SYNOPSIS

Course objectives.
The seminar investigates research and representation methods to develop your landscape architecture thesis. It examines inquiry as, itself, a generative process and practice of representation. In this sense, inquiry compares to actual, physical, changing landscapes and their architectures. Questions are projects. Projects are questions. And the recursive inquiry-research-inquiry-research... process amounts to design as it’s studied and practiced and questioned and re-presented and studied more and practiced more...

How do scholars/designers in this field identify good questions to ask/projects to make? What makes these questions/projects good? How do we evaluate them? And -- maybe the hardest question of all -- why do we evaluate them -- why does it matter? In other words, what does it mean to value certain questions/projects, where are we doing when we value them, and where does that valuation get us? If design values things while also changing them, what things are we looking to value and change?

Topic.
Work, including readings, class discussions and investigative assignments, will focus on one thematic topic in order to demonstrate the thesis inquiry and research process. This topic, relevant to most if not all landscape architecture projects and related to questions of value and change, is denaturalization and (re)naturalization of things and ideals. The broad research keyword “nature” allows different thesis/project ideas to emerge, supporting continued individual or group development in the spring thesis studio.

Student objectives.
You will propose a master’s or senior honors landscape architecture thesis for completion in the Spring 2015 semester. You will write and illustrate your thesis proposal, consisting of a cogent research/design statement; questions; objectives; situation of the work’s context(s), position(s) and contestability in the discipline and world; scope of inquiry, evaluation of disciplinary relevance(s) and contribution(s); research/design methods; formatted references; production schedule; and possible future(s) after completion. You’ll need to:

-Distinguish each of the thesis proposal components bolded above.
-Anticipate how you will deal with each of these things in your thesis.
-Identify and organize key research/design references and tasks.
-Consider social and material contexts of your thesis.
INVESTIGATIONS

1. History.
Reference archive read note question contextualize analyze draft sketch.
Investigate how the institutional definition of “nature” has changed within the context of a federal agency that regulates land in some way(s). Formulate your own research questions from your investigation and the broader course inquiry into denaturalizing and renaturalizing processes and practices of landscape architecture. Write and draw.
  _Research question_ How and why has the institutional definition of “nature” changed?
  _Research context_ The institutionalizing regulation of what we think nature to be, idealize as nature, value as nature, represent as nature, design as nature, construct as nature, and reproduce as nature in landscapes.
  _Research product_ Clearly formatted, punctuated, spelling-and-grammar-checked, fully and correctly cited, coherent and thoughtful, hand and computer-generated, word and image questions and notes. Roughly 6 - 10 tabloid pages of double-spaced text and illustrative images (by you and your references, and including bibliography), as discussed in class (you may produce more or less, depending on your work approach, image sizes, image density, etc).

2. Agency.
Re-reference synthesize situate state question evaluate position scope archive.
Pan, zoom and locate a particular site(s) for focused inquiry and research for the rest of the semester.
Retrace key ideas emerging from Investigation 1. Identify and abstract material and energy movements, relationships, and actions in, into, around and out of the study territory. Map these relationships as connections and disconnections in words and pictures. Picture the verbal and illustrative outlines of these ideas -- and their shadows -- distinctly, even if distinctly blurry. Write and draw.
  _Research questions_ Who/what acts -- as agents -- in your focal site? How do they act? What do they do? How do these actions/agencies change things? Why do they act as they do? What ideals and values of nature do these actions represent?
  _Research context_ Your focal site(s) of inquiry into institutionalizing processes and practices, and the spaces and times enfolding those site(s), processes and practices of nature-as-landscape-architecture.
  _Research product_ More clearly formatted, punctuated, spelling-and-grammar-checked, fully and correctly cited, coherent and thoughtful, hand and computer-generated, word and image questions and notes. Roughly 15 - 20 tabloid pages of double-spaced text and illustrative images (by you and your references, and including bibliography), as discussed in class (you may produce more or less, depending on your work approach, image sizes, image density, etc).

