

LANDSCAPE STUDIES

LSS 100 Landscape, Environment and Design (2 Credits)

Through readings and a series of lectures by Smith faculty and guests, this course examines the history and influences out of which landscape studies is emerging. The course looks at the relationship of this new field with literary and cultural studies, art, art history, landscape architecture, history, biological and environmental sciences. What is landscape studies? Where does it come from? Why is it important? How does it relate to, for instance, landscape painting and city planning? How does it link political and aesthetic agendas? What is its role in current sustainability debates and initiatives among architects, landscape architects, planners and engineers? Students may take this course twice for credit. S/U only. {A}{H}{S}

Spring

LSS 105 Introduction to Landscape Studies (4 Credits)

This introductory course explores the evolving and interdisciplinary field of landscape studies. Drawing upon a diverse array of disciplinary influences in the social sciences, humanities and design fields, landscape studies is concerned with the complex and multifaceted relationship between human beings and the physical environment. Students in this course learn to critically analyze a wide variety of landscape types from the scale of a small garden to an entire region, as well as to practice different methods of landscape investigation. It is a course designed to change the way one sees the world, providing a fresh look at everyday and extraordinary places alike. Priority given to first-year students, sophomores and LSS minors. Enrollment limited to 30. {A}{H}{S}

Fall

LSS 200 Colloquium: Landscape, Environment, and Design (2 Credits)

LSS 200 is a credit linked colloquium to complement the LSS 100 series. Students will engage with the LSS 100 lectures more deeply via weekly class discussions, writing of synthesis papers, and presentations. LSS 200 is intended to provide interested students with an opportunity to grapple critically with topics raised in LSS 100 lectures and thoughtfully make connections between disparate lectures and their broader academic experiences. Can be taken twice for credit. Corequisite: LSS 100. Enrollment limited to 15. {A}{S}

Spring

LSS 220 GIS for Landscape & Urban Studies (4 Credits)

GIS for Landscape & Urban Studies provides a critical lens for understanding landscapes, the built environment, and the complex interplay between geospatial environmental and social concerns with the implicit power of the act of mapping them. Emphasizing bias, equity, and ethics, the course examines how geospatial data informs planning and reflects social justice issues like green space access, housing density, and food insecurity. Students gain technical expertise while critically engaging with the societal impact of mapping. Students use GIS tools like ArcGIS Online, QGIS, and Social Explorer to develop skills in geospatial analysis, data visualization, and cartography. Enrollment limited to 20. {S}

Fall, Spring, Variable

LSS 230 Urban Landscapes (4 Credits)

Students in this course investigate the production of the built environment and the landscape of cities, focusing on key actors such as neighborhood activists, real estate developers, city officials, and environmentalists, among other advocates and interested parties. Organized thematically and supplemented by readings in urban theory and related fields, the course tackles questions of how urban places are made, why different cities look and feel the way they do, and who shapes the city. Prerequisites: LSS 100 or LSS 105 or equivalent. Enrollment limited to 20. {A}{H}{S}

Fall, Spring, Variable

LSS 240 Cultural Landscapes and Historic Preservation (4 Credits)

Debates over the meaning, interpretation and management of unique, artistic, historic or culturally significant places take center stage in this course. Students consider how and why some landscapes and buildings get preserved and protected while others are redesigned, ignored, neglected or demolished. Major themes in the course include continuity and change in the built environment, notions of cultural heritage and the concept of authenticity. Readings include theoretical and historical perspectives on the topic supplemented by case studies and field investigations. Prerequisites: LSS 100 or LSS 105 or equivalent. Enrollment limited to 20. {A}{H}{S}

Spring

LSS 245 Place Frames: Photography As Method In Landscape Studies (4 Credits)

Photography and landscape are intertwined. Scholars, design professionals, artists and journalists use photographs as evidence, as a means of representing sites, as a design tool, as source material for project renderings and as documentation. This course focuses on how photography is a part of field observations and research techniques, how photographs are used in landscape studies and how text and image are combined in different photographic and scholarly genres. Students take photographs and examine the photographs of landscape architects, urbanists, artists and journalists. Field exercises are combined with workshops, discussions and research at the Smith College Museum of Art. Enrollment limited to 15. {A}{S}

