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# The Multicultural American Landscape: Difference and Diversity: GRG/AMS

Professor Robert Lemon / Fall-Winter 2015-2016  
Universität Heidelberg  
*[This draft of the syllabus: 10-08-2015]*

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**Course Description:** Today the American landscape is a hybrid, composed of many different types and models that have been physically transformed by cultural practices and institutional bureaucracy; these hybrids are exclusively American. This course introduces students to the American cultural landscape and the social processes that shape it. Students are first familiarized with the idea of landscape as a way to see, describe, and ultimately understand socially constructed environments (as both physical and mental spaces). Through this conceptual framework, students then examine the morphology of the American cultural landscape, from its early landscape typologies (i.e. streets, parks, and yards) to its contemporary social practices (i.e. race, ethnicity, gender). Throughout the course, students will learn to more critically interpret the heterogeneous cultural practices that come together to define the contemporary American landscape; pluribus unum.

**Course Purpose:** The course is designed to introduce students to the idea of landscape in order to better understand the everyday environment. The course exposes students to various landscape philosophies. It also introduces students to the social, economic, and political forces that have profoundly shaped the American landscape. The course explores both historic and contemporary features of the American cultural landscape through examining both human place making patterns (architectural typologies) and social practices.

**Office: HCA – Room #309**  
**E-mail: rdlemon@gmail.com**

**Office Hours:** 13:00-15:00 Tuesdays or by appointment.

**Lectures:** 11:00-13:00 c.t. Wednesdays  
Location: Oculus Room, Heidelberg Center for American Studies

**Prerequisites:** All majors are welcome and no prerequisite courses are required! However, it may be helpful if you have already taken lower level geography courses.

**Required Readings will be posted to the Course Webpage.**

**Assignments:**

1. Attendance and Participation (10%)
3. Weekly Journal (40%)
4. Landscape Paper and Collage (25%)
5. Take Home Exam (25%)

**Attendance and Participation (10%)**

Attendance will be checked periodically. Since this class only meets once a week, it is essential that you attend class regularly. It is also pertinent that you come to class prepared, having done the readings, and that you participate with the class discussion. Part of your participation grade will be to come to each class prepared with two questions about the readings. The questions may be issues you had about the material. Or they may be questions of inquiry to see how your classmates interpreted or came to understand the material.

**Journal (40%)**

Students will keep a weekly (electronic) journal throughout the course. Each week the professor will assign one (1), two (2) or three (3) journal prompt(s) in class, or via email. Students will write at least a (1) one-page response to the prompt(s). (Times New Roman, 12pt font, double spaced, and 1.25-inch margins) The response to the prompts should incorporate the weekly readings as applicable. The prompts assigned most often will stem from the in class discussions. Therefore it is imperative that students attend class regularly and keep up with the readings. The professor will ask to read the journal entries periodically throughout the course (either by email or on printed paper). Completed journals should be turned in digitally on the last day of class.

**Landscape Paper and Collage (25%)**

On November 4<sup>th</sup> (4<sup>th</sup> week of class), you will be given an assignment to research an American urban landscape. Part of the assignment will be to make a collage. The collage portion of the assignment is due December 9<sup>th</sup>. The final paper is due Monday, December 21<sup>st</sup> (Hardcopies only).

**Take Home Exam (25%)**

There is only one exam for the class. It is a take home exam. The exam will be essay form with four sets of questions. Each set will have two or three questions to choose from. You must answer one question for each set. The exam will be distributed at the end of class January 13<sup>th</sup> and is due at the beginning of class January 20<sup>th</sup> (Hardcopies only).

**Graduate Students.**

Graduate students may have slightly different assignments than for undergraduates. Typically the research paper is a bit longer and in more intellectual depth (i.e. provide a short lit review, etc.) Graduate students may also have to lead a discussion section as part of their grade.

**Late Assignments will not be accepted** unless the student has a valid excuse, accompanied by some documentation, and has notified the instructor ahead of time that they cannot turn the assignment in on time.