3. Draft.
Re-reference contest re-situate restate request reevaluate reposition re-scope archive schedule.
Critically revisit Investigations 1 and 2 above. Critically fill out the GSC thesis proposal form as a pdf with text and images. Critically re-read and re-view the form. Critically locate your research gaps and critically fill them in. Critically question your sources (thesis context) and information-to-date (words and images) and self (position) more. Retrace, rewrite, rethink, rinse, repeat. Rewrite and redraw.
  _Research questions_ See “Student objectives,” p 1, and the GSC thesis proposal form. Each objective and thesis component is a question to be researched, critiqued and (re)filled in (though not -- ever -- answered completely).
  _Research context_ How does landscape architecture denaturalize and (re)naturalize “nature”? _Research product_ More clearly formatted, punctuated, spelling-and-grammar-checked, fully and correctly cited, coherent and thoughtful, hand and computer-generated, rinsed, words and image questions and prose. Roughly 15 - 20 letter-sized pages of double-spaced text and illustrative images (by you and your references, and including bibliography), as discussed in class (you may produce more or less, depending on your work approach, image sizes, image density, etc), and in the GSC thesis proposal form format.

Re-contest, re-reference, re-contextualize, re-scope, re-evaluate, re-position, re-situate, re-question, re-state, re-schedule, re-archive, anticipate, re-present, re-format.

Re-do 1-3 above. Format your writing and images in a way you like that represents and generates/provokes more thought. Polish the critical, contestable intelligence and representation (valued concepts, words and images) of investigative phases 1-3. Make it shine. Practice presenting it to your classmates, friends, mirror image. Rewrite and redraw, stop. Present, stop. Re-draft a (not final) “final” thesis proposal in the Graduate School format (http://www.gradsch.osu.edu/guidelines.html), post to Carmen.

Research questions: Why does landscape architecture denaturalize and (re)naturalize “nature”? Research context: How do you want to question landscape architecture? How’s this contestable question relevant and valuable to landscape architecture? How and why will you position your research/design references, objectives, methods, schedule and potential future iterations? Research products: (1) a provocatively formatted thesis proposal presentation, (2) a thesis proposal formatted according to Ohio State University Graduate School guidelines (http://www.gradsch.osu.edu/guidelines.html). Roughly 15 - 20 letter-sized pages of double-spaced text and illustrative images.

READING

Discussions.

Each week we will read and discuss/debate assigned readings in class. I’ve selected the readings to support your seminar and thesis work.

Annotate and bring to each class a 1 to 2 page (double spaced) bibliography of the week’s readings so you can use it during the discussions. Post this annotated bibliography to Carmen right before or after the discussion. Email me or talk to me after class if you have any difficulties.

One or two students, as discussants/debaters, will lead the discussion each week, presenting and questioning or arguing ideas drawn from the week’s reading. Discussants should meet before the discussion to prepare notes and questions to begin and direct the discussion. The annotated bibliography for the discussion/debate you’re leading should be denser, more detailed (include page numbers, key quotes, useful images), and longer (roughly 2 to 3 pages double spaced). You’ll read the bibliography aloud before the discussion, projecting images to illustrate your points as needed.

EVALUATION

Attendance.

I require your physical-mental participation in all class meetings. I excuse absence only if you’re sick, injured, or have an emergency, calamity or other extenuating circumstance that you must deal with. Please email or talk to me as soon as possible before, during or after any such condition. I try to email warnings after more than one unexcused absence, but, regardless of my record-keeping and your email system, you’re responsible for your presence and absence from class. Any unexcused absence after the second one will result in a 10-point reduction of your final grade. I may encourage you to withdraw at this point, and will likely require withdrawal -- for the good of your GPA and future work -- if you miss more classes or deadlines.

Deadlines.

I don’t review or grade late work unless you’ve requested and I’ve agreed to an extension, or you’re absent due to one of the conditions described under “Attendance” above. I pace deadlines through the semester to avoid normal studio review dates, but you’re responsible for letting me know if you have conflicting deadlines in other classes. You’re also responsible for your own time management in meeting deadlines. This is an advanced seminar. Please act accordingly. Please discuss any difficulties with me as
soon as you can once they arise so we can work things out. Any unexcused missed deadline after the first one will result in a 3 point reduction of the assignment grade for every 24 hours after the deadline. I may encourage you to withdraw -- for the good of your GPA and future work -- if you’re running into multiple delays or missing more than one deadline.

Grades.
I will post grades to Carmen after a suitable review time following each assignment deadline. More complicated/demanding assignments require more review and evaluation time. My evaluation criteria include commitment to objectives represented in the syllabus and class, thoroughness, depth, thoughtfulness, creativity, generativity, and legibility of your work and its representation in class discussions and assignments. Integration and tailoring of suitable representation methods presented in class, the readings and all assignments will count.

