

LA 620 Landscape Research Methods I

The culture and context of research in landscape architecture

Department of Landscape Architecture

University of Oregon Winter 2018

2 credits / Grading: P/N

Prof. Roxi Thoren / 219 Lawrence Hall

Time: Tuesdays 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Office hours: Wed. 11 a.m. - 12 noon or by appt.

Location: 231 Lawrence Hall

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Prerequisites: conditional MLA or Ph.D. student or Permission of Instructor

Course Description

Landscape architecture is a discipline that crosses multiple realms, including the natural and social sciences, the humanities, and the arts. As a result, research within landscape architecture engages a wide range of inquiries, methods, and outcomes. This course introduces students to the role of research within the field of landscape architecture, stages of defining and completing a research project, and typical methods of landscape architectural research, with an aim towards defining a prospectus for the students' masters project.

The purpose of this course is to understand the culture and the context of landscape architectural research as a precursor to conceiving and carrying out your own graduate research project. As part of this you will explore the role of the master's project proposal in articulating your research intentions, you will explore published literature in landscape architecture and other fields, and examine tools and techniques that range from online literature searches to place analyses.

Course Objectives

By the end of the course, students will have:

- Achieved moderate proficiency in critical reading and thinking about landscape architectural research.
- Learned techniques for efficiently accessing and sorting through information that can connect their research to the body of critical thinking within environmental design professions and from other fields with relevant knowledge or perspectives.
- Understood how to narrow their thinking from an interest area to a topic to a researchable question, conceive approaches to answering that question, and then reconnect the answer to the broader context of the issue so that the new knowledge can be applied within a larger context of design and planning

Course Format

The course meets weekly for two hours. We will explore the culture of landscape architectural research through various modes: readings, discussion, short writing assignments, team and individual projects. COD faculty and current graduate students will visit the class to discuss their research and the role of research in their professional development. Doctoral students will meet an additional hour every other week with the instructor, and are expected to contribute an additional 5 hours a week of independent work outside of class in refining their dissertation proposal direction. The scope of this additional work will be defined in consultation with the instructor and, when appropriate, the student's major professor.