

Englewood: City or Suburb?



Urban Design Proposals and Open Space Concepts for a Community in Transition

Studio

The City of Englewood is at the cross-roads between hanging on to a suburban character or becoming a city. However, not everybody in the town is on the same page: Some people see a higher density and urbanization as a chance for development toward a more sustainable future, others see bike lanes and dog parks as indicators for gentrification.

Task 1: Develop a vision for Englewood in the context of regional impacts of climate change. This will be the focus of an international workshop with landscape architecture students from the University of Applied Sciences Osnabrück, Germany.

Task 2: Develop urban design proposals and open space concepts that enhance the quality of life for a diverse community, preserve natural resources, improve habitat quality, and address climate change impacts.

The town evolved from Dutch and English settlements with the building of the Northern Railroad in 1858/59 into a picturesque railroad suburb. Easy access to New York City via Hoboken ferries spurred substantial development. Another big push came with the 1931 George Washington Bridge, reducing the commute to New York City to a few minutes by car.

The development pressure is likely to increase because Englewood's higher elevated sites may be a possible place for retreat from climate change. The Bergen line light rail extension will use the historic train corridor up to Englewood hospital. This new commuter connection will make the city even more attractive. At the same time, this connection is using the railroad right of way, which would also be a perfect greenway connection.

The Jersey City planning and architecture firm DMR is currently updating the masterplan, the Rutgers Center for Urban Environmental Sustainability (CUES) has just completed an *Inventory, Analysis and Strategic Vision for the City of Englewood Park System*. Both documents are important steppingstones, but they also showed that not all residents have the same ideas about the future direction Englewood shall take.

11:550:431, 5 credits
Advanced Landscape Architecture, 5
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Office hours by arrangement

Concentration 1: Spatial Concept Downtown

Palisades Avenue serves as the main street of Englewood, with attractive stores and restaurants. Just north of it is a rather undefined (sub-)urban area along Van Burnt Street dominated by parking and a shopping mall. Depot Square Park and Veterans Memorial Park frame the former train station. That station will become a stop for the proposed light rail which will terminate at Englewood Hospital. One block to the south of Palisades Avenue is the large active recreation area, MacKay Park.

Urban design and open space concepts will discuss potential higher density and will explore new urban forms. Possible redesigns of Depot Square Park and Veterans Memorial Park shall develop a closer connection between the two sites while addressing the new light rail with required parking. Reconfiguration of parking along Van Burnt Street and Palisades Avenue may open the opportunity for complete streets. Investigating opportunities for green connection to MacKay Park may also be considered.

