LSA 227:
Foundation Design Studio 2

COURSE SYLLABUS
Spring 2012

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

This semester’s studio course will build on the fundamentals introduced in the fall semester and will focus on expanding your understanding of the complexities of the design process. We will supplement last semester’s approach to site analysis derived from observation by introducing a rich assortment of factors that are relevant to the design process. Many of these factors are not apparent through observation alone and will require research—tracking down information found in books, magazines, journals, the Internet, archives, reports, maps and other sources. You should welcome this added complexity—it makes design more challenging, but also adds the potential for creating landscapes that artfully use information as the generative source material for design expression.

Ideally, a landscape architect is an artist, an intellectual, a scientist and a craftsperson. If you don’t already think of yourself in these terms, as a creative person charged with synthesizing these concerns, it is time to start. Creativity is the capacity to be a leader in the sense of your own education and intellectual growth. To take something as conceived by others and make it your own relative to your own experiences. Identifying sources for a creative approach to landscape architecture will be at the center of our agenda for the semester.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Design and Theory Objectives

- To develop a more complex and nuanced understanding of what constitutes landscape, and the role of landscape architects in envisioning and creating new landscapes.
- To explore methods for creatively investigating landscapes as a generative practice resulting in compelling and innovative forms and transformative strategies.
- To introduce landform and topographic manipulation as an essential skill and opportunity for sculptural expression.
- To introduce the concept of nested scales of practice in the design process, focusing on site scale problems in a regional context.

Skills Objectives

- To continue to emphasize process drawing as a way of thinking through design problems.
- To introduce drafting (precision drawing) as an approach to design refinement and detailing.
- To continue to refine skills in plan, section and axonometric drawing.
- To introduce 1 and 2 point perspective theory.
- To introduce color as a tool for communication in landscape representations.
- To refine model making skills and craft.
- To become familiar with the spatial requirements of various common landscape functions.
COURSE POLICIES and INFORMATION

Attendance
LSA 227 is a design studio that requires a substantial dedication and investment of student time, skill, and critical thought both during and after official studio hours. **Attendance in studio is mandatory.** Students are required to participate in all lectures, discussions, and field trips, as well as group and individual critiques of assignments and projects. Classes meet Tuesdays and Thursdays from 2:00 PM – 4:50 PM. Attendance is required for the entire class period. We expect students to be in studio on time and prepared to work through the duration of the class. Upon arrival begin getting organized for your afternoon work.

Each student will be required to attend five small group discussion sessions to be scheduled outside of studio time. (Time and day to be determined.) The discussion sessions will focus on the content of readings and movies and their relevance to studio projects, design and the profession of landscape architecture.

**Excused Absences:**
Excused absences are generally granted for documented personal medical reasons (obtain verification from student health center or on a physician’s letterhead) or an extreme crisis in the immediate family. Persons granted an excused absence will be granted 1 class day for each day excused to make up work. Regardless, it is the responsibility of the individual student to notify the studio instructor of these circumstances. Students who fail to do this will not be eligible for an excused absence. Students with prolonged illness will be advised to drop the studio and retake the studio during the next available semester. Only in extreme instances (and in the context of substantial completion of the work assigned) will the grade of I (incomplete) be given as a semester evaluation and then only subject to University guidelines.

**Un-excused Absences:**
Failure to qualify under the category Excused Absence will result in the awarding of a zero for class days missed and any work not submitted. Un-excused absences in excess of three (3) days over the course of the semester will result in a semester grade of F.

Readings
We will continue to reference Frank Ching’s, *Architecture: Form, Space and Order* in LSA 227. Additional readings will be available in digital format through the DLA ftp site.

Movies
Movies viewing times will be scheduled during the first week of the semester. Each student will be required to watch all of the movies either during scheduled viewings or through your personal access to the movies. For each movie you will be required to submit an essay that provides a critical commentary on the contents of the movie and your assessment of the relevance to the current studio project. Teaching experience tells us that an essay of 500 +/-
words is often sufficient to express your commentary and assessment; however, that is a ball park number. The length of your essays is to be determined by what you need to thoroughly, yet concisely, document your thoughts.

Supplies
If you purchased last semester’s supply kit you should have the basic tools for the studio; however, additional papers, coloring utensils and modeling materials will be required for individual projects.

Projects
All projects must be submitted at the exact date and time specified in the project statement regardless of the degree of completion. Any work submitted late will automatically be marked down by a full letter grade (-10%). Late work must be turned in by the beginning of the next studio meeting or it will receive no credit (0%). Please note: if one major project receives no credit it will be impossible to pass the course. Exceptions to this policy will only be considered with written documentation per the above attendance policy.

