

# Course guide

LK0372 Landscape Theory in Architectural and Planning Practice  
autumn 2020



Little Sparta, The Garden of Ian Hamilton Finlay and Sue Finlay. South Lanarkshire, UK

Photographer: Andrea Jones

<http://durhamcouncilofgardenclubs.blogspot.com/2014/11/book-review-gardeners-garden.html>

## The course in a nutshell

This course is concerned with key concepts in landscape architecture and planning practice and method, such as place, space, nature, scale, environment, power, representation, heritage, identity and landscape. These concepts are sites of conflict, with different interests seeking to define them in their own way. The course seeks to give the student insight into how to critically use theoretical concepts to inform and guide an inclusive and just landscape architectural and planning practice. It also provides a historical and philosophical background on the development of the key concepts, and of how their use has shaped the land. An important aspect of the course is the insight that society and its landscapes are not uniform, but are made of multiple activities, power-relations and processes.

Literature seminars and lectures on different themes form the base of the course. The course concludes with a final paper, which should be based on the reading and discussion on the key concepts, and with advantage can be linked to developing the ideas, theory and methodology for one's master thesis.

Success as a student depends on the ability to be able to make the key concepts speak to the particular subject, case or problem that the student is interested in exploring. This means learning to think about concepts not as something to be memorised, but as flexible tools for critical analysis and inspired creative work.

### Course team

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## Schedule

The Schedule is available online on the Canvas. All updates and changes will also be published there. Visit the course on Canvas regularly.

## Pedagogics

Depending on how the Covid 19 situation develops, we will adapt the course logistics and pedagogics. For the moment, we are planning for the seminars to partly take place on campus and partly on zoom. Most of the lectures will be held on zoom. Please check Canvas regularly to see the development. This puts special demands on us as teachers and you as students. In the seminars, it is crucial to contribute to an open minded and active climate in discussions and conversations. We hope that you students are prepared to actively participate, even for those of you who will participate through a screen.

## Reading list

The very base of the course is its readings, and they are divided into particular conceptual themes. Each theme has “Compulsory readings” and “Recommended readings.” The Compulsory readings are mandatory to read before each seminar (3-4 texts to each seminar), and the written assignments in the course are based on these readings. We encourage you to also read the “Recommended readings,” especially if you think you might want to focus on the theme covered in your final papers. These texts are very useful when you write but also during the seminars, to get a wider understanding of the key concepts in landscape theory. All the texts critically discuss the themes and concepts from different perspectives and enable you to get an historical and philosophical background.

The full Reading List is published on Canvas. The compulsory readings are available to download on Canvas when the course starts.

## Seminars and Lectures

The first part of the course is based on compulsory literature seminars on different themes. The readings will be discussed during 8 compulsory seminars, based on the 8 themes. The aim of the seminars is to support you in acquiring a thorough and complex understanding of the different concepts and themes. A key insight that the course aims to convey, is an understanding of concepts, not as fixed and finished, but as living and contested tools that enable the conception of new approaches to the planning practice of landscape architects and planners. How you think and reflect about landscape can have a big effect on the way you plan, design and manage landscape.

You are expected to read and be prepared to discuss all compulsory readings for each theme. Prepare each seminar by 1) reading the 3-4 compulsory texts in the reading list, and perhaps more if you like, 2) writing and handing in a written assignment, a personal reflection, on the compulsory readings to that theme – these should not be thought of as an exam, where you must give the “right” answer, we are interested in what you think (see further instructions below). To each seminar, 3 to 4 of you also compose an oral presentation about one of the compulsory readings (see further information below), to present at the seminar.

The overall aim with the written assignments, the oral presentations and the discussions at the seminars is to enable an active, in-depth and critical understanding. As the readings are written in an academic style, the written assignments, the oral presentations and the discussions will help you to learn to translate the content of the texts into a language that is more accessible to you. We encourage you to share your insights and inspiration at the seminar, as well as your struggles with understanding the texts or if you are critical to the text in some way or the other.

A purpose of the seminars is to give the students the chance to develop their own opinions on the articles reads, without being told beforehand what to think. Each seminar will be followed by a lecture (efterläsning) on the theme, held by a researcher who has specific knowledge of the theme discussed in the seminar. By having the lecture after the seminar you will be well prepared to ask challenging questions following the lecture. The lectures will help you to develop your ideas and theoretical framework further, and more deeply explore the theme. Take the opportunity to ask the lecturers questions that arose during the seminars or questions you have about their texts.

