



architecture
+
culture

arc 1413
summer 2010
901 MTWRF 9:30 - 10:45
main campus
professor mark a. blizard
mark.blizard@utsa.edu
please reference: architecture and culture
office hours by appointment

Turning to history, Lucretius [1st c Roman poet] drew a grim portrait of pre-civilized life in the wilderness. Men lived a nightmarish existence, hounded by dangers on every hand and surviving through the ancient code of eat or be eaten. With obvious satisfaction, Lucretius related how the race escaped this miserable condition through the invention of clothing, metals, and, eventually, “ships, agriculture, city walls, laws, arms, roads.” These enabled man to control wild nature and achieve relative security. Cultural refinements... followed the release from the wilderness. -- Roderick Nash, *Wilderness and the American Mind*

course description Introduces architecture by exploring its sources within culture and the dynamic interrelationship between humans and the environment. Draws from diverse sources and cultures in the exploration of architectural order, including Western and Non-Western traditions, art, philosophy, literature, music, history, language, myth, ritual, oral and written traditions, and popular culture.

content + purpose In our search for an understanding of **place**, this class will explore various **perceptions** of our cultural landscape and its relationship to the so-called “natural” world. By looking at, and reading architecture and other cultural artifacts as maps, we will begin to perceive a web of meanings and values that connects land culture and practice together. First, we will examine the concept of nature and its origin as a human construct, calling into question certain common sense notions about the world in which we inhabit. The dynamic interrelationship between humans and the environment gives rise to the necessity of culture. Architecture, in mediating **between self and world**, provides a **common ground** for humans and society.

Throughout the class, diverse historical and contemporary examples, cultural concepts, and ideas will be introduced and explored through architectural corollaries and examples. Indeed, we will always return to architecture – continuously linking culture to the built environment. Our search will draw from such distinct fields as Amer-Indian, Indonesian, and other oral traditions, the Greek city-state, the Italian medieval and renaissance city, eastern philosophy, shamanism, folk and vernacular building traditions, twentieth century architecture, new urbanism, the contemporary landscape, as well as critical issues such as sustainability and technology. The purpose is to suggest that our current time and place is a complex and interrelated cultural construct: a composite of residues and meanings that serves as a repository of raw material for thought and design. Likewise, by reaching beyond the inherent limitations of what we already know – by entering into a paractice of architecture that is dialogic – we will discover new solutions to new problems that confront us.

This class seeks to provoke meaningful thought about, and engagement in, our cultural landscape. While offering no immediate answers to the problems confronting the architect, the class seeks to broaden the scope of inquiry and support critical thought about the inter-relation between architecture and the wider envelop of culture. We find ourselves brought together as a people in a more interconnected and sustainable world.

course structure This course begins by offering working definitions of architecture and culture along with the broader field of land, culture, and practice – all of which which will undergo change throughout the semester as new ideas, examples, and experiences are introduced. Secondly, several analogical models and diagrams will provide a structural framework to direct, and interconnect our exploration of the material and allow us a deeper reading of the text. In this search we will read cultural artifacts and landscapes as “maps” which convey something about the values, beliefs, and world view of both their makers and ourselves. They are a lens and a mirror through which we can develop an awareness of the relationships binding ourselves to others and to the environment as a whole. The artifact then, is an extension of ourselves out into the world, and also, an extension of the world inward to the self. Place, then, is formed as a web of artifacts that mediate our exchange with the environment – necessary layers that separate us from, and join us to, the world. *Through readings, lectures, the notebook, (with its photo-essay and critical commentary), the student will be given a chance to explore the territory of this class in conjunction with their individual search for a deeper understanding of architecture and culture.* Experience is preliminary for the development of thought and the formulation of questions. Experience of the cultural landscape, of which we are a part, is fundamental to the class. The notebook is the primary tools for deciphering and questioning the cultural landscape.

required textbook Blizard, Mark A. Architecture: Land Culture Practice. Kendall Hunt: Dubuque, Iowa, 2008.
ISBN: 978-0-7575-5157-4

All required readings are to be completed prior to class on the day indicated on the schedule.

evaluation You will be evaluated based on the following assignments only:

1st submission	Th mid-July (required) (evaluation given: -,√-,√,√+,+) (no photoessay)	
2nd submission	Th end of July (required)	50% of grade
	(cumulative notebook with first photoessay)	
final submission	early August 10:30-12:00 (req'd – lobby Monterey Bldg)	50% of grade
	(cumulative notebook and second photoessay)	
submission pick-up	1st week in fall semester (faculty office, Monterey Building)	

The above requirements will be discussed at length during class and through written handouts (included in this syllabus). Final grades shall be awarded in strict accordance with the following scale: 90% - 100% = A; 80% - 89% = B; 70% - 79% = C; 60% - 69% = D; <60% = F. There will be no extra credit for any reason.

