

GGR 360H1F: Culture, History and Landscape

University of Toronto, Fall 2019
Mondays, 10:00am-12:00pm
Sidney Smith 1087

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Office Hours: Mondays, 2:30-4:00pm; Tuesdays, 9:30-11:00am (or by appointment)
Course Website: On Quercus (<https://q.utoronto.ca>)
TA: Connie Yang

Course Description

Landscape is a crucial geographical concept, and this course examines both the history of approaches to the term and its relationship to powerful cultural expressions over several hundred years of history. 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) treated cultural landscapes as the physical manifestation of the interaction between humans and ‘nature’ over time. They stressed fieldwork and direct observation as fundamental elements of this approach.

Newer approaches, however, have explored more subtle, political dimensions of landscapes, showing how they can reflect and even perpetuate social inequalities. These perspectives stress the ideological, imagined, and representational properties of landscapes alongside their physical elements. While it does not entirely discount fieldwork, this expansive understanding of landscape has also encouraged the contemplation of other cultural sources, from painting and photography to literature and music. In the last three-quarters of the course, 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: a critical history of notable landscape ideas and forms.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, you should be able to:

1. Understand the history and significance of ‘landscape’ as a geographical concept, and as an entry point to the sub-field of cultural geography.
2. Critically assess cultural landscapes, past and present, using cultural geographic methods, and clearly convey this assessment in writing.
3. Understand and interpret the powerful ‘ways of seeing’ that have defined and continue to define much of our world, particularly the social relations they reflect and perpetuate.

Evaluation

In-class Participation:	10%
Assignment One (Landscape Description):	10%
Assignment Two (Visual Analysis):	20%
Assignment Three (Short Essay):	30%
Final Exam:	30%

Key Dates

Assignment 1 due:	October 7
Assignment 3 Pitch (optional) due:	October 28 (returned November 11)
Assignment 2 due:	November 11
Assignment 3 due:	December 2
Final Exam:	TBA (December 7-20)

The Course Environment

Your primary obligations are: to complete the readings; to come to class ready to ask questions and foster conversations about those readings and related lecture content; and to contribute to a respectful classroom space. I am responsible for facilitating an enjoyable, accessible, and safe environment, but that obligation is ultimately a collective one. Our subject material can be distressing, but it is also tremendously important that we confront it through evidence, analysis, and discussion. Please do not hesitate to speak to me after class or during office hours if you have concerns about the course environment.

Please turn your cellphones to silent during class. Slip out of the room if you need to text or talk. I prefer that you use a pen and paper, but if you wish to take notes and work on a laptop, I expect that you will only be online when absolutely necessary. Taking photos or filming during class is not permitted. Permission is required before audio-recording.

The Readings

There is no textbook that adequately addresses the range of topics covered in this course. Instead, the reading list is drawn from two sets of sources:

1. Journal articles, book chapters, and other writing posted to the course website on Quercus
2. Web-based media

If you are unable to access any source, please e-mail me. And 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 numerous classes. While lecture slides will be posted on Quercus before classes, they will lean on images, and *will not be a substitute for attendance*.

Class 1 (September 9): Introduction

(No reading)

Class 2 (September 16) – Landscape in Geography, from Morphology to the Vernacular

- J.B. Jackson, “The Popular Yard,” *Places* 4.3 (1987), 26-32
(<https://placesjournal.org/assets/legacy/pdfs/the-popular-yard.pdf>).
- 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 (September 23) – Cultural Studies and the New Cultural Geography

- Hua Hsu, “Stuart Hall and the Rise of Cultural Studies,” *The New Yorker* 17 July 2017
(<https://www.newyorker.com/books/page-turner/stuart-hall-and-the-rise-of-cultural-studies>).
- Don Mitchell, “Cultural Studies and the New Cultural Geography,” in *Cultural Geography: A Critical Introduction* (2000), 37-65.

Class 4 (September 30) – Look Upon the Land: Class, Gender, and Property

- Denis Cosgrove, “Landscape and the European Sense of Sight – Eyeing Nature,” in K. Anderson et al eds., *Handbook of Cultural Geography* (2003), 249-268.
- 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 5 (October 7) – Oversight: Colonial Tropicality

ASSIGNMENT #1 DUE

- Charmaine Nelson, “Colonialism and Art: Landscape and Empire,” in *Slavery, Geography and Empire in Nineteenth-Century Marine Landscapes of Montreal and Jamaica* (2016), 41-58.
- 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 a chapter].

NO CLASS OCTOBER 14 – UNIVERSITY CLOSED

Class 6 (October 21) – Arcades and Underworlds

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

Class 7 (October 28) – Peaks and Poles

ASSIGNMENT #3 (OPTIONAL) PITCH DUE

- K. Maria D. Lane, “Astronomers at Altitude: Mountain Geography and the Cultivation of Scientific Legitimacy,” in D. Cosgrove and V. della Dora, *High Places: Cultural Geographies of Mountains, Ice and Science* (2009), 126-146.
- Karen Routledge, “Prologue: On the Ice,” in *Do You See Ice? Inuit and Americans at Home and Away* (2018), xi-xxviii.

