ADV 9341
Preparation of MLA Design Thesis

ADV 9342
MLA Design Thesis
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Design Thesis  

ADV 9342  
MLA Design Thesis  

Charles Waldheim  
Mercedes Peralta, TA  
Seok Min Yeo, TA  
Mark Heller, TA

MONDAYS  

DISCUSSION  
13:30-15:00 - 7 Sumner 104, 42 Kirkland St 42-1-A, 40 Kirkland 1D  

LECTURE  
15:00-16:30 - Gund 109  

WORKSHOP  
16:30-18:00 - Gund 109

DEPARTMENT OF LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE  
HARVARD UNIVERSITY GRADUATE SCHOOL OF DESIGN
“The natural sciences are concerned with how things are . . . Design, on the other hand, is concerned with how things ought to be.”

—Herbert Simon, 
The Sciences of the Artificial, 1969
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1. Introduction to MLA Design Thesis

This handbook serves as a guide for students who are undertaking a design thesis in the Department of Landscape Architecture at the Harvard Graduate School of Design. The thesis provides an opportunity for candidates in the Master in Landscape Architecture program to pursue graduate-level research and explore a topic of their interest through design research. The design thesis builds upon the core curriculum in landscape architecture at the GSD. This handbook provides a summary of key design thesis requirements and offers an overview of the design thesis process, from selection of a suitable topic to submission of the final thesis.

For landscape architecture students interested in completing a thesis, the planning process begins in their penultimate year of the MLA Program. The thesis project itself begins in earnest in their final year, through thesis prep and design thesis courses, offered in Fall and Spring terms, respectively. In the Spring term of their penultimate year of study (fourth semester for MLA I students, second semester for MLA I AP and MLA II students), candidates must formally state their intention to complete thesis. Interested candidates are also encouraged to begin consideration of a thesis topic and potential thesis advisor at this time. In the Fall term of their final year of study candidates enroll in GSD 9341 and prepare a design thesis proposal and secure a design thesis advisor. In the Spring term of their final year of study candidates enroll in GSD 9342 Design Thesis and complete, present, and submit their design thesis. Each of these stages of work, and their associated requirements, are described in greater detail below.
2. The Penultimate Year: Establishing a foundation for design thesis

a. Declaring Intention to Pursue MLA Design Thesis

While the design thesis is pursued during the final year of the MLA at the GSD, planning for design thesis begins in the Spring term of the penultimate year of study. Students considering pursuing an MLA design thesis are invited to attend midterm and final reviews of MLA thesis candidates in the year ahead of them, as well as meetings with potential faculty advisors and the MLA design thesis coordinator, in the Spring term prior to their final year of study. These reviews, discussions, and informational sessions survey the potentials and limits of the MLA design thesis process, as well as the support offered by the department for the design thesis.

Students who opt to pursue a design thesis are required to declare their intentions in the Spring term of their penultimate year, on or before a date published by the department office. This deadline, as well as the MLA thesis declaration form, and other relevant information can be found on the GSD website under resources at: https://www.gsd.harvard.edu/resources/mla-thesis-guidelines/

MLA candidates electing to pursue design thesis are not required to declare a thesis topic or faculty advisor until the Fall term of their final year of study; however, they are encouraged to begin reaching out to faculty before the Fall during the Spring term of their penultimate year and over the summer months. In selecting topics for their design thesis, MLA candidates are encouraged to build upon their previous academic and professional formation, and to use the summer months to articulate their individual interests, appetites, and attitudes. These are most effectively articulated in dialogue with a faculty advisor and the design thesis coordinator.

MLA candidates in the professional degree program (MLA I and MLA I AP) who pursue a design thesis are required to complete an option studio offered by the Department of Landscape Architecture in the Fall term of their final year of study. Candidates in the post-professional degree program (MLA II) are not subject to this requirement.
During the Fall term of their final year of study, students begin a formal process of thesis preparation. Over the semester, students complete the department’s four-unit thesis preparation lecture/workshop course, GSD 9341: Preparation of Design Thesis Proposal for Master in Landscape Architecture. This research lecture/workshop course is intended for Master in Landscape Architecture candidates electing to pursue a design thesis in their final year of study. The course defines the parameters of a design thesis and assists candidates in the development of their own individual design thesis proposals. The course addresses a series of broad themes essential to developing a cogent thesis proposal including design research, projective practices, discursive agendas, site contexts, programmatic drivers, and representational strategies. The lecture/workshop course examines the role of precedent projects and design methods in thesis, as well as the status of design and design research as forms of knowledge production in the research university.
b. Thesis Prep Course Structure (GSD 9341)

i. Course Structure
The lecture/workshop course meets weekly for three hours, beginning with a lecture and discussion session, followed by tutorial workshops with smaller groups for the purpose of reviewing assignments and proposals in progress. In addition to the regularly scheduled class sessions, tutorial workshops, and formal reviews, individual meetings with faculty advisors are an important aspect of the course. Students will be invited to identify and recruit a faculty thesis advisor during the first half of the term. By the end of the term candidates will have prepared a proposal for their individual design thesis through word and image.

FORMAT
The thesis prep course meets as a group for three hours. The first half of this period is devoted to a series of thematic lectures on a range of topics and the second half of the period is devoted to individual student presentations in a workshop format. In addition to the three-hours of class, students are invited to join one or more smaller independent discussion and project prep sessions.