Excuses that are NOT valid:

“My computer isn’t working”

“My computer is being fixed this week so I can’t work on anything”

“My printer ran out of ink”

Assignments will not be accepted by email. A hardcopy must be turned in before class starts on the day the assignment is due. It must be stapled with a title, your name, and page numbers or you will lose points.

## **OTHER INFORMATION**

### **Rules and Regulations**

**1. IPADS and Electronic Tablets are allowed only if they are used to read/annotate assigned readings and are being used in class for discussion purposes. (Laptops and Mobile phones are not allowed. Laptop screens physically impede the discussion dynamics of the table. And mobile phones simply appear distracting to others in a discussion setting; they are also too tempting to text and play with)**

[http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/03/08/AR2010030804915\\_2.html?sid=ST2010030805078](http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/03/08/AR2010030804915_2.html?sid=ST2010030805078)

<http://www.thebigmoney.com/articles/diploma-mill/2010/04/20/blackboard-versus-keyboard>

<http://www.mndaily.com/2010/05/02/journalism-professor-asks-students-unplug>

### **2. Office Hours and E-mail:**

Many students/TAs/professors prefer to use email as a form of communication instead of going to office hours. If you need to communicate with me, feel free to email me if your question requires a yes or no answer. If it is a question that a fellow student can answer, don't ask me, ask them. Any other questions should be asked in person during my office hours.

Any question regarding grades sent by email will not be answered, you need to come to office hours and talk to me.

Finally, going to office hours is a good way to develop a relationship with your Professors. The more we know about you, the better we can assist you in your academic development. Often if we know you, we are more likely to help you out in terms of offering advice, correcting papers, or sending you information about something of interest.

### **3. Classroom Collegiality and Expectations:**

The classroom should be a safe place where all ideas can be expressed freely and openly. Please be open to listening to me and to other students and also feel free to share your ideas, thoughts, feelings and doubts with others. At the same time, please be supportive and constructive in your responses to me and to others. That said, don't be afraid to disagree! It is not disrespectful or rude to disagree with another student or even with your instructors or your professor. Usually, the most interesting and provocative conversation are between people who have different opinions about a particular issue. Engaging with people who think differently from ourselves allows us to move beyond our own

stereotypes and ideas and challenges us to think about why we think about things in a certain way.

#### **4. Academic Honesty**

If there is evidence that you have been involved in any form of academic dishonestly (intentional or unintentional), you may receive a failing grade for the assignment and possibly for the course. A report will be provided to the student judicial services.

The examples below do not include all possible violations of the university's expectations, but they do give a good idea of behavior that can result in grade reduction, disciplinary probation, suspension, or expulsion from the university.

**Plagiarism:** Copying homework answers from your text to hand in for a grade; failing to give credit for ideas, statement of facts, or conclusions derived from another source; submitting a paper downloaded from the Internet or submitting a friend's paper as your own; claiming credit for artistic work (such as a music composition, photo, painting, drawing, sculpture, or design) done by someone else.

**Taking Information:** Copying graded homework assignments from another student; working together on a take-home test or homework when not specifically permitted to do so by the instructor; looking at another student's paper during an examination; looking at your text or notes during an examination when not specifically permitted to do so by the instructor.

**Providing Information:** Giving your work to another to be copied; giving answers to another student during an examination; after taking an exam, informing another student in a later section of questions which appear on that exam; providing a term paper to another student.

**Misrepresentation:** Having another student take your exam, or do your computer program or lab experiment; lying to an instructor to increase your grade; submitting a paper that is substantially the same for credit in two different courses without prior approval of both instructors involved; altering a graded work after it has been returned and then submitting the work for re-grading.

**Students with Disabilities:** If you have a learning disability or any other disability that the professor of the course should be aware of to better facilitate your needs, please see me within the first two weeks of class.

**Religious Holy days:** A student who misses a quiz, work assignment, or other project due to the observance of a religious holy day will be given an opportunity to complete the work missed within a reasonable time after the absence, provided that she or he has properly notified the instructor. If you must miss a class, an examination, a work

assignment, or a project in order to observe a religious holy day, you will be given an opportunity to complete the missed work within a reasonable time after the absence.