NO CLASS NOVEMBER 4 – FALL READING WEEK

Class 8 (November 11) – War in the US West

ASSIGNMENT #2 DUE

ASSIGNMENT #3 PITCH RETURNED

- Valerie Kuletz, “Invisible Spaces, Violent Places: Cold War Nuclear and Militarized Landscapes,” in N. L. Peluso and M. Watts., eds., *Violent Environments* (2001), 237-260.
- Rebecca Solnit, “Up the River of Mercy,” *Sierra Magazine* (November/December 1992), 52-57.

Class 9 (November 18) – Planetary High Modernism

- Tina Loo, with Meg Stanley, “An Environmental History of Progress: Damming the Peace and Columbia Rivers,” *Canadian Historical Review* 92.3 (2011), 399-427.
- Benjamin Moser, “Cemetery of Hope: Brasília at Fifty,” *Harper’s* (January 2008), 67-74.

Class 10 (November 25) – Ruined Cities, Rebellious Cities

- Gyan Prakash, “Introduction: Imaging the Modern City, Darkly,” in Prakash, ed., *Noir Urbanisms; Dystopic Images of the Modern City* (2010), 1-14.
- Look at street photography of New York City in the 1970s and early 1980s, including:
 - o Alex Q. Arbuckle, “1970-1979: Camilo José Vergara’s New York” (<http://mashable.com/2015/12/09/new-york-1970s-vergaras>).
 - o David Gonzalez, “Faces in the Rubble,” *The New York Times* 21 August 2009 (<https://www.nytimes.com/2009/08/23/nyregion/23bronx.html>).

Class 11 (December 2) – “Profane and Stylistic”: Postmodern Places and Beyond
ASSIGNMENT #3 DUE

- Aihwa Ong, “Hyperbuilding: Spectacle, Speculation, and the Hyperspace of Sovereignty,” in A. Roy and A. Ong, eds., *Worlding Cities: Asian Experiments and the Art of Being Global* (2011), 205-226.

Class 12 (December 5) – Landscape Myths and Realities / Final Exam Review
(Note the date: Make-up day for Monday classes)

- 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, using normal margins, in 12-point font**. It should reflect what you saw on that particular day, and it should consider 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: 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.

To receive feedback on your description, please submit it in DOC, DOCX, or RTF form via Quercus (instructions to follow) by midnight on **October 7**. Aside from extensions arranged by Accessibility Services, I will not accept assignments after October 14. There are no late penalties.

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 (Assignment #1). 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.

On **October 7**, I will hand out (and post) a sheet with a number of images. Choose one, and following the material from the first several weeks of the course, 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).

If you would like to use an alternate image, please run it by me.

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 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 directly quoting.

Analyses should be a **minimum of 3 and a maximum of 4 pages, doubled-spaced, using normal margins, in 12-point font** (not including the bibliography and a cover page, which are both mandatory).

To receive feedback on your analysis, please submit it in DOC, DOCX, or RTF form via Quercus (instructions to follow) by midnight on **November 11**. Aside from extensions arranged by Accessibility Services, I will not accept assignments after November 18. There are no late penalties.

Please include your name and student number, my name, and the course number on the cover page.

#3: The Research Essay

This short essay must adhere to the following topic:

Using a combination of secondary, scholarly sources and cultural texts (such as paintings, photographs, films, music, etc.), make a case for a ***twenty-first century cultural landscape*** worthy of critical study by cultural geographers. Your choice must be located beyond the Greater Toronto Area.

Although you may be considering something that seems truly 'new', keep in mind that many landscape forms are less novel than they appear, and are produced as a result of the destruction of something else. The secondary source requirement also means that you should choose a landscape that has already received some scholarly scrutiny.

You must use at least **three cultural texts** (films, photographs, magazine profiles, and **three scholarly sources**. Illustrate your paper if appropriate -- for example, if some or all of your cultural texts are visual. As with Assignment 2, provide full citations for every secondary source you employ even when you are not directly quoting directly. Provide a separate list of your cultural texts before the bibliography. Where applicable, this list should include details on where you found the items.

You are encouraged – but not required – to submit a **paper-copy ‘pitch’ of no more than one page in class on October 28**, describing your choice of topic, your approach, and listing 3-4 sources that you intend to consult. If you submit this pitch, you will gain an additional (1.0) mark on your essay (out of 30); the pitches will be returned with comments on November 11.

Essays must be a **minimum of 6 and a maximum of 7 pages, double-spaced, in 12-point font** (not including the bibliography, which is mandatory). To receive feedback, please submit your essay in DOC, DOCX, or RTF form via Quercus (instructions to follow) before midnight on **December 2**. Aside from extensions arranged by Accessibility Services, I will not accept assignments after December 9. There are no late penalties.

Please include a cover page with an interesting title, your name and student number, my name, and the course number.

For all assignments: University policy specifies that requests for re-marking should be submitted to the instructor no later than two weeks after the work has been returned. If your assignment was marked by a TA, please communicate with them first.

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. Messages sent after 5pm will likely receive a reply the following day.

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 Student Illness or Injury’ form, available online, or a letter from your Registrar’s office). Please consult your college Registrar if you are having difficulties that prevent you from completing 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, 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>. Your College can also be an important source of support, and if there is anything I can do, please let me know. You are not obligated to disclose anything to instructors.

The Course Website:

Once you have logged in to Quercus (<https://q.utoronto.ca>), you’ll find a link to GGR 360. The 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 to this address. Forwarding your utoronto.ca e-mail to an external account (Gmail, Outlook, etc.) is not recommended, since in some cases messages sent to these accounts are filtered as junk mail.