- class policies**
- 1 Class attendance is mandatory.
 - 2 You are responsible for **all** material covered in class for every lecture and reading.
 - 3 If any work is returned labeled “see me,” you **must** see me within one week to review your work.
 - 4 All work submitted for completion of this course will be governed by the standards of “scholastic dishonesty” in the UTSA undergraduate catalog. See also the faculty handbook (section VI, chapter 2, section 2.37). Plagiarism and its results will also be discussed in class.
 - 5 No eating or sleeping in class is tolerated.
 - 6 No late arrivals or early departures except in the case of inclement weather.
 - 7 Turn your cell phone off. No instant messaging or cell phone use is permitted.
 - 8 Ball caps or other hats are not to be worn during class.
 - 9 Laptop computers may be used in the front row of the classroom only. The only authorized use of laptops in class is note taking. Laptop computers and cell phones may be confiscated for misuse.
 - 10 There will be no time extensions, and no excuses for failing to turn in your assignments on time without prior written request and consent or an appropriate physician’s note.
 - 11 Material that does not meet the requirements will be assigned a failing grade in whole or in part.

notes Although lectures will be tied to the subject matter of the readings as indicated, the content of all lectures is subject to change and refinement. For both majors and non-majors, this course satisfies the core curriculum requirement in “world society and issues” under domain VI. This class satisfies the following requirements for architecture accreditation (NAAB):

- 1 understanding western traditions
- 2 understanding non-western traditions
- 3 understanding human diversity

This class satisfies the following requirements for interior design accreditation (CIDA):

- 1 Student work demonstrates understanding of: the concepts, principles, and theories of sustainability as they pertain to building methods, materials, systems, and occupants. [secondary]
- 2 Students understand: how design needs may vary for different socio-economic populations. [p]
- 3 The interior design program provides: opportunities for developing knowledge of other cultures, lecture series, study abroad. [primary]
- 4 Students understand that social and cultural norms may vary from their own and are relevant to making appropriate design decisions. [primary]

postscript This class is intended to foster an environment promoting individual thinking, visual literacy, and a broadening awareness of the richness of the built environment.

due dates	week	date (2009 – 2010 will vary)		reading	general lecture topic
SUBMISSION 2 (cumulative)	1.1	m	06 july		introduction + syllabus
	1.2	t	07 july	preface pp i - xiii introduction pp 1 - 9	introduction + notebook
	1.3	w	08 july	ch. 1 "in the wilderness" pp 11 - 24	the idea of wilderness
	1.4	th	09 july		architectural interjection 1
	1.5	f	10 july	ch. 2 "on the garden wall" pp 27 - 44	the idea of the garden
SUBMISSION I DUE	2.1	m	13 july		architectural interjection 2
SUB. 1 RETURNED	2.2	t	14 july	ch. 3 "border crossing" pp 47 - 64 [crossing as transformation]	boundaries
	2.3	w	15 july	ch. 3 "border crossing" pp 64 - 75	boundaries
	2.4	th	16 july		architectural interjection 3
	2.5	f	17 july	ch. 4 "about the house" pp 77 - 92 [body]	the idea of the house
	SUBMISSION 2 DUE	3.1	m	20 july	ch. 4 "about the house" pp 92 - 103
	3.2	t	21 july		architectural interjection 4
	3.3	w	22 july	ch. 5 "between the buildings" pp 105 - 120 [to: economic framework]	the idea of the city
	3.4	th	23 july		architectural interjection 5
	3.5	f	24 july	ch. 5 "between the buildings" pp 115 - 133	the fabric of the city
SUB. 2 RETURNED	4.1	m	27 july	ch. 6 "the city remembered" pp 135 - 151 [to: the city as language]	the city of memory
	4.2	t	28 july	ch. 6 "the city remembered" pp 151 - 166 [to: the city	the city of memory

FINAL SUBMISSION (cumulative)

			remembered]	
4.3	w	29 july	ch. 6 "the city remembered" pp 166 - 176	architectural interjection 6
4.4	th	30 july	ch. 7 "on the road" pp 179 - 192	signs + simulation
4.5	f	31 july	no class	
5.1	m	03 august		signs + simulation
5.2	t	04 august		architectural interjection 7
5.3	w	05 august		closing: recapitulation

5.4 th 06 august no class

friday 07 august
final submission
9:00 - 11:00 AM
lobby
monterey building

FINAL SUBMISSION DUE

monday 10 august
submission pick-up
9:00 - 11:00 AM
faculty office
monterey building