INDEPENDENT DISCUSSION / PREP SESSIONS
13:30 - 15:00 [Rooms TBC]

Independent discussion sessions are organized by course TAs who facilitate the organization of student materials and technologies in support of a smaller group discussion led by the students themselves. These discussions are framed in response to the previous week’s assignment and allow for the thesis cohort to work more independently, while fostering creative and critical discussion regarding the work in progress.

LECTURES
15:00 - 16:30 [Gund 109]

The class meets weekly for lectures that present a range of perennial topics associated with the design thesis. These sessions include presentation of key conceptual and disciplinary forms of knowledge, precedent projects, and selected aspects of recent MLA Design Theses. These sessions conclude with
a presentation and discussion of the next weekly thematic assignment and the format and schedule for upcoming review sessions

WORKSHOPS
16:30-18:00 Gund 109

The class continues to meet as a group in the second half of the three-hour course. During this session, a small set of individual students are invited to make brief seminar presentations (5-10 mins) on the status of their design thesis proposal to date. These sessions enable the broader group discussion and feedback to each of the individual thesis proposals prior to the midterm review. These sessions also enable a second opportunity for presentation to the group in the second half of the course.

TEACHING ASSISTANTS
The thesis prep course engages one or more TAs to contribute to a number of aspects of course preparation, organization, and facilitation. TAs will assist the faculty in preparing course materials, syllabi, readings, presentations, and other materials in support of course conception and delivery. TAs will manage the course CANVAS site, course folders, and related contents on the GSD network. TAs will communicate with students, faculty, and invited guest critics; organize midterm and final review sessions; and organize independent weekly discussion and prep sections led by the students in smaller groups. TAs will collect weekly assignments as well as review presentations and misc. deliverables from the students and will be available to support students and faculty in the organization of their materials for presentation.

The first half of the semester introduces the thesis as a conceptual frame and identifies key elements common to all design theses. Students are required to begin drafting a thesis statement, develop a specific topic for their proposed thesis, and simultaneously explore and collect a body of precedent research to help define the form and type of project they intend to produce. A
thorough examination of precedent material and simultaneous iterative development of the thesis statement is emphasized, with the intention of allowing students to develop broad ideas and concept of what a thesis is, as well as specific direction for their individual work. The analysis of precedent work is an iterative process that leads to the definition of the thesis.

iii. Precedents
Students are required to review and critically evaluate relevant literature and projects that will inform their anticipated thesis project. By considering a range of project types and format, students will amass a body of work to draw from when defining the parameters to which their design thesis will respond. This body of work should define a genre within which the individual thesis project will fall, in this way placing the student’s work within a larger professional and academic context at an early stage. The selected precedents should demonstrate stylistic qualities, conceptual approaches, and presentation structure intended for the final thesis. This literature and project review serves as a resource to students moving forward through the thesis prep and into the final thesis semester. Students are expected to explain their choice of selected precedents, and communicate their analysis and critique of each project to the seminar class. Precedents are critically evaluated through verbal explanation and analytical drawings exploring a range of key elements including design, representation, and site.

iv. Advisor
Advisor choices are due in early October so that the advisor-student relationships can be confirmed before the mid-term reviews. Typically, students will list their preferred advisors in order of preference. These are then validated with the advisors, in concert with their individual teaching roles and responsibilities. While the student-advisor choices are confirmed in October, often these discussions begin much sooner. Students are encouraged to choose an advisor they might work well with.
v. Site + Subject
The thesis topic is addressed following the precedent studies. Students iteratively refine both their thesis statements and precedent analyses during this section of the seminar. Students begin to articulate an idea of site through both the precedent analysis and thesis topic development. At this point in the thesis prep semester, the site may remain an abstract concept, defining parameters that will inform the selection of a specific project site, or if the site is fundamental the topic of the thesis, students may identify a more specific, physical site for their work. After identifying a site, students continue through the remainder of the semester to hone in on specific site selection and study through mapping and analytical drawing. This section of the seminar concludes with the Mid-Term Review, where students present the conceptual framework of the design thesis, through their precedent analysis, thesis statement, preliminary site definition, and beginnings of a design project.

vi. Articulation of Design Thesis Project
The second half of the semester focuses on developing the design project, and producing an outline of the work to be completed in the final thesis semester for the final design project. At this stage, the regular thesis prep lecture/workshop sessions are followed by individual meetings with the TA(s) rather than the meetings of small groups. By the end of thesis prep, students are required to have defined the design project of their thesis, as well as the methods of research, production, and representation they intend to use to complete the final project. This work provides the basic structural framework for the design project, preparing students to continue directly into the final design project in the following semester.

vii. Design Project
Students are required to launch directly from feedback of the Mid-Term Review toward a more refined definition of a design project for the design thesis. The design project will be refined through iteration over the course of thesis prep, but the idea
vii. Representation
Students are required to review and discuss the main representational techniques they intend to use in their final thesis project. Representation methods must be analyzed to explain their effectiveness and appropriateness to each proposed thesis. A number of lecture/workshop sessions will be dedicated to exploring various representational techniques through tutorial and workshop.

ix. Methodology
Students are required to review and discuss their intended methodology(ies) for research and design work. The selected methodology should reflect the anticipated topic and program of the final thesis. Defining the method simplifies the design process for students later by defining the manner of making fundamental decisions and moving forward throughout the final thesis project. This basic decision-making is fundamental to successful progress of the final thesis.

x. Schedule and Deliverables
Throughout the second half of thesis prep, students are required to refine a list of media and deliverables to be produced for the final thesis project, as well as a draft schedule for the completion of thesis. The media and deliverables should reflect, and be heavily informed by the precedents selected by each student. The draft schedule will inform the progression of work for the final semester.
i. Independent Discussion / Prep Sections
Independent discussion sessions are organized by course TAs who facilitate the organization of student materials and technologies in support of a smaller group discussion led by the students themselves. These discussions are framed in response to the previous week’s assignment and allow for the thesis cohort to work more independently, while fostering creative and critical discussion regarding the work in progress.

