Research Methods in Landscape Architecture
LARCH 7780 Call number 15750, 3 credits
Tuesday and Thursday: 2:20PM - 3:40PM, Scott Lab E0105

Instructor:
Jesus J. Lara, PhD
lara.13@osu.edu
Assistant Professor
Landscape Architecture
291 Knowlton Hall
Phone (614) 292-7452
Larch 7780 Research Methods in Landscape Architecture

Catalog Description: *Research in professional practice techniques; emphasizes all phases of design investigation and documentation*

GENERAL INFORMATION

This course provides students a survey of research methodologies used in the design disciplines. The course will also expose students to the rigor of intensive reading, writing and discussion whose product will provide a solid foundation for subsequent research in the Masters program in Landscape Architecture, Planning and Design. The course will have regular readings and follows a seminar format where everyone participates in discussion. Periodic written assignments will complement the readings with practical application of research skills.

INTRODUCTION

Landscape architects, Designers and Planners draw on a broad range of substantive research to inform the design of places and spaces. Designers need to understand how and why development patterns and spaces are created, how they support a range of activities, how to describe them, how they improve the ecological or economic viability of built form, and how they are used, modified, perceived, evaluate and document the successes and failure of such places. This course examines research and research methods related to such substantive concerns.

There are several ways of approaching research in the design disciplines, including post occupancy studies, case studies, and technical studies. Research can be done using quantitative and/or qualitative methods. Methods can beneficially be borrowed from other disciplines. Given the nature design fields, the use of a multiple methods approach to landscape, planning and design research has become the norm. The case study method takes this approach, and many programs in design now use it for student thesis work, and there is a growing critical mass of cases with similar methods to allow cross comparison. *(http://www.lafoundation.org/Case_Method.html)*

PURPOSE

The purpose of the course is to introduce students to a number of research approaches useful to Planning and Design practice and inquiry, and to further develop their skills for understanding and critiquing both research methods and findings. The course should help students define their own research interests and help them identify methods useful in answering their research questions. A conceptual framework will be used to help organize knowledge areas as well as facilitate understanding between different approaches. Case study approaches will be given special attention, but students will also have opportunity to focus on other research approaches of their choice.

Case study method can be utilized to bring out several kinds of information. One important benefit of case study is that often answer the big questions in the intersection of policy and design in the landscape architecture field. ‘A case study is a well-documented and systematic examination of the process, decision-making and outcomes of a project, which is undertaken for the purpose of informing future practice, policy, theory, and/or education’ (Francis 2003). A case study not only describes projects and places but can also explain and predict future action. They can help to develop a strategic approach to design and planning. According to Robert Yin the value of case studies lies in their potential to ‘retain holistic and meaningful characteristics of real life situation’. Case study analysis is a particularly useful research method in the urban design profession, and the need for case studies arises out of the need to understand complex social and cultural phenomena (Yin 2003).
COURSE OBJECTIVES

- To introduce students to the theoretical issues of research and the methods by which research is conducted;
- To develop techniques and skills in formulating research approaches in planning and design;
- To understand the characteristics of qualitative, quantitative and descriptive research techniques; and,
- To demonstrate applications of these techniques and skills in academics and practice.

NEED FOR RESEARCH IN DESIGN AND PLANNING

Design and planning are based upon input, message exchange, negotiations and information management. How to select, synthesize and use environmentally critical information is the applied objective of this course. Historically, the design professions have had little exposure to measuring client input, whether through individual or group participation. This void underscores the need for scientifically acceptable approaches to research. This situation explains why the design professions have lagged behind other academic fields in the generation of knowledge. In fact, in the United States, design practitioners rather than academicians, have been at the forefront of design innovations and knowledge generation, with few exceptions.

As we at OSU, and planning and design disciplines worldwide, reach for achievements in the academic environment in which we perform, it is essential that we infuse scientific rigor into our curricula. Our universities expect it, and accreditation demands it. That is why this course is in the curriculum.

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES:
The course is taught largely as a seminar, meaning that an emphasis is placed on student preparation for each upcoming class. There is a great deal of outside reading required. Therefore, student preparation is measured by the student’s ability and willingness to discuss assigned and unassigned readings, the student’s ability to challenge the class with solid, well-grounded critical thought, and the student’s attendance. (Any unexcused absence will result in loss of one letter grade for the course.) In addition, student performance is measured by the students’ incorporation of ideas and concepts learned or noted on previous exercises into subsequent discussions or exercises. In other words, don’t forget what you’ve learned.

