Landscape Architecture Program
College of Architecture and Planning
University of Colorado at Denver

Fall 2017 LA 5500-001/002
Intro Landscape Architecture Design Studio
Monday/Thursday: 2:00 PM - 4:45 PM
Taught in conjunction with LDAR 5510-002 Graphic Media in Landscape Architecture Monday/Thursday: 12:30 PM - 1:45 PM
Instructors: Anthony Mazzeo + Leila Tolderlund
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Office Hours: by appointment

Landscape Architecture Design Studio 1

Landscape as Medium


Landscape is a medium in the fullest sense of the word. It is a material “means” (to borrow Aristotle’s terminology) like language or paint, embedded in tradition of cultural signification and communication, a body of symbolic forms capable of being invoked and reshaped to express meanings and values. As a medium for expressing value, it has a semiotic structure rather like that of money, functioning as a special sort of commodity that plays a unique symbolic role in the system of exchange-value...

Landscape is a medium not only for expressing value but also for exchanging meaning, for communication between persons – most radically, for communication between the Human and the non-Human. Landscape mediates the cultural and the natural, or “Man” and “Nature,” as eighteenth-century theorist would say…”

WJT Mitchell
Landscape and Power
Intro Landscape Architecture Design Studio

Intensive study of landscape architecture design stressing the importance of critical thinking in the design process. Students will develop a critical understanding of landscape as medium. Students will work with the virtual (the drawing medium) and the real (the landscape medium). Speculation and actualization are part of the design process. Studio goals are to familiarize students with landscape architecture design process, design methods and strategies, and to develop a vocabulary and language to describe the landscape. Studio goals are also to develop students' ability to think critically about the problems they are confronted with and to understand how the landscape mediates the cultural and the natural. Mediate defined in Merriam-Webster as occupying a middle position; acting through an intervening agency.

Through the mediating act of construing and constructing landscape, nature and culture are joined, not in simple combination, but something more.

Medium (me·di·um) n.

1. something in a middle position
2. a middle condition or degree: mean

b plural usually media (1) : a channel or system of communication, information, or entertainment — compare mass medium (2) : a publication or broadcast that carries advertising (3) : a mode of artistic expression or communication (4) : something (as a magnetic disk) on which information may be stored

c: go-between, intermediary

(Merriam Webster)

Studio Polemic:
The first landscape architecture studio of the core studio sequence dwells in the middle, the space between theory and practice, drawing and ground, form and performance, artifact and effect. We will work simultaneously with the virtual [the drawing medium] and the real [the landscape medium], speculation and actualization. Our studio works will be highly specific in material form and at the same time engage the efficacious aspects of landscape.
As landscape architects, our first responsibility is endowing the human environment with legibility and allure through the shaping and forming of the landscape medium. Making legibly alluring design gestures that allow novel interactions between people and their environment, requires the designer to address issues of scale, context, and spatial organization. There are countless methods for going about this, but some of these are reductive and confrontational to a site’s potential. Avoiding such pitfalls requires sensitivity to the field conditions at hand and their influence on space.

**Studio Objectives:**

The first studio in the “core” landscape architecture studio sequence will take the form of an ongoing series of *studio works*, aimed at giving physical material form to landscape experience. As already mentioned above, we will work from the middle, the space between the theoretical and technical aspects of landscape architecture. We will place particular emphasis on the relationship between drawing and the production of landscape. The studio has two primary objectives:

**Objective I: Practice**

To develop the conventions of landscape architectural design thinking through drawing, collage, and model

The first objective is about learning and practicing the discipline of landscape architecture, which at its most fundamental understanding, is a discipline where the physical world of time and matter and the virtual world of ideas and concepts are first translated into drawings and then translated again as constructed landscapes.

**Objective II: Theory**

To develop an understanding of landscape as medium

This second objective is to understand aspects of what it means to project our ideas of landscape onto the physical ground and into the world. Therefore, the second objective pertains to the development of a theoretical understanding of:
1. What is landscape?

2. What is landscape architecture and what could it be?

3. What is the relevance of landscape architecture in our current cultural situation?

**Studio Outcomes:**
Based on the primary objectives student will:

1. develop a deep understanding of the relationship between drawing/modeling and the actual making of landscape

2. develop an understanding that drawing/modeling is not only a means of communicating design intent, but also a means of generating design thought

3. develop an understanding of landscape as medium

4. develop a range of representational technique and method at a variety of scales, as well as the principles on which those techniques are based

5. develop a working understanding of when to use what type of representational application as it relates to conceptualizing, developing, demonstrating, and communicating design thought

**Studio Site(s):**
In this studio we will work with the abandoned quarry on top of North Table Mountain in Golden, Colorado.

From the rim of the quarry, the landscape is experienced as a panorama... a 360 degree turn of the body takes in the complexity and enormity of the urban front range at a sweeping glance. From the quarry floor, the experience is much different... more intimate. While both
experiences are different in scale, they are measured and read by the human body.

