

GGR 360: Culture, History and Landscape

University of Toronto, Winter 2017

Thursdays, 12-2pm

Sidney Smith 2125

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Office Hours: Mondays, 3:30-4:30pm; Thursdays, 2:30-4:30pm (or by appointment)

Course Website: Accessible through <http://portal.utoronto.ca> (see below)

TAs: TBD (contact details and office hours to follow)

Course Description:

Landscape is a crucial geographical concept, and this course examines both the history of approaches to the term and its relationship to recent cultural expressions. Because landscape is an ambiguous and contested word, we will begin with a review of its use in geographical study. For most of the twentieth century, geographers and other scholars (writing in English – an important qualifier) approached cultural landscapes as the material manifestation of the interaction between humans and ‘nature’ over time, and they stressed field research as a fundamental element of this approach.

Newer approaches, however, have explored the symbolic and political aspects of landscapes, suggesting that they reflect social inequalities and divisions. These perspectives include the ideological, imagined, and representational properties of landscapes alongside their physical elements. While it does not entirely discount fieldwork, this more expansive understanding of landscape has also encouraged the contemplation of other sources, from painting and photography to literature and music. We will use these more recent approaches (and these sorts of sources) to move through a series of diverse, roughly chronological case studies, from the estates and plantations of the ‘early modern’ era to contemporary ‘hyper-modern’ cities.

Evaluation:

In-class Participation:	10%
Assignment One (Landscape Description):	10%
Assignment Two (Visual Analysis):	20%
Assignment Three (Short Research Essay):	25%
Final Exam:	35%

Key Dates:

Assignment 1 due:	February 2
Assignment 3 Pitch (optional) due:	February 16 (returned March 2)
Assignment 2 due:	March 2
Assignment 3 due:	March 23
Final Exam:	TBA (April 10-28)

The Course Environment:

Your primary obligations are: (1) to read the specified materials for a particular day, and to come to class ready to ask questions and foster conversations about those readings and the related lecture content; (2) and to contribute to a respectful classroom space. I am responsible for facilitating an enjoyable, open, and safe environment for conversation, but that responsibility is ultimately collective. Our subject material can be unsettling and upsetting, but it is also tremendously important that we confront it through discussion and debate. Please do not hesitate to speak to me after class or during office hours if you have concerns about the course environment.

The Readings:

There is no textbook that adequately addresses the range of topics covered in this course. Instead, the reading list is drawn from three sources: academic journal articles, book chapters, and web-based material. While you can access journal articles through the Library's E-journals search option, and online material through the URLs below, all of the materials have been gathered on the Library's Course Reserves module; look for the '**Course Reserves**' link on your **Portal dashboard** (<https://portal.utoronto.ca>). If you are unable to access any source, please e-mail me.

While the benefits of 'free' readings are clear, you will consume a significant amount of paper if you print all of the sources listed below. I encourage you to work with PDFs online or print creatively (two pages per page, double-sided, on recycled paper...).

Class Schedule and Required Readings:

Readings will parallel and be folded into lectures, but lectures will include additional cases and details, and they will not last for the full two hours. We will also be discussing film clips, music, and other media in several classes. While lecture slides will be posted on Blackboard before classes, the slides will be image-heavy, and will not be a substitute for attending class.

Class 1 (January 5): Introduction

(No reading)

Class 2 (January 12) – 'The Content of Landscape'

- Carl Sauer, "The Content of Landscape," in "The Morphology of Landscape" (1925), 25-30.
- John Wylie, "Landscaping Traditions," in *Landscape* (2007), 17-54.

Class 3 (January 19) – Finding the Vernacular

- J. B. Jackson, “The Word Itself,” in *Discovering the Vernacular Landscape* (1984), 3-8 (http://art-tech.arts.ufl.edu/~jack/home/images/9/9f/Jackson%2CJB_Vernacular_Landscape.pdf).
- J.B. Jackson, “The Popular Yard,” *Places* 4.3 (1987) (<http://escholarship.org/uc/item/4mc5h97p.pdf>).
- Robert Mellin, “An Isolated Newfoundland Outport,” in *Tilting: House Launching, Slide Hauling, Potato Trenching, and Other Tales from a Newfoundland Fishing Village* (2003), 1-24.

Class 4 (January 26) – The ‘New Cultural Geography’ and the Re-evaluation of Landscape

- Denis Cosgrove, “Prospect, Perspective and the Evolution of the Landscape Idea,” *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 10.1 (1985) 45-62.
- Don Mitchell, “Cultural Studies and the New Cultural Geography,” in *Cultural Geography: A Critical Introduction* (2000), 37-65.

Class 5 (February 2) – Look Upon the Land: Class, Gender, and Property

ASSIGNMENT #1 DUE

- Gillian Rose, “Geography as the Science of Observation: The Landscape, the Gaze and Masculinity,” in F. Driver and G. Rose, eds., *Nature and Science: Essays in the History of Geographical Knowledge* (1992), 8-18.