A suburban strip mall occupies most of downtown



Downtown Englewood, rough outline for concentration 1

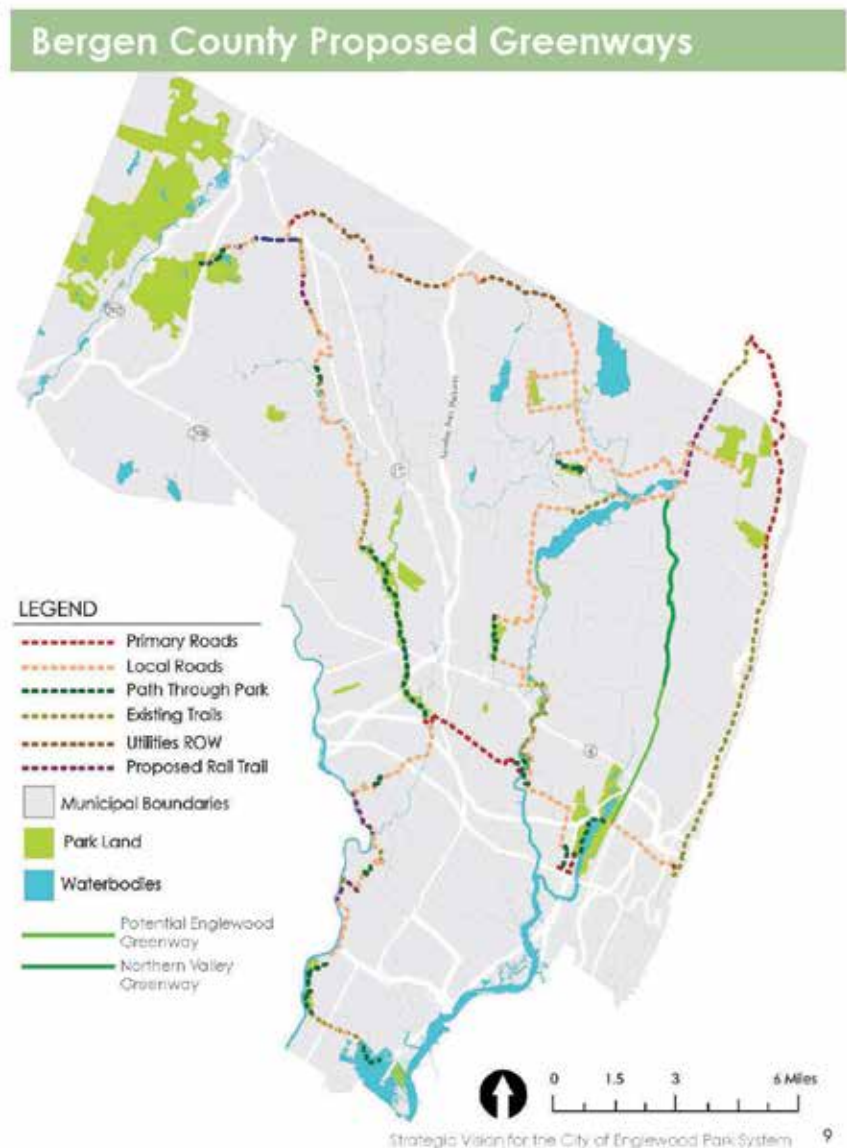


Concentration 2: Urban Greenway

Residents and city officials have expressed the demand for a Greenway connection between Overpeck Park and the Northern Valley Greenway. The 834 acres Overpeck is an urban-style, heavily used, diverse park with vibrant social interactions, large events, sport attractions, and nature recreation opportunities. The proposed Northern Valley Greenway will very likely begin north of Englewood Hospital utilizing abandoned tracks for a rail to trail program. Several grassroots initiatives are promoting the concept for an 8-mile-long, linear park running through six towns in Bergen

County: Tenafly, Cresskill, Demarest, Closter, Norwood & Northvale. Creating a Greenway link from Overpeck Park to Englewood Hospital will require substantial investigation. The feasibility of developing a recreational path along the proposed light rail should be explored along with options that might use a less direct route and integrate existing parks (Denning, Mackay, and Depot Square Park).

The proposed Greenways for Bergen County form the context for the Englewood Greenway.



A greenway fragment along railroad tracks.



Concentration 3: Resiliency Park MacKay

Community survey showed that MacKay Park (28 acres) is the most visited park in Englewood, the active recreation amenities are in high demand. Unfortunately, the park has significant storm water issues because it is situated at low elevation and in close proximity to Overpeck Creek and Metzler Creek. Frequent flooding and a high water table prohibit the use of the sports fields too often.

Design explorations could include resiliency concepts that improve usability and at the same time help to mitigate stormwater issues of the adjacent neighborhood. Hoboken provides successful examples, however, the public opinion is clearly divided: Some see Hoboken as a shining example for a desirable future, others worry that extensive development may cause even more gentrification.

MacKay Park



Artificial turf



Flooding at MacKay Park



Concentration 4: Neighborhood Park Madison

The community survey conducted by CUES identified Madison Park the third most popular park in the City. Currently, it is a relatively undefined flat grass area (4.5 acres) with a playground, a basketball court, all framed by significant Maple Trees. Neighborhood character could be strengthened by adding more benches, a path or a meeting space. The parks character can further be enhanced through the introduction of new plantings and signage in attempt to better integrate into the neighborhood.