***\* I reserve the right to make reasonable and responsible changes to the syllabus based on our progress, and any special requirement that may arise as the semester progresses. You will be notified about these changes well in advance. As such, the schedule is tentative; some topics may take longer/shorter than slotted in the schedule below.***

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## OUTLINE OF LECTURE TITLES

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### **PART I: The Idea of Landscape**

- Oct 14: Wednesday. Introductions / The Mississippi River and the shaping of the American Cultural Landscape (New Orleans)
- Oct 21: Wednesday. Landscape Lecture I: Early Geographic Concepts
- Oct 28: Wednesday. Towards a Regional Cultural Geography
- Nov 4<sup>th</sup>: Wednesday. Seeing, Thinking, Describing Landscapes
- Nov 11<sup>th</sup>: Wednesday. Reinterpreting the American Landscape

### **PART II: Patterns**

- Nov 18<sup>th</sup>: Wednesday. The Grid
- Nov 25<sup>th</sup>: Wednesday. The Park
- Dec 2<sup>nd</sup>: Wednesday. The Suburb and The Ghetto
- Dec 9<sup>th</sup>: Wednesday. The Freeway (Los Angeles)
- Dec 16<sup>th</sup>: Wednesday. The Freeway (Los Angeles)

### **PART III: Practices**

- Jan 13<sup>th</sup>: Wednesday. Plazas/ Squares
- Jan 20<sup>th</sup>: Wednesday. Streets
- June 27<sup>th</sup>: Wednesday. Streets
- Feb 3<sup>rd</sup>: Wednesday. Gardens

## **Course Schedule:**

### **Week 1:**

Wednesday Oct 14 – Introductions / The Mississippi River and the shaping of the American Cultural Landscape (New Orleans)

### **Week 2:**

Wednesday Oct 21 – Towards a Regional Geography

#### Readings:

- “Texas-Mexican Social Identities” from Arreola, Daniel David. 2002. *Tejano South Texas: A Mexican American Cultural Province*. University of Texas Press.
- “Nineteenth-Century German Farmers and Their Emigration to Texas.” Jordan, Terry G. 1975. *German Seed in Texas Soil: Immigrant Farmers in Nineteenth-Century Texas*. 1st edition. Austin, Tex: University of Texas Press.

#### Skim:

- “Structure” from Zelinsky, Wilbur. *The Cultural Geography of The United States: A Revised Edition*. 1992. 1 edition. Englewood Cliffs, N.J: Prentice Hall.

### **Week 3:**

Wednesday Oct 28<sup>th</sup> – Landscape Lecture: Geographic Concepts

#### Readings:

- “The Word Itself” from Jackson, John Brinckerhoff. *Discovering the Vernacular Landscape*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986.
- “Frameworks for Cultural Landscape Study” from Groth, Paul. *Understanding Ordinary Landscapes*. Annotated edition edition. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997.
- Lewis, Pierce. “Axioms for Reading the Landscape” 1982. From Meinig, Donald. *The Interpretation of Ordinary Landscapes: Geographical Essays*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1979.
- Mitchell, Don. “New Axioms for Reading the Landscape : Paying Attention to Political Economy and Social Justice,” 2008.

#### External Links:

Texas-German Dialect Project: <http://www.tgdp.org/tgdp>

Conjunto Music Festival: <http://www.guadalupeculturalarts.org/tejano-conjunto-festival/>



#### **Week 4:**

Wednesday Nov 4<sup>th</sup> – Seeing, Thinking, Describing Landscapes

##### Readings:

- Hoelscher, Steven, “The White-Pillared Past: Landscapes of Memory and Race in the American South,” in Richard Schein (ed) *Race and Landscape in America* (Routledge 2006), 39-72.
- Meinig, Donald. “The Beholding Eye: Ten Versions of the Same Scene.” 1982. From *The Interpretation of Ordinary Landscapes: Geographical Essays*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1979.
- Excerpt from Edward Relph, “Seeing, Thinking, Describing Landscapes,” in Thomas F. Saarinen, et al, eds. *Environmental Perception and Behavior: An Inventory and Prospect* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Department of Geography Research Paper No. 209, 1984), 209-224