SUBMISSION PICK-UP

This Syllabus is provided for informational purposes regarding the anticipated course content and schedule of this course. It is based upon the most recent information available on the date of its issuance and is as accurate and complete as possible. I reserve the right to make any changes I deem necessary and/or appropriate. I will make my best efforts to communicate any changes in the syllabus in a timely manner. Students are responsible for being aware of these changes.

notebook

contents

develop an articulate and complete table of contents that includes the following in this order:

- 1 class notes
- 2 lecture commentary
- 3 reading commentary
- 4 reference commentary
- 5 photoessays

cover

All work is to be submitted properly bound within a cover. The front of the cover is to include your name, date, + section. In addition: all first-time freshmen are to indicate their status. No 3-ring binders will be accepted. Work not properly bound will not be accepted. The preferred cover will be specified in class.

class notes

20% of grade
Class notes will be graded based on completeness and clarity

requirements:

Your class notes may be hand-written or typed. In each case, they should “cover the territory” of the daily lectures and present the depth and interconnections that are a part of the lecture material. The top right of each page is to include the date of the lecture and the general lecture topic. No notes are necessary for the reading.

lecture

commentary

20% of grade
Present and explore the major issues, ideas, concepts, points, diagrams, and examples of each

lecture in your own words. Commentary is critical thinking that makes sense of the material presented. Commentary draws your thought into a dialog with the material and looks for critical connections between the material from different lectures and between the lecture material and the readings.

requirements:

semester total: ≥ 28 pages
 ≥ 1 page per class, 12pt type, single space, 1” margins.
The top right of each page is to include the date of the lecture and the general lecture topic.

reading

commentary

20% of grade
Explore and present the major issues, ideas, concepts, points, diagrams, and examples of each reading in your own words.

requirements:

preface + introduction: ≥ 1 page
chapter 1: ≥ 2 pages; chapter 2: ≥ 2 pages; chapter 3: ≥ 3 pages; chapter 4: ≥ 3 pages; chapter 5: ≥ 3 pages; chapter 6: ≥ 4 pages; chapter 7: ≥ 2 pages; semester total: ≥ 20
12pt type, single space, 1” margins.
The top right of each page is to include the book title and chapter title. Use of MLA required.

In both lecture commentary and reading commentary include explanation of critical diagrams and make sense of the architectural examples in accordance with the major issues, ideas, concepts, points, diagrams, and examples provided in both lecture and reading material. In all

commentary and photoessays you must use correct spelling, grammar and footnoting: this will figure into your grade.

reference

commentary

20% of grade
Select one architect / architectural example, book, or critical idea per week (beginning with week 2). The books are to be selected from the footnoted sources listed within *Architecture: Land Culture Practice*. Then: read, study, discover, and seek to make sense of the work or architect as they relate to the class material. Bring your discoveries back into dialog with the class material in well-constructed commentary. The successful student will consider the library as a necessary extension to the class.

requirements:

≥ 1 page/source per week
semester total: ≥ 12 pages (≥ 12 sources)
12pt type, single space, 1” margins.
MLA guidelines must be followed for footnoting all sources. The web is **not** considered an appropriate source of material for this class, and should not be included, although it may be used as a “first step” in locating reference material.

photoessays

20% of grade
see handout entitled “photoessay”

the submissions

Your work will be submitted 3 times during the semester:

first submission

date: x July (required)
It is the purpose of the first submission to verify and note the progress of student work. Although no grades will be given, an estimate of the relative strength and/or weaknesses of the work in each part of the notebook (no photoessay required) will be noted as follows:

- unacceptable
- $\sqrt{-}$ marginal
- $\sqrt{}$ acceptable
- $\sqrt{+}$ good
- + very good

Due to time constraints, no further notes or comments can be given. These marks will not figure into the grade in any way. Failure to submit a complete notebook will result in lowering your final grade by 10%.

second submission

date: x July
It is the purpose of the second submission to be thorough: establishing a written dialog between faculty and student, and providing a clear understanding of the student’s level of work. Faculty notes and comments will be made throughout the work submitted and will offer a guide for preparing the final submission. This work will be graded. All submissions must be complete.

final submission

date: x August
The notebook is cumulative: each submission must include all prior work (complete with all faculty comments). When appropriate, your new work should address faculty comments and concerns. No handwritten (other than class notes) or virtual work will be accepted without prior faculty approval.

photo-essay

the photoessay

Following the intent to reveal the cultural layers which position us in the world and to explore the territory of this class, the photo-essay will require you to engage in “cultural mapping”. The essay is to be structured first as a written essay whose topic you select from the list below. The content should be drawn from both class material, your independent references, and your critical thought.

