

Professional Practice: Inside–Out

LAR 4124

Graduate Program in Landscape Architecture
Washington-Alexandria Architecture Center
Virginia Tech-National Capital Region

Spring 2017

INSTRUCTOR Dr. Annalisa Aldana

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OFFICE HOURS

I will be available M-F via email and will respond within 24 hours.

WebEx hours will be held online every Tuesday 12:30-2:30 pm. My WebEx address is <https://virginiatech.webex.com/meet/anni>

PREREQUISITES

Students should be in their last year of study unless otherwise approved in the student's Plan of Study.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Landscape architecture is both a discipline and a profession. As a discipline, it is various ways of thinking, seeing, doing, and modes of engagement with the world. As a profession, it is a slowly-evolving collection of histories, practices, technical capacities, and constraints, legally codified and regulated, which shapes the materialization of the discipline in time and space.

The intent of this course is to prepare students to embark on careers in landscape architecture; concentrating on operations, organizational structures, professional ethics, and legal frameworks of professional practice. Though rigorously focused on the present, the course reflects to the past and projects to the future — discussing how choices, events, and people have shaped present practice and inviting speculation about the shape of landscape architecture to come. It argues that the clever professional practitioner not only understands these practices, structures, and constraints, but both utilizes them to their advantage as a designer and actively participates in shaping them. Moreover, this course is intended to help the young designer navigate these structures to achieve both personal and career goals.

Presented in modules, the course includes a series of audiotaped interviews with practitioners from the Washington D.C. metropolitan area, whose oversee and contribute to design and management of urban, natural, and historic landscapes, including private firms, public agencies, and non-governmental organizations. The interviews are supplemented by readings, online discussions, and a term project.

COURSE GOALS

The goals of this course include:

1. Preparing students for entry into the profession through an introduction of diverse career options in landscape architecture and the development of a technical vocabulary for communicating industrial standards and canons of the professional practice.
2. Building a foundation of knowledge and skills necessary for participating in professional landscape architectural practice, including principles of business law, methods of project management, professional ethics, insurance, licensure, contracting, marketing, cost control, compensation practices, negotiating the regulatory and procurement systems in the building as well as site design and construction sector.
3. Familiarizing students with the mechanisms of public regulation (and private self-governance) in the building community, which would empower them to contribute to industry affairs and the public policies affecting it.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Upon completion of the course, students will be able to:

1. Explore the various disciplines in which landscape architects work, both private and public sectors, as potential career directions, roles and responsibilities.
2. Identify the historical eras of landscape architecture and the legal parameters and societal forces impacting the built works of that time.
3. Articulate the profession's current forms of practice, emerging trends, and future difficulties seen through the lens of practitioners.
4. Articulate how laws and regulations impact, negatively and positively, the different stages of the design process and the built works.
5. Discuss the benefits and challenges of different firm sizes and office organization.
6. Create a comparison between a single discipline firm or organization with one that is multi-disciplinary and how tasks and responsibilities at the various tiers of management are distributed.
7. Evaluate and critique various marketing strategies and financing plans firms use.
8. Conduct an informed, articulate dialogue with a principal or practitioner about their company's structure and organization, design process, industry standards, marketing strategies, licensure, worker compensation, ethics, and technological applications.
9. Explore the impact of landscape architecture outside the immediate profession, at the small scale of communities and the larger scale of societies.
10. Reflect upon and evaluate personal career choices.

REQUIRED TEXTS

Rory Hyde, *Future Practice*.

REQUIRED TECHNOLOGY

This is an asynchronous online course offered through Virginia Tech's University Canvas course management system (canvas.vt.edu), which requires the student have access to high speed internet capable of streaming online videos and narrated lectures. Virginia Tech requires a two-factor authentication to access the course through Canvas. Office hours are also conducted via WebEx and the student must be familiar with online conferencing and have video and audio capabilities.

I not provide technical support. Requests for technical support and/or Scholar support can be directed to 4Help by calling (540) 231-HELP (4357). However, I will provide help with WebEx initially, but support can be accessed at online through Virginia Tech's WebEx site.

REQUIRED TECHNIAL SKILLS

Students must be able to communicate with other students and the instructor via email, Canvas, and WebEx. They must be able to securely logon and participate in the discussion boards, listen to lectures, access the readings, and post on the digital storytelling blog.