Design Reviews
Work in this class is public. This means that everything you produce will be seen and commented on by others. You must decide that you will accept that this is just the way studio (and the profession in general) works. We learn from each other, from how others see the world, how they design, how they craft. Design does not happen in a vacuum. Review of progress in your design work will take several forms:

- Individual desk crits: faculty will circulate and assist with problems and offer advice while you work.
- Small group crits: faculty will work with a group of 3 or 4 students to review progress.
- Section pin-ups: the entire section will meet and pin-up their work for a group discussion.
- Studio pin-ups: all three sections will pin-up in the department jury space for a large group discussion of work.
- Formal reviews (the design jury): at the end of a major project, a committee of outside faculty will review your completed design proposals.

Studio Work Documentation
A comprehensive collection of all studio work is required at the end of the semester. It must include all of your semester projects and your process journal; therefore, each student will need to provide safe storage for their work during the semester. The wise student will immediately document their work (through digital photography or scanning) upon completion of each project.

Studio Life and the Social Environment
Always remember that the studio is both a learning and professional work environment. It represents your personal office as well as a public, democratic space. While you are encouraged to create a pleasant personal workspace, you must also be respectful and considerate of the needs of others working near you. Each individual is responsible for maintaining (not worsening) the condition of his/her furniture and must provide means for securing personal possessions. Each studio section is responsible for keeping their common area clean and orderly. Absolutely no audio players may be played on open speakers in the studio. You may listen to music but only through headphones. It should be noted that absolutely no smoking, alcohol or drugs are allowed in the studio.

You are STRONGLY encouraged to work in the studio rather than at home on all assignments. Talk to each other, commiserate, share your ideas—this is a big part of the learning process in a studio!

GRADES

*The Department of Landscape Architecture has a policy that requires a grade of C or better in LSA 227 in order to advance to LSA 326.*

Project Evaluation Criteria
Grades will be assessed based on how students work through the problems presented in each stage of the projects. Self-direction in response to criticism, commitment to imaginative exploration and problem solving, dedication to refinement and completion, and excellence in communication in terms of graphic, written and verbal resolution will
be considered. Your solutions to each assignment will be evaluated on the strength of idea, your process of investigation, level of complexity and completeness. Your ideas should show evidence of applying a broad range of resources to inform the quality of your solution. Exceptional work is built upon a synthesis of previous knowledge, as well as a broad spectrum of sources, not merely the studio assignment. In determining your grade we will consider:

**Performance** – You are committed to quality in design process. Work for excellence in craft, presentation of your ideas both graphically and verbally. Be self-disciplined and manage your time well.

**Process** – You engage the journey of the design process. Try multiple approaches to every problem. Evaluate. Ask questions. Your first ideas are typically not your best. The best ideas come from a process of exploration where you occasionally reach dead-ends and need to explore new avenues. To reach a dead-end but not lose momentum in the design process is seen as success; you will be evaluated positively for going through this crashing/renewal process—it is part of expanding your mind and working through unanticipated avenues of ideas. Creativity is about seeing something in a different and unexpected way; be willing to search for the unknown. You cannot progress as a designer unless you learn how to critique your work (articulate both positive and negative aspects of your work).

**Documents** – You are required to keep all studio materials throughout the semester, including: handouts, process documentation, study models and presentation materials created in this course.

**Attitude**: You are enthusiastic and willing to contribute to the working atmosphere of the studio. Be positive, curious, willing to take risks intellectually and aesthetically, open to critique from the instructor and peers, and thoughtful.

The following is a qualitative description of how specific grades will be determined. Grades will be assigned based on a dominant trend toward any assessment description. In other words, most of these characteristics (either positive or negative), but not necessarily all of them, must be present to receive each grade below.

**Excellent Work: A, A-**
As a faculty we are enthusiastic about giving A’s for excellent student work; however, we intend these grades to be meaningful. Therefore, with the bar set high there may be few A’s in the class. Students who receive A’s in studio will have earned their grade by:

- Producing design work that utilizes a strong conceptual foundation, clearly articulates forms derived from that concept, and articulates a cohesive spatial design.
- Fully and exhaustively researching and developing design proposals, utilizing ideas not touched on directly in class. (For example, researching built or proposed works similar to the assigned problem for inspiration or technical approach; or pursuing readings outside of what has been assigned to broaden your understanding of the problem.)
- Demonstrating the ability to achieve and excel in the development of studio work by positively responding to faculty criticism, as well as showing the ability to work independently (this means you do not require constant input, supervision and approval before progressing).
- Fully utilizing the design process, creating iterative trace studies, overlays and alternatives, creating study models, and other means of fully exploring ideas prior to producing final drawings and models.
- Demonstrating superior craft—beautifully made drawings and models with precise attention to details.
- Actively participating/ proposing in a critical dialogue in both group and individual discussions about assignments. A leader who helps faculty foster an atmosphere of inquiry about studio problems.
- Enthusiastic about the assignments and discussions, working to exceed the minimal expectations.
- Making the most of each and every studio session (i.e. working the entire period, discussing relevant project-related issues with classmates, effectively using desk crits, participating in discussion, etc.)
- Using both oral and written communication (on boards) to completely articulate the full range of ideas. Spelling and grammar are excellent.