Fall, Spring, Variable

LSS 250 Studio: Landscape and Narrative (4 Credits)

Landscapes guide their use and reveal their past. This landscape design studio asks students to consider the landscape as a location of evolving cultural and ecological patterns, processes and histories. Students work through a series of site-specific projects that engage with the narrative potential of landscape and critically consider the environment as socially and culturally constructed. A variety of media are used in the design process including drawing, model-making, collage and photography. Priority given to LSS minors and ARU majors. Enrollment limited to 14. {A}{S}

Fall, Spring, Variable

LSS 255 Art and Ecology (4 Credits)

Environmental designers are in the unique and challenging position of bridging the science of ecology and the art of place-making. This landscape design studio emphasizes the dual necessity for solutions to ecological problems that are artfully designed and artistic expressions that reveal ecological processes. Beginning with readings, precedent studies and in-depth site analysis, students design a series of projects that explore the potential for melding art and ecology. Enrollment limited to 14. {A}{S}

Fall, Spring, Variable

LSS 260 Visual Storytelling: Graphics, Data and Design (4 Credits)

Communicating with images is different than communicating with words. By learning how the eye and brain work together to derive meaning from images, students take perceptual principles and translate them into design principles for effective visual communication. Course lectures, readings and exercises cover graphic design, visual information, information graphics and portfolio design. Students are introduced to graphic design software, online mapping software and develop skills necessary to complete a portfolio of creative work or a visual book showcasing a body of research. Enrollment limited to 18. {A}

Fall, Spring, Variable

LSS 300 Seminar: Rethinking Landscape (4 Credits)

This capstone course in the study of the built environment brings history and theory alive for those students with interests in diverse fields such as art, architecture, American studies, engineering and the natural sciences. Designed as an advanced-level seminar, it explores key concepts and theoretical debates that have shaped the interdisciplinary field of landscape studies. In particular, students investigate how the field has changed over time and critically consider where it is likely to go in the future. Classic texts from thinkers such as J.B. Jackson, Yi-Fu Tuan, John Stilgoe, Anne Spirn and Dolores Hayden are paired with contemporary critiques and new approaches to the study of space and place. Independent research work and participation in class discussion are strongly emphasized. Prerequisite: one 200-level course in LSS, or equivalent. Priority given to LSS minors, and seniors and juniors. Restrictions: Juniors and seniors only. Enrollment limited to 12. Instructor permission required. {A}{S}

Fall, Spring, Variable

LSS 315 Seminar: Urban Ecological Design (4 Credits)

This seminar course examines how designers and planners have theorized the interaction of natural processes and human-constructed systems in cities. Major themes include: how planners, architects, landscape architects, and engineers put ecological knowledge and scientific expertise into action to address complex problems; how an ecologically-based reading of the urban landscape differs from typical approaches to city design; relationships between land form, land use, and built environment; and, conceptions of urban nature and "design with nature." Topics may include sea-level rise; urban infrastructures; access to parks and open spaces; the combined sewer overflow problem; and heat, health, and urban forestry. Restrictions: Juniors and seniors only. Enrollment limited to 12. Instructor permission required. {H}{N}{S}

Fall, Spring, Variable

LSS 389/ ARS 389 Broad-Scale Design and Planning Studio (4 Credits)

Offered as LSS 389 and ARS 389. This class is for students who have taken introductory landscape studios and are interested in exploring more sophisticated projects. It is also for architecture and urbanism majors who have a strong interest in landscape architecture or urban design. In a design studio format, the students analyze and propose interventions for the built environment on a broad scale, considering multiple factors (including ecological, economic, political, sociological and historical) in their engagement of the site. The majority of the semester is spent working on one complex project. Students use digital tools as well as traditional design media and physical model building within a liberal arts-based conceptual studio that encourages extensive research and in-depth theoretic inquiry. Previous studio experience and two architecture or landscape studies courses suggested. Priority given to LSS minors and ARU majors. Enrollment limited to 14. Instructor permission required. {A}

Fall, Spring, Variable

LSS 400 Special Studies (1-4 Credits)

Normally for senior minors. Advanced study and research in landscape studies-related fields. May be taken in conjunction with LSS 300 or as an extension of design work begun during or after a landscape studies or architecture studio. Instructor permission required.

Fall, Spring