EVALUATION CRITERIA:
The reason that attendance is absolutely necessary is because each class builds upon those that precede it. The student will be expected to come to class prepared, and current in reading and writing assignments. Participation in class is a good measure of preparedness. In addition to reading assignments in the texts, journals and other publications, you will be given numerous hand-outs over the course of the quarter. The primary writing assignment is the preparation of a thesis proposal, worthy of publication as a scientific paper. This proposal includes an introduction, literature review, methodology and conclusion.

Assignments: There will be three types of assignments: individual-daily, periodic assignments, and quarter-long research proposal.

1. Daily assignments will require the student to read the assigned readings and be prepared to participate in a seminar discussion of those readings. The intent of the discussion assignments is to introduce a rigor of efficient reading, to learn skills in paraphrasing the ideas of others, and to interpret these ideas into use within your own research. The students should be able to concisely summarize key points of the readings and recognize applications to your own research topic.
2. **Periodic assignments** will apply the research skills from the readings toward developing a final research proposal. The periodic assignments are cumulative and are meant to produce a concise proposal for your subsequent research. All periodic assignments must be produced using a computer and must comply with the format and style criteria established in the required reference texts for this course.

3. **Quarter-Long Project Research Proposal.** Format: Paper and PowerPoint presentation and 36 by 48 poster. In addition, students will make a 15 minute presentation in power point of high lights of their final project and submit a hard copy report. Students will prepare a complete research proposal for your research topic. The research proposal shall be a maximum 15 pp. (not including appendices)

**Daily Assignments:**
- Readings

**Periodic Assignments:**
- Journal Critiques
- Assignment One: Define a Topic Problem
- Assignment Two: Annotated Working Bibliography
- Assignment Three: Semester Project Research Proposal

**Semester-Long Project:**
- PowerPoint
- Report

**Critical reading / reflection**
Reading critically generally requires more than one read. The first read through gives an impression of the content and stirs the imagination. The second read is the slow one, during which you analyze the content, in depth. The third is for another chance to understand the flow and continuity of arguments or parts of the whole.

While reading; it is crucial to read material more than once with pencil and highlighter in hand, looking for what is there and not there, letting the following kinds of questions come to mind:

- what are the key issues, topics, themes?
- what do key terms mean (use of a dictionary)?
- what are the author’s priorities?
- what is valued explicitly? implicitly?
- how is material organized? is there a clear structure?
- what is repeated?
- what is not written, but seems to be conveyed nonetheless?
- what is fact, supposition, belief, theory: are these clearly identified?
- what appears to be the basis or support of the author's views?
- how linear or nonlinear is the flow of ideas?
- with what do I agree or disagree?
- how could difficult phrases be rewritten to clarify the message?
- where are examples drawn from, comparisons?
- what conclusions are drawn?
- how does the material compare with your personal experience?
- is there a moral, a take-home message, one good idea?
- where does the material lead?

The creative, curious and critical reader will imagine that he or she is in conversation with the author while reading, and mark up the text by underlining, highlighting, starring, making notes, inserting comments and
posing questions in the margins, perhaps inside the back cover and on end pages. He or she will recognize the subtext of bibliographic sources, and will check footnotes and endnotes as paths to additional insights.

COURSE ORGANIZATION

Examinations
There will be an in-class mid-term exam and the final exam will be a take-home exam which will be distributed a week prior to its due date. The material covered is essential to your understanding of the discipline and forms a core part of your working knowledge allowing you to function in a professional setting.

Late Work
All assignments are due in their entirety at the time specified at the beginning on each project. All work submitted late (even if it is only five minutes after the due date) will be penalized according to the following scale: submitted within 24 hours after due date will be reduced 20%; submitted within 48 hours after due date will be reduced 40%; and submitted within 72 hours after due date will be reduced 60% of the total possible points allocated for the particular project.

Retention of Work
All work submitted by the student to satisfy course requirements will normally be returned to the student within a reasonable amount of time. However, the course faculty and the Section of Landscape Architecture reserve the right to retain any student work for the purpose of display and/or future teaching resources. Any student work that is retained will be made available for student review upon request. At the end of the quarter students must turn in electronic files of their research (CD’s and Drop assignment box at Carmen).

