IDS 2935: [Cultures of Landscapes in the American South] Quest 1: Identities

I. General Information

Class Meetings

- Spring 2025
- In-person, 132 students
- M/W Period 5 (11:45 a.m. 12:35 p.m. EST), F discussion sections

Instructor

- Nicholas Serrano, Ph.D.
- Antevy Hall 430
- Mondays 1:00-3:00 p.m.
- <u>nicholas.serrano@ufl.edu</u>

Teaching Assistant(s)

- Matthew Sinclair
- TBD

- TBD
- <u>sinclairm@ufl.edu</u>
- Jacob Ville
- TBD
- TBD
- <u>villejacob@ufl.edu</u>

Course Description

Paying attention to the South—its past, its dance, its present, its threatening future, and most of all how it moves the rest of the country about—allows us to understand much more about our nation, and about how our people, land, and commerce work in relation to one another, often cruelly, and about how our tastes and ways flow from our habits. --Imani Perry, South to America (2022)

Landscapes are physical places created by humans; they have distinct spatial patterns, settlement practices, and social routines set in specific geographical conditions. Landscape is also a way of seeing and understanding physical spaces through history and culture. American anthropologist James Deetz

once noted that landscape is "the highest level of mediation between the natural and the cultural, against which all other mediating material culture is projected."¹

The American South is a palimpsest of people, ideas, beliefs, and practices in a unique geographic region. This course investigates cultures of landscapes to deepen and problematize our understanding of the American South. How do landscapes help us understand the culture of the South? How have Southerners created the world around them and become who they are today. Can landscape help us understand the experience and meaning of the South?

This course will employ an interdisciplinary approach to exploring the history, evolution, and present landscape of Southern culture. We will look at how Indigenous people live with landscape, how Southern authors employ landscapes as settings for tragic narratives, how landscape serves as a stage for performing race, how fruits of the land craft distinct regional cuisines, and how landscapes function as carries of cultural memory. Using principles and methods of critical geography, visual and material culture, and vernacular architecture, we will investigate the physical and metaphorical landscape of the South, exploring how landscape has shaped culture and defined the South as a region.

Essential Question: How do landscapes mediate culture, frame everyday life, and shape identities in the American South?

Quest and General Education Credit

- Quest 1
- Humanities
- Writing Requirement (WR) 2000 words

Humanities courses provide instruction in the history, key themes, principles, terminology, and theory or methodologies used within a humanities discipline or the humanities in general. Students will learn to identify and to analyze the key elements, biases and influences that shape thought. These courses emphasize clear and effective analysis and approach issues and problems from multiple perspectives.

This course accomplishes the <u>Quest</u> and <u>General Education</u> objectives of the subject areas listed above. A minimum grade of C is required for Quest and General Education credit. Courses intended to satisfy Quest and General Education requirements cannot be taken S-U.

Required Readings and Works

- Charles Reagan Wilson, *The American South: A Very Short Introduction*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2021.
- Gerald Graff and Cathy Birkenstein, *They Say / I Say: The Moves that Matter in Academic Writing*, Sixth Edition. W.W. Norton, 2024.

All other required readings will be available in Canvas. Materials and Supplies Fees: n/a

¹ James Deetz, "Prologue—Landscapes as Cultural Statements," in *Earth Patterns: Essays in Landscape Archaeology*, ed. William M. Kelso and Rachel Most (Charlottesville, UVA Press, 1990), 1-4.

II. Graded Work

Description of Graded Work

Participation (30% of final grade)

Students will regularly prepare material to share during discussion sections based on weekly prompts noted in the schedule. Consistent informed, thoughtful, and considerate class participation during discussion sections is expected and will be evaluated using the rubric below. The teaching assistants will inform you of your participation grade to date on week 7 and will schedule a conference if you are earning below 70% of the possible points. If you have personal issues that prohibit you from joining freely in class discussion, e.g., shyness, language barriers, etc., see the instructor as soon as possible to discuss alternative modes of participation.