Students are encouraged to meet with other classmates to share emerging work and to learn from each other’s successes and struggles. Developing a strong peer network of fellow thesis students is an excellent strategy for self-motivation and keeping the thesis on track, both temporally and intellectually.

ii. Thesis Prep Reviews
For the thesis-prep Mid-Term Review, students present their work and receive feedback from a panel including their thesis advisor, other MLA thesis advisors, thesis prep TAs, and additional reviewers from within the Landscape Architecture Department faculty. Students are expected to have articulated a thesis statement, and present precedent projects, site description and the beginnings of a design proposal at the Mid-Term Review.

**MID TERM REVIEW**
09:00-15:00 [venue TBC]
Each student is invited to prepare and present a five-minute presentation of their in-progress design thesis proposal to date. Feedback is provided by faculty, teaching assistants, and the class as a whole.

**PENULTIMATE TERM PREP REVIEW**
12:00-18:00 [venue TBC]
Each student is invited to prepare and present a five-minute presentation of their in-progress design thesis proposal to date. Feedback is provided by faculty, teaching assistants, and invited thesis advisors, and the class as a whole.

C. Reviews
Each student is invited to prepare and present a ten-minute presentation of their in-progress design thesis proposal to date. Feedback is provided by faculty, teaching assistants, and invited thesis advisors.

iii. Individual Lecture/Workshop Course Reviews
Following the Mid-Term Review, weekly progress reviews within the seminar occur one-on-one between students and TAs. This allows students and TAs to have individual, project-focused time as students begin developing in more detail the thesis design proposal.

iv. December Presentation of Design Thesis Proposals
For the Final Presentation of Design Proposals in December, students will present work to a panel of advisors mostly from within the faculty of the GSD. Students are expected to present their work from the semester, encompassing precedents, topic, method, site, and focusing on the proposed design project.

v. Advisor-Advisee Meetings
A regular meeting schedule is encouraged between advisor and thesis candidate. Once advisors are selected, students are encouraged to meet regularly throughout the semester with their advisor and develop a working relationship and progress the thesis. To track progress, students should stay in close contact with their thesis advisor over the thesis preparation term. Regular meeting and feedback will also allow the student to iteratively develop a final proposal that meets the requirements and expectations of the department. This semester is the time for students to work closely with advisors, whether through office hour appointments or other meetings, and develop the core ideas underpinning your thesis.
 Evaluation

The thesis prep course is evaluated by the faculty member leading the course on a standard GSD pass/fail system, with no more than the top 25% of the class being considered for marks of HIGH PASS/DISTINCTION. Course requirements include class discussion and workshop presentations (25%); weekly class assignments (50%); and final review (25%). All weekly assignments and review presentations should be uploaded as PDF to canvas site by 11:59pm (midnight) the day prior to the due date/review. Work submitted weekly will be evaluated by four equally weighted terms of evaluation:
1. Representation: demonstrating a clear argument visually as well as verbally;
2. Research: consistent inquiry and engagement with the topic throughout the term;
3. Proposition: the intellectual and cultural arguments supporting your project; and
4. Proposal: potential of the project as both an intervention in the world and a contribution to the field.
During the Spring term of their final year of study, MLA candidates pursuing thesis complete the final design thesis for defense in May. Following the successful completion of Thesis Prep (GSD 9341) in the Fall term, each student articulates a specific topic for their design thesis as advised by a member of GSD faculty. Students must be enrolled in the 8-unit course, Independent Thesis in Satisfaction of the Degree Master in Landscape Architecture (GSD 9342).

Throughout the thesis process, student work closely with their faculty advisors, participate in organized peer and external reviews, and demonstrate significant self-directed independent work on the development and completion of a final design thesis project. By the end of the Spring term, students will have developed rigorous design proposals and be able to present and defend these proposals both verbally and through a range of representational media including but not limited to drawings, models, and diagrams. Completion of the final design thesis project requires public presentation of the project and its successful defense, as well as the submission of the thesis book, documenting the final thesis for Harvard University’s own record. This document will be made available to future years of thesis students in the Frances Loeb Library.