Plagiarism: Students in this course are responsible for the honest completion and representation of their work, for appropriate citation of sources, and for respect of others’ academic endeavors. Please note that according to the University’s Code of Behavior on Academic Matters:

It shall be an offence for a student knowingly:
• to forge or in any other way alter or falsify any document or evidence required for admission to the University, or to utter, circulate or make use of any such forged, altered or falsified document, whether the record be in print or electronic form;
• to use or posses an unauthorized aid or aids or obtain unauthorized assistance in any academic examination or term test or in connection with any form of academic work;
• to personate another person, or to have another person personate, at any academic examination or term test or in connection with any other form of academic work;
• to represent as one’s own any idea or expression of an idea or work of another in any academic examination or term test or in connection with any other form of academic work, i.e. to commit plagiarism;
• to submit without the knowledge and approval of the instructor to whom it is submitted, any academic work for which credit has previously been obtained or is being sought in another course or program of study in the University or elsewhere;
• to submit for credit any academic work containing a supported statement of fact or reference to a source which has been concocted

Evaluating Student Work:
Students will be evaluated on the course components according to the assignment guidelines in the “Assignments” document. But generally the following criteria will be used:

Written work:
• Mechanics: that is, freedom from spelling and grammatical errors. Students are expected to include thorough, accurate and consistent references in any bona fide academic referencing style that includes page numbering.
- Writing style: defined as clarity, succinctness, appropriate diction and tone.
- Structure: This refers to the coherence of the paper’s organization. It means that the focus of the work is clearly presented in the introduction and the work is structured in a way which logically flows from this introduction. It also means that a thesis or argument is clearly presented when the assignment calls for it. Furthermore, ideas and sections are linked. Finally, a well-structured essay avoids repetition and duplication and remains focused on the subject matter.
- Precision and accuracy: Precision means saying exactly and specifically what you mean, avoiding vague generalities. Accuracy refers to absence of major factual errors.
- Analysis: Student essays are expected to include critical distance, reflection and originality of thought. The proposal and term paper will be evaluated on the defensibility of their analysis in terms of their use of evidence and logical coherence.

RESOURCES AT OSU
If you need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability, you should contact us to arrange an appointment as soon as possible. At the appointment we can discuss the course format, anticipate your needs and explore potential accommodations. We rely on the Office for Disability Services for assistance in verifying the need for accommodations and developing accommodation strategies. If you have not previously contacted the Office for Disability Services, We encourage you to do so.
ADA Coordinator’s Office: <http://ada.osu.edu>
Office for Disability Services: <http://www.ods.ohio-state.edu>

Misconduct:
The Student Code of Conduct 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. Other Misconduct includes damage to, alteration of or other improper use of University Equipment and Property. The facilities of Knowlton Hall are for your use, but they are also for the use of students who come after you. Please take appropriate care in your use of the facilities.

Sexual Harassment
Attention is called to the University’s Sexual Harassment Policy 1.15 https://hr.osu.edu/policy/policy115.pdf. Prompt action will be taken to report and correct any problems should they occur. If a student feels they have been the subject of harassment, or if others observe such harassment, it should be reported immediately to the Faculty member in charge, Section Head or Director of the School.

Student Resources
Other resources for students can be found at: http://studentaffairs.osu.edu/default.asp

EVALUATION
Course Grades
Numerical Values:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Numerical Value</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>94-100</td>
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<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90-93.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>83-86.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80-82.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>73-76.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>70-72.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>60-66.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>D+</td>
<td>67-69.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>&lt; 60</td>
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<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87-89.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>77-79.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reject: inadmissible evidence</td>
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</table>
**Breakdown of Grades by Assignment:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Weekly Assignments:</strong></td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Readings and Journal Article Critiques</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Periodic Assignments:</strong></td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group lead discussion on readings</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assignment One: Define a Topic Problem-Presentation</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assignment Two: Annotated Working Bibliography</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assignment Three: Research Proposal-Final Presentation</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participation, attendance and preparation</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Exams</strong></td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
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**Syllabus Change**

_The course faculty reserves the right to modify, alter, delete, add, or otherwise change the content of this syllabus at any time during the quarter upon proper notification of the students enrolled in the course._

**Course Materials**

**Required Reading available at the bookstore:**


*Key supplementary texts, listed below, are also available on reserve in the Architecture Library. These sources are made available to allow the student to study the entire book for information for which time could not allow further study:*