Trail map available at: http://jeffco.us/Open-Space/Documents/Park-Documents/North-Table-Mountain-Park-Documents/North-Table-Mountain-Park-Map/

**Studio Approach:**

Our studio method is shaped by the instructors’ years of experience within the practice of landscape architecture. We believe that the contemporary landscape project can be so much more than conventional practice allows. Within the “studio” environment this polemic will be achieved through the critical consideration of the inherited processes, tools, and methods of current practice and the development of feasible alternatives.

The design process itself is made up of unequal parts: method, logic, and intuition; trial and error, repetition, and magic; imagination, passion, and compromise. Our aim is to help you develop a working understanding of your design process as well as the necessary skills to effectively communicate design thought. In short we will help you find, develop, and exercise your critical voice for construing and constructing landscape.

The method of work within this studio environment will be generative, requiring the use of logic, discovery, device, and invention, in studio and in situ. We will develop a number of different design problems throughout the semester. These design problems will be referred to as “studio works” and will be described briefly below, and in detail by the instructors at the beginning of each new studio work. Each studio work will employ a variety of drawing systems, including collage, orthographic projection, parallel projection, perspective and model. Each studio work performed throughout the semester will be approached as “work-in-progress.” As such the method of work will become increasingly precise and articulate from one studio work to the next.

Our efforts will eventually evolve a self-contained set of drawings that will be presented at mid-term and final review; however developing fluency for re-presenting the landscape medium will be the focus. Our goal will be to build a working vocabulary for developing, expressing, and communicating “landscape thought.”
Studio Sequence:

In this studio we will develop the necessary strategies and tools for reading and writing this Colorado landscape. Our design interventions will inhabit the marginal territory between earth and sky, between theory and practice, between observation and speculation, between drawing and ground...

The program for the site is: Path, Threshold, Markers, and Platform. The semester will be divided into three parts: Analysis, Speculation and Design. Each part will be guided by several exercises outlined below:

**Analysis + Mapping**
1. Basic Form (Plan/Section Survey of Transect)
2. Spatial Form (Spatial Readings Moving Across Transect)
3. Ecological Form (Considerations of Larger Ecological Operations)
4. Cultural Form (Historical Context)

**Speculations + Considerations**
5. Metaphorical Form (Imaginative Research through Collage)
6. Transformation of Type (Precedent)
7. Programmatic Form (Diagram Programmatic Sequence on Transect)

**Design (Transformations + Refinements)**
8. Compositional Elements (Design Components – Micro/Macro)
9. Compositional Schema (Assembly of Components)
10. Transformation of Basic Form (Final Plan + Section)
11. Transformation of Spatial Form (Final Perspectives)

The lectures, readings, discussions, and assignments in Graphics and Studio are aligned to support and inform each other. The final individual studio work will, through the precedent studies, explore several landscape architectural fundamentals that in sum will provide the foundations of a coherent design methodology that will continue to evolve in the core studios to follow. At semester end, the final project proposal and collection of drawings to support and convey design ideas, will be presented to a jury.
Studio+Graphics Culture:
Participation is not only required but critical to the success of both the studio and the graphics class. Each student is expected to be present at each session for the entire period. Mondays and Thursdays will typically begin with a graphics session (12:30 PM – 1:45 PM) and studio will continue after Graphics (2:00 PM – 4:45 PM).

The combined studio+graphics class will typically take one of three forms: 1: work days, 2: pin-ups, and 3: reviews.

**Work Days**
On work days we will typically meet as a group at the beginning of each period for a short meeting or graphics/studio lecture. Next, the instructors will meet individually with each student for approximately 15-20 minutes. You must be prepared each graphics and studio session with new work to show progress and enter into a discussion with your instructor.

**Pin-Ups**
A number of pin-ups will be scheduled throughout the semester. Typically a pin-up will mark the end of one exercise and the beginning of another. Each student will not only be required to present their own work, but to offer critical review of the work of their classmates as well.

**Reviews**
Students will be required to present their project to a jury of invited guests, who will offer criticism and direction.

The strength of the studio + graphics learning environment is the diversity of its participants. Therefore, we promote working in studio outside of studio hours and discourage working at home. Please do your best to maintain a respectful, creative, and productive studio environment.
Readings:

Studio and graphics readings will be handed out during the semester. The purpose of these readings is not to become experts in all the given texts, but to become acquainted with the depth of ideas [both present and absent] affecting our perceptions of the landscape project in a broader cultural context. Students are strongly encouraged to develop their own polemical ‘lens’ throughout the semester, reading acutely the various texts we will encounter and be prepared to participate in discussions/debates relative to reading topics and studio works.