The evaluation of the design thesis is the primary responsibility of the faculty advisor, in consultation with the thesis coordinator, other thesis advisors, and the program director.
b. Independent Thesis in satisfaction of the Degree in Landscape Architecture (GSD 9342)

Structure of Semester
Building upon the research and work done in the Fall term, students focus in their final term on the articulation of a design research project to satisfy the thesis framework set out by the department, and outlined by the individual student during Thesis Prep. Design thesis work is advised by a member of GSD faculty, yet is largely pursued independently. Students meet regularly with their advisors on a mutually agreed schedule, and participate in reviews of their work arranged throughout the term by the thesis coordinator.
c. Reviews

The formal reviews listed below are all to be coordinated by the thesis coordinator. Any additional internal reviews between students, and between student and advisor, should be arranged independently.

i. January preliminary reviews:
Preliminary thesis reviews are held at the beginning of the Spring term in January. These are less a repetition of December reviews and more a review of work done since the December meeting and include the scope and schedule of work during the Spring term.

ii. March midterm reviews:
Mid-term reviews are typically held on the Monday immediately following Spring Break. The deliverables are established in consultation with individual faculty advisors.

iii. May final reviews:
The finals are scheduled in mid-May in front of a panel consisting of external reviewers in addition to the GSD design thesis advisors and other faculty reviewers.
A thesis grading meeting will be held shortly after
the date of final thesis reviews and prior to the
Department degree vote and awards discussion.
Each candidate having successfully defended their
thesis project shall be presented at this thesis
grading meeting by their advisor for discussion and
comparative evaluation with the cohort. Successful
candidates completing their design thesis will
be presumed to have earned a grade of PASS.
This meeting will convene faculty advisors, thesis
director, program director, and department chair in
a discussion and evaluation of the thesis projects
successfully defended. This group will vote to
nominate approximately 25% of the students for the
mark of HIGH PASS or DISTINCTION (following the
grading system outlined in the GSD’s Guidelines
for Instruction). The group will similarly vote to
nominate a single student or project from amongst
this group to be recognized with the MLA Thesis
Prize. The recommendation for THESIS PRIZE will
be presented at the Department degree vote and
awards meeting for ratification by the voting faculty
of the Department. These grades will be informed
by:

1. Representation: demonstrating a clear argument
graphically as well as visually;
2. Engagement: showing consistent inquiry
throughout the semester;
3. Proposal: the potential of the design research
project; and
4. Excellence: quality of overall design research
project.

Submission requirements
PDFs of all final boards and presentation materials
are required for final submission. A final digital PDF
thesis book is required for completion of the final
design thesis. In addition to the design project,
this book should document the precedent and
site research begun in the fall semester, as well as
clearly outline the thesis site and subject.

A signed statement of permission allowing Harvard
University’s libraries to archive the thesis work is
required at the time of submission of the thesis book for grading, and should also be included as a page in the printed hard copy. In general, this statement is included on the thesis internal cover page. Please see attached addenda with specific instructions from the library on PDF creation guidelines and cover page with permission statement template. Supplemental materials such as video or additional photos are permitted, and should be included on a DVD, also according to library guidelines included in the appendices of this document.
There are, in principle, at least three fundamental dimensions to any MLA design thesis:

First, what is the subject matter or thematic topic that motivates your research in the thesis?

Second, what is the landscape design project that you could devise to best illuminate that topic or theme?

Third, what critical position or essential question in landscape architecture will be advanced through this work?
ADV 9341
Preparation of MLA Design Thesis

FALL 2019
Mondays 1:30-6:00

Mercedes Peralta, TA
Seok Min Yeo, TA
Mark Heller, TA
Charles Waldheim

INDEPENDENT DISCUSSION / PREP SECTIONS
13:30-15:00
Group 1: Mercedes Peralta (7 Sumner 104)
Group 2: Seok Min Yeo (42 Kirkland St 42-1-A)
Group 3: Mark Heller (40 Kirkland 1D)

LECTURE
15:00-16:30
Gund 109

WORKSHOP
16:30-18:00
Gund 109
INDEPENDENT DISCUSSION / PREP SECTIONS
13:30-15:00

Independent discussion sessions are organized by course TAs who facilitate the organization of student materials and technologies in support of a smaller group discussion led by the students themselves. These discussions are framed in response to the previous week’s assignment and allow for the thesis cohort to work more independently, while fostering creative and critical discussion regarding the work in progress.

LECTURE
15:00-16:30, Gund 109

The class meets weekly for lectures that present a range of perennial topics associated with the design thesis. These sessions include presentation of key conceptual and disciplinary forms of knowledge, precedent projects, and selected aspects of recent MLA Design Theses. These sessions conclude with a presentation and discussion of the next weekly thematic assignment and the format and schedule for upcoming review sessions.

WORKSHOP
16:30-18:00, Gund 109

The class continues to meet as a group in the second half of the three-hour course. During this session, a small set of individual students are invited to make brief seminar presentations (5-10 mins) on the status of their design thesis proposal to date. These sessions enable the broader group discussion and feedback to each of the individual thesis proposals prior to the midterm review. These sessions also enable a second opportunity for presentation to the group in the second half of the course.
A thesis is a thematic proposition offered for discussion and debate. A thesis is typically developed through a piece of original research specific to an academic discipline, often at the culmination of a program of study. Theses are produced through various methods as appropriate to the disciplinary commitments of academic fields across the research university. Design theses are pursued through the methods and media specific to the design disciplines, through design research. Design research most often refers to the process and products of knowledge produced through design, as distinct from knowledge produced by research methods associated with the humanities or the sciences. Design research can be characterized by its means and methods, as well as by its sites and subjects for work, as well as the dissemination and reception of its propositions.