Discussion Board Postings (20% of the final grade)

Each week by 5:00pm the day before discussion sections, one third of the class will be required to write an online discussion board post via canvas. Class members will be divided into three groups, and we will cycle through weekly discussion posts four times over the course of the semester. Each group (and thus each student) will make 4 discussion posts over the course of the semester. Discussion posts must be a minimum of 200 words, and they should not exceed 400 words. Posts must critically engage with some aspect of the required readings, and they must end with a question posed to the class. A document identifying each student's group affiliation as well as a schedule will be posted on Canvas. Discussion posts will be graded on the following scale: 0 points for failure to post a discussion of at least 200 words; 85 points for a 200-400 word post that presents cursory engagement with the required text(s); 100 points for a 200-400 word post that shows serious engagement with the required text(s). Late posts will be accepted only until 10pm on the day they are due, and will receive 50 points.

Reflection Essays (30% of final grade)

Students will write three short reflection essays (750-words each) for this course. Detailed instructions and prompts will be posted on Canvas. Reflection essays will be submitted via a canvas assignment link and are due the same day as your discussion section.

Landscape Analysis Paper (20% of final grade, WR)

Students will write a 2,000-word final, thesis-driven analytical essay applying the methods of interpretation we cover in class to a specific landscape. Full details will be posted on Canvas. Papers will be submitted via a canvas assignment link. This paper counts towards the writing requirement.

Note: Attendance will be taken daily and recorded in Canvas gradebook. You are allowed three unexcused for the semester, after which each absence that does not meet university criteria for "excused" will result in a two-point deduction from your final grade.

Grading Scale

For information on how UF assigns grade points, visit: <u>https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/grades-grading-policies/</u>

А	94 - 100%	С	74 – 76%
A-	90 – 93%	C-	70 – 73%
B+	87 – 89%	D+	67 – 69%
В	84 – 86%	D	64 – 66%
B-	80 - 83%	D-	60 – 63%
C+	77 – 79%	E	<60

Grading Rubric(s)

Writing Assessment Rubric and Statements

	SATISFACTORY (Y)	UNSATISFACTORY (N)
CONTENT	Papers exhibit at least some evidence of ideas that respond to the topic with complexity, critically evaluating and synthesizing sources, and provide at least an adequate discussion with basic understanding of sources.	Papers either include a central idea(s) that is unclear or off-topic or provide only minimal or inadequate discussion of ideas. Papers may also lack sufficient or appropriate sources.
ORGANIZATION AND COHERENCE	Documents and paragraphs exhibit at least some identifiable structure for topics, including a clear thesis statement but may require readers to work to follow progression of ideas.	Documents and paragraphs lack clearly identifiable organization, may lack any coherent sense of logic in associating and organizing ideas, and may also lack transitions and coherence to guide the reader.
ARGUMENT AND SUPPORT	Documents use persuasive and confident presentation of ideas, strongly supported with evidence. At the weak end of the Satisfactory range, documents may provide only generalized discussion of ideas or may provide adequate discussion but rely on weak support for arguments.	Documents make only weak generalizations, providing little or no support, as in summaries or narratives that fail to provide critical analysis.
STYLE	Documents use a writing style with word choice appropriate to the context, genre, and discipline. Sentences should display complexity and logical sentence structure. At a minimum, documents will display a less precise use of vocabulary and an uneven use of sentence structure or a writing style that occasionally veers away from word choice or tone appropriate to the context, genre, and discipline.	Documents rely on word usage that is inappropriate for the context, genre, or discipline. Sentences may be overly long or short with awkward construction. Documents may also use words incorrectly.
MECHANICS	Papers will feature correct or error-free presentation of ideas. At the weak end of the Satisfactory range, papers may contain some spelling, punctuation, or grammatical errors that remain unobtrusive so they do not muddy the paper's argument or points.	Papers contain so many mechanical or grammatical errors that they impede the reader's understanding or severely undermine the writer's credibility.