Class 6 (February 9) – Oversight: Colonialism and Tropicality

- Judith T. Kenny, “Climate, Race, and Imperial Authority: The Symbolic Landscape of the British Hill Station in India,” *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 85.4 (1995), 694-714.
- Krista A. Thompson, “Framing ‘The New Jamaica’: Feasting on the Picturesque Tropical Landscape,” in *An Eye for the Tropics: Tourism, Photography, and Framing the Caribbean Picturesque* (2006), 27-42 [part of chapter].

Class 7 (February 16) – Arcades and Underworlds

ASSIGNMENT #3 PITCH DUE

- Walter Benjamin, “The Flâneur,” in *Charles Baudelaire: A Lyric Poet in the Era of High Capitalism* (trans. 1997), 35-66 (<https://victorianpersistence.files.wordpress.com/2012/01/benjamin-ii-the-flaneur.pdf>).
- Elizabeth Wilson, “The Invisible Flâneur,” *New Left Review* 191 (1992), 90-110.

NO CLASS FEBRUARY 23 – READING WEEK

Class 8 (March 2) – Arctic Visions

ASSIGNMENT #2 DUE

ASSIGNMENT #3 PITCH RETURNED

- Carol Payne, “Lessons with Leah: Rereading the Photographic Archive of the North,” in *The Official Picture: The National Film Board of Canada’s Still Photography Division and the Image of Canada, 1941-1971* (2013), 165-188.

Class 9 (March 9) – Memory and Militarization in the U.S. West

- Dydia DeLyser, “Authenticity on the Ground: Engaging the Past in a California Ghost Town,” *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 89.4 (1999), 602-632.
- Rebecca Solnit, “Diary,” *London Review of Books* 25.19 (9 October 2003) (<http://www.lrb.co.uk/v25/n19/rebecca-solnit/diary>).

Class 10 (March 16) – Hope, Ruin, and Twentieth-century Urbanism

- “1970-1979: Camilo José Vergara’s New York” (<http://mashable.com/2015/12/09/new-york-1970s-vergaras/>)
- David Gonzalez, “Faces in the Rubble,” *The New York Times* 21 August 2009 (<http://www.nytimes.com/2009/08/23/nyregion/23bronx.html>). [Also, click on the “Revisiting the South Bronx” link at the bottom of the article.]
- Benjamin Moser, “Cemetery of Hope: Brasília at Fifty,” *Harper’s* January 2008, 67-74.

Class 11 (March 23) – New, New Cities ASSIGNMENT #3 DUE

- Bianca Bosker, “Into ‘The Land of Courtly Engagements,’” in *Original Copies: Architectural Mimicry in Contemporary China* (2013), 1-19 (pp. 1-12 are at <http://www.uhpress.hawaii.edu/books/boskerOriginalExcerpt.pdf>).

Class 12 (March 30) – Landscape Myths and Realities / Final Exam Review

- Nicholas Blomley, “Mud for the Land,” *Public Culture* 14.3 (2002), 557-582.

Participation

Your contributions to the class environment are essential. Throughout the course, I will ask you to participate in a variety of in-class undertakings, including short written reactions to lecture material or readings, brief group discussions, and assignment-related activities. You will only be able to complete these tasks if you attend classes, and your participation mark will be based on these exercises.

Assignments:

We will discuss all of the assignments in class, but here are some basic elements:

#1: The Landscape Description

Following the initial lecture material and readings, visit and then write a description of a landscape in Greater Toronto. The choice of site, or view, is yours, so long as you can argue that it is meaningful. Your description should be a full **2 pages, double-spaced, in 12-point font**. It should reflect what you saw on that particular day, and take into account the human and non-human elements which comprise a landscape. This exercise will test your observation and writing skills; you will be graded on both. Be creative, and don’t

just describe what you see, but attempt to make a larger interpretative point or two about the wider issues at stake in this specific location. Consider how the landscape as you encounter it might (or might not) contain clues to its changing identity over time.

This is not a research assignment, and therefore the use of secondary sources is not required.

Descriptions are due at the beginning of class on **February 2**. I will not accept this assignment after February 9, and 0.5 marks (out of 10) will be deducted for each day that it is late, including weekend days. Please include your name and student number, my name, and the course number on the first page.

#2: The Visual Analysis

This assignment builds on the interpretative aspects of your Landscape Description. Given that the word landscape, as it has been used in the English language, is tied closely to representation, it is not surprising that cultural geographers have focused extensively on the study of images.

Following the examples set in the first several weeks of the course, choose a particular painting or photograph – preferably one not discussed in class – and consider the landscape that it depicts. Situate the image within geographical and historical contexts, including the location (if applicable) and the artist's life (again, if applicable). Do not just describe the image; aided by scholarly sources, you should *interpret* it for symbolic meaning (iconography).

In other words, choose an image that you can easily research. You must use at least **two academic sources** to support your analysis. These can include scholarly books or journal articles, but **not** newspapers or magazines (which you are, of course, free to use in addition). If you supplement your research with on-line, non-academic sources, select them carefully; citing Wikipedia is not recommended. Be sure to provide full citations (in-text, footnote, or endnote) for every source you use, even when you are not quoting directly. Finally, include a copy of the image that you chose, along with a caption identifying where you found it, at the end of your document – or, if you prefer, a caption followed by a URL.