**Recommended journals**

- EDRA conference proceedings
- Global Architecture (various issues on designers, projects and firms)
- Land Forum
- Land Use and Environment Law Review
- Land Use Digest (ULI)
- Land Use Law & Zoning Digest
• Land Use Policy
• Landscape (J.B. Jackson, ed.)
• Landscape Architecture
• Landscape Ecology (in Hale: Science)
• Landscape Management
• Landscape Research
• Landscape Architecture and Town Planning in the Netherlands
• Process: Architecture (various issues on designers, projects and firms)
• The Princeton Journal, Volume 2, Landscape
• Journal of Environmental Psychology
• Environment & Behavior
• Environment & Planning B
• Journal of Planning Literature
• Landscape and Urban Planning
• Journal of Architecture and Planning Research
• Journal of the American Planning Association
• Journal of Social Issues
• Journal of Urban Design

(Note: Tentative Course Outline/Schedule subject to change depending on circumstances)

Required readings for lecture/seminar discussion:

ASSIGNMENTS

Journal Articles Critiques
Format: Write up report
Critiques of selected journal articles and readings will be due every three week. Please identify the following: Author’s name, Article Name, Journal-date-volume-pages, Objective, Problem, Methods, Categorized Methods, and Findings.

Describing relationships between and among readings would be a useful way of establishing meaning, but be brief and incisive.

For each journal critique entry, consider these questions and indicate what the content means to you:
1. What is the context for the author’s work?
2. What is the author’s purpose?
3. What is the topic and the main point?
4. What are the main arguments?
5. How does this article or chapter relate to other material you are currently reading?
6. How could you apply this material to current studio or other work? … to future work?
7. What does it mean to you now?

PERIODIC ASSIGNMENTS

Assignment #1: Define a Problem Statement

Define a topic of research which will guide your analysis of readings and assignments throughout this course and interpret this into a problem statement. The topic you choose may or may not be your actual thesis topic as it may change throughout the semester as you develop research skills. You are encouraged to use the assigned
readings in this course to support your ideas. You must use format guidelines outlined in required Graduate College document.

1. **In no more than two pages, this paper should define a problem statement which answers the following questions:**

   - What is the Topic Problem (and/or sub-problems) you will be addressing in doing your research? What is the question your research will answer?
   - What is the goal of your research? Defined in one sentence
   - What is the context of your Topic Problem; why is the Topic Problem significant to you and the larger professional, academic, or public communities?

   The paper should be written to include an Introduction defining the context, Body defining the problem and goal, and Conclusion defining the significance of the problem to the context.

2. **Pecha-Kucha Day 20x20 presentation introductory exercise,**

   Pecha-Kucha 20x20 is a simple presentation format where you show 20 images, each for 20 seconds. The images forward automatically and you talk along to the images. An informal way people get together and share their ideas, works, thoughts, and holiday snaps - just about anything.


**Assignment #2: Annotated Working Bibliography**

**Format: Write up report. Due**

Create an annotated working bibliography on your research topic. It should consist of at least 20 sources and must include at least the following types of resources: books, journal articles and dissertations/theses. You may also include primary resource materials.

- The bibliography should be preceded by a one sentence statement defining the research topic.
- All the annotations should then relate directly to that topic.
- All entries should follow standard bibliographic format as described in the APA text: [http://www.library.cornell.edu/resrch/citmanage/apa](http://www.library.cornell.edu/resrch/citmanage/apa)
- Each entry should be annotated with information describing its context and significance to your research.
- Do not simply copy existing abstracts, but react to each source by addressing the following:
  - What information does this source provide?
  - How does this source contribute to your research?
  - How is this source distinguished from your other sources?

For more information on how to do an annotated bibliography, visit the Cornell University Library's research skills website, [http://www.library.cornell.edu/okuref/research/skill28.htm](http://www.library.cornell.edu/okuref/research/skill28.htm). Refer to the OSU Research Resources website for a Citation Guide for bibliographic entries.

**Assignment #3: Semester Project Research Proposal**

**Format: Paper and PowerPoint presentation. Students will make a 15 minute presentation in power point of high lights of their final project and submit a hard copy report.**

Prepare a complete research proposal for your research topic. The research proposal shall be a maximum 15 pp. (not including appendices) and shall include:

- Title Page
- Abstract of proposal
- Problem statement and its significance
- Hypothesis/Goal of Research/Thesis Statement
- Project Description
  - Research objectives
  - Research plan (proposed methodology, faculty committee)
As a parallel assignment, **Graduate students** are required to seek out a granting agency applicable to their research topic and follow their application guidelines in the completion of this assignment. The grant application must be approved by the instructor and should include the above structure as a minimum. A copy of the grant application must be included with the final assignment submittal.

