GEOG/HIST 488/688: CREATING NORTH AMERICAN LANDSCAPES
Spring 2017

Note: Supplemental information regarding course requirements, including detailed assignment guidelines, is posted on the course WebCampus site. Students should read the material on WebCampus as well as this syllabus in the first week of class and check the site at least once a week for new information and announcements.

Instructor Information

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

course description: The North American landscape is at once a physical place and a cultural artifact. It has been created both by the practices we employ on the land, and the stories we tell about it. This interdisciplinary, integrative course will use the methods of geography and cultural history to explore the ongoing creation and recreation of the American landscape(s).

American culture nurtures reverence for the past as well as a fierce dedication to the future. Historically, North American settlement history has been characterized by displacement and settlement, by a willingness to abandon and move on as well as a deep desire to set down roots. Its cultural origins are European, but its physical manifestations are a mélange of international, national, and local influences. A taste for the new continues to attract Americans—from east to west, from countryside to city, from city to suburb, from Rust Belt to Sunbelt; but we simultaneously celebrate the allure of the old world as we create monuments, shrines, or theme parks based on that heritage. The contemporary landscape we confront today is the result of all these impulses, and we will consider their intersection as we explore the processes and consequences of landscape creation. This is a cross-listed, co-instructed course drawing on content and methods from Geography and History.

This course satisfies CO 13 of the Silver Core Curriculum.

CO 13 – Integrative Experience: Students will be able to integrate and synthesize Core knowledge, enabling them to analyze open-ended problems or complex issues.
In addition, Geography/History 488/688 helps students to develop the skills described in CO 1 (Effective Composition and Communication), CO 3 (Critical Analysis and Use of Information), CO 5 (History & Culture), CO 6 (Cultures, Societies, and Individuals), and CO 11 (Global Contexts).

Student Learning Outcome (SLOs) and Correlation to Core Objectives (COs):

Students successfully completing this course will be able to:
1. Integrate skills of written, oral, and visual communication to pose and answer an informed question about the origins and significance of the North American landscape (CO 1, CO 3, CO 13)
2. Describe the ways that landscape is both a physical and a cultural creation (CO 13, drawing on CO4 and CO5, CO9)
3. Explain the regional variations in the North American landscape (CO 11)
4. Discern national and international influences in the local landscape (CO 6, CO 11)
5. Analyze and synthesize the impact of national political, social, and economic systems on the local landscape (CO 6)

BOOKS


Additional readings will be available on WebCampus.

ASSIGNMENTS

488 requirements:

1. During the semester you will use your research skills, previous training, and newly acquired knowledge to ask and answer a significant question about the North American landscape. This research project will be developed throughout the semester, and relevant due dates for each stage are noted on the syllabus. You may choose your topic and your presentation format, but it must have both historical and geographical dimensions, and your research must involve both historical and observational methodologies. For these assignments you may approach landscape as a primarily physical phenomenon, or as a primarily cultural one, but both textual research and landscape observation are required to formulate the answer to your question.
Further details about each phase of the assignment will be discussed in class, and instructions will be posted on the WebCampus site. You will receive guidance about the appropriate scope and manageable scale of your project, but its design and formulation are your responsibility. The final project need not be a traditional research paper, but must combine both written and visual resources. Grades for all the developmental stages of the project (proposal and 3 separate progress reports) will be part of the final grade for the research project.

2. Regular, active participation in class—including attendance at lectures, discussions of the readings, and oral presentations as assigned—is required. Absences or silences will inevitably jeopardize this segment of the grade (which is substantial) as well as your successful completion of the requirements above. Part of your participation grade will consist of short written assignments to prepare in advance of each class. These will be announced in class, with specific instructions posted on the WebCampus site each week. You are expected to attend faithfully, to have the readings completed beforehand, and to demonstrate through the weekly assignments and your discussion that you have thought analytically about them. More than one unexcused absence will jeopardize your final grade, although attendance alone will not insure a good class participation grade.

688 requirements:

688 students will meet separately with the instructors four times during the semester to discuss ideas and develop proposals for their more extensive research projects according to the schedule described on the syllabus. At two of these meetings you will present monographs you have found helpful in your work. A third meeting will include maps, images, geographic databases, or other non-textual source that you will draw upon for your project. You are free to conceive this assignment broadly, subject to instructors’ approval. 688 students will present the results of their investigations at the final class meeting, during exam week.

ASSESSMENT:

Student learning will be assessed in the assigned writing, research, and oral components throughout the semester. Grades will be based on performance on the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>grading:</th>
<th>488</th>
<th>688</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>class participation</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>final project</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>50%</td>
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Students enrolled in 688 will be held to a higher standard of performance than 488 students.