Final grades are issued at the end of the quarter on an A-E scale interpreted as:

- Exceptional work A (/-)
- Good work B (+/-)
- Acceptable work C (+/-)
- Sub-par, barely passable work D (+/-)
- Inadmissible work E
- Incomplete I *

* School policy restricts Incomplete (I) grades to situations beyond individual control preventing a student’s regular participation in class and/or completion of assigned work. Students must document conditions/circumstances necessitating an Incomplete grade. The instructor, section head, and academic advisor must agree to the Incomplete grade before the last class meeting. Students receiving Incomplete grades must complete all assigned work as arranged with the instructor before the university deadline for final grades.

POLICY

Changes.
The instructor reserves the right to modify, alter, delete, add, or otherwise change the contents of this syllabus at any time during the semester upon proper notification to all students enrolled in the course. I generally limit changes to improvements/tweaks suggested by students, and welcome your input to better our work together.

Archiving.
All project assignments, including research, process work, and final project, must be uploaded as pdf files to designated dropboxes in our Carmen course space. File names must follow this convention: 5880/8990_AU14_AssignmentName_LastnameFirstinitial.pdf (example: 5880_AU14_Investigation1_BennettK.pdf). Note the lack of spaces, underscores, and use of capital vs. lower case letters. This convention is necessary for downloading and archiving your work.

I will subtract 5 points from your assignment grade the first time and 10 points each time after that if you don’t use the naming convention correctly.

Conduct.
Students must to adhere to all codes and academic policies of the Ohio State University and Knowlton School. Plagiarism (using the ideas, words or works of someone or something other than yourself as if they are your own without citation) is strictly forbidden.

Academic misconduct.
Any indication of possible cheating, plagiarism or other academic misconduct must be referred to the
Committee on Academic Misconduct 3335-23-01. You must credit and cite all work for this course not originating with you per standards of use and law. You must fully cite all references and credit all images in accordance with university and course guidelines. I will grade any work violating these parameters with an “E”, and refer the violating student to the Committee on Academic Misconduct, per university rules.


Student Code of Conduct.
This code (http://studentaffairs.osu.edu/resource_csc.asp) defines academic misconduct as any activity that tends to compromise the academic integrity of the university, or subvert the educational process. All students are required to review the code and understand the implications of a code violation. If there is any suspicion of academic misconduct, the faculty member/instructor will report the alleged violation to the section head and the Committee on Academic Misconduct (http://oaa.osu.edu/coam/home.html) for investigation and any further action.

Sexual Harassment.
O.S.U.’s Sexual Harassment policy, which applies to all faculty, staff, and students, includes lewd remarks and inappropriate comments made in the studio environment, classroom, and computer labs as well as the “display of inappropriate sexually oriented materials in a location where others can see it.” Students can file a complaint by contacting Student Judicial Affairs at 292-0748. Sanctions include reprimand, suspension, and dismissal from the University.

Accessibility.
If you require accommodation for a disability, please arrange an appointment with the instructor and the Office for Disability Services immediately. At the appointment, the instructor, disability counselor, and student can discuss the course format, anticipate needs and decide upon accommodations. Instructors rely on the Office for Disability Services for assistance in verifying the need for accommodations and developing accommodation strategies.
ADA Coordinator’s Office: http://ada.osu.edu
Office for Disability Services: http://www.ods.ohio-state.edu/
(614) 292-3307 | Fax: (614) 292-4190 | TDD: (614) 292-0901

The following items are prohibited in Knowlton Hall.
Non-KSA furniture, liquor, weapons, bicycles, skateboards, rollerblades, pets, spray paints, foam cutter wands, welding devices, heat guns, and any flame or gaseous liquid device. The following safety compliances must be observed: electrical power cords cannot be connected in a series or extend over traffic areas; fire extinguishers must remain accessible and in full view; access to stairwells, corridors, and aisles must maintain a 44” clear width and handrails must be unobstructed. Building surfaces cannot be marked, anchored to, or penetrated. Installations may not occur in any part of the building except by permission of the KSA Building Coordinator. Power tools are restricted to the shop except when permission is granted by the KSA Building Coordinator. Loud noise is forbidden. Graffiti and vandalism are grounds for disciplinary action.

Student Resources.
http://studentaffairs.osu.edu/def