## **Oral presentations during the seminars**

### **(Assignment 1; Documentation of oral presentations on seminars)**

As stated above, each of the compulsory texts will be orally presented by a student in the seminars. The texts will be divided amongst the students during the course introduction.

The presentation of each text should be max 15 minutes. It is crucial that you stick to the time limit as it is important to have enough time for discussion. Your presentation should be a summary of what you have read, but most importantly, you should say something about how it relates, or does not relate to your own professional interests, previous understanding, and the practice, of landscape architecture and planning. Use your presentation to help generate a discussion in the group, for example by stating questions. Other ways to do this could be to discuss things with which you might not agree, or share your struggles with understanding parts of the text – is it because the author was unclear, or because you were not prepared to deal with such questions?

You can present the text in any way you like, and of course the alternatives depends on if you are attending the seminars IRL or on Zoom. One possibility both IRL or Zoom is to use the support of presentation software (e.g. PowerPoint, Prezi etc). We would like to encourage you to think of the presentation as an occasion to experiment with different presentation formats, at the same time as the presentation should support the content you would like to convey.

**You are expected to send in some form of documentation of the presentation**, for example a document with the main points of the presentation or if you use e.g. Power Point you can send the slides. The presentations should be uploaded on Canvas and the file format should be **tittle.pdf** or **tittle.doc**.

## Written assignment to each seminar theme

### (Assignment 2; Written reflections to each seminar)

The written assignments are primarily a pedagogic tool to make you take notes of the texts read in class. These notes will be useful in writing the paper for the course, and in other courses.

For each literature seminar you are expected to send in **either**

- a. an **imaginary letter** (approximately 1000 words) to the author of **one** of the texts. The letters should be written in a casual and exploratory style and should contain the following parts:
  - a ‘Thank you’-paragraph, in which you thank the author for an aspect well explained, for an insight conveyed or a position well expressed etc.
  - a ‘Could you please explain this better’-paragraph, in which you refer (with a literal quotation, giving a reference) to a concept or argument that you have not understood, explaining why that was difficult to understand.
  - a ‘Your text will help me to improve my professional praxis’-paragraph, in which you outline how the text’s theories and concepts will do just that.

**or**

- b. a **summary of all the three texts**, which outlines the main arguments of the texts on a total approximately 1000 words.. The notes will be useful in writing the paper.

The hand-in should be about maximum 2-3 pages in total, summarizing each text you have read, written in a casual and exploratory style (but with correct citations) and could contain the following parts:

- The main arguments and conclusions of the text
- an insight or Aha-moment you got from reading the text, if you have had one
- ideas of how you think the text’s theories and concepts will help you improve your professional praxis
- Where needed: refer to a concept or argument that you have not understood, explaining why that was difficult to understand

### **All written assignments should be uploaded on Canvas**

We strongly encourage you to write your assignment to each theme before each seminar – this will help you to get the most out of the discussion in the group and enhance your understanding of the texts, which in turn will help you with finding a theme for and writing your final paper. The file format should be **tittle.pdf** or **tittle.doc**.

## Field trip

Due to Covid 19 the field trip this year will unfortunately not be held.

## Paper

### (Assignment 3; Course paper)

The second part of the course is dedicated to writing your paper. Your final assignment is a paper in which you apply relevant concepts from the course to topic of your own choosing, but with our approval. It is important here to show that you are aware of all the course readings that might be relevant to your theme. In this way you can show that you are able to think broadly about a topic, and that you have been able to see how the different topics inter-relate. This will also be a good opportunity, if you wish, to try out ideas that you may be playing with for your master's thesis, and get some feedback from the teachers and other students. The paper should be ca 10–15 pages long, and not more than 7 000 words including the reference list. It should be written in English. Only by way of exception, and after discussion with your supervisor, you can write in Swedish if you prefer.

To make sure you do not get stuck on how to structure the paper we would argue the paper should have (at least) the following sections in this order: (1) Introduction (in which a studied example is introduced, and questions as well as aims of the paper are clearly stated), (2) a section that introduces the theory and/or methods used, (3) a section which presents and discusses the studied example via collected empirical material. "Empirical material" can range from field studies, plans, policies, programmes and design proposals, to interviews, newspaper articles and academic literature, depending on your interest and the aims of your paper. The discussion is crucial in this section, (4) a concluding section in which you return to the questions and sum up the findings, (5) References. There might be reasons to divert from this structure, but if that is the case, please discuss it with your supervisor. For further inspiration, see examples of previous year's papers in Canvas.

