Department: Plant Science

Course No.: LAND 2210 [275]

Title: The Common (Shared) Landscape of the USA: Rights, Responsibilities and Values

Credits: 3

Contact: George Elliott

Content Area: CA 1 Arts and Humanities

Current Title and Catalog Copy:

LAND 275. Landscape Architecture: Theory I - The Cultural Landscape First semester. Two credits. Two class periods. Open to sophomores or higher. *Miniutti*
An introduction to the study of landscape architecture and related planning and design disciplines. Emphasis on understanding the political and social forces which influence development patterns in the United States.

Revised Cat Copy:
The Common (Shared) Landscape of the USA: Rights, Responsibilities and Values First semester. Three credits. Three class periods. Open to sophomores or higher. *Miniutti*
An introduction to the study of vernacular landscapes in the USA with an emphasis on the relationship between societal values and land use patterns.

CA Justification: develop a thoughtful and informed attitude toward the forces that dictate development patterns in the USA. The following course objectives will guide curriculum development:

1. To understand the need for and usefulness of critical inquiry of the vernacular landscape.
2. Provide students with the fundamental skills needed to critique the built landscape.
3. To understand how the myriad of historical, political, economic, and societal forces affect how land is valued or de-valued in this country.
4. To speculate what development patterns would emerge if the student's value system guided development.
5. Communicate the importance and validity of questioning conventional knowledge in regard to development patterns.

B. The course will be organized around five major themes (see 1c. below) Each theme will have a lecture discussing theory, a "demonstration" lecture about a practical application of the theory and assigned reading(s). For each theme, students will have a graphic and written assignment. There will also be a midterm and final exam.

C. The major themes:
Part 1: Search for Paradise

Lecture: Garden(s) of Eden
Part 2: The Ideology of Space
Lecture: Views of Ownership and Possession in the USA
Part 3: Your Health, Safety, and Welfare
Lecture: Planning and Zoning
Part 4: Aesthetics, Meaning, and Function
Lecture: Cultural Sustainability
Part 5: The Social Arts of Landscape Architecture, Architecture, and Engineering
Lecture: The Arts ˆ Fine and Social

Meets Goals of Gen Ed
Become articulate: There are three ways the students need to readily express themselves. Orally, during class discussions: with the written word on exams, and graphically, on student projects. Students are required to bolster their intuitive feelings with objective facts. A student portfolio of graphic assignments will be required. All graphic skills needed to produce the portfolio will be taught in class.
Acquire intellectual breath and versatility; the disciplines of landscape architecture, architecture, and planning are often referred to as "social-arts", that is part art and part science. Social-artists are generalists by nature. We tend to have a working knowledge of many disciplines without being microscopic in our thinking in any one discipline. We keep our heads up, observing, thinking, and reacting. This attitude can and will be taught.
Acquire critical judgment; this course teaches techniques used to understand and critique the vernacular landscape.
Acquire moral sensitivity; Students are required to define their "land ethic". Issues of sustainability, capitalism, individual rights and the need to protect the health, safety and welfare of the general public are presented to help students better understand how Americans have traditionally valued (de-valued) land.
Acquire awareness of their era and society; the students need to understand that we, as a society have to assume full responsibility for our actions. We posses the technological/military might to dominate and potentially ruin the natural world. Do we also posses the intellectual capacity not to do it? This class will discuss these topics.
Acquire a working understanding of the processes by which they can continue to acquire and use knowledge; by mid-semester, many of my students ask me how they can become involved in their communities immediately. I have a section of the course that discusses avenues for their participation in the town meeting process, as well as a supplemental reading/website list.

CA1 Criteria:
This course will introduce students to and engage them in investigations and historical/critical analyses of the vernacular landscape in the USA. The students will be taught the necessary skills to formulate a thoughtful and informed attitude toward the forces that dictate development patterns in the USA. To a lesser degree, the students will also be exposed to modes of symbolic representation and comprehension of architecture.

Supplementary Information: -

I will be utilizing teaching techniques developed during my research on "visual thinking". Over the past 8 years, I have taught an Introduction to Landscape Architecture course that is designed to be highly image-oriented through the use of digital presentation technology. The resultant focus on "visual thinking" has had a positive effect on students' memory and comprehension, as well as on their engagement with class material. Below is a sampling of qualitative student evaluation responses from PLSC 275 Introduction to Landscape Architecture that address issues of memory and comprehension:

"I appreciate the simplicity of the lectures. I like the way things are broken down into the bare essentials when a topic is discussed, rather than throwing a whole bunch of material at us and making us memorize it. The use of little text and lots of images helps me to better understand and grasp the concepts we discuss." "[I have appreciated..] the fact that we have to think in order to understand and learn. Most classes deal with boring memorization, but you have such strong presentations that I didn't just memorize the material, but correlated it with what significance it holds." "What I most appreciated about this class was your ability to manipulate the image-and-text on the computer   so that we could comprehend a little better what exactly you were trying to get across to us. Being able to draw lines and circles on the image-- a slide can only be shown or talked about. There is nothing better than actually showing us what it is you are talking about."