**Notable Work: B+, B**
A grade of B or higher is reserved for students who go beyond minimal competency and begin to demonstrate a willingness to work hard and consistently with some notable success. Working hard is both a time and effort commitment and success is measured by:

- Producing design work that utilizes a reasonable conceptual foundation, clearly articulates forms derived from that concept, and articulates a cohesive spatial design.
- Demonstrating not only understanding but also achievement in directing the investigations and development of studio work.
Researching and developing design proposals, utilizing ideas not touched on directly in class. (For example, researching built or proposed works similar to the assigned problem for inspiration or technical approach; or pursuing readings outside of what has been assigned to broaden your understanding of the problem.)

Utilizing the design process to explore design ideas, as demonstrated by trace studies, overlays and alternatives, study models, etc., prior to producing final drawings and models.

Demonstrating strong competence in craft.

Often participating in group discussions

Demonstrating enthusiasm about the assignments and discussions.

Attending and working during each studio session.

Using both oral and written communication (on boards) to articulate ideas.

Spelling and grammar are good.

**Competent Work: B-, C+**

A student who consistently meets all deadlines and project requirements as well as:

- Producing design responses that are derived from an effective conceptual foundation, and are based on forms derived from that concept.
- Showing a basic understanding of issues introduced in studio.
- Demonstrating a willingness to think critically about studio design problems by asking good questions of faculty and peers. Student may have some difficulties but actively work to address gaps in their understanding.
- Demonstrating only a core competence in craft.
- Occasionally contributing to group discussions.
- Occasionally enthusiastic about the assignments and discussions.
- Attending and working during each studio session.
- Meeting required work for each studio session.
- Using both oral and written communication (on boards) to articulate ideas. Spelling and grammar are acceptable.

**Satisfactory (Marginal) Work: C**

Student work that meets only a minimal level of competence. This is borderline work and should be considered a warning of the potential for problems in upper level studios. It is important to note that satisfactory work must surpass mere completion by exhibiting an acceptable level of competence.

- All work is complete and turned in on time.
- Work shows minimal understanding of issues introduced in the assignments.
- Student has shown some minimal willingness to think critically about studio design problems, although often creating superficial or reflexive responses not related to a concept.
- Conceptual foundation for work is weakly defined and articulated, with design responses utilizing forms, patterns, and objects that are applied in loosely arranged space(s).
- Minimal utilization of the design process, showing little design exploration.
- Craft is problematic, but ideas are readable.
- Student is an active member of studio culture.
- Student attends all studios, arriving on time and departing only at the end of the period.
- Both oral and written communications (on boards) are minimally effective.
- Spelling and grammar are problematic.

**Unsatisfactory Work: C-, D**

A student who does not demonstrate the minimal competence to advance in the program. Students receiving a C- or lower must petition to advance to the next studio. Student work that receives this grade has the following characteristics:

- All deadlines are met, however projects are not complete (see policy on late work).
- Exhibiting difficulty in demonstrating recognition and understanding of the issues presented in the studio problems.
- Conceptual foundation for work is poorly defined and articulated, with design responses utilizing unrelated forms and patterns as well as randomly applied objects.
- Poor utilization of the design process, showing no design exploration and solutions that “appear” on the due date.
- Little or no willingness to think critically about the studio assignments.
- Little or no evidence of student work maturing over course of semester.
- Unacceptable level of craft where accuracy and precision are problematic.
- Missing or leaving studio sessions early without notice.
- Repeatedly coming to class late.
- Being a distraction rather than an asset to the working environment of the studio.
- Oral and written communications are unclear and poorly articulated. Spelling and grammar are abysmal.
Course Failure: F
Student work does not meet minimal academic standards for passing the course.
- Completion and deadlines are not met.
- No recognition or understanding of the issues and concepts presented in the studio problems.
- No willingness to think critically about the studio assignments.
- No evidence of student work maturing over course of semester.
- Unacceptable level of craft where accuracy and precision are absent.
- Missing or leaving studio sessions early without notice.
- Repeatedly coming to class late.
- Disciplinary problems.
I have fully read and understand the syllabus for LSA 227 Foundation Design Studio II, including all course policies and the grading rubric.

____________________________________
SIGNATURE

____________________________________
PRINT YOUR NAME

____________________________________
DATE

PLEASE DETACH THIS SIGNATURE SHEET AND RETURN NO LATER THAN TUESDAY JANUARY 24\textsuperscript{TH}, 2012