In the paper you are asked to apply the theoretical discussions from the course readings, the seminars and the lectures on a specific case or example. The paper should illustrate your ability to use the concepts and theories discussed during the course. The case could be, for instance, a specific place, a plan, a design proposal, an interview, or a (limited) sequence of events. Since the empirical study as such is not the main focus here, it is advisable to choose a limited case/example, perhaps a project or a place with which you are already familiar. Your supervisor will help you delimit your topic.

Where appropriate, you can illustrate the paper with photographs, plans, videos or other images, as long as you refer to their source and are free to use them. For further requirements in the paper, see the grading criteria. A number of lectures in the course will also give you advice on how to write.

We will supervise you, most likely in groups. The supervisor will decide the time slots once the groups are decided.

## Grading criteria

The requirements for attaining different grades are described below.

The scale of grades is: 5: Pass with distinction, 4: Pass with credit, 3: Pass, U: Fail

<b>Grading of... (teaching objective)</b>	... <b>final paper</b> with a high standard of writing, a critical reading of relevant theoretical literature (primarily from the course literature) and with a relevant case.	... <b>active participation in the literature seminars and lectures</b> to acquire a understanding of the different concepts and themes	... <b>written assignments</b> in preparation for the seminars
<b>Corresponding course component</b>	Paper	Literature seminars and lectures	Written assignment (excl. the final paper)
<b>Weighting of teaching objectives</b>	60%	40%	Pas
<b>Marked by</b>	Examiner	Examiner	Examiner

### The seminars

- 4/5** The student is active in all seminars, puts relevant questions and listens carefully to ideas and comments of others. The questions and comments reveal that the student has read the required texts carefully and critically (this does not rule out occasional misunderstandings, and certainly not questions concerning the theories and ideas of the paper in question). The student contributes with oral presentations which are clearly structured, capture the main content of the paper, raise interesting questions for the discussion, and is done within the given time frame. It is also good if a student can mention other relevant theories and texts that the student has read, but not at the expense of the required texts, which are the primary topic.
- 3** The student is active in all seminars, puts questions and listens to ideas and comments of others. The questions and comments reveal that the student has read the texts. The student contributes with oral presentations, within the given time frame.
- U**

### The written assignments (excl. the final paper)

- Pass** The student is able to present and discuss the content of the readings according to the instructions given under the heading “Written assignment to each seminar theme”.  
The student refers to the readings in a correct way. The student is able to write assignments in a clear language within the given word limit.
- U**



## The final paper

- 5 The student is able to identify and critically discuss issues within the topic selected by the student and formulate and justify his/her case in a convincing way. The student refers correctly to the relevant compulsory readings, as well as to relevant recommended readings and, secondarily, to other literature sourced by the student on their own. The student is able to handle the complex and dynamic character of key concepts of the course, in the theoretical discussion and in relation to a case. The student is able to write a well-structured paper in a clear language within or close to the given word-limit (max 7000 words incl. references).
- 4 The student is able to identify and critically discuss issues within the selected topic and formulate and justify his/her case. The student refers correctly to the relevant compulsory readings, as well as to relevant recommended readings. The student is able to handle the complex and dynamic character of the key concepts of the course, in the theoretical discussion and/or in relation to a case. The student is able to write a well-structured paper in a clear language within or close to the given word-limit (max 7000 words incl. references).
- 3 The student is able to identify and formulate questions within the selected topic, and to correctly refer to the relevant compulsory readings. The student demonstrates understanding of the complex and dynamic character of the key concepts of the course, and she/he is able to present the paper in an understandable language within or close to the word limit (7000 words incl. references).

U

## Mandatory course moments

Mandatory moments of the course are

1. **The seminars**, including (a) preparation and active participation, b) oral presentation of assigned text c) hand-in of a documentation of the presentation
2. **Hand-ins** of written assignments (summaries) for all themes
3. **Paper**

If you miss a seminar, you will have to hand in an extra assignment. We strongly recommend that you participate at all seminars **and lectures**, and are well prepared. The lectures will in many cases give explanations to questions or issues that you have and experience shows that the more seminars a student misses, the higher the likelihood that she/he will not pass the course. For the very same reason, we also recommend that you attend the lectures and the supervision for your final papers. Please get in touch with (Maria.Maria.Kylin@slu.se) if you miss a seminar.