

Course #: **LAND 2210** 3-credits fulfills 3 credits of Content Area 1 – Arts and Humanities
Course title: **The Common Landscape of the U.S.A: Rights, Responsibilities, and Values**
Room 132 WB Young Building 9:30 – 10:45
Department: **Plant Science & Landscape Architecture**

Instructor: **Associate Professor Peter Miniutti**
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Office hours: **By appointment. Please email.**
Office: **WB Young Room 109C**

SEE & THINK



Make-believe landscapes are becoming more and more common as evidenced by Disney World's Blizzard Beach

A. What This Course Is About

The common landscape of the U.S.A. is what you see every day when living in America.

Development patterns (location of our objects) in this country are the result of three primary forces; (1) the **common law right** of an individual to use their land as they please, (2) the **government's power** to limit that use in order to promote the health, safety, morals and the general welfare of the community, (3) and our individual and collective **value systems**.

The overall goal of this course is to provide students with the necessary skills to develop a thoughtful and informed attitude toward the forces, which guide development patterns in the U.S.A. The ability to systematically analyze the built environment, in an objective manner, is the basis for understanding the "cause and effect" between the primary forces and resultant development patterns.

B. Objectives:

1. Become articulate. There are three ways to express yourself. Orally, during class discussions, with the written word on tests and graphically on student projects. You are required to bolster your intuitive feelings with objective facts. All graphic skills needed will be taught in class.

2. Acquire intellectual breadth and versatility. The disciplines of landscape architecture, architecture, and planning are often referred to as “social-arts”, that is part art and part science. “Social-artists” are generalists by nature and tend to have a working knowledge of many disciplines without being microscopic in thinking in any one discipline. You will be asked to keep your head up, observe, think and react.

3. Acquire critical judgment. Learn techniques used to understand and critique the common landscape.

4. Acquire moral sensitivity. You need to define your “land ethic”. Knowledge of sustainability, capitalism, individual rights and the need to protect the health, safety and welfare of the general public will help you better understand how Americans have traditionally valued (de-valued) land.

5. Acquire awareness of your era and society. You need to understand that we, as a society, must assume full responsibility for our actions. We possess the technological/military might to dominate and potentially ruin the natural world. Do we also possess the intellectual capacity not to do it?

C. Course Format:

Here is a formula to ensure success in this class.

- Attend. Lectures, demonstrations, discussions, and walking trips.
- Prepare. Each lecture has an assigned reading. Read in preparation for each lecture.
- Express your thoughts. The assignments give you freedom of expression. Use it.
- Study. For exams.

Please be on time, give me your full attention and stay for the full duration of the class. If a class is to be missed, notify me by email before the class. You are responsible to have work made up by the next class.

D. Grading Method:

Your grade for the course will be determined approximately as follows:

- Simple in-class assignments* 15 %
- Class participation 15 %
- Student Projects 25 %
- Midterm exam 20 %
- Final exam 25 %

* Numerous classes will begin with simple in-class assignments. These assignments will be graded with a check plus, check & check minus system.

A	95+
A-	90 - 94
B+	87 - 89
B	83 - 86
B-	80 - 82
C+	77 - 79
C	73 - 76
C-	70 - 72
D+	68 - 69
D	64 - 67
D-	60 - 63
F	59 and below

In the past, the average grade in this class is approximately 90% with a couple of flunks.

Please refer to the following link for additional syllabus information:

<https://provost.uconn.edu/faculty-and-staff-resources/syllabi-references/>

E. Major Readings:

- Lecture 1: *Paradise on Earth*, Gabrielle van Zuylen Ch. 1: The Gardens of Antiquity and the Legacy of Islam
- Lecture 2: *Landscape Ecology Principles*, Richard TT Forman, Part 1: Principles
- Lecture 3: *The Image of the City*, Kevin Lynch, Part 1: The Image of the Environment, Part 3: The City Image
- Lecture 4: *Denatured Visions: The American Ideology of Space*, Leo Marx
- Lecture 5: *The Geography of Nowhere*, James Kunstler, Ch. 2: American Space

All the major readings need to be read before the lecture. Other readings will also be assigned.

This course will use UConn's Blackboard Learn website:

<https://learn.uconn.edu/>

F. Proposed Schedule (tentative):

This course will be organized around three major themes.

Date: Activity: Subject:

Part 1: Gardens of Eden

1. 28 Aug	A Question, Course Syllabus & a Video	
2. 30	Lecture 1:	The Creation of High Quality Outdoor Spaces (Gardens of Eden)
3. 04 Sep	Video:	Gardens of the World or other
4. 06	Site Walk:	UConn Storrs Campus Walk – Is this Campus a Garden of Eden?
5. 11	PM	Attempts to Create Gardens of Eden
6. 13	Work Session	
7. 18	Student Projects	

Part 2: Sustainable Patterns of Development (Gardens of Eden)

8. 20	Lecture 2:	Sustainability and Richard TT. Forman
9. 25	Site Walk:	Issues of Natural Sustainability
10. 27	Work Session	
11. 02 Oct	Student Projects	
12. 04	Lecture 3:	Human Ecology, Kevin Lynch and Mental Maps
13. 09	Video:	The Garden and the Grid or other
14. 11	PM	Attempts to Create Sustainable Environments
15. 16	Work Session	
16. 18	Student Projects	

Midterm

17. 23	Midterm review	
18. 25	Midterm exam	

Part 3 Land Ethic of the USA

19. 30	Lecture 4:	Marx's American Ideology of Space
20. 01 Nov	Video:	The moral roots of liberals and conservatives by Jonathan Haidt
21. 06	Video:	Put a value on nature! by Pavan Sukhdev
22. 08	Lecture 5:	Your Health, Safety and Welfare
23. 13	Video/Lecture	James Kunstler / Above and Beyond
24. 15	Discussion:	Make Believe Landscapes
25. 17	PM/NM	Attempt to Create a Mixed-Use Community
26. 29	Site Walk:	Downtown Storrs
27. 04 Dec	TBD	
28. 06	Final review	