Analyses should be a minimum of **3 and a maximum of 4 pages, doubled-spaced, in 12-point font** (not including the bibliography, which is mandatory). They are **due at the beginning of class on March 2**. I will not accept this assignment after March 9, and 1 mark (out of 20) will be deducted for each day that it is late, including weekend days. Please include your name and student number, my name, and the course number on the first page.

#3: The Research Essay

This short essay will move you past the pictorial understanding of landscape to consider landscape's dual physical and symbolic qualities, and the *work* that landscapes do.

Your essay must adhere to the following topic:

Select a case not discussed in class and not from Toronto to demonstrate how the *production* of a landscape is always also a process of *destruction*. While this is most obviously framed in environmental terms, remember that the course is one in cultural and historical geography; the

production and destruction of a landscape always involves cultural meanings, and you should be sure to emphasize these.

Be specific with your choice, and for some guidance, consult Don Mitchell, “Cultural Landscapes: Just Landscapes of Landscapes of Justice?” *Progress in Human Geography* 27.6 (2003), 787-796.

Library research is required for this assignment, and you must use at least **four academic sources**. (See the instructions accompanying Assignment 2 for a discussion of source use.) Illustrate your paper with photographs or maps, if appropriate, and (as with Assignment 2) provide full citations for every source you employ, even when you are not quoting directly.

You are encouraged – but not required – to submit a **hard-copy ‘pitch’ of no more than one page by February 16**, describing your choice of topic, your approach, and listing 3-4 sources that you plan to consult. If you submit this pitch, you will gain an additional (1.0) mark on your essay (out of 25); the pitches will be returned with comments on March 2.

Essays must be longer than 5 and shorter than 7 pages, double-spaced, in 12-point font (not including the bibliography, which is mandatory, or the cover page). They are **due at the beginning of class on March 23**, and will be available for pick-up in my office during exam-week office hours. I will not accept this assignment after March 30, and 1.5 marks (out of 25) will be deducted for each day that it is late, including weekend days. Please include a cover page with an interesting title, your name and student number, my name, and the course number.

The Final Exam

The final exam will cover the entire term, and will feature both short-answer and essay-form questions. The absence of a mid-term exam means that you must review a fair amount of material for the final. In recognition of this fact, we will devote the second half of the last class to review. During that class, I will distribute a sheet with a list of terms and topics; I will draw from this list to create the exam. In other words, there should be no surprises!

Course Administration:

I will reply to e-mail messages within 24 hours, excluding weekends and holidays.

Taking photos or filming during class is not permitted. Please ask me for permission if you wish to audio-record lectures. Turn off your cell phones during class, or place them in silent mode; if you need to answer your phone or send a text, step outside. And if you are using a laptop in class, I expect that you will only employ it for course-related purposes; other uses can be very distracting for other students, not to mention the instructor!

Extensions will be granted only in cases of illness or injury, and only after receipt of paper documentation (a completed University of Toronto ‘Verification of Illness or Injury’ form, or a letter from your Registrar’s office). Please consult your college Registrar should you be having difficulties during term that prevent you from completing your course work due to extenuating circumstances.

You are certainly encouraged to discuss lecture content and readings with classmates. However, plagiarism and submitting an assignment under your name that you have not completed are offences under university policy. Plagiarism is quoting (or paraphrasing!) the work of an author without a proper citation, or citing an author without enclosing copied words in quotation marks. It is also an offense to submit academic work for which you have already obtained (or are concurrently seeking) credit. Please consult the “Rules and Regulations” section of the FAS Calendar (www.artsandscience.utoronto.ca/ofr/calendar/rules.htm) for further information, and have a look at www.writing.utoronto.ca/advice/using-sources/how-not-to-plagiarize.

For more material on academic writing, consult www.writing.utoronto.ca/advice. Go to <http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/writing-centres/arts-and-science> to book an appointment at one of the writing centres on campus. Material on the English Language Learning program (ELL) is at <http://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/current/advising/ell>.

If you require accommodations for a disability, or have any accessibility concerns about the course, the classroom or course materials, please contact Accessibility Services as soon as possible: accessibility.services@utoronto.ca or <http://studentlife.utoronto.ca/as>.

For matters related to mental health, please contact the Health and Wellness Centre: <https://www.studentlife.utoronto.ca/hwc>.

The Course Website:

Once you have logged in to the portal using your UTORid and password (see www.utorid.utoronto.ca for more information), look for the My Courses module, where you’ll find the link to the GGR360 course website along with all of your Blackboard-based courses. The course website will contain copies of the syllabus, lecture slides, and other handouts.

All students should have a valid UofT email address, and you should also ensure that this address is properly entered in the ROSI system. Course announcements will be sent through Blackboard to this address. Forwarding your utoronto.ca e-mail to an external account (Gmail, Hotmail, etc.) is not recommended, since in some cases messages sent to these accounts are filtered as junk mail.