

General Information:

Quest 1 Theme: Nature and Culture

General Education: Humanities, Writing (2,000 words), and International

Material and Supplies Fees: None

Professor:

Timothy Murtha, PhD

Office Hours: See Canvas

Email: tmurtha@ufl.edu

Teaching Assistant:

Ms. LuWei Wang (TA)

Office Hours: See Canvas

Email: weiwei88117@ufl.edu

Meeting Times:

Please check your registration for your discussion section.

Lectures: T/TH Period 3

Discussion: F Periods 3, 4, & 5

Please note: Course resources, information, announcements, updates, assignments, and discussions are available through the course canvas site (www.elearning.ufl.edu).

Course Description

This interdisciplinary Quest1 course explores our place in the natural world through the lens of the first cities and first landscapes of the Americas. Relying on methods of the humanities and humanistic anthropology, the course emphasizes two perspectives on landscape as narrative. First, our cities and landscapes are our unintentional cultural and natural autobiography, reflecting history and agency. Second, how we perceive, portray, design, and represent cities and landscape reflects our values and beliefs.

Using cities and their landscape settings in the Americas before 1492 as our canvas, we will address core questions about culture and nature in this Quest 1 course. The course is explicitly focused on conceptions of nature, human interventions in the landscape, and how form, representations, and interpretations of cities and landscapes are used to express values like conservation, sustainability, and resilience. This is not a survey of the past or representations of the past, but a course designed to discuss a variety of topics, including, sustainability, ecological design, resilience, environmental degradation, resource extraction, deforestation, environmental justice, and especially urbanization through the lens of the past. Weekly topics and readings are organized by key cultural and natural themes.

Student Learning Outcomes

1. Define, describe, and explain the concepts of “natural”, “urban”, “city”, and “landscape” as cultural and international concepts (Content SLOs for Gen Ed H, Gen Ed N, and Quest 1).
2. Identify, describe, and explain how the humanities and humanistic inquiry can help in navigating ideas about the natural and cultural world and their interactions (Content SLOs for Gen Ed H and Quest 1).
3. Identify ways in which city form, design, and landscape interventions reflect cross cultural values and natural conditions (Content SLOs for Gen Ed H and Gen Ed N).
4. Identify traditions and frameworks of humanistic inquiry into the cultural and natural world, especially as related to design and planning (Critical Thinking SLO for Gen Ed H).
5. Analyze and evaluate cultural considerations surrounding concepts such as sustainability and resilience (including ethics of resource use, power and authority, and environmental justice) (Critical Thinking SLOs for Gen Ed H).
6. Analyze, evaluate, and respond to questions about the cultural and natural context of early cities and landscapes and their place in the contemporary world (Content SLOs for Gen Ed N; Critical Thinking and Communication SLOs for Gen Ed H, Gen Ed N, and Quest 1).

7. Develop and respond to core questions about the human experience as it relates to international, relativistic cultural and natural perceptions and values (Critical Thinking and Communication SLOs for Gen Ed H, Gen Ed N, and Quest 1).
8. Develop and present ideas about culture and nature connecting the past to the contemporary world through writing and visual presentation (Critical Thinking and Communication SLOs for Gen Ed H and Gen Ed N).

Required Texts

All of the media for the course, including videos, readings and audio recordings are available through our Canvas course (see www.elearning.ufl.edu) and some materials will also be available through the UF Libraries Course Reserves. Please let me know if you have any problems fully accessing and using the course canvas site.

Recommended Content Related Books:

- Håkansson, N. T., & Widgren, M. (2016). *Landesque capital: The historical ecology of enduring landscape modifications*. London: Routledge.
- Mann, Charles C. 2006. *1491 (Second Edition): New Revelations of the Americas Before Columbus*. New York: Random House US. <http://public.eblib.com/choice/publicfullrecord.aspx?p=5336514>.
- Marcus, Joyce and Jeremy A. Sabloff 2008. *The Ancient City: New Perspectives on Urbanism in the Old and New World*. School for Advanced Research, Santa Fe, New Mexico.
- Smith, Monica L. 2003. *The Social Construction of Ancient Cities*. Smithsonian Institution, Washington D.C.
- Recommended Writing Guide and Information about Citations
- Strunk, William, and Elwyn B. White. 2014. *The Elements of Style*. Pearson, Boston MA.
- Citation Management Guide from UF Libraries: <http://guides.uflib.ufl.edu/citationsoftware>