- The Writing Requirement (WR) ensures students both maintain their fluency in writing and use writing as a tool to facilitate learning.
- The instructor will evaluate and provide feedback before the end of the course on all of the student's written assignments with respect to grammar, punctuation, clarity, coherence, and organization.
- WR course grades have two components. To receive writing requirement credit, a student must receive a grade of C or higher and a satisfactory completion of the writing component of the course.

	Excellent (8 points)	Good (7 points)	Average (6 points)	Insufficient (5 points)	Unsatisfactory (4-0 points)
Knowledgeable: Shows evidence of having done the assigned work.					
Thoughtful: Evaluates carefully issues raised in assigned work.					
Considerate: Takes the perspective of others into account and listens attentively.					

Participation Rubric

III. Annotated Weekly Schedule

Week	Topics, Homework, and Assignments	
Week 1 Jan. 13 th	 Topic: Introduction to Cultural Landscape Study Summary: This week will introduce students to cultural landscapes, provide a brief background to material culture study, and provide a general framework for the semester moving forward. Required Readings/Works: Graff and Birkenstein, "Introduction: Entering the Conversation," pgs. 1-31; Pierce Lewis, "Axioms for Reading the Landscape: Some Guides to the American Scene," in <i>The Interpretation of Ordinary Landscapes</i>, ed. D.W. Meinig (NYC, Oxford University Press, 1979), 12-32. Discussion: No Discussion Section this week. 	
Week 2 Jan 20 th	 Topic: Introduction to the American South Note: No Class Monday January 20th Summary: This week Readings: Wilson, "Introduction," pgs. 1-6; Graff and Birkenstein, "Yes / No / Ok, But: Three Was to Respond" and "I Take Your Point: Entering Class Discussions," pgs. 59-73 and 188-192; 	

Week	Topics, Homework, and Assignments		
	Discussion: Introductions.		
Week 3 Jan. 27 th	 Topic: Cotton Kingdom (Plantation Landscapes) Summary: This week will look at the landscape history and legacies of plantations, how they dominated early physical and economic development of the region, and the lasting racial legacies this history has imprinted on the cultural landscape. Required Readings/Works: Wilson, "Chapter 2: Section to nation," pgs.22-37; Dell Upton, "White and Black Landscapes in Eighteenth-Century Virginia," <i>Places Journal</i> 2, no.2 (1984): 59–72. Discussion: Meanings of the South discussion. 		
Week 4 Jan. 27 th .	 Topic: Antebellum Urban Landscapes Summary: This week will look at antebellum cities and towns to understand the early urban geography of the region with a particular focus on Richmond, Charleston, and Savannah. We will consider the difference between urban and rural culture historically and how this continues to inform cultural and social identities in the present day. Required Readings/Works: Holly Markovitz Goldstein, "St. Augustine's Slave Market: A Visual History," Southern Spaces (28-September-2012) (https://southernspaces.org/2012/st-augustines-slave-market-visual-history/); Assignment: Visit the Matheson History Museum and complete reflection essay. 		
Week 5 Feb. 3 rd	 Topic: Landscape of Jim Crow Summary: This week will cover the evolution of race relations from Reconstruction through the Civil Rights movement as played out in the landscapes of everyday life. We will consider how everyday landscapes functioned as a stage for enacting and performing racial identities, and how segregation set the stage for contemporary understandings of urban neglect in the popular imagination. Required Readings/Works: Wilson, "Chapter 3: Tradition and modernization," pgs.38-54; Steven Hoelscher, "Making Place, Making Race: Performances of Whiteness in the Jim Crow South." Annals of the Association of American Geographers 93, no.3 (2003): 657-686; Further Reading: Grace Elizabeth Hale, "For Colored' and 'For White': Segregating Consumption in the South," in Jumpin' Jim Crow: Southern Politics from Civil War to Civil Rights, ed. Jane Dailey, Glenda Elizabeth Gilmore, and Bryant Simon (Princeton University Press, 2000), 162-182. Discussion: Boundaries and edges. 		
Week 7 Feb. 10 th	 Topic: Black Geographies Summary: This week will focus on the landscape histories of African Americans in the American South. Although African Americans are a part of every week throughout the semester, this week will focus on our evolving knowledge of Black Geographies to reconsider past class discussions and frame future considerations throughout the semester. Required Readings/Works: Boone, "Notes Toward a History of Black Landscape Architecture," <i>Places Journal</i>, October 2020. Accessed 25 Jun 		