Because of the importance of this park for the neighborhood, this concentration offers the opportunity for a design workshop with neighbors. That workshop will apply methods already utilized in previous CUES community design charettes. In case a design team decides to take on this concentration, it would require holding the community workshop on a Sunday afternoon (most likely 10/19). Conducting and documenting the community workshop will count as the master planning effort. Each team member will be expected to develop an individual design for the park, giving various interpretations of the community's intentions.

Grass at Madison Park allows for flexible usage.



Community



Tourist Train



Team Work

Professional work environments, like landscape architecture and urban planning, rely on teamwork. However, teamwork is not easy and must be learned. This class is your opportunity to further develop your team working skills by listening to your team members, valuing each person's voice, and contributing your share of the work on time. It is perfectly fine to disagree and to utilize the exchange of facts and arguments for a better outcome.

We will have three group assignments: Inventory & Analysis, Vision Workshop, and Masterplan. With 21 students enrolled, the 7 Inventory & Analysis Groups (assignment # 1 & # 2) will have three students each. For the Masterplan (assignment # 4) you may stay in the same group or reshuffle and form new design groups. We will organize our international teams for the Vision Workshop (assignment # 3) after our guests have arrived.

Praxis 2024



Juniors 2018



Juniors 2019



Assignment 1

Define Questions for Inventory and Analysis

Inventory Groups

Given 9/3

Pin up 9/5

Due 9/5

Deliverables:

- List of maps/topics
- Problem statement for each topic
- What is the information needed for each topic?
- Assessment criteria for each topic
- Sliced topics for class discussion

Evaluation criteria:

- A profound problem statement that identifies the challenges you identified.
- Set of goal statements.
- Complete list of information needed for maps.
- Comprehensible list of mapping criteria.

As advanced landscape architecture students from New Jersey you know how to do inventory and are familiar with (sub)-urban challenges.

As starting point, go back to your previous studio class and revisit previous inventory processes. What did you study along the Hudson, in St. Augustine, Roebling, or Puerto Rico? What were the inventory topics addressed? Which analytic criteria that you used? Which were particularly helpful and which were less useful?

In a next step you will ask the questions: What makes Englewood, New Jersey, different from the spring semester sites? Obviously, it is not an island in the Caribbean, is much younger than St. Augustine with a more Dutch and English history, but it is close to the Hudson River. When you think about the challenges of climate change, gentrification, and quality of life in a suburb very close to New York City, what are additional topics for inventory and analysis?

For this discussion, keep in mind that design groups will be able to choose from four possible concentrations.

After you identified a topic ask yourself: What is the appropriate scale for each topic? Climate change and sea level rise may be analyzed state-wide, transportation possibly on a county scale, open space on a municipal scale and shade trees on a neighborhood scale. Please include the suggested scale in your list of mapping topics.

In addition to submission on Canvas, provide a paper copy of your Inventory & Analysis topics in large print (22 pt), each on a separate line, and cut the print into one slice for each topic. We will use the pin up space in class to organize the themes for the Inventory& Analysis groups.

St. Augustine Historical Sites and Floods



St. Augustine Parking



St. Augustine Restaurants by Ethnic Food Category



Assignment 2

Inventory & Analysis

I & A Group
Given 9/5
Pin up 9/17
Due 9/19

Based on the outcome of assignment #1, the workload of gathering and documenting information will be split between the inventory & analysis groups during class discussion. Each I & A group will gather the relevant data, either from existing files, additional research, or on-site mapping.

The findings must be documented in at least two maps and a corresponding text of about 150-200 words per map. Avoid phrases like “the map shows...” rather focus on the findings and how they will be relevant for the planning and design process. Because the goal of this exercise is to bring our guests up to speed for the workshop, the submission will include a combined inventory and analysis booklet that we will share with our guests.

