

LAR 350: Parks and Urban Public Spaces

Fully on-line course

GenEd Tier II

School of Landscape Architecture and Planning
College of Architecture and Landscape Architecture
The University of Arizona

Syllabus

INSTRUCTOR

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Lecturer, School of Landscape Architecture and Planning

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Meetings by appointment

DESCRIPTION

This course exams the history, function, politics and design of parks, gardens and other urban public spaces in American cities. A typology of public space will be presented and used to examine public life today and how design and public involvement influence the nature of public space. The course will examine contemporary issues in parks and public space such as place-making, environmental integrity and sustainability, diversity and accessibility issues, children and nature, and the privatization of public space.

Prerequisites

None

Purpose

Students will be exposed to issues and concepts related to parks, gardens and urban public spaces and their relationship to city life and culture. Weekly topics will create structure for lectures, group discussions, and group and individual projects. Through this exploration, students will learn about the importance of public gathering places and access to nature in urban settings and will critically examine the factors that create a vibrant public space. Students will also exam recent trends in public space including sustainability, privatization, urban agriculture, diversity and accessibility issues.

Format

The course will be include lectures, readings, discussion, videos, quizzes, an individual project and a final examination. Course readings will include books, articles and chapters available on D2L (<https://d2l.arizona.edu/>).

STUDENT EVALUATION

Attendance

Attendance and participation in the class is mandatory for the successful completion of this class. Students are expected to participate in online discussions and peer review sessions. The course readings will support but will not correspond directly with the lectures. It is therefore, critical that students view the lectures in order to prepare themselves for examinations and assignments. Students who are unable to participate for any reason are asked to email the instructor and show documentation of their illness or other approved activity.

Late Work

Students are expected to turn in all assignments on time. Late or incomplete work and missed presentations will not be accepted unless there is documentation of a medical or family emergency. Students are given ample opportunity before assignment due dates for instructor feedback. If the student has a documented medical excuse or other documented emergency, the assignment may be accepted without a deduction of points after a discussion with the instructor.

Grades will be based on the following categories:

20% Weekly Assignments and Discussions

Students are required to participate in online discussions in a thoughtful and substantive way. Quality of participation is important. Student discussion helps the instructor gauge the level of understanding of course concepts and provides feedback to other students.

20% Quizzes

The course will include two quizzes designed to gauge the students' understanding of the material and completion of the reading assignments.

20% Project

The details of the project assignment will be discussed in class. The project will involve research, writing and an oral presentation to the class using Voice Thread.

40% Mid-term and Final Exams

A mid-term (20%) and a final exam (20%) may include multiple choice, short answer, and short essay questions.

Final points will be calculated and a grade assigned as follows:

90-100% A

80-89% B

70-79% C

60-69% D

50-59% E

Honors Students:

Honors students should contact the instructor within the first two weeks of class to discuss an independent research project which will substitute for the Project. Honors students will be expected to prepare an in-depth study of a relevant topic which will include examination of peer-reviewed journal articles, collection and analysis of data and preparation of a research paper. Honors students may meet regularly with the instructor to discuss journal articles and research methodologies.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week / Lesson #	Topic
1	Course Overview
2	Parks and Public Spaces
3	History of American Parks, Part I
4	History of American Parks, Part II
5	Public Space Matters, Part I
6	Public Space Matters, Part II
7	Children and Play Spaces
8	Ecology and Parks
9	Mid-term Exam
10	Health, Parks and Public Spaces
11	Parks as Historic and Cultural Landscapes
12	Project Overview
13	Trends in Sustainability
14	Contemporary Issues in Parks and Public Space
15	Reclaiming Public Space: Guerilla Urbanism
16	Final Project / Class Presentations
	Final Exam