Requirements:

2 essays: (one submitted with second submission and the other submitted with the final submission)
 3 – 5 pages per essay
 10 photographs per essay
 12pt type, single space, 1” margins, title required
 Present and explore a clearly defined and identified topic / subject. You must draw from class material (both lecture and reading as well as reference), correct spelling and grammar. Footnotes must be used for all published sources (following MLA guidelines), The web is not considered an appropriate source for the purposes of this class.

Present and explore the subject/topic of your essay. You must demonstrate an understanding of the topic / subject. Your photographs will serve to illuminate, illustrate, or provide examples for your essay. Begin with lecture and reading references, but draw from additional references and sources.

The site of the essays will be presented in class.

Your work **must** interconnect the

general concepts (topic/subject) with the particular examples. Your essay must include (but should not be limited to) the following:

1 Describe and illuminate the definition and importance of the subject matter or topic (idea, issue, or concept) explored as it relates to the class and reading material.

2 Provide a map or narrative of the site (or sites) chosen for your photographs, indicating the location of each photograph taken and your route. No web maps acceptable.

3 Provide a description of the content of photographs as they relate to topic/subject of the essay. These may be considered as captions to the photographs.

4 Reference each photo in your essay. Number all photographs and make all reference to them by their number in your written essay.

Each of the two essays must be a different topic/subject taken from the list below and must use the same site / datum.

submission

It is very important to write coherent essays. Remember, these are not reports, technical papers, stories, or the like. You need to consider the structure of the essay as a genre. There are many ways to compose a successful essay – please consult [The Oxford Book of Essays](#) (John Gross, ed.), or other similar collections, for a wide range of examples.

Perhaps read and study a couple non-fiction essays of Jorge Borges, or the work of Aldus Huxley, Edmund Wilson, Jacques Barzun,

Jan Morris, V. S. Naipaul, Mark Twain, Stephen Gould, Annie Dillard, or John Updike. Look closely at their craft and structure. Ask the question: “what makes a good essay?” (hint: search for this on the web.) Your work must demonstrate critical thinking, drawing together issues, ideas, aspects of the class as a whole.

All work is to be submitted as part of the notebook.

If you choose to use regular photographs, mount them with care + precision on 8.5 x 11 cover stock (or card stock – no regular paper or construction paper is acceptable). For printed images and text (printing scanned or digital images), use regular white 8.5 x 11 paper (28# or 32# works best). Please do not waste expensive photo paper – it will not improve a poor essay or a poor image. No handwritten or virtual work will be accepted without prior agreement from instructor.

required process

Following your selection of a topic:

1 Find references (books and periodicals) and gather new information, sources, and thoughts, building a body of knowledge beginning from the class material and reaching outward.

2 Write a first draft. Usually this means beginning with twice as many pages – you will edit later.

3 Drive to the site as indicated in class and begin to explore. Make sure that you have a map. Travel in groups during the day is recommended.

4

Select appropriate place(s) to photograph, guided by the essay that you have written.

5 Park your car (no “drive by shootings” will be accepted) and walk around. Sample the food (as necessary) and talk with the people that you happen upon.

6 Take photographs and notes simultaneously – always seeking connection to your essay and class material. Make sure you mark the location of each image on a map (draw one). Take more photographs than you will use – you will edit them later as you weave them into your essay.

7 Carefully consider what images will best and most appropriately illuminate and present the ideas, thoughts, issues and concepts of your essay.

8 Rewrite essay, coherently weaving photographs into text.

grades

The successful photo essay will draw from the readings and lectures, weaving them into a single essay, rather than presenting the mere assembly of fragmented thoughts and images. Your grade will be based upon the following:

completeness (orderliness of content)
 clarity (orderliness of craft)
 connection to class material
 critical thinking
 references

remember

You should refrain from familiar environments that you already know. Seek instead to be a stranger, a traveller on a journey

photo-essay

through unknown territory – not a tourist who dotes on the obvious, the conventional.

remember that each topic needs to be explored within the context of the class.

Seek to see things differently through the “lens” of the class! Be creative with your work... explore the envelope of possibilities (take a close look at the work of Joseph Cornell, Man Ray, dada, surrealism, Nick Bantok, and others – search for inspirations and precedents). There are no precise, predetermined solutions, photographs, or a specific essay structure that I am looking for.

Please note that everything on this page is important and will figure into your success. (Re-read this page. Take notes.)

list of topics

artifacts
boundaries and centers*
wilderness and human values*
the idea of the garden*
the idea of the culture*
the idea of the house
the idea of the city
memory and the city
the idea of place
the fabric of the city
common ground
exile as an allegory
falsework
knowledge
the territory as map
practice
architecture and memory
time's arrow and time's cycle*
architecture as mediation*

Additional topics will be mentioned periodically in class lectures.

* denotes topics that are acceptable for your first essay.