#### **Week 5:**

Wednesday Nov 11<sup>th</sup> – Reinterpreting the American Landscape

##### Readings:

- Limerick. Patricia Nelson. Disorientation and Reorientation: The American Landscape Discovered from the West. *The Journal of American History* Vol. 79, No. 3, Discovering America: A Special Issue (Dec., 1992), pp. 1021-1049
- Swentzell, Rina, “Conflicting Landscape Values: The Santa Clara Pueblo and Day School,” from Groth, Paul, and Todd W. Bressi, eds. *Understanding Ordinary Landscapes*. annotated ed. Yale University Press, 1997.
- Deutsch, Sarah. Landscape of Enclaves: Race Relations in the West, 1865-1990. *Under an Open Sky: Rethinking America’s Western Past*. 1993. New York: W. W. Norton & Company.

#### **Week 6:**

Wednesday Nov 18<sup>th</sup> – The Grid

##### Readings:

- “The Grid and the Republican Spatial Imagination,” from Upton, Dell. 2008. *Another City: Urban Life and Urban Spaces in the New American Republic*. Yale University Press.
- The City Planning Ordinances of the Law of the Indies Revisited, pp., Croach, Dora P. and Alex Mundigo. *Town Planning Review*. Vol.48, no. 3, July 1977.
- Suisman, Douglas. 1993. “Plaza Mexicana.” *Places Journal* 8 (3).
- “County Seats and Court House Squares” from Jordan-Bychkov, Terry G. 2003. *The Upland South: The Making of an American Folk Region*. Santa Fe, NM : Charlottesville: Center for American Places.

**Week 7:**

Wednesday Nov 25<sup>th</sup> – The ParkL

Lecture/ Film

Film: Fredrick Law Olmsted – Designing America

Readings:

- “Private to Public Property” from Rosenzweig, Roy, and Elizabeth Blackmar. 1998. *The Park and the People: A History of Central Park*. Cornell University Press.

- “The Greensward Plan and Its Creators” from Rosenzweig, Roy, and Elizabeth Blackmar. 1998. *The Park and the People: A History of Central Park*. Cornell University Press.

- “Public Parks and the Enlargement of Towns” Fredrick Law Olmsted

**Week 8:**

Wednesday Dec 2<sup>nd</sup> – The Suburb and The Ghetto

Readings:

- “Where the Sidewalk Ends: Urban Services and Race” from Bayor, Ronald H. 2000. *Race and the Shaping of Twentieth-Century Atlanta*. The University of North Carolina Press.

- “Federal Subsidy and the Suburban Dream: How Washington Changed the American Housing Market” from Jackson, Kenneth T. 1987. *Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of the United States*. 1st ed. Oxford University Press, USA.

- Wetherell, W. D. 1985. *The Man Who Loved Levittown*. 1 edition. University of Pittsburgh Press.

- “Nostalgia and Futurism” from Hayden, Dolores. *Building Suburbia: Green Fields and Urban Growth, 1820-2000*. 2004. Reprint edition. New York: Vintage.

**Week 9:**

Wednesday Dec 9<sup>th</sup> – The Freeway (Los Angeles); Film: Falling Down

Readings:

-Avila, Eric, 2007, “East Side Stories: Freeways and Their Portraits in Chicano L.A.” *Landscape*, Vol. 26, Issue 1, pp. 83-97.

- “Bureaucrats” from Didion, Joan. 2009. *The White Album: Essays*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux.

**Week 10:**

Wednesday Dec 16<sup>th</sup> – The Freeway (Los Angeles)

Readings:

- “Autopia” From Banham, Reyner. *Los Angeles: The Architecture of Four Ecologies*. Penguin Books, New York, 1971.
- Mitchell, Don. “The S.U.V. Model of Citizenship.” *Political Geography*. 24 (2005) 77-100.

