Considering the Campus:  
Landscape Architecture, Tradition, and the Ecological Mandate  
ARST 441  
Spring 2012

Course Description
There is increasing pressure on institutions, municipalities, and private citizens to integrate natural systems into their designed landscapes. Ecological urbanism, green infrastructure, the native plant movement, and organic maintenance practices, all testify to shifting conceptions of how we inhabit or aspire to inhabit the land. University campuses with their traditional landscapes and landscape maintenance regimes face new mandates for ecological performance and expression.

As a discipline, landscape architecture negotiates the regions between architectural envelopes and the sea and sky. Separating the civilized from the wild, the constructed from the natural, and the brown from the green is neither desirable nor possible. As a medium, landscape architecture has the ability to manage stormwater, clean air, and express ideas about the relationship between humans and the natural world. This course seeks to use a combination of readings and design exercises to test ideas of nature and community, and to explore how the basic components of the landscape - topography, hydrology, and vegetation – impact campus design.

This course foregrounds the relationship of the academic community – with its emphasis on rigorous inquiry and free exchange of ideas – with the dynamic landscape it operates. What is the structure of the campus landscape? How is it conceived? How does it function? What traditions of land use and settlement are embedded in the structure? What kinds of ecological performance are present? What kinds of ecological performance are possible?

Introduction  
Week 1

1. Landscape as a medium. Campus characterized. Ecological frameworks.

Mapping  
Weeks 2-4

2. Local Geographies – The daily and beyond. Two routes. Documenting what’s familiar, given, and necessary. Documenting the surrounding - the river, the swamp, and main street. Prepare two maps with annotations and illustrations.  
Required Readings:
Recommended Readings:

Readings:

4. Habitats and Communities – Group Exercise. Inventory the habitats and communities on campus and, where significant, adjacent lands. How do you evaluate and represent biodiversity, natural communities, population dynamics?
Readings:

Conceiving
Weeks 5-7

5. What nature? What site? – Urban ecology, Landscape Urbanism, Ecological Services, all offer means to interpret the campus plan. Consider existing and past master plans and start imagining – through drawing and model – a new plan. What other representations are relevant? Views, sections, diagrams, narrative?
Short (500 word) response paper due.
Readings:

6. Frameworks, Policies, Abstractions, Pictures – How is change conceived, organized, perceived and effected? The role of sustainability and management plans. Develop before and after montages to illustrate existing and proposed landscape policies.
Readings:

7. Interventions: What pilot project/s will have the greatest ecological impact? What will be the simplest to initiate? What will have the most cultural impact? – Annotated and illustrated guide to possible projects.
Juried Mid-Review.
Acting
Weeks 8-13

8. Identifying the design problem. What is the site? What is the ambition?
10. Thinking through section.
11. Thinking through model.
13. Final Pinup.

Final Review
TBA

Course Structure
Design Studio

The course will focus on a series of design exercises. Students will be expected to present work at every class. For the first half of the course, there will be a brief lecture and discussion session at the beginning of every class. For the last half of the course, all effort will be directed at project development and pinups. One short response paper will be required.

Evaluation Criteria
80% Studio Projects (5,10,20,45)
20% Class attendance, participation, and public speaking

1. Ability to convey information in drawings and models in direct relationship to the stated intention for the project.
2. Ability to convey information in drawings and models in direct relationship to the stated intention for the project.
3. Timely completion of work assigned throughout the semester.