Week	Topics, Homework, and Assignments		
	 2023. <u>https://doi.org/10.22269/201028</u>; hooks, bell. 1990. "Homeplace: A Site of Resistance." In <i>Yearning: Race, Gender, and Cultural Politics</i>. Boston, MA: South End Press, 41 – 49; Lizzie Presser, "The Dispossessed," <i>The New Yorker</i>, 22-July-2019, pgs.29-35.; Discussion: Homeplace discussion. 		
Week 8 Feb. 17 th	 Topic: New South Landscapes Summary: This week will look at the development of ideas of the "New South" in the 1950's and 60's with particular focus on Atlanta and the Research Triangle Park. We will consider how "the city too busy to hate" and research "parks" were based in particular geographic notions, and how they contrasted with the realities of contemporaneous racial confrontations. Required Readings/Works: TBA. 		
Week 9 Feb. 24 th	 Topic: Latino South Summary: This week we will look at the unique contributions of Latinos to the contemporary South Required Readings/Works: TBA. Discussion: Community discussion. 		
Week 10 March 3 rd	 Topic: Southern Gardens Summary: This week will look at the considerable history of gardens and tradition of gardening in the American South. We will particularly consider how gardens framed an Edenic narrative of the South and the rise of gardening culture in the 20th century. Required Readings/Works: Catherin Howett, "Grace and Modest Majesties: Landscape and Garden Traditions of the American South," in <i>Keeping Eden: A History of Gardening in America</i> (Bulfinch Press, 1992): 81-95; Anne Raver, "In Georgia's Swept Yards, a Dying Tradition," <i>The New York Times</i>, 8-August-1993, pgs. 1,24; Richard Westmacott, "The Gardens and Yards of African-Americans in the Rural South," <i>Magnolia</i> 8, no.4 (1992): 1, 3-8; 		
Week 11 March 10 th	 Topic: Foodscapes of the South Summary: This week will borrow from the evolving body of work in Food Studies to look at the relationship between landscape, cuisine, and cultural identity. We will begin with a brief survey of landscape-based culinary traditions before considering the economic and environmental difficulties facing contemporary local farmers, fishermen, and chefs. Required Readings/Works: Wilson, "Chapter 8: Southern Tastes," pgs.114-126; Bernard L. Herman, "Drum Head Stew: The Power and Poetry of Terroir, Southern Cultures 15, no.4 (Winter 2009): 36-49; Discussion: Bring a recipe from the online sources provided through Canvas to your discussion section. The recipe should remind you of home (if you are a southerner) or makes you think of the South (if you are not). Be prepared to discuss. 		