The final project is a cumulative assignment that builds throughout the semester, beginning with the topic proposal through each of the three interim progress reports. Specific guidelines and instructions for each of these reports will be posted on the WebCampus site and discussed in class. Overall, the goal of the project is to incorporate material from the lectures
and readings with students’ own knowledge and analysis to pose and answer a question about the North American landscape. Each progress report will document a successive phase of the project, receive extensive instructor feedback, and be incorporated into the grade for the final project.

In-class discussion, including posing and answering questions, participating in group discussions and presentations, and presenting the results of students’ own inquiries, gives an opportunity to refine the skills of composition, communication, and critical analysis that students have developed through previous courses. The short, written weekly assignments on the readings will focus on the readings to insure that students understand the multiple levels at which landscape operates, national, international, local, and individual. These will receive comments and S/U grading. They will be included as part of the class participation segment of the final grade.

**Grading Criteria**

*Grading criteria* for written work:

**F** denotes work that is not done or not acceptable. It demonstrates that the student has no idea what the course material is about, suggesting a lack of interest or effort and frequent absences from class. If you complete the assignments and come to class regularly it is virtually impossible to receive an F.

**D** is given for work that is inadequate. It omits important points, contains more than a few inaccuracies, and is badly organized, suggesting that the student has not been paying much attention to the course or is having conceptual problems. A student who attends class but does not contribute to it is assumed to be doing D work.

**C** is given for work that is average. The student shows familiarity with the subject, but assignments lack detail or effective organization, or fail to follow instructions. The C progress report might make general points but fail to support them with specific evidence, or it might be merely a collection of facts, with no coherent discussion of them. The C discussant might sporadically ask an extraneous question, but not submit weekly assignments that show command of the readings or awareness the themes of the class.

**B** denotes work that is above average in quality. It demonstrates that the student knows and understands the material covered in class, and that s/he is capable of synthesizing it in a variety of ways, including reflective weekly readings responses, analytic refinement of an American landscape topic for the progress reports, and submission of a final project that is accurate, detailed, and well organized. The B discussant’s assignments reflect active engagement with the readings, and an ability to relate them to the student’s own landscape investigation.

**A** is for work of exceptional quality. This grade is for work that presents a clear thesis supported by persuasive evidence and analysis, logically organized, and free from typing or grammatical errors. An A-level final project demonstrates the student’s ability to build on what he or she has learned during the semester, so as to explore new subject matter employing a variety of both
geographical and historical skills. The A discussant’s weekly assignments employ the readings to reflect on and extend course themes, offer and informed and reflective perspective on the topic under consideration and its connections to the student’s own landscape investigation.

**COURSE POLICIES:**

**Deadlines and Policies Regarding Missed Work**

Assignments are due in class on the dates indicated in the Weekly Schedule. **Late papers will not be accepted.** Readings and journal entries should be completed prior to the lecture each week. Extra credit opportunities will be available.

**Grade Ranges:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade Ranges</th>
<th>95-100 A</th>
<th>80-83 B-</th>
<th>67-69 D+</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>90-94 A-</td>
<td>77-79 C+</td>
<td>64-66 D</td>
<td>any grade below 60 is failing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>87-89 B+</td>
<td>74-76 C</td>
<td>60-63 D-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>84-86 B</td>
<td>70-73 C</td>
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**Academic Dishonesty**

The university’s Academic Standards policy states:

Academic dishonesty is against university as well as the system community standards. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, the following:

Plagiarism: defined as submitting the language, ideas, thoughts or work of another as one's own; or assisting in the act of plagiarism by allowing one's work to be used in this fashion.

Cheating: defined as (1) obtaining or providing unauthorized information during an examination through verbal, visual or unauthorized use of books, notes, text and other materials; (2) obtaining or providing information concerning all or part of an examination prior to that examination; (3) taking an examination for another student, or arranging for another person to take an exam in one's place; (4) altering or changing test answers after submittal for grading, grades after grades have been awarded, or other academic records once these are official.

Sanctions for violations of university academic standards may include the following:

(1) filing a final grade of “F”; (2) reducing the student’s final course grade one or two full grade points; (3) awarding a failing mark on the test or paper in question; (4) requiring the student to retake the test or resubmit the paper.
Copying someone else’s entire paper or article is a clear example of academic dishonesty, but note that plagiarism can take other, less obvious forms as well. “Language, ideas, thoughts or work of another” includes any material used in your assignments and essays that was written or produced by others. Using brief phrases or sentences from books, articles, internet sites, documents, or other sources without letting your reader know where they came from is a form of plagiarism. You must properly acknowledge your use of other people’s words by placing them in quotation marks and citing all sources used in your paper. Even if you paraphrase someone else’s ideas and do not quote them directly, you must still indicate where those ideas came from. Citations should also be given for little-known facts and statistics.

In addition, all cases of academic dishonesty are reported to the Office of Student Conduct and become part of the student’s academic record. Potential employers as well as the directors of graduate and professional programs to which students may apply can request copies of these records, in which case the academic dishonesty charge will be disclosed.