Deliverables:

- Minimum one inventory map
- Minimum one analysis map
- Corresponding text (approx. 150-200 words per map)
- Sections as appropriate
- Set of evaluation criteria
- Analytic conclusions
- Contribution to the booklet

Evaluation criteria:

- How well is the gathered information made accessible through text?
- Appropriate key and clear graphic expression.
- Clear distinction between inventory and analysis.
- Comprehensive rational of analysis.

Middlesex Open Space Needs Analysis.
Cut out Woodbridge

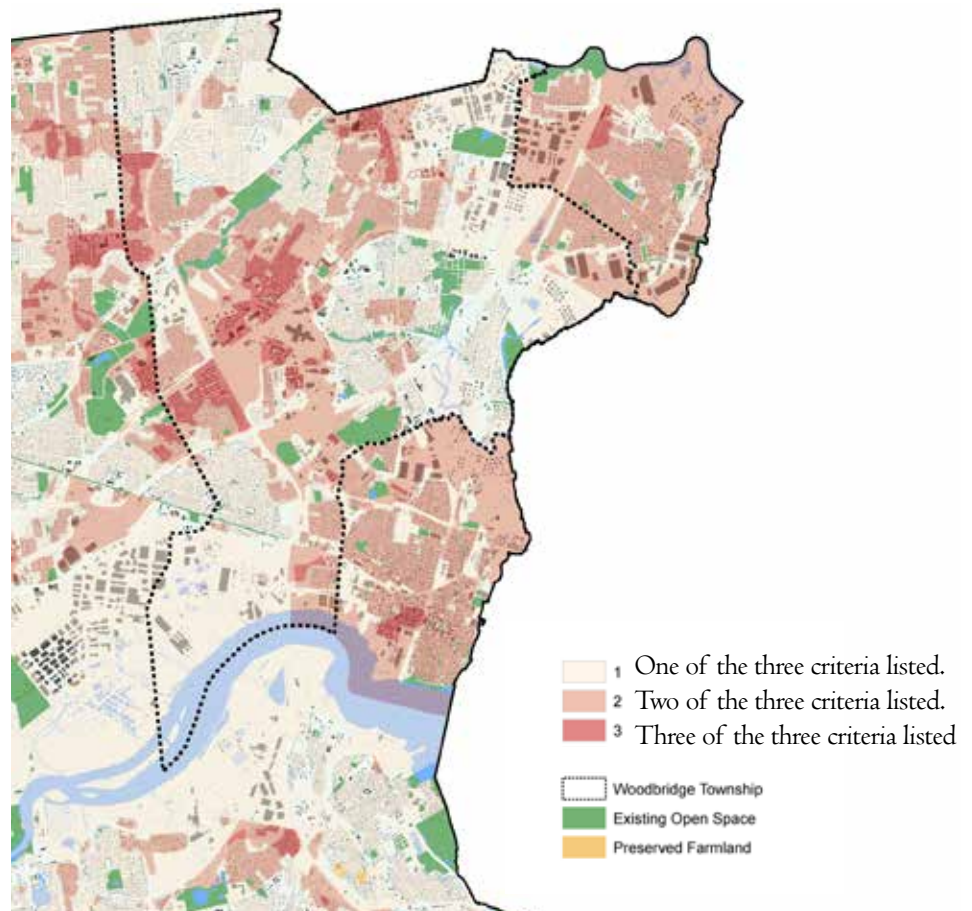
Criteria

- Indicators of potentially disadvantaged populations (analysis by VTC)
- densely populated
- not within a 10-minute walk of an existing park

Map Created by: CUES
Draft as of 01/04/2021
Projected Coordinate System: NJ State Plane (Feet)

Data sources:

Indicators of potentially disadvantaged populations (analysis by VTC)
US Census
Existing open space used to create walking distance assessment



Assignment 3

Vision Workshop Regional and Local Trends in New Jersey

International Teams

Kick-off Monday 9/23

Final discussion 10/3

Deliverables:

