J.B. Jackson, *Discovering the Vernacular Landscape*. p. 1-102; 125-157.

Suggested Reading:

J.B. Jackson, *Discovering the Vernacular Landscape*. p. 103-124.

Michael Allen, The Landscape of Fragments and Memories: Intangible Heritage on the American Bottom
<http://theamericanbottom.org/itineraryAllen.html>

Paper #2 Due

Friday, October 27 (Landscapes of Labor, Landscapes of Struggle)

Film In Class:

Harlan County USA (1976; directed by Barbara Kopple).

Reading:

bell hooks, *Belonging*, p. 1-68.

Jesse Vogler, "Company Towns," The American Bottom Project.
<http://theamericanbottom.org/itinerarySix.html>

Suggested Reading:

Eric Lipton and Barry Meier, "Under Trump, Coal Mining Gets New Life on U.S. Lands," *New York Times* (6 August 2017).
<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/08/06/us/politics/under-trump-coal-mining-gets-new-life-on-us-lands.html>

Friday, November 3 (Sacred Landscapes)

Field Trip In Class: Greenwood Cemetery, 6571 St Louis Ave, St. Louis, MO 63121

Guest Guide: Raphael Morris; President, Greenwood Cemetery Association

Reading:

John R. Stilgoe, "Graveyards," *Common Landscape of America* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1982).*

Kathy McKoy, "Afro-American Cemeteries in St. Louis," *Gateway Heritage* 63 (Winter 1985).
bell hooks, *Belonging*, p. 69-105

Friday, November 10 (Landscapes of Despair)

Film In Class:

Detropia (2012)

Reading:

Dora Apel, *Beautiful Terrible Ruins: Detroit and the Anxiety of Decline*. p. 1-11; 58-112; 132-152.

Barry Langford, "Seeing only corpses: Vision and/of urban disaster in apocalyptic cinema," *Urban Space and Cityscapes: Perspectives from Modern and Contemporary Culture* (Oxon, UK: Routledge, 2006).

Paper #3 Due

Friday, November 17 (Landscapes of Hope)

Field Trip In Class: The Ville

Guest Guides: Aaron Williams, Young Friends of the Ville; Others TBD

Reading:

bell hooks, *Belonging*, p. 106-119; 143-183 & 203-223.

Suggested Reading:

National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form: Historic and Architectural Resources of the Ville (2010)

<https://dnr.mo.gov/shpo/nps-nr/64500318.pdf>

Friday, November 24 – NO CLASS

Friday, December 1 (Field Work)

Work in Teams; Start In Classroom for Discussion

Reading:

Camilo Jose Vergara, "Energies of the Outmoded," *American Ruins* (New York: The Monacelli Press, 1995).*

Trevor Paglen, "Experimental Geography: From Cultural Production to the Production of Space," *Critical Landscapes: Art, Space, Politics* (Oakland, Calif.: University of California Press, 2015).*

Sarah Kanouse, "Critical Day Trips: Tourism and Land-Based Practice" *Critical Landscapes: Art, Space, Politics* (Oakland, Calif.: University of California Press, 2015).*

Friday, December 8 (Presentations, Last Class Session)

Presentations of Final Projects

Wednesday, December 13

Final Paper Due by 5:00 PM