**Academic Success Services**

Your student fees cover use of the Tutoring Center, the University Writing Center, and the Math Center. Students are encouraged to take advantage of these services as needed.
Tutoring Center: ph. 784-6801 or visit www.unr.edu/tutoring
University Writing Center: ph. 784-6030 or visit www.unr.edu/writing_center
Math Center: ph. 784-4433 or visit www.unr.edu/mathcenter

**Students with Disabilities**

The History Department is committed to equal opportunity in education for all students, including those with documented physical disabilities or documented learning disabilities. If you have a documented disability and will be requiring assistance, please contact me or the Disability Resource Center (Thompson Building Suite 101) as soon as possible to arrange for appropriate accommodations.

**Audio and Video Recording**

Surreptitious or covert videotaping of class or unauthorized audio recording of class is prohibited by law and by Board of Regents policy. This class may be videotaped or audio recorded only with the written permission of the instructor. In order to accommodate students with disabilities, some students may be given permission to record class lectures and discussions. Therefore, students should understand that their comments during class may be recorded.

**COURSE SCHEDULE:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>date</th>
<th>topic/reading</th>
<th>assignments due</th>
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</table>

week 1  introduction - What do we mean by landscapes?  
Why do (or should) we care?  

readings: Donald W. Meinig, ed, “Introduction,”  
in *The Interpretation of Ordinary Landscapes*  

week 2  How do we define and study landscapes?  
nature and culture; historical and geographical perspectives  

readings: Pierce F.Lewis, “Axioms for Reading the Landscape,”  
Leo Marx, *The Machine in the Garden*, chapt. 1  
Meinig, “The Beholding Eye,” in *Interpretation of Ordinary Landscapes*  

week 3  agrarian vs. commercial landscapes, the North  

readings: Michael Conzen, *The Making of the American Landscape*, chapt. 4  
James E.Vance, Jr., *The Continuing City*, pp. 251-63  
John R. Stilgoe, *Common Landscape of America*, pp. 43-58  

week 4  agrarian vs. commercial landscapes  
the South and elsewhere  

readings: Conzen, chapt. 6  
Marx, chapt. 3  
Vance, pp. 268-275  

488 topic proposal due  

week 5  nature and order - internal improvements reshape the landscape  

readings: Conzen, chapt. 7  
Hayden, chapt. 3  
Stilgoe, pp. 99-107  
Vance, pp. 263-268, 275-281  

week 6  wilderness and the sublime  

readings: Roderick Nash, *Wilderness and the American Mind*; chaps. 3 and 4  
Nye, chaps. 1 and 2
week 7  early industrial landscapes and  
the technological sublime

688 project proposals du
488 progress report #1 due

readings: Marx, pp. 145-169, 190-208
Nye, chapt. 3
Vance, pp. 328-344

week 8  industrialization and urbanization move westward

readings: Conzen, chapt. 9, pp. 182-185
Nye, chapt. 5
Earl Pomeroy, “The Power of the Metropolis,”
chapt. 6 in The Pacific Slope
Vance, pp. 353-361

week 9  spring break - no class

week 10 the Great Industrial City

688 abstract, outline, and
annotated bibliography due

readings: Conzen, chapt. 9, pp. 176-182 and chapt. 13
William Cronon, Nature’s Metropolis, chapt. 2
Edward K. Muller, “Industrial Suburbs and the Growth of Metropolitan
Pittsburgh,” chapt. 7 in Robert Lewis, ed., Manufacturing Suburbs

week 11 suburban reorganization of the landscape

488 progress report #2 due

readings: Hayden, chaps. 4 and 6
Kenneth T. Jackson, Crabgrass Frontier, chapt. 5
Vance, pp. 438-448

week 12 the Electric City and its tributaries

readings: Rosalyn Baxandall/Elizabeth Ewen, Picture Windows, chapt. 13
Peter Goin/Elizabeth Raymond, Changing Mines in America, chapt. 1 and 2
Nye, chapt. 7
Vance, pp. 430-438;

week 13 midcentury landscapes - the new technological sublime

readings: Baxandell/Ewen, chapt. 10 and 12
Hayden, chapt. 7 and chapt. 8 to p. 172
Vance, pp. 449-454
week 14 evolving suburbs and the dynamic sublime 688 drafts due
488 progress report #3 due
readings: Conzen, chapt. 15
Hayden; chapt. 8, pp. 172 on and chapt. 9
Nye, chapt. 9
Vance, pp. 490-494

week 15 the contemporary landscape 688 papers due
readings: Hayden, chapt. 10
Nye, chapt. 10
Vance, pp. 458-461; 506-515

exam week final exam meeting - the end of place? 488 projects due
688 presentations
readings: Hayden, chapt. 11
Alex Marshall, “End of Place,”
chapt. 2 in Making Cities Work
Nye, chapt. 11

Additional readings are available on WebCampus. These assignments are indicated in the syllabus in bold.