For assistance in seeking an appropriate granting agency, contact the University’s Research Support Office. Format and style must comply with the criteria established in the required reference texts for this course. This research proposal shall be based on a model of a research grant proposal without identifying either personnel or budget requirements. Refer to grant writing manuals for general organization, style and content guidelines.

(Note: Tentative Course Outline/Schedule subject to change depending on circumstances)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Assigned Readings and Activities</th>
<th>Assigned Readings and Activities</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Jan 8</td>
<td>Jan 10</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Course introduction.</strong></td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Jan 15</td>
<td>Jan 17</td>
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<td><strong>Intro Presentations:</strong> 6 minutes Pecha-Kucha about you and your interests interest in Landscape Architecture</td>
<td><strong>Identifying Resources</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Booth, pp. 2-14, and Creswell, pp. 1-20</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>- Leedy, pp.1-12 (Carmen)</td>
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<td><strong>Jane McMaster: Bibliographic Instruction Session Architecture Librarian</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Jan 22</td>
<td>Jan 24</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Defining the Problem/Literature review</strong></td>
<td><strong>Asking Questions, Finding Answers</strong></td>
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<td>- Booth, pp. 16-26, and Creswell, pp. 23-46.</td>
<td>- Class exercise</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Jan 29</td>
<td>Jan 31</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Journal article critique #1(3 articles)</strong></td>
<td><strong>Research Question and Hypothesis</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Integrating Design and Research/The introduction and Purpose Statement</strong></td>
<td>- Creswell, pp. 111-125</td>
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<td>- Booth, pp. 35-66, and Creswell, pp. 97-143;</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Feb 5</td>
<td>Feb 7</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Assignment One due: Define a Topic Problem-Presentation and discussion.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Guest Speaker #1</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Booth, pp. 68-8103, Creswell, pp. 129-139</td>
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<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Event</td>
<td>Notes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feb 12</td>
<td>Comparative Methodologies - Environment-Behavior (qualitative)</td>
<td>Demin, pp. 152-172 (Carmen)</td>
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<td>Feb 14</td>
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<td>No class LASER event.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feb 19</td>
<td>Comparative Methodologies - Environment-Behavior (qualitative)</td>
<td>Demin, pp. 152-172 (Carmen)</td>
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<td>Feb 21</td>
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<td>Guest Speaker #2, (Researcher) readings will be provided in Carmen</td>
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<td>Feb 26</td>
<td>*Journal article critique #2 (3 articles)</td>
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<td>Feb 28</td>
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<td>Guest Speaker #3: (Researcher) readings will be provided in Carmen</td>
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<td>Mar 5</td>
<td>Comparative Methodologies - Environment-Behavior (qualitative)</td>
<td>Booth, pp.177-200</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mar 7</td>
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<td>Guest Speaker #4, Gulsah Akar, PhD, CRP (Academic) readings will be provided in Carmen.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mar 12</td>
<td>Spring Break</td>
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<td>Mar 14</td>
<td>Spring Break</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Mar 19</td>
<td>**Assignment Two due: Annotated Working Bibliography</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mar 21</td>
<td></td>
<td>Guest Speaker #5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mar 26</td>
<td>Comparative Methodologies – Case Study Mark Francis article (Carmen)</td>
<td>Booth, pp.213.226</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar 28</td>
<td></td>
<td>Guest Speaker #6</td>
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**Assignment Two due: Annotated Working Bibliography**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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</thead>
</table>
| April 2 | *Journal article critique #3 (3 articles)*  
- Booth, pp.249-268  
- Demin, pp. 192-204 (Carmen)  
**Preliminary Outline due** |
| April 4 | **Guest Speaker #7 Kristy Balliet, Architecture**  
(Academic) readings will be provided in Carmen |
| April 9 | **Individual Meetings Production Day.** |
| April 11 | **Individual Meetings Production Day.** |
| April 16 | **Assignment Three due: Research Proposal-Final Presentation** |
| April 18 | **Assignment Three due: Research Proposal-Final Presentation** |
| April 23 | **Take-Home Final Exam distributed** |
| April 25 | **Final Exams** |
| April 30 | **Final Exams** |