## **Wednesday Dec 23<sup>rd</sup> Christmas break begins – January 6<sup>th</sup> Christmas break ends**

### **Week 11:**

Wednesday January 13<sup>th</sup> – Plazas/ Squares

#### Readings:

- Arreola, Daniel D. “Plazas of San Diego Texas: Signatures of Mexican American Place Identity.” From *Places*. Vol. 8, No. 3, 1993.
- Johnson, Jerah. “New Orleans's Congo Square: An Urban Setting for Early Afro-American Culture Formation.” *Louisiana History: The Journal of the Louisiana Historical Association*. Vol. 32, No. 2 (Spring, 1991), pp. 117-157
- “Symbolism and Social Activity at the Courthouse Square” from Veselka, Robert E. 2000. *The Courthouse Square in Texas*. Clifton and Shirley Caldwell. Edited by Kenneth E. Foote. Austin: University of Texas Press.

### **Week 12:**

Wednesday January 20<sup>th</sup> – The Street (Ethnic Enclaves)

#### Readings:

- “Roads Belong to The Landscape.” from Jackson, John Brinckerhoff. 2000. *Landscape in Sight: Looking at America*. Edited by Helen Lefkowitz Horowitz. New Haven; London: Yale University Press.
- “The Enacted Environment: Examining the Streets and Yards of East Los Angeles” – Rojas, James from Wilson, Chris, and Paul Groth, ed. 2003. *Everyday America: Cultural Landscape Studies After J. B. Jackson*. 1st ed. University of California Press.
- Ponce De Leon, Monica. “Calle Ocho.” *Places*. Vol. 8, No. 3, Design History Foundation, Brooklyn, 1993. pp. 68-79.
- Lai, David Chuenyan. “The Visual Character of Chinatowns.” From *Places*. Vol. 7. pp. 29-31
- Hayden, Delores. “Remembering Little Tokyo on First Street” From *The Power of Place*. MIT Press, Cambridge, 1995. pp. 210-225.
- Roseman, Curtis C., and J. Diego Vigil. 1993. “Los Angeles -- From Broadway to Latinoway.” *Places* 8 (3).

**Week 13:**

Wednesday January 27<sup>th</sup> – The Street (Socio-Spatial Practices)

Readings:

- “Cruising Spaces” from Chappell, Ben. 2013. *Lowrider Space: Aesthetics and Politics of Mexican American Custom Cars*. Reprint edition. S.l.: University of Texas Press.
- “How Sixth Avenue Became a Sustaining Habitat” from Duneier, Mitchell, Hakim Hasan, and Ovie Carter. 2000. *Sidewalk*. 1st edition. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux.
- “Privacy Could Only Be Had in Public: Forging a Gay World in the Streets” from Chauncey, George. 1995. *Gay New York: Gender, Urban Culture, and the Making of the Gay Male World, 1890-1940*. New York: Basic Books.

**Week 14:**

Wednesday February 3 – Yards and Gardens

Readings:

- Groth, Paul. “Lot Yard and Garden” From *Landscape*. Vol. 30, No. 3, Berkeley, CA 1990. pp. 29-35
- Fellows, Donald K. “Japanese Buddhism – Its Imprint on the California Landscape.” From *California Geographer* Vol. 13, 1972. pp. 49-58.
- Westmacott, Richard. “Pattern and Practice in Traditional African American Gardens in Rural Georgia.” From *Landscape Journal* 10:2, University of Wisconsin Press, Madison, 1991. pp. 86-104
- Walker, Alice. “In Search of Our Mothers Gardens.” From *In Search of Our Mothers Gardens*. New York, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1983. pp. 230-243.
- Butler, Francis. “*Mappus Mundi*: The Portuguese Immigrant Garden in California.” From *Places*. Vol. 4, No. 3, Design History Foundation, Brooklyn N.Y. pp. 33-43.