CONTEMPORARY AMERICAN LANDSCAPES

Winter 2021
Instructor: Leslie Ryan       lryan@uoregon.edu
Office hrs: Tues 12-1 pm (or by appt), Onyx Bridge 178
Room: Lawrence 206
Time/day: T/Th 10-11:50 am
Credits: 4
Prerequisites: none

The land we are on
We are learning and living on the ancestral and contemporary lands of the Kalapuya, who have called this land home for thousands of years. What does this knowledge compel us to do?

Herbert Bayer (1982) Mill Creek Canyon Earthworks, Kent, WA

As the name suggests, the “contemporary American landscape” covers extensive terrain and a diverse array of places and voices. The landscapes we look at will be designed and vernacular, urban and rural, wild and domesticated, and range across large and small scales. Although the focus is on post-war (1945-) landscapes of the territory known as the United States, we will be studying the greater context and underlying factors that helped shape the contemporary landscape and provide a glimpse of what these places may become.

There will be three broadly defined themes and nine weekly topics to be covered throughout the term:

The land before us
1. Reading the landscape
2. Disciplining the landscape
3. Remembering the landscape

Immigrants and colonizers
4. Food landscapes
5. Introduced landscapes
6. Energy landscapes

Making room for others
7. Defiant landscapes
8. Healing landscapes
9. Wild landscapes
Course structure
Each week’s theme will be explored through lectures, guest speakers, readings and other outside sources, discussions, and short walks (weather permitting). Assignments will be opportunities to integrate class lectures and discussions with reflections on your place within the larger landscape. There will be no tests or quizzes. Please note that the School of Architecture and Environment does not hold regularly scheduled classes during week 10 when all SAE students are attending final design reviews.

Course learning objectives
• Develop critical observation skills in reading the landscape and communicating observations using multiple methods
• Demonstrate an understanding of the layers of culture embedded in a place
• Expand knowledge of contemporary landscape design
• Learn to become responsible landscape citizens
• Comprehend an array of potential relationships between natural and built forms, systems, and spaces
• Understand the entanglement of social, ecological and economic relationships affecting the contemporary landscape in the U.S.

Inclusive culture
The University of Oregon community is committed to engaging and including people across all differences. Each of you is welcome in this course. A shared objective among faculty and students is to promote a culture supporting a diversity of values and thoughts through maintaining an environment of open communication, critical discourse and creative thinking. Consideration for the needs of others, and for the facilities that we share, is essential to foster a culture of mutual respect and collaboration.

Attendance
Attendance is required in all class sessions. If you are unable to attend, you must inform me prior to your absence to request an excused absence. More than one unexcused absence will be grounds for lowering your grade by one level, and more than two unexcused absences will be grounds for lowering your grade by two levels.

Grading
This course is graded. A grade of C or better indicates that you have achieved the Learning Objectives stated above, have completed all assigned work, attended classes, and participated in group discussions and pin-ups. The following grade breakdowns are provided to help you understand what each grade will entail:

A 100 – 90 % ---- Excellent. Ideas are clearly stated and developed. Specific examples are appropriate and help develop claims. Student not only demonstrates full knowledge of subject, but also demonstrates insight, invention, critical thought and ability to elaborate.
B 80 - 89 % ------ Good. Meets expectations for assignments, analysis and critique.
C 70 - 79 % ------ Average. Work is competent. Student demonstrates reasonable awareness and knowledge of subject, but fails to elaborate; work is often not supported by specific examples, analysis or synthesis.
D 60 - 69 % ------ Inferior. Notably lacking preparation; project/assignment content may be irrelevant or dispersive.
F 59% or less ---- Failing. Work is incomplete, not understandable or logical, poorly organized. Student doesn’t have grasp of information, and can’t answer questions about subject.
Please note that all work for this course must be completed during this quarter -- it is University policy that an "I" or Incomplete be given only by prior arrangement with the instructor, and then only when very special circumstances warrant that mark.

**Accessible education**

Please let me know within the first two weeks of the term if you need assistance to fully participate in the course. Participation includes access to lectures, web-based information, in-class activities, and exams. The Accessible Education Center ([http://aec.uoregon.edu/](http://aec.uoregon.edu/)) works with students to provide an instructor notification letter that outlines accommodations and adjustments to class design that will enable better access. You can also contact the Accessible Education Center directly for assistance with access or disability-related questions or concerns.

**Academic misconduct**

“The University Student Conduct Code (available at [conduct.uoregon.edu](http://conduct.uoregon.edu)) defines academic misconduct. Students are prohibited from committing or attempting to commit any act that constitutes academic misconduct. By way of example, students should not give or receive (or attempt to give or receive) unauthorized help on assignments or examinations without express permission from the instructor. Students should properly acknowledge and document all sources of information (e.g. quotations, paraphrases, ideas) and use only the sources and resources authorized by the instructor. If there is any question about whether an act constitutes academic misconduct, it is the students’ obligation to clarify the question with the instructor before committing or attempting to commit the act. Additional information about a common form of academic misconduct, plagiarism, is available at [https://researchguides.uoregon.edu/citing-plagiarism](https://researchguides.uoregon.edu/citing-plagiarism).”