GRADING AND ASSESSMENT

Grades will be awarded using the following letter scale:

A+ 970-1000 points	A 930-969 points	A- 900-929 points
B+ 870-899 points	B 830-869 points	B- 800-829 points
C+ 770-799 points	C 730-769 points	C- 700-729 points
D+ 670-699 points	D 630-669 points	D- 600-629 points
F 600 and below and points		

Your grade is derived from three main activities: 1) the term project, 2) the discussion boards, and 3) participation in an online storytelling gallery. The term project will be completed in phases throughout the duration of the course, integrating the concepts and topics learned through the eight lessons. The discussion board and online storytelling gallery are to be completed per each lesson and correspond to the topic. Below are the activities with their assigned point values:

50% (500 points)	Term Project: Paper/Video Documentary
40% (400 points)	Discussion Board Participation
10% (100 points)	Inside-out Forum

1: Term Project: 500 points

The term project will be an analysis of two landscape architecture firms that extracts lessons about the effect of each firm's structure on the work done and extrapolates lessons for the future of landscape practice from the example of each firm. The term project will be divided into four parts:

1. Proposal	5%	25 points
2. Interview	15%	75 points
3. Rough draft	15%	75 points
4. Final draft	65%	325 points

The term project will be assigned during the first lesson. Due dates and rubrics will be provided for each of the four parts. Part one, the proposal, consists of identifying two different practitioners and firms or agencies with whom you will conduct interviews, a list of interview questions, and research on the work done by each firm/agency. The interview portion is the actual interview accompanied by a summary of each interview with questions and answers, highlighting interesting comments made, and visual documentation of at least two landscapes built by the firm/agency. The rough draft is a first composition of the final draft, outlining topics, organization, visual aids, and storyboards for the documentary video. The final draft is a refined document submitted with cover page, 5 page single spaced, well-written and insightful narrative discussing course core concepts, accompanied with citations and appropriate copyrights. A documentary video for each firm/agency is part of the final draft submission and will be shared online with classmates and participating practitioners.

2: Discussion Board: 400 points (8 lessons posts: 50 points each)

Students are required to participate in an online discussion board. In each lesson you are required to respond to at least two questions proposed by the instructor and at least two questions/comments by your colleagues. The discussion boards are open for a three week period, beginning one week before the lesson's date until one week after the date. Full participation must be completed by the specified due date or no credit will be given. We should have robust discussions in the threads on each course topic. I like to see consistency and quality. I'd like you to have something thoughtful and insightful to say that will benefit everyone else in the class.

These are some of the activities that make for effective discussions of a given topic or case:

- Compare and contrast concepts, contexts, companies
- Diagnose problems, missed opportunities
- Pose questions
- Point out new opportunities or ideas
- Challenge and recommend
- Integrate
- Prioritize
- Describe cause and effect or relationships
- Summarize

In sum, I look for:

- Participation in a variety of topics, but not necessary to comment on every thread
- Dialogue – reflecting or asking questions to other students relevant to other posts
- Consistent participation – it doesn't have to be every day, but not once a week, either
- Leadership – some posts that start or are early in a thread
- New thoughts that apply course ideas in a way that makes people understand them more deeply

Discussion board participation will be graded each week.

Netiquette:

In your written work and posts use complete sentences without slang and shortcuts. In general, this is the best way to communicate in a business setting unless you know your audience extremely well. Language need not be overly formal. Make it simple, direct, and professional, please. It should go without saying that posts and responses to posts should be respectful and courteous. We are here to learn from each other. Being respectful and courteous doesn't mean agreeing, but it means seriously considering viewpoints other than your own and seeing them as valid and legitimate. That means putting forth contrasting ideas and arguments as well as comments that reinforce and reiterate. Don't say anything in a way that an average person would take offense at, and don't take offense to someone critiquing your idea in a professional manner. I look forward to learning from you, and you should look forward to learning from each other. Our discussions will be successful if you gain understanding of a topic and also gain understanding of why someone else has a different view on a topic or questions.

3: Inside-Out Forum-Digital Storytelling Gallery 100 points (8 lesson posts: 12.5 points each)

Students will participate in an online digital storytelling gallery that allows the student to share images of built works juxtaposed with thoughts/reflections about each lesson's topics provided by the instructor. Each lesson the student will submit one image and the accompanying text of no more than 75 words. The word and image digital submission should demonstrate the student's inquiry into course topics and reflection about the practice. Please be creative in your submission.

MISSED/LATE ASSIGNMENTS

Lessons are spread over a two-week period which begins on Mondays and ends two weeks later on Sunday night 11:59pm. Discussion board posts and digital storyboard forum posts should be completed within this timeframe, and anything outside this timeframe will not be considered for credit. The term project is divided into four sections that each have their own due date. For each day they are turned in late the assignment will be deducted 10% of its point value, thus if there is a 75 point value, 7.5 points will be deducted each day the assignment is late, or for the final draft with a 325 point value, 32.5 points will be deducted each day the assignment is late. Failure to make any type of submission for anything given a grade will result in 0 points for that activity. To honor and respect the privacy of a student experiencing a medical, personal, or familial crisis, the student should 1) contact the Academic Dean of their college as soon as possible, 2) explain the nature of their situation and 3) request their Academic Dean to send the instructor an email indicating there was a justifiable situation to warrant the instructor to assign an Incomplete grade for both that assignment until a time when the emergency event has completely passed. The Instructor will only assign an Incomplete grade with notification from the student's Academic Dean. In the absence of such notification, all assignments are due on the specified dates.

