

LARCH 6920: Deconstructing Landscape

Instructor name: Kristi Cheramie
Year and term: Spring 2014
Meeting time: MWF 1:50-5:30
Meeting location: G1 Landscape Studio

COURSE INFORMATION

DESCRIPTION

This semester we will explore the landscape by way of materials. We will investigate how a collection of materials might come to be located in a particular place and what parameters or conditions hold these materials in position, how these materials might constitute a landscape, and where opportunity might exist to orchestrate (and, thus, design) how and when those materials convene to form space. Rather than reading the landscape as a series of complete or finished objects (tree, glade, park, city), we will instead read the landscape as a process composed of live material formed and continuously reformed by the mutually constitutive forces of ecology, geology and culture. You will be challenged to conceptualize landscape-beyond-program, as a set of materials that is (1) constantly in flux, (2) defined by particular parts capable of influencing each other, and (3) given to certain formal and behavioral properties based on the order of or relationship between those parts. This studio will make the argument that to effectively design (here, we define landscape architecture as the intentional structuring of a landscape's component parts), the landscape must first be understood as a collection of materials embedded with particular histories, cycles, processes, potentials, and limits

OBJECTIVES

- Develop a stance on landscape materials through site analysis, observation, and design.
- Apply a coherent design process to complex site design projects.
- Design at the small/medium scale utilizing two and three dimensional analog/digital representation techniques.
- Develop site analysis techniques and apply them to complex projects focusing on dynamic systems.
- Design with multiple program elements within individual design strategies.
- Apply knowledge from researched case studies, materials, and technologies to innovative site design proposals.

Projects

Project 1: The practice of landscape architecture has little with which to work in the absence of material. Yet the material qualities of landscape are often sidelined in favor imagining landscape as a curated collection of steady-state objects (tree, rock, river). Instead, we will consider landscape as a set of volatile, fluctuating materials (sediment, water, etc) that can be ushered into various configurations and gradually manipulated over periods of time.

Project 2: To that end, the question of how materials change over time will also be ever-present in our investigations. We will consider change an actant not unlike the designer – an active force in the shaping of space, place (in our case, landscape). Identifying types of change (e.g. slow, fast, punctuated, cyclical, gradual) will facilitate our ability to visualize the capacity of materials to play multiple roles in the landscape.

Project 3: Our design work will challenge the seemingly singular and distinct notions of nature, city and infrastructure. As we embrace the new geologic epoch, the Anthropocene, it has become increasingly clear that “we do not act or move along clearly delineated pathways of human and nonhuman, biologic and geologic, inside and outside, self and other. We operate, instead, within complex interstitial field[s] of nonpersonal, ahuman forces, flows, tendencies, and trajectories.” (Ellsworth and Kruse, Making the Geologic Now) To that end, our design work will aim to construe a sequence of new relationships within an existing site in Columbus.