Design research is propositional and projective rather than simply empirical or descriptive. It is most often predicated on intervention in the world rather than simply describing the world as found. Design research is characterized by its capacity to propose alternative and better futures while simultaneously producing disciplinary knowledge in design. Thesis projects pursued through design research exhibit a dual valance, standing as a form of disciplinary knowledge and as propositions for intervention in the world. Candidates in the Master in Landscape Architecture Program elect to pursue independent design theses at the culmination of their graduate work. The projects presented here represent original thematic propositions put forward through design research to stimulate discussion and debate. In this sense, they are as much about design discourse and disciplinary formation as they are propositions for how things ought to be.
This research seminar is intended for Master in Landscape Architecture candidates electing to pursue a design thesis in their final year of study. The course defines the parameters of a design thesis and assists candidates in the development of their own individual design thesis proposals. The course addresses a series of broad themes essential to developing a cogent thesis proposal including design research, projective practices, discursive agendas, site contexts, programmatic drivers, and representational strategies. The seminar examines the role of precedent projects and design methods in thesis, as well as the status of design and design research as forms of knowledge production in the research university.

The seminar meets weekly for four and a half hours, with 90-minute lecture sessions with the entire class between a pair of 90-minute workshop sections for small individual feedback. In addition to the regularly scheduled class lectures, tutorial workshop sections, and formal reviews, individual meetings with faculty advisors are an important aspect of the course. Students will be invited to identify and secure a GSD faculty thesis advisor during the first half of the term. By the end of the term candidates will have prepared a proposal for their individual design thesis through word and image.
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<td>04 NOVEMBER</td>
<td>Midterm Thesis Prep Review</td>
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<td>Penultimate Thesis Prep Review</td>
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INTRODUCTION TO THE DESIGN THESIS
> THREE MODES OF MLA DESIGN THESIS
> ELEMENTS, ASPECTS, ADVISORS, ETC.
> CRITERIA FOR EVALUATION OF QUALITY
> OVERVIEW AND STRUCTURE OF COURSE

RESPONSE #1 (DUE: SUNDAY 15 SEPTEMBER BY 11:59PM):
> THREE QUESTIONS (REVISED + REFINED)
  WHAT DO YOU WANT TO DO?
  HOW DO YOU WANT TO DO IT?
  HOW WOULD YOU LIKE IT TO BE RECEIVED?

> SELF-ASSESSMENT (REVISED + REFINED)


ALEXANDER AGNEW (MLA '17)
“GOD FROM THE ISLAND: Realizing Mythological Space”
Master’s Thesis in Landscape Architecture
Harvard University Graduate School of Design
2017
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Advised by:
Francesca Benedetto

CARLOS ESPINOZA BARDALES (MLA '18)
“LATENT MARGINS: Eroding the static city”
Master’s Thesis in Landscape Architecture
Harvard University Graduate School of Design
2018
Page 5 (detail)

Advised by:
Belinda Tato
INTRODUCTION TO DESIGN AS A FORM OF RESEARCH

RESPONSE #2 (DUE: SUNDAY 22 SEPTEMBER BY 11:59PM):

BRIEF NOTES ON FIVE INDIVIDUAL INGREDIENTS:

- WHAT BODY OF DESIGN PRECEDENT OR PROJECTIVE PRACTICE WILL YOUR PROJECT JOIN?
- WHAT DISCOURSE OR DEBATE IN DESIGN WILL YOUR PROJECT CONTRIBUTE TO?
- WHAT IS THE SITE OR SITES FOR YOUR DESIGN THESIS PROJECT?
- WHAT IS THE PROGRAMMATIC AGENDA SHAPING INTERVENTION UPON THAT SITE(S)?
- WHAT REPRESENTATIONAL/METHODOLOGICAL STRATEGIES WILL YOU USE?


KENT HIPP (MLA '17)
"COASTAL RETREAT: Staging Inundation in Provincetown"
Master's Thesis in Landscape Architecture
Harvard University Graduate School of Design
2017
Page 14 (detail)

Advised by:
Gary Hilderbrand

KELLY CLIFFORD (MLA '18)
"Waste / Wealth Accumulations: Labor Ecologies + the Remaking of the Public Realm"
Master's Thesis in Landscape Architecture
Harvard University Graduate School of Design
2018
Page 5 (detail)

Advised by:
Rosalea Monacella
23 SEPTEMBER
Design Projection

> INTRODUCTION TO DESIGN AS PROPOSITION THROUGH PRECEDENT

RESPONSE #3 (DUE: SUNDAY 29 SEPTEMBER @11:59PM):
> BRIEF NOTES ON FIVE INDIVIDUAL INGREDIENTS:
FACSIMILE OF SPRING 2020 OPTION STUDIO BRIEF
NAME OF GSD FACULTY THESIS ADVISOR


WILLIAM S. BAUMGARDNER (MLA ’18)
“TIRANA FREESCAPE: Reconstructing Socialist Space”
Master’s Thesis in Landscape Architecture
Harvard University Graduate School of Design
2018
Page 22 (detail)

ANNIE LIANG (MLA ’18)
“KNOWLEDGE GROUNDS, A LANDSCAPE BASED ART SCHOOL ON Haida Gwaii”
Master’s Thesis in Landscape Architecture
Harvard University Graduate School of Design
2018
Page 74 (detail)
30 SEPTEMBER

Design Contexts

> INTRODUCTION TO DESIGN CONTEXTS, SITES, SITUATIONS

RESPONSE #4 (DUE: SUNDAY 06 OCTOBER @11:59PM):
> WORD + IMAGE DOSSIER ON SITE


Miyon Kwon, “One Place After Another: Notes on Site Specificity.” October, no. 80 (Spring 1997), 85–110.