- Sketches and diagrams
- Vision statement
-

Evaluation criteria:

- Contribution to the international teams
- Innovation carried through

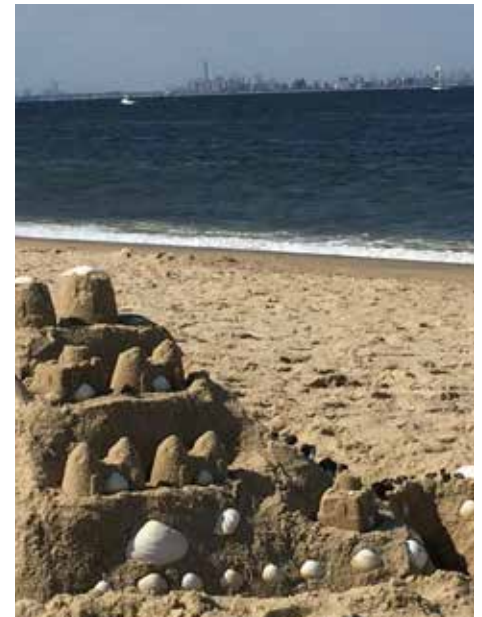


HOCHSCHULE OSNABRÜCK
UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES

From September 21 to October 4, a group of landscape architecture student from the University of Applied Sciences Osnabrück, Germany will visit Rutgers for this workshop. The Spatial Vision Workshop combines two scales relevant to the spatial transformation of New Jersey. On the one hand, it addresses the question of how to manage regional population movements forced by climate change, such as where people will relocate as coastal areas become increasingly vulnerable to hurricanes and thus uninhabitable. At the same time, at the community level, using Englewood as an example, it examines how densification of existing settlement structures can be sustainably managed. Students from Osnabrück can choose which of the two scales they want to delve into. To facilitate collaboration with students from Rutgers University, they will also engage in planning issues at the regional scale during the two weeks, while Osnabrück students will also (at least to some extent) address strategies for the local level. Accordingly, students will work in mixed groups.

The kick-off for the Workshop will be a field trip Transect “Climate Change and landscape transformation” on Monday, September 23. We will charter a bus and visit the Gateway National Park at Sandy Hook, the Twin Lights historic lighthouse, coastal protection at Union Beach, and the Woodbridge blue acres site.

Sandy Hook



Twin Lights



Union Beach dune construction 2023



Woodbridge Blue Acres



Assignment 4

Conceptual Design

Given 10/8
Pin Up 10/17
Due 10/23
Midterm 10/24
Revised Prints 12/5

The vision workshop shall inform goals and values for the masterplan of your design team. Your team has the choice to select one of the four concentration topics.

The masterplan suggestions for vegetation, buildings, commerce, circulation, leisure, recreation, and perhaps cultural identity. The corresponding text and the midterm verbal presentation shall avoid phrase like “I decided...” Rather, references to the inventory and analysis, the vision workshop, and process diagrams will communicate your thinking throughout the design process.

Deliverables:

- One colored print and one digital version that is reproducible (PDF & JPEG file)
- One overview Plan
- Illustrative drawings and diagrams
- Model is optional but encouraged

Evaluation criteria:

- Open space character
- Resiliency solution
- Handling of historic elements.
- Green space connection
- Urban context
- Vehicular/pedestrian connections/parking
- Innovation carried through

Each group will define areas of focus for individual designs during the second half of the semester. The discussion at the midterm presentation will confirm these areas and provide you with advice for the next steps.

Format and scale of deliverables for the midterm and final presentation will be discussed in class. Exploration through models is very welcome.