Required Readings:


Grading:

A progress grade for Studio and a progress grade for Graphics will be distributed following the mid-term review. A final grade for Studio and a final grade for Graphics will be assigned at term end. Students will be evaluated based on their enthusiasm and commitment to investigating and advancing the process along with the quality of work, work ethics, verbal and graphic presentation skills and individual assignments.
You will be evaluated based on the following:

**Participation:** 20%

**Concept and Design Development:** 30%

**Translation and Refinement:** 30%

**Oral Presentation and Articulation:** 20%

You will be evaluated on the strength of your concepts and the skill with which you express them, not for how much time you invest (although the two are mutually linked). More than two absences will deduct from your overall grade. Each studio project has a list of products required by each student. A grading rubric will be provided to each student prior to mid-term and final review. This is the minimum required and we encourage all students to do more than what is listed. No exceptions will be made from this list without our consent and approval. We may not see every student every studio session. *If no consultation is needed you are still expected to work in studio, on studio, during the entire session. We reserve the authority to request any student to pin-up and discuss their ideas without advance notice.*

**Student Code of Conduct:**

Students are expected to know, understand, and comply with the Code of Student Conduct. You can find the Student Code of Conduct on the CU Denver website, under Office of Student Life and Student Activities. Disruptive classroom behavior will be reported to the Office of Student Life for disciplinary action. Disruptive classroom behavior, if necessary or appropriate, might also be reported to the Auraria Campus Police for investigation of possible criminal action.

Disruptive behavior includes, but is not limited to: arriving to class late (or leaving early) without explanation or apology; sleeping in class; reading a book, a newspaper or a magazine; unrelated to the content of the course; having personal conversations unrelated to class or passing notes during class; being under the influence of alcohol or other drugs; any kind of physical or verbal threat or other type of harassment to the instructor or fellow students; failing to comply with classroom rules and expectations described above.

Each student is expected to do his or her own work on the homework assignments. Collaborating with others on individual homework assignments is prohibited. Using copies of any kind of other person’s
previous homework, posted or published solutions to the problems on a homework assignment is prohibited. Lending your solutions to others or allowing another student to copy any of your work on a homework assignment is prohibited. Violating these homework assignment policies will result in a failing grade for the course. The violation will also be reported to the student’s department chair for potential additional action.

Notice of Non-Discrimination:
Consistent with the Laws of the Regents, Article 10, Non-Discrimination, the University will not tolerate acts of sexual harassment of or related retaliation against or by any employee or student in its educational programs and activities (Policy 2J: Sexual Harassment. https://www.cu.edu/regents/policy-2j-sexual-harassment).

The University of Colorado does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, disability, creed, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, veteran status, political affiliation, or political philosophy in admission and access to, and treatment and employment in, its educational programs and activities. The university takes action to increase ethnic, cultural, and gender diversity, to employ qualified disabled individuals, and to provide equal opportunity to all students and employees (Article 10: Nondiscrimination. https://www.cu.edu/regents/laws-and-policies/regent-laws/article-10-nondiscrimination.)

Academic Honesty:
Students are expected to know, understand, and comply with the ethical standards of the University, including rules against plagiarism, cheating, fabrication and falsification, multiple submissions, misuse of academic materials, and complicity in academic dishonesty.

Students are expected to abide by the highest standards of intellectual honesty in all academic work. The University and your instructor assume that you do your own work and credit all work or thought taken from others. Assignments are to be turned in electronically on canvas so submission to plagiarism detection software can be done if needed. Academic dishonesty will result in the grade ‘F’ for the course.
Plagiarism is the use of another person’s ideas or works without acknowledgement. Appropriate acknowledgement and credits are required when incorporating another person’s work into your own.

Examples of plagiarism when the source is not noted:
- Copying (word-for-word) another person’s writings or ideas
- Leaving out quotation marks out, when quoting other peoples work
- Copying another person’s writings, imagery, or ideas and interspersing your own words or imagery here and there, yet still using that person’s basic imagery/ideas and/or theories
- Paraphrasing another person’s writings, imagery or ideas, yet still using that person’s basic ideas and/or theories
- Copying or submitting another person’s work as your own
- Fabricating sources

For suggestions on ways to avoid academic dishonesty, please see the Academic Honesty Handbook at:
http://www.ucdenver.edu/faculty_staff/faculty/center-for-facultydevelopment/Documents/academic_honesty.pdf

Disabilities:
If you qualify for accommodations because of a disability, please submit a letter to the instructor from Disability Services in a timely manner so that your needs may be addressed. Disability Services determines accommodations based on documented disabilities. Contact the appropriate campus agency. Accommodation for Religious Observances

Accommodations for Religious Observances:
Campus policy regarding religious observances requires that faculty make every effort to reasonably and fairly deal with all students who, because of religious obligations, have conflicts with scheduled exams, assignments, or required attendance. In this class, we will work with individuals on a case-by-case basis. Please notify the instructor in a timely manner so that accommodations can be arranged.
Military Duty:
If you are a student in the military with the potential of being called to military service and/or training during the course of the semester, you are encouraged to contact your school/college Associate Dean or Advising Office immediately.

Calendar:

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>08.21.17</td>
<td>Introduction to Studio Project 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>08.24.17</td>
<td>Site Visit – Table Mountain Quarry</td>
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<td>09.04.17</td>
<td>No Class – Labor Day</td>
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<td>09.21.17</td>
<td>Transect Field Trip (Studio + Ecology)</td>
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<td>11.20.17</td>
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<td>11.23.17</td>
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<td>12.04.17</td>
<td>Final Jury</td>
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<td>12.07.17</td>
<td>Final Studio Deliverables Due</td>
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