SONNY MENG QI XU (MLA ‘18)

“Borderhood, Re-imagining the Canada-US Borderlands”
Master’s Thesis in Landscape Architecture
Harvard University Graduate School of Design
2018
Page 119 (detail)

Advised by:
Sergio Lopez-Pineiro

RAYANA HOSSAIN (MLA ‘17)

“Projecting Upazilas: A New Town Ecology For Economic Growth and Environmental Sustainability in Bangladesh”
Master’s Thesis in Landscape Architecture,
Harvard University Graduate School of Design
2017
Page 1 (detail)

Advised by:
Anita Berribeitia
INTRODUCTION TO DESIGN DRIVERS, PROGRAMS, PUBLICS

RESPONSE #5 (DUE: SUNDAY 13 OCTOBER @11:59PM):
WORD + IMAGE DOSSIER ON PROGRAM


Tiffany Kaewen Dang (MLA '17)
“BEWILDERED IN BANFF: Displacing the Contours of Colonization in Canada’s National Parks System”
Master’s Thesis in Landscape Architecture
Harvard University Graduate School of Design
2017
Page 37 (detail)

Advised by:
Pierre Bélanger

Seok Min Yeo (MLA ‘18)
“Manhattanism, Unhinged”
Master’s Thesis in Landscape Architecture
Harvard University Graduate School of Design
2018
Pages 130-131 (detail)

Advised by:
Craig Douglas
Rosalea Monacella
Week 06

14 OCTOBER
No
Classes
JOSHUA STEVENS (MLA ’19)
“THE TROPICAL ARBORETUM OF VEGETAL DWELLING”
Master’s Thesis in Landscape Architecture
Harvard University Graduate School of Design
2019
Page 14 (detail)
Advised by:
Rosalea Monacella

CHRISTIN HU (MLA ’19)
“Landscape games: Tools for collaboratively shaping our environment”
Master’s Thesis in Landscape Architecture
Harvard University Graduate School of Design
2019
Page 13 (detail)
Advised by:
Craig Douglas
> INTRODUCTION TO METHODS AND STRATEGIES OF DESIGN

RESPONSE #6 (DUE: SUNDAY 27 OCTOBER @11:59PM):
> WORD + IMAGE DOSSIER ON DESIGN METHODS


INTRODUCTION TO DESIGN AS MEDIA

RESPONSE #7 (DUE: SUNDAY 03 NOVEMBER @11:59PM):
WORD + IMAGE DOSSIER ON DESIGN MEDIA


TING LIANG (MLA ’19)

“People’s Agri-topia: An Equitable Field”
Master’s Thesis in Landscape Architecture
Harvard University Graduate School of Design
2019
Page 3 (detail)

Advised by:
Sergio Lopez-Pineiro

ISAAC STEIN (MLA ’19, MDES ’20), MAGGIE TSANG (MDES ’19)

“Lines in the Sand: Rethinking Private Property on Barrier Islands”
Master’s Thesis in Landscape Architecture
Harvard University Graduate School of Design
2019
Page 97 (detail)

Advised by:
Craig Douglas
Rosetta S. Elkin
04 NOVEMBER
Midterm Thesis Prep Review

GUND 109, 9:00 - 15:00
> INTRODUCTION TO SCALES AND SUBJECTS ASSOCIATED WITH SITES FOR WORK

RESPONSE #8 (DUE: SUNDAY 17 NOVEMBER @11:59PM):
> TITLE: SUBTITLE
> ONE SENTENCE THESIS STATEMENT
> SINGLE FRONTISPICE IMAGE
> PARAGRAPH ON SITES + SUBJECTS


JOHN WRAY IV (MLA ’17)
"CORRECTIVE COLLECTIVE: Remediation as Generator of Urban Form"
Master’s Thesis in Landscape Architecture
Harvard University Graduate School of Design
2017
Page 29 (detail)

Advised by:
Fyonn Byrne

ERNEST WILLIAM HAINES (MLA ’18)
"Turnpike Metabolism: Reconstituting National Infrastructure Through Landscape"
Master’s Thesis in Landscape Architecture
Harvard University Graduate School of Design
2018
Page 12 (detail)

Advised by:
Robert Pietrusko
> INTRODUCTION TO PUBLIC AUDIENCES AND PROGRAMMATIC AGENDAS FOR PROJECTION

RESPONSE #9 (DUE: SUNDAY 24 NOVEMBER @11:59PM):
> TITLE: SUBTITLE
> ONE SENTENCE THESIS STATEMENT
> SINGLE FRONTISPICE IMAGE
> PARAGRAPH ON PROGRAMS + PUBLICS

Parc de la Villette competition, 1982 (OMA and Tschumi entries, in particular)

Yokohama Terminal competition, 1995 (OMA and FOA entries)

Fresh Kills Park competition, 2001 (James Corner Field Operations entry and project)
25 NOVEMBER