VIRGINIA TECH HONOR CODE

Academic misconduct is a corrosive force in the academic life of a university, jeopardizing the quality of education and depreciating the genuine achievements of others. Actively deterring academic misconduct is, without reservation, the responsibility of all members of the Virginia Tech community. Apathy or acquiescence in the presence of academic misconduct is not a neutral act – failure to confront and deter such behavior will reinforce, perpetuate, and enlarge the scope of such misconduct.

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITY Virginia Tech students are expected to uphold and to encourage other students to abide by the Honor Code. A primary responsibility of Virginia Tech students is to refrain from any form of violation of the Honor Code. Students are responsible for authenticating any work on assignments or scholarly projects submitted to an instructor or for publication and, if asked, should be able to produce proof that the submission is indeed the work of that student. Students should keep appropriate records at all times, as the inability to authenticate one's work if asked to do so will be considered sufficient grounds to initiate an investigation of academic misconduct.

If a student participating in group work engages in academic misconduct, all members of that group could be held responsible for the misconduct if it is shown that the group members assisted in the misconduct and/or were aware of it without reporting it to the instructor. It is the responsibility of each group member to document who contributes each part of the project and to know what activities group members are engaging in to get the material they provide.

Honor Code Definitions

Cheating Cheating includes the intentional use of unauthorized materials, information, notes, study aids or other devices or materials in any academic exercise, or attempts thereof.

Plagiarism Plagiarism includes the copying of the language, structure, programming, computer code, ideas, and/or thoughts of another and passing off the same as one's own original work, or attempts thereof.

Falsification Falsification includes the statement of any untruth, either verbally or in writing, with respect to any element of one's academic work, or attempts thereof.

Fabrication Fabrication includes making up data and results, and recording or reporting them, or submitting fabricated documents, or attempts thereof.

Multiple Submission Multiple submission involves the submission for credit—without authorization of the instructor receiving the work—of substantial portions of any work (including oral reports) previously submitted for credit at any academic institution, or attempts thereof.

Complicity Complicity includes intentionally helping another to engage in an act of academic misconduct, or attempts thereof.

Violation of university, college, departmental, program, course, or faculty rules The violation of any University, College, Departmental, Program, or Faculty Rules relating to academic matters that may lead to an unfair academic advantage by the student violating the rule(s).

For further explanations on the Virginia Tech Honor Code please refer to the following PDF.
http://honorsystem.vt.edu/HSConstitution/honor_code_manual_pdf.pdf

CLASS ORGANIZATION

The course content is organized into eight lessons, each lasting two weeks in duration. In each lesson students are required to complete a series of activities including readings, lecture videos, discussion boards, digital storytelling forum, and a status report on the term project.

COURSE OUTLINE

INTRODUCTION Preview Week

LESSON 1: Introduction to the Profession and the Discipline

- Readings: Roger, Ch.1 (1-43); Hyde, "Introduction" (17-24)
- Term Project: Assigned to students, list of alumni posted for students to choose from

LESSON 2: Client and Projects

- Readings: Rogers, Ch. 2 (53-150) Hyde, "The Massive Changer"
- Term Project: Proposal due with student's rubric completed

LESSON 3: Firm Structure and Organizational Culture

- Readings: Rogers, Chapter 3 (169-223)
- Term Project: Work on Interview

LESSON 4: Finance & Marketing and Business Development

- Readings: Rogers, Ch. 5 (264-287); Rogers, Ch. 8 (373-406)
- Term Project: Continue work on Interview

LESSON 5: Contracts and Relationships

- Readings: Rogers, Ch. 4 (236-261) & Ch. 9 (410-459); Hyde, "The Contractual Innovator" (112-123)
- Term Project: Interview due with student completed rubric

LESSON 6: Workflow and Project Management

- Readings: Rogers, Ch. 10 (471-504)
- Term Project: Continue work on Rough Draft

LESSON 7: Law, Legal Obligations and Professional Ethics

- Readings: Rogers, Ch. 11 (508-536); ASLA Codes of Ethics; UO interview with Gerald Frug
- Term Project: Rough Draft Due with student's completed rubric

LESSON 8: Future Practice: New Strategies for Landscape Architecture

- Readings: Hyde, "The Civic Entrepreneur" (42-55); Hyde, "The Urban Activist" (102-111); Davis & Sigrist, "Open Source Practice", Berkeley Planning Journal
- Term Project: Term Project Due with student's completed rubric

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Classroom Accessibility: Any student who has been confirmed by the University as having course accommodations must notify me as soon as possible, preferably during the first week of the course. For more information please go to the [Services for Students with Disabilities website](#).

Academic Support Services: Any student requiring academic support should investigate the [University's services provided by the Academic Affairs office](#).

For complete information on student services at Virginia Tech, please visit the [website for the Division of Student Affairs](#)