*Example senior studio fall 2013,
Jessie Woods, Michelle Hartmann, Rebecca Cook*



*Example praxis studio spring 2024,
Maggie Dobkowski*

Assignment 5

Special Topic

Individual

Given 10/29

Presentations 11/5 & 11/7

Due 11/12

Deliverables:

- Illustrations
- Corresponding text
- Oral PPT presentation and leading of class discussion

Evaluation criteria:

- Comprehensive rational of investigation
- How well the gathered information is made accessible through text.
- Quality of oral presentation

By now, you are very familiar with the site, and it is very likely that you have studied other examples of urban design and open space projects. It is also very likely that you have discovered questions that appear to be of particular interest for you. They will guide the research and intellectual investigation of this assignment. The outcome of your research is informing your design process. The outcome of this exploration is part of your contribution to the general discussion on urbanization of suburban communities. We will discuss in class possible topics and the extensiveness of this assignment according to the ongoing design process.

*Example praxis studio spring 2024,
Devin Pardón*



Assignment 6

Site Design

Individual
Given 10/20
Pin Up 11/14 & 11/26
Due 12/5

Final Presentation TBD

Deliverables:

- Presentation board hard copy colored print
- Reproducible digital copy (JPEG & PDF file).
- Model is optional but encouraged

Evaluation criteria:

- Open space vision and program
- Resiliency
- Historic context
- Urban design (spatial structure & density)
- Functionality
- Sustainability
- Vehicular/pedestrian connections/parking
- Adjacencies
- Use of vegetation
- Detailed plans &/or sections
- Diagrams
- Model
- Sheet layout
- Graphics/readability
- Completeness of information

The conceptual design and special topics investigations will guide the individual designs during this phase. Individuals will develop proposals for selected sites at the scales of 1" = 50', 1"=20', 1"=10' (as appropriate). This may include designs for a downtown gathering space, a section of the greenway, a component of MacKay Resiliency Park, or a design for Madison Park. You are strongly encouraged to use a model for design development. Format and scale of deliverables for the final presentation will be discussed in class.

Example praxis studio spring 2024, Josh Kover



Assignment 7 Documentation

Individual & Groups

Given 9/3

Due 12/13

Deliverables:

- Files for project documentation

Evaluation criteria:

- Completeness of Information, text quality
- Graphics/readability
- Digital organization (all files at appropriate location)
- Completeness and punctuality of contributions

Text sources as well as drawings and other images you use must be correctly cited. Please follow the Chicago Manual of Style for any written document you produce.

Keep a design journal with sketches and written notes that will help you to keep track of your creative process. In addition, keep good records of all your work (digital filing system, store your trace sketches safely), you will need this for the project documentation. The final product will be a comprehensive document with acquired data, research, design process and reproductions of models and drawings. Because Englewood is currently at the difficult crossroads from suburban to urban, your designs and visionary thinking will have an impact on the future public discourse. People will read your final brochure!

Readings

Gehl, Jan. 2010. *Cities for People*. Washington, DC: Island Press.
(RU Library)

Dostal, N. & Eisenman, T. S., (2022) "Pedestrianizing Streets as a Strategy for Urban Greenways", Fábos Conference on Landscape and Greenway Planning 7(1).

Liu, Xiaobo, Yi Deng, and Scott Le Vine. 2016. "Residential Relocation in Response to Light Rail Transit Investment: Case Study of the Hudson-Bergen Light Rail System." *Journal of Modern Transportation* 24 (2): 139–44.

New York Times, March 11: 2024: A Showcase for Israeli Property Creates Rancor in a Diverse Town

CUES 2024: Inventory, Analysis and Strategic Vision for the City of Englewood Park System

Master Plan Public Responses from all 4 Ward Meetings

Lectures

09/03 Introduction
09/05 Inventory and Analysis,
09/12 EP in NJ, Zoning and Density
09/17 Green Systems and Greenways
10/10 Competing for Space
10/15 Sponge City
11/14 Evolving Cultural Concepts of Nature and Landscape
11/21 Suburban Culture, Place, and Meaning

Learning Goals

Students will

- Identify and examine relevant topics at hand when addressing possible adaptive re-uses of underutilized sites within the wider context of urban renewal and residential development.
- Integrate professional ethics and stakeholder values when developing creative interpretations and development concepts for the urbanized landscape.