Modes + Measures

> INTRODUCTION TO MEANS AND MODES OF DESIGN PROJECTION AND MEASURES OF RECEPTION

RESPONSE #10 (DUE: SUNDAY 01 DECEMBER @11:59PM):
> TITLE: SUBTITLE
> ONE SENTENCE THESIS STATEMENT
> SINGLE FRONTISPICE IMAGE
> PARAGRAPH ON MODES + MEASURES


TAM N. BAHN (MLA ’18)
“WATER ASSEMBLAGE: A new politic for the Mekong River Collective”
Master’s Thesis in Landscape Architecture
Harvard University Graduate School of Design
2018
Page 2 (detail)

Advised by:
Robert Pietrusko

NAM JUNG KIM (MLA ’19)
“TRAVERSING PINATUBO”
Master’s Thesis in Landscape Architecture
Harvard University Graduate School of Design
2019
Page 30 (detail)

Advised by:
Rosalea Monacella
02 DECEMBER
Penultimate
Thesis Prep Review

[GUND 109] 13:30 - 18:00
DANICA LIONGSON (MLA '19)


Master’s Thesis in Landscape Architecture
Harvard University Graduate School of Design
2019
Page 26 (detail)

Advised by:
Montserrat Bonhevi Rosich

ISABEL BROSTELLA (MLA '19)

“The Multiplicity of a Line”

Master’s Thesis in Landscape Architecture
Harvard University Graduate School of Design
2019
Page 50 (detail)

Advised by:
Montserrat Bonhevi Rosich
Week 14

15 DECEMBER
Final
Thesis Prep Review

[PORTICOS 121, 122, 123] 09:00 - 18:00
Article V of the 1837 Treaty stated: "The purchase of hunting, fishing and gathering the wild rice, upon the lands, the right to hunt upon the lands included in the territory ceded to the government (for) to the Indian, becoming the property of the President of the United States." In Article II of the 1837 Treaty several clauses were added: "The Indians stipulate for the right of hunting and gathering the wild rice and other natural privileges of occupancy, until required by the President of the United States, and that the laws of the United States shall be extended to this. In respect to their trade and intercourse with other nations until otherwise ordered by Congress."
“Interdisciplinarity is not the calm of an easy security; it begins effectively . . . when the solidarity of the old disciplines breaks down—perhaps even violently, via the jolts of fashion—in the interests of a new object and a new language.”

—Roland Barthes, 1971
ADV 9342
Design Thesis

SPRING 2020
Schedules TBC with individual primary thesis advisors

Mercedes Peralta, TA
Charles Waldheim

*All Review Venues TBD [09:00-6:00]
*All Workshop Venues TBD [12:30-2:00]
Spring 2020 Schedule

27 JANUARY
Preliminary Design Thesis Review

10 FEBRUARY
Publication Workshop 1/6
Editorial Criteria

10 FEBRUARY
Publication Workshop 1/6
Editorial Criteria

10 FEBRUARY
Publication Workshop 1/6
Editorial Criteria

24 FEBRUARY
Publication Workshop 2/6
Editorial Precedents

24 FEBRUARY
Publication Workshop 2/6
Editorial Precedents

09 MARCH
Publication Workshop 3/6
Editorial Provocations

09 MARCH
Publication Workshop 3/6
Editorial Provocations

09 MARCH
Publication Workshop 3/6
Editorial Provocations

23 MARCH
Midterm Design Thesis Review

23 MARCH
Midterm Design Thesis Review

23 MARCH
Midterm Design Thesis Review

06 APRIL
Publication Workshop 4/6
Editorial Concepts

20 APRIL
Publication Workshop 5/6
Editorial Design

20 APRIL
Publication Workshop 5/6
Editorial Design

04 MAY
Publication Workshop 6/6
Editorial Projects

12-15 MAY
Final Design Thesis Review

12-15 MAY
Final Design Thesis Review

12-15 MAY
Final Design Thesis Review
Recent Precedents

Selected MLA Thesis Projects

2016-17
Lex Agnew, “God from the Island” (Francesca Benedetto)
Rawan Alsaffar, “Oil and Salt” (Robert Pietrusko)
Tiffany Dang, “Bewildered in Banff” (Pierre Belanger)
Hannah Gaengler, “Rigged New World”
Kent Hipp, “Coastal Retreat” (Gary Hilderbrand)
Alexandra Mei, “Accessing the Past” (Robert Pietrusko) *
Chris Reznich, “Solar Frameworks” (Charles Waldheim)
Jonah Susskind, “Forward from Woodward” (Fionn Byrne)
Carlo Urmy, “Dry Bones” (Fionn Byrne)
David Zielnicki, “Gradually, Fiercely” (Sergio Lopez-Pineiro)

2017-18
Tami Banh, “Water Assemblage” (Robert Pietrusko)
William Baumgardner, “Tirana Freescape” (Anita Berrizbeitia)
Emily Drury, “How to do Things with Plants” (Silvia Benedeto)
Ernest Haines, “Turnpike Metabolism” (Robert Pietrusko) *
Annie Liang, “Knowledge Grounds” (Robert Pietrusko)
Alison Malouf, “Ghostworlds” (Silvia Benedeto)
Greta Ruedisueli, “L’Enfant’s Leftovers” (Jill Desimini)
Rhea Shah, “Decolonizing the Forest” (Dilip daCunha)
Sonny Meng Qi Xu, “Borderhood” (Sergio Lopez-Pineiro)
Min Yeo, “Wild” (Craig Douglas) *