Week	Topics, Homework, and Assignments
Week 10 March 17 th	Note: No class (Spring Break)
Week 11 March 24 th	 Topic: Landscapes of Memory Summary: This week will look at the history of war memorials in southern townscapes to contextualize recent debates on the place of Confederate monuments in the contemporary landscape. We will consider the role of physical artifacts in the process of memorialization and how differing historical narratives inform contemporary cultural identities in the South. Required Readings/Works: Clint Smith, "The War on Nostalgia," <i>The Atlantic</i>, June 2021, 52-61; Dell Upton, "Confederate Monuments and Civic Values in the Wake of Charlottesville." SAH Blog, September 13th, 2017 (https://www.sah.org/publications-and-research/sah-blog/blog-detail/sah-blog/2017/09/13/confederate-monuments-and-civic-values-in-the-wake-of-charlottesville); Campbell Robertson, "Monument Debate Spurs Call for a Reckoning in the South," <i>New York Times</i> 19-August-2017, Section A Page 1.
Week 12 March 31 st	Note: No Class (LAA Field Trip Week)
Week 13 April 7 th	 Topic: Landscapes of History Summary: This week will look at how the South played a dominant role in the rise of historic preservation in America. We will look at case studies in Mount Vernon, Colonial Williamsburg, the French Quarter of New Orleans, and St. Augustine to consider the cultural complexity and authenticity of historic preservation practice and how preserving landscapes works to promote select cultural identities. Required Readings/Works: Daniel Bluestone, "Tobacco Row: Heritage, Environment, and Adaptive Reuse in Richmond, Virginia," Change Over Time 2, no.2, (Fall 2012): 132-154. Discussion: Historic sites discussions.
Week 14 April 14 th	 Topic: Landscapes of Justice Summary: This week will look at the 20th century history of environmental racism and justice in the American South through case studies of Warren County, N.C., and Cancer Alley in Louisiana. We will consider the landscape legacies of pollution and the intractable nature of contemporary solutions. Required Readings/Works: Anya Groner, "One Oppressive Economy Begets Another." <i>The Atlantic</i> 7-May-2021; Linda Villarosa, "The Refinery Next Door." <i>The New York Times Magazine</i> 28-July-2020 p.28. Assignment: Environmental Justice case study discussion.
Week 15 April 21 st	 Topic: Course Wrap-up and Review. Summary: This short week will function as a review of course themes and wrap-up for the semester Required Readings/Works: n/a Discussion: Landscape Analysis papers due.

IV. Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs)

At the end of this course, students will be expected to have achieved the <u>Quest</u> and <u>General Education</u> learning outcomes as follows:

Content: Students demonstrate competence in the terminology, concepts, theories and methodologies used within the discipline(s).

- Identify, describe, and explain the different methodological approaches scholars have taken to understand landscapes through history, critical geography, visual and material culture, and vernacular architecture (Quest 1, H). **Assessments**: Discussion Board postings, Discussion Section participation, Landscape Analysis paper.
- Identify, describe, and explain cultural landscapes including their historical contexts and lasting effects today. (Quest 1, H). **Assessments**: Discussion Board postings, Discussion Section participation, Reflection Essays.
- Identify, describe, and explain how landscapes have and continue to mediate culture and human social relationships in the American South. (Quest 1, H, D). **Assessments**: Discussion Board postings, Discussion Section participation, Reflection Essays.

Critical Thinking: Students carefully and logically analyze information from multiple perspectives and develop reasoned solutions to problems within the discipline(s).

- Evaluate select historical, geographical, literary, gastronomical, and artistic works that contributed to cultural identities in the American South (Quest 1, H). **Assessments**: Discussion Board postings, Reflection essays (Matheson Museum), Landscape Analysis paper.
- Analyze landscapes, situate them in historical and cultural context, and develop critical interpretations of their significance to South identities. (Quest 1, H). Assessments: Reflection essays, Landscape Analysis paper.

Communication: Students communicate knowledge, ideas and reasoning clearly and effectively in written and oral forms appropriate to the discipline(s).

- Develop and present in writing clear and effective responses to essential questions about landscape and culture based on their analysis of primary sources (Quest 1, H). Assessments: Reflections Essays, Landscape Analysis Paper.
- Communicate orally and in writing the relationship between landscape and culture in the American South both historically and in present everyday life. (Quest 1, H). Assessments: Discussion participation, Reflection Essays.

Connection: Students connect course content with meaningful critical reflection on their intellectual, personal, and professional development at UF and beyond.

