



Landscape Architecture Department
Cal Poly State University
LA 213 Site & Terrain Analysis
Fall Quarter 2002

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LA 213 COURSE SYLLABUS AND SCHEDULE

... We have to make the effort to see landscapes clearly, without bias and in their totality, and we must appreciate their aesthetic qualities and grasp their identities with all the sensitivity we can muster.

Ted Relph To See With the Soul of the Eye

Course Introduction

The natural landscape is a complex system of living organisms and inorganic materials, the basis on which designs and plans are constructed. All development proposed by man, either planned or unplanned, will create varying degrees of impact on the natural system, causing its original character to change.

Many of the ecologically and aesthetically unsound changes perpetrated on the landscape through time have occurred because of a failure to either consider or understand natural and cultural factors. A designer's major objective in the design process is to see that both the ecological and cultural impacts of man's development are minimized, while optimizing human use and enjoyment of the landscape. As students, you must learn to develop an analytical approach that thoroughly investigates the landscape as both a natural and cultural system.

In summary, we are seeking a process capable of generating a sense of "fit" between man's activity, the environment, and a landscape's character. A process need not, however, be a standardized, routine, inflexible approach. You will, of necessity, modify it to fit yourself and various circumstances you encounter.

Course Objectives

Upon successful completion of this course, you should have developed:

1. an empathy for and knowledge of the natural and cultural factors and resources of a site
2. methods and techniques for inventorying, recording and mapping site data
3. analytical skills to evaluate and compare the worth of recorded and mapped site data
4. an understanding of how to synthesize all data deriving a design program for land planning which considers landform, plant form and built form and
5. a thorough understanding of the value and importance analysis of the natural and cultural resources have in environmental decision making.

Course Structure

This Tuesday/Thursday course is structured to be both a lecture course and a lab course, where lectures are supported by with interpretive activities. The activities in the laboratory will consist of discussions, field trips, project critiques and audio-visual presentations. The course schedule identifies the lecture topics and reading assignments.

Course Reference Reading

The required reading for the course will be in the handouts, which will be given to you throughout the quarter. I suggest that you purchase a 3 ring binder to put all the reading material into. This reader along with all your notes will become a valuable reference for you in the future. Other bibliographic references on the topic of site analysis, site planning and landscape assessment include:

- De Chiarra and Koppleman Site Planning Standards
- Ibid., Urban Planning and Design Criteria
- Forman, Landscape Ecology
- Hester, Neighborhood Space
- Leopold, A Sand County Almanac
- Marsh, Environmental Analysis
- McHarg, Design with Nature
- Navi-Lieberman, Landscape Ecology and Analysis
- Simonds, Landscape Architecture
- Robinette, Landscape Planning for Energy Conservation
- Rutledge, Anatomy of a Park
- Way, Terrain Analysis
- Rubenstein, A Guide to Site and Environmental Planning
- USGS, Nature to be Commanded
- USDA Soil Conservation Service, Know the Soil You Build On

Student Evaluation Criteria

You will be given assignments during the lab portion of this course on a weekly basis. Each project will take approximately one week in duration. You will be given the assignment at the beginning of the week and it will be due the following week for review and discussion unless otherwise noted. The total score for the quarter will be based on a combination of the midterm, lab points, as well as, participation.

Late projects will not be excepted unless circumstances are discussed beforehand with me. Each late project will be marked 10% down per class session. After one week from due date no late projects will be accepted.

Your participation and attendance is very important. Please advise me if you are going to be absent from a class session. More than three absences will result in you overall course grade dropping by one grade. I am only a phone call away or email away.

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| • Lab assignments | 75 pts |
| • Final Package | 25 |
| • Midterm | 40 |
| • <u>Participation</u> | <u>10</u> |
| • Total Points | 150 pts |

Course Schedule and Reading Assignments

- **Week One** (September 24, 26)
Introduction
Environmental Perceptions and Ethics
Readings: A Sand County Almanac: “The Land Ethic”,
“The Beholding Eye”
Case Studies Sutro Baths
Site Visit
- **Week Two** (October 1, 3)
Method and Process
Observation and Recording
Human Factors
Site Visit
Readings: Image of the City (Handout)
“User Analysis” (handout)
“Spatial Standards: Human Dimensions” (handout)
- **Week Three** (October 8, 10)
Land Measurement/ Mapping / Political and Legal
Urban, Political and Legal
Site Visit
- **Week Four** (October 15, 17)
Visual Assessment
Site Visit
Readings: from Handouts
- **Week Five** (October 22, 24)
Landform and Geology & Soils
Site Visit
Readings: from Handouts
- **Week Six** (October 29, November 3)
Hydrology and Erosion
Readings: from Handouts
- **Week Seven** (November 5, 7)
Written Midterm
Biotic Communities/Ecosystems
Site Visit
Readings: from Handouts
- **Week Eight** (November 12, 14)
Microclimate
Readings: from Handouts

Course Schedule and Reading Assignments continued

- **Week Nine** (November 19, 21)
Program Analysis/Composite Site Analysis
Synthesis
Readings from handout: to be announced
- **Week Ten** (November 26, Thanksgiving Holiday)
Environmental Protection
Readings from handout: to be announced
- **Week Eleven** (December 3, 5)
Wrap up, Final Review

Have a Great Holiday Break!