Lydecker Homestead from 1803 at 228 Grand Avenue

Fine Print


Date changes may occur due to group process and availability of project partners.

Except for circumstances truly beyond the student's control, all assignments are due at the dates and times specified throughout the semester. Projects that are incomplete on the due date should still be submitted on the date it is due to receive at least partial credit. Any work submitted late will be penalized a grade step for each day past due. Working beyond a due date is both unrealistic in a professional setting and unfair to your classmates in this course.

If you encounter any personal circumstances that inhibit your ability to fulfill the requirements of this course, you should immediately contact the instructor. In addition, any student with a special need, circumstance, or disability, should make an appointment to see me during the first week of classes. Studios provide a very effective but also very intense learning environment and all of us need to feel encouraged to support a studio culture that provides space for every individual to unfold his or her creativity.

Studio sessions, lectures, and the common lectures all count as individual class sessions for this course. More than three unexcused absences will result in a step reduction in your semester grade. Each additional three absences will result in another step reduction. Content missed due to an excused absence will be made available however, any missed quizzes or in-class assignments will not. In addition, an excused absence does not prolong an assigned due date for any assignment.





RUTGERS UNIVERSITY

Department of Landscape Architecture

550:431 Advanced LA 2024, 5 Credits

Lecture

Thursday

12:10 - 1:30

Wednesday

3:50 - 5:10 (common)

Studio

Tuesday

2:00 - 5:00

Thursday

2:00 - 5:00

All equipment must be used appropriately according to the student handbook. Access to the fabrication lab is granted after successfully passing the safety instructions. Access is monitored and can be revoked if students use tools they are not qualified for or if students do not clean after themselves.

If there is a plotting problem, PDF files can be placed on the appropriate folder in the R-Drive and the assignment will not be considered late. However, a printed version is due by the following class period and the late penalty will be assessed thereafter.

It is requested that you will give proper reference to all sources (text and image) quoted in every drawing or text.

Submitted drawings, models, photographs, or written papers for any project assigned in Landscape Architecture courses are considered the property of the Department. The formatting of all digital submission must follow the department guidelines because they will be retained in its archives for exhibition and accreditation purposes.

All information in this syllabus and course schedule is subject to change throughout the semester and will be announced in the scheduled class periods. It is your responsibility to stay informed!

Grade Rational

| | |
|----------------------------|----|
| # 1 Define Questions | 0 |
| # 2 Inventory and Analysis | 10 |
| # 3 Vision Workshop | 10 |
| # 4 Group Masterplan | 30 |
| # 5 Special Topic | 10 |
| # 6 Site design | 30 |
| # 7 Documentation | 10 |

Assignment # 1-4 will define whether warning rosters may become necessary.

A Outstanding –This not only means fulfilling the requirements, but impressing and going beyond the initial expectations of the project. The student has demonstrated a superior grasp of the subject matter coupled with a high degree of creative or logical expression, and strong ability to present these ideas in an organized and analytical manner.

B Very Good – The student has demonstrated a solid grasp of the material with an ability to organize and examine the material in an organized, critical, and constructive manner. The projects and in class performance reveal a solid understanding of the issues and related theories or literature.

C Acceptable –The student has shown a moderate ability to grasp concepts and theories for the class, producing work that, while basically adequate, is not in any way exceptional. This performance in class display a basic familiarity with the relevant literature and techniques.

D Unacceptable – The work demonstrates a minimal understanding of the fundamental nature of the material or the assignment with a performance that does not adequately examine the course material critically or constructively. Students cannot graduate from the Landscape Architecture program with 2 D's in required 550-classes.

F Failure – The student has demonstrated a lack of understanding or familiarity with course concepts and materials. Their performance has been inadequate. Failure is often the result of limited effort and poor attendance which may indicate that the student is not in the proper field of study.