2018-19
Isabel Brostella, “The Multiplicity of a Line,” (Montserrat Bonvehi)
Sarah Diamond, “Her Home,” (Emily Wettstein)
Mark Heller, “No Service,” (Robert Pietrusko)
Emily Hicks and Melody Stein, “Wild Rice Waters” (Rosetta Elkin) *
Ting Liang, “People’s Agri-topia,” (Sergio Lopez-Pineiro)
Danica Liongson, “Eulogy for the Olive,” (Montserrat Bonvehi)
Ann Lynch, “Inveterate Scars,” (Danielle Choi)
Isabel Preciado, “Airiscapes,” (Danielle Choi)
Isaac Stein and Maggie Tsang, “Lines in the Sand,” (Rosetta Elkin)
Joshua Stevens, “The Tropical Arboreturn of Vegetal Dwelling,” (Rosalea Monacella)

* MLA thesis prize
General Readings


6–21, 33-39.


Miwon Kwon, “One Place After Another: Notes on Site Specificity,” *October*, no. 80 (Spring 1997), 85–110.


Exhibitions


References


Michael Bierut, *How to use graphic design to sell things, explain things, make things look better, make people laugh, make people cry, and (every once in a while) change the world* (Thames & Hudson, 2015).


Structure of Creativity cards

Arup, Drivers of Change (Gustavo Gili, 2006).

a+t, 50 Urban Blocks (a+t publishers, 2017).

Color Aid Swatches (Color Aid Corp., 1948).

Charles and Ray Eames, House of Cards (Eames Office, 1952).

Brian Eno and Peter Schmidt, Oblique Strategies (Eno & Schmidt, 1975).


IDEO, Method Cards (William Stout, 2003).


Chris Raschka, Circus Mixies (eeBoo Corp., 2003).

The course is evaluated on a standard GSD pass/fail system. Course requirements include ten weekly response assignments (5% each or 50% total); two interim reviews (12.5% each or 25% total) and a final term review (25%).
All weekly assignments and review presentations should be uploaded as PDF to canvas site by midnight Sunday the day prior to the class meeting/review.

Work submitted weekly will be evaluated by four equally weighted terms of evaluation:
1. Representation: demonstrating a clear argument visually as well as verbally;
2. Research: showing consistent inquiry and engagement with the topic throughout the semester;
3. Proposal: the potential of the project as an intervention in the world and a contribution to the field; and
4. Proposition: the intellectual and cultural arguments supporting your project.

Students are expected to be familiar with and abide by the school’s standards for academic honesty and conduct. Cheating, plagiarism, unauthorized collaboration or paid assistance, deliberate interference with the integrity of the work of others, fabrication or falsification of data, and other forms of academic dishonesty are considered serious offenses for which disciplinary penalties will be imposed. A work is understood as the original expression of an author; a copy of the work is a physical manifestation of the expression. Copies of work submitted by a student in satisfaction of admission, course, or degree requirements, such as papers, drawings, models, digital images and other materials, become the property of the school. The GSD may use such copies for GSD non-commercial, academic or research purposes such as in exhibitions of GSD student work, GSD publications, reports to sponsors of studios and other forms of GSD outreach, provided that each student must be appropriately credited as the creator of the student’s work. Any other use of student work, for example, by faculty in their own publications, requires the written consent of each student contributor, in addition to appropriate credit. The school, faculty, and staff assume no responsibility for the physical safeguarding of such copies of student work and may, at their discretion, retain such copies, return them to their creators, or discard them.
Contact Information
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Mercedes Peralta is an Argentinean-Italian architect and research associate in the Office for Urbanization. Mercedes holds an MArch II degree and a Certificate in Media and Modernity from Princeton University in addition to her professional diploma of Architecture from University of Buenos Aires. Her interests lie in design approaches that question the relationship between perception, technology, and natural phenomena. Before Harvard, she worked in New York. She was part of the Princeton and Columbia research and design team for Beatriz Colomina’s and Mark Wigley’s Istanbul Biennial “Are We Human?” and a presenter at the 2017 ECAADE conference in Rome. Her written work appears in Summa+ Magazine, where she has been a permanent collaborator between 2013 and 2015.

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Seok Min Yeo
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Seok Min Yeo is a Korean landscape urbanist and research fellow at the Office for Urbanization. Yeo completed his MLA at the Harvard University Graduate School of Design, and his B.Arch at Syracuse University School of Architecture. Yeo’s work explores techniques of understanding and translating ecological phenomena into design methods, with a special interest in the relationship of the sun and the built form of the city. Before coming to Harvard, he held design positions at Payette and Safdie Architects.

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Mark Heller
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Irving Innovation Fellow ’20, Harvard GSD

Mark D. Heller is an Irving Innovation Fellow at the Harvard Graduate School of Design for 2019-2020, and an Adjunct Professor in Architecture at Wentworth Institute of Technology. Mark received his MLA and MUP from the Harvard Graduate School of Design, and will soon join Perkins + Will’s Boston office as an urban designer. As an Irving Innovation Fellow, Mark is devising an alternative mode of interrogating landscape through densities and voids of electromagnetic bandwidth. Working predominantly through geographic-scale visualization, Mark explores how classical interpretations of the landscape sublime might be resurrected today not through the physicality of nature, but rather in the deepest trenches of the electromagnetic terrain.

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