- Connect course themes like cultural history and the experience of place to their own intellectual, personal, and professional development at UF and beyond (Quest 1). Assessments: Reflection Essays, Discussion participation.
- Reflect on how landscapes mediated culture and social relationships unique to the American South, and how this informs various identities of the South today. (Quest 1). Assessments: Reflection essays, Discussion participation.

V. Quest Learning Experiences

1. Details of Experiential Learning Component

Students will visit the Matheson History Museum in Gainesville to explore the experiential presentation of history and culture. They will write a 750-word reflection essay on their visit answering: What is the museum trying to do? What are its methods? What assumptions are being made in the presentation? Is it successful? What problems do you see in its approach?

2. Details of Self-Reflection Component

Students will write two 750-word reflection essays throughout the course of the semester that tasks them to reflect on the readings and discussion section conversation around the landscapes of Jim Crow and the place of Confederate Monuments in the contemporary landscape. See the "Graded Work" and "Detailed Schedule" sections for more information.

VI. Required Policies

Attendance Policy

Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university policies that can be found at: <u>https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx</u>

Attendance will be taken daily and recorded in Canvas gradebook. You are allowed three unexcused for the semester, after which each absence that does not meet university criteria for "excused" will result in a two point deduction from your final grade.

Students Requiring Accommodation

Students with disabilities who experience learning barriers and would like to request academic accommodations should connect with the disability Resource Center by visiting https://disability.ufl.edu/students/get-started/. It is important for students to share their accommodation letter with their instructor and discuss their access needs, as early as possible in the semester.

UF Evaluations Process

Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available at https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens, and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or

via <u>https://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/</u>. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at <u>https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/</u>.

University Honesty Policy

UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states, "We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: "On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment." The Honor Code

(<u>https://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/</u>) specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. Furthermore, you are obligated to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor or TAs in this class.

Counseling and Wellness Center

Contact information for the Counseling and Wellness Center: <u>http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/</u>, 392-1575; and the University Police Department: 392-1111 or 9-1-1 for emergencies.

The Writing Studio

The writing studio is committed to helping University of Florida students meet their academic and professional goals by becoming better writers. Visit the writing studio online at http://writing.ufl.edu/writing-studio/ or in 2215 Turlington Hall for one-on-one consultations and workshops.

In-Class Recordings

Students are allowed to record video or audio of class lectures. However, the purposes for which these recordings may be used are strictly controlled. The only allowable purposes are (1) for personal educational use, (2) in connection with a complaint to the university, or (3) as evidence in, or in preparation for, a criminal or civil proceeding. All other purposes are prohibited. Specifically, students may not publish recorded lectures without the written consent of the instructor.

A "class lecture" is an educational presentation intended to inform or teach enrolled students about a particular subject, including any instructor-led discussions that form part of the presentation, and delivered by any instructor hired or appointed by the University, or by a guest instructor, as part of a University of Florida course. A class lecture does not include lab sessions, student presentations, clinical presentations such as patient history, academic exercises involving solely student participation, assessments (quizzes, tests, exams), field trips, private conversations between students in the class or between a student and the faculty or lecturer during a class session.

Publication without permission of the instructor is prohibited. To "publish" means to share, transmit, circulate, distribute, or provide access to a recording, regardless of format or medium, to another person (or persons), including but not limited to another student within the same class section. Additionally, a recording, or transcript of a recording, is considered published if it is posted on or uploaded to, in whole or in part, any media platform, including but not limited to social media, book, magazine, newspaper, leaflet, or third party note/tutoring services. A student who publishes a recording without written consent may be subject to a civil cause of action instituted by a person injured by the

publication and/or discipline under UF Regulation 4.040 Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code.

V. Sources

Organizations

- <u>Center for the Study of the American South</u> (UNC)
- <u>Center for the Study of Southern Culture</u> (Ole Miss)
- Institute for Southern Studies
- Institute for Southern Studies (USC)

Journals

- Southern Culture
- Journal of Southern History
- <u>Study of the South</u>
- Oxford American
- <u>Southern Spaces</u>
- The Bitter Southerner