Grades, Grading Distribution, and Grade Points

Grades for the course will be calculated through evaluation of the following assignments:

1.	Discussion and reflection notes:	30%
2.	City and Landscape Annotated Bibliography:	10%
3.	City and Landscape Paper:	25%
4.	Interim Exam (online):	15%
5.	Final Exam (online):	15%
6.	Reflection Photo and Essay:	5%
Total:		100%

Final Grades will be assigned based on the following chart:

A	93-100	4.00	C	73-77	2.00
A-	90-93	3.67	C-	70-73	1.67
B+	87-90	3.33	D+	67-70	1.33
B	83-87	3.00	D	63-67	1.00
B-	80-83	2.67	D-	60-63	0.67
C+	77-80	2.33	E	0-60	0.00

Grade points are assigned based on University of Florida policy:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>

Assignments

PLEASE NOTE: Assignments 2 and 3 listed below must be completed to fulfill the 2000 word Writing Requirement.

1. Themed weekly discussion and reflection notes: Using the formatted documented provided on our canvas site students will submit discussion questions and reflection statements based on the weekly readings and media assigned. These assignments are due each week by 5:00pm on Mondays beginning week 2.
SLOs 1,2,3,4,5,&6
2. Pre-Columbian City and Landscape Paper Annotated Bibliography: In this assignment you will identify and correctly cite academic papers and books that you will use to support your paper (assignment 3). This assignment contributes to Writing Requirement.
SLOs 1,2,3,&7

3. Pre-Columbian City and Landscape Paper (2000 to 2500 words): In this paper you will select, research, and describe a Pre-Columbian city and its associated landscape context. Additional guidelines for the paper are described in detail on our canvas site (contributes to Writing Requirement).
SLOs 1,2,3,&7
4. Interim Exam: Each student will prepare and submit a interim exam via canvas outside of course meeting times. The exam asks students to define key concepts and respond to key themes of the course through written responses, for example: 1) Defining a city, urbanism, and urbanization; 2) The sustainable city; 3) Resilience and the city; and, 4) Ecological urbanism.
SLOs 4,5,6,&8
5. Final Exam: Each student will prepare and submit a final exam due by the date published in the UFL course registry. The final exam asks students to define key concepts and respond to key themes of the course through written responses, for example: 1) Defining a city, urbanism, and urbanization; 2) The sustainable city; 3) Resilience and the city; and, 4) Ecological urbanism.
SLOs 4,5,6,&8
6. Reflection Photo and Essay: After week 10, all students must visit the Florida Museum of Natural History and spend time in the south Florida environment and people exhibit to fulfill the experiential element of the course. Spend time looking at the details of the exhibits, reading the panels, and the artifacts that are on display. Reflecting on the core questions posed in class students must submit a single photo and short essay (500 words) discussing how culture and nature are portrayed and perceived in parts of the exhibit or the exhibit as a whole. Students should reflect on whether or how the exhibit makes them consider their own place in the natural world. Additional guidelines for the essay are described on our canvas site. PLEASE NOTE: This assignment does NOT contribute to the 2,000 word Writing Requirement.
SLOs 7&8

***Substitutions for visits to the museum, such as site visits to Shell Mound, St. Augustine, or other museums can be made, but must be approved by the end week 10.

UF Student Honor Code, Original Work, and Plagiarism

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 (<https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/policies/student-honor-code-student-conduct-code/>) 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 in this course.

Original thought, writing, and discussion is critical for core questions about our place in the natural world and for meaningful discussions about culture and nature. Please be thoughtful and meticulous in your citations. This video offers useful information for how to avoid plagiarism and cite appropriately.

<https://mediasite.video.ufl.edu/Mediasite/Play/adaa44500eaf460a84f238e6b9a558f9>

If you have any questions, please ask.

Plagiarism on any assignment will result in a 0 for that assignment. A second incident of plagiarism will result in a failing grade (E) for the course.

Attendance

Attendance will be recorded for each discussion section and throughout the semester during lectures. Each absence or late arrival beyond 5 across the entire semester will result in a deduction of 5 points from the final grade. For example, a student with a final grade of 86 (with 4 unexcused absences and 3 late arrivals) will receive a 76 for the course.

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: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>

Accommodation for Students

Students with disabilities requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/) by providing appropriate documentation. Once registered, students will receive an accommodation letter which must be presented to the instructor when requesting accommodation. Students with disabilities should follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester.

Student Course Evaluation

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

IMPORTANT STUDENT WELLNESS RESOURCES

U Matter, We Care:

If you or a friend is in distress, please contact umatter@ufl.edu or 352 392-1575 so that a team member can reach out to the student.

Counseling and Wellness Center:

<https://counseling.ufl.edu/>, 392-1575; and the University Police Department:392-1111 or 9-1-1 for emergencies.

Sexual Assault Recovery Services (SARS)

Student Health Care Center, 392-1161. University Police Department, 392-1111 (or 9-1-1 for emergencies).

<http://www.police.ufl.edu/>

Please know that I will help you find the resources we can offer here at the University of Florida with confidentiality and discretion.

IMPORTANT ACADEMIC RESOURCES

E-learning technical support, 352-392-4357 (select option 2) or e-mail to Learning-support@ufl.edu.

<https://lss.at.ufl.edu/help.shtml>.

Career Connections Center, Reitz Union, 392-1601. Career assistance and counseling. <https://career.ufl.edu/>

Library Support, <http://cms.uflib.ufl.edu/ask>. Various ways to receive assistance with respect to using the libraries or finding resources.

Teaching Center, Broward Hall, 392-2010 or 392-6420. General study skills and tutoring. <http://teachingcenter.ufl.edu/>

Writing Studio, 2215 Turlington, 846-1138. Help brainstorming, formatting, and writing papers.

<http://writing.ufl.edu/writing-studio/>

COURSE CALENDAR

(SUBJECT TO CHANGE...SEE EACH MODULE FOR MORE INFORMATION):

January 9: Introduction to the course: Read the syllabus, review the course material, ask questions, introduce yourself, meet fellow students, meet your professor and teaching assistants.

THE CITY (LA CIUDAD)

Week 1 Introduction to the course. Why Design?

Summary: Our course is focused on design and planning of cities and settlements, especially with a focus on ecological urbanism. We use the deep past as a means to talk about why some cities are sustainable and what it means to be resilient.

Readings: Syllabus

Newspaper: Quartz Reading

Media: None

Assignments: Discussion and reflection notes – Design @ Work

Week 2 What is a city? What is urbanism?

Summary: This week we start the course by exploring some basic (but honestly complicated) definitions of cities. One key aim is to begin to identify our own assumptions about cities, especially how cities, urban design, and planning relate to the natural world. Some questions we'll ask are: Are cities natural? and What is nature's place in cities?

Readings: Childe 1950; Smith, M.E. 2007

Newspaper: <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/09/27/science/maya-ruins-lidar.html><https://news.nationalgeographic.com/2018/02/maya-laser-lidar-guatemala-pacunam/>

Media: None

Assignments: Discussion and reflection notes – Poem or Song for the City

Week 3 Urbanism as a way of life

Summary: Living in an era with the majority of humans living in cities, it is sometimes challenging to think about how urbanism influences our lives... even if we don't live in a city. This week we'll introduce ideas about urban life. We'll ask questions, such as: how do cities influence our identity? How do we interact and express ourselves in cities in ways that are unique to cities?

Readings: Smith 2003a, Ashmore 2002

Newspaper: None

Media: <http://www.bu.edu/research/articles/archaeology-teotihuacan-mexico/>

Assignments: Discussion and reflection notes – Photo of urban life

Week 4 Low Density vs. High Density/Lowlands vs. Highlands

Summary: As cities become larger and megalopoleis emerge, should we question how we design and shape our settlements? Is there an inevitability to urbanization? Are vertical cities and high-density populations our global future? Are there alternative patterns of urbanization that we can creatively explore? While the following is a theme that filters through the entire semester, for the first time this week we will ask how our perceptions of cities today, influence our interpretations and representations of past cities?

Readings: Chase and Chase 2016; Murtha 2017

Newspaper: <https://www.nytimes.com/1993/01/05/science/mayans-had-a-middle-class-too.html> ;
<https://www.nytimes.com/2000/12/19/science/in-maya-ruins-scholars-see-evidence-of-urban-sprawl.html>

Media: None

Assignments: Discussion and reflection notes – Vertical or Horizontal

Week 5 Power and the City

Summary: Through built form, monumental architecture, public art, and public works, expressions of power and authority are common in cities. In this section we explore how power and authority are visible in cities? We end our section on la ciudad (the city) with discussions about expressions of power over nature in cities.

Readings: Yoffee 2005; Hutson et al. 2008; Magnoni et. al 2012.

Newspaper: <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/01/03/world/americas/untangling-an-accounting-tool-and-an-ancient-incan-mystery.html>
Media: <https://youtu.be/AmPyz1kCbOw>
Assignments: Discussion and reflection notes – Top Down or Bottom Up....MAP YOUR CITY!

Week 6 Diversity and the City

Summary: In our early explorations of city definitions (week 1) and urbanism as a way of life (week 2), we briefly introduced the idea of diversity and cities. This week we will explore diversity within cities, wrestling with what types of diversity we can identify and just how diversity influences identity and worldview. One key topic we'll discuss is how perceptions of natural diversity compare or contrast to conceptualizations and interpretations of diversity in cities.

Readings: Hirth 2008; Janusek and Blom 2006; Pyburn 2008

Newspaper: <http://hrf.yale.edu/featured-culture-aztecs-cosmology-and-ancient-rituals-in-ehraf/>

Media: None

Assignments: Discussion and reflection notes – Diversity in Cities

WATER (AGUA)

Week 7 Water, Ideas, and Values

Summary: Building on discussions of power, we begin this section on water by examining how water and landscape intersect. This is an opportunity to examine alternative worldviews centered on water. We will critically examine how the control of water is described and discussed in representations and interpretations of the past.

Readings: Scarborough 2003a

Newspaper: <https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2016/04/160408132503.htm>

Media: https://youtu.be/Z04hCNe_OoA

Assignments: Discussion and reflection notes – Clean Water

Week 8 Rain and Reservoirs

Summary: Dealing with too little or too much rain is a persistent theme throughout human history. How was rain captured and managed in the past? How were landscapes designed to manage rainfall?

Readings: Scarborough et al. 2012; Erickson 2019

Newspaper: <https://green.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/07/16/a-mayan-water-system-with-lessons-for-today/>
<https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2010/05/100504155421.htm>

Media: None

Assignments: Discussion and reflection notes – Keep It

Week 9 Design, Drainage, and Irrigation

Summary: Maintaining, managing, and designing landscape systems to redirect the flow of water influences control over the natural world, power in society, and perceptions of authority. What are some of the diverse ways culture is shaped by designing (or redesigning) the flow of water?

Readings: Scarborough 2003b

Newspaper: None

Media: <http://landandwaterrevisited.blogspot.com>

Assignments: Discussion and reflection notes – Let It Go

LAND + LANDSCAPE (TIERRA)

Week 10 Land, Landscape, and Perception

Summary: The next five weeks are focused on reading landscapes as narratives through the lenses of land (la tierra) and forest (la selva). For decades, perceptions of cultural evolution were overly influenced by a lack of research and understanding about landscape ecology in the Americas, especially across the lowlands. What do we now know about the human dimensions of lowland ecology? What does that tell us about the relationships between nature and culture?

Readings: Erickson 2006; Mann 2006a; Ashmore 2009

Newspaper: <https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2002/03/1491/302445/>

Media: <https://video.nationalgeographic.com/video/travel-source/unesco-world-heritage-sites/00000164-3776-d915-a76e-b7fe043c0000>

Assignments: Discussion and reflection notes – City as Landscape

Week 11 Landscape Design and Landscapes Capital

Summary: How do perceptions of landscape change as we tinker, design, and transform our environment?

Readings: Clement et al 2015; Erickson 2010

Newspaper: <https://www.newscientist.com/article/dn27945-myth-of-pristine-amazon-rainforest-busted-as-old-cities-reappear/>

Media: None

Assignments: Discussion and reflection notes - Terraces; Reading Landscapes Paper

Week 12 Landscape Resilience and Sustainable Landscapes

Summary: How are modern concepts like resilience and sustainability relevant to representations and interpretations of the past?

Readings: Heckenberger et al 2003; Robinson et al. 2018

Newspaper: <https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2018/05/180517081817.htm>

Media: None

Assignments: Discussion and reflection notes – Sustainability vs. Resilience; Reflection Photo and Essay Open for Submission; Reading Landscape Paper Due.

FORESTS (LA SELVA)

Week 13 Forest and Fallow

Summary: Forests and fallow landscapes offer critical perceptive windows into temporality, worldview, and society? How were forests perceived and portrayed in past cities and landscapes? What is wild? What is natural?

Readings: Schele and Freidel 1990; Ashmore 2009

Newspaper: None

Media: None

Assignments: Discussion and reflection notes – Wild Cities

Week 14 A Place for Ruins

Summary: Is there a place for cycling of the built environment as we discussed for forests? How were ruins perceived, managed, and curated in the past?

Readings: Ashmore and Sabloff 2002; Stanton and Magnoni 2008

Newspaper: None

Media: <https://youtu.be/FS1PX3WwMgI>

Assignments: Discussion and reflection notes – Sacred Cities

FUTURE PAST (EL FUTURO PASADO)

Week 15 Climate Change, Disasters, and Past Landscapes

Summary: Turning our attention from the past, we spend the next two weeks dreaming and imagining the future through the creative lens of the past. What do the narratives we've explored tell us about the future? How can they influence design and planning? What is collapse?

Readings: Kennett et al. 2012;

Newspaper: <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/04/17/travel/mexico-city-volcanos-aztec.html> ;
<https://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2015/01/150127-maya-water-temple-drought-archaeology-science/>

<https://www.northwestern.edu/newscenter/stories/2007/02/apocalypto.html>

Media: <http://ihopenet.org/>

Assignments: Discussion and reflection notes – Landscapes of Vulnerability; Student Online Course Evaluation

Week 16 ONE LESSON FROM THE PAST

Assignments: REFLECTION ESSAY DUE

Quest 1 Description

Quest 1 courses are multidisciplinary explorations of truly challenging questions about the human condition that are not easy to answer, but also not easy to ignore: What makes life worth living? What makes a society a fair one? How do we manage conflicts? Who are we in relation to other people or to the natural world? To grapple with the kinds of open-ended and complex intellectual challenges they will face as critical, creative, and self-reflective adults navigating a complex and interconnected world, Quest 1 students use the humanities approaches present in the course to mine texts for evidence, create arguments, and articulate ideas.

Quest 1 Nature and Culture Description

In general, Q1 Nature and Culture courses address the following questions: Who are we in relation to the natural world? How have humans understood their role in the natural world and their responsibility to it? How do portrayals of nature reflect our values or self-understanding?

Nature and Culture courses consider the ways humans see themselves and their place in the natural world. Topics may include conceptions of nature; how representations of the natural world have been used to express important values; humans in contrast to animals; human interventions in the landscape and the values that guide such designs; development, sustainability, and conservation; ideas about humanity's place in relationship to paradise, divine creation, or sacred dimensions of the natural world; and nature as a site for physically or spiritually healthy or harmful experiences.

Quest 1 SLOs:

- Identify, describe, and explain the history, theories, and methodologies used to examine essential questions about the human condition within and across the arts and humanities disciplines incorporated into the course (Content).
- Analyze and evaluate essential questions about the human condition using established practices appropriate for the arts and humanities disciplines incorporated into the course (Critical Thinking).
- Connect course content with critical reflection on their intellectual, personal, and professional development at UF and beyond (Connection).
- Develop and present clear and effective responses to essential questions in oral and written forms as appropriate to the relevant humanities disciplines incorporated into the course (Communication).

Humanities Description

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.

Humanities SLOs

- Identify, describe, and explain the history, underlying theory and methodologies used in the course (Content).
- Identify and analyze key elements, biases and influences that shape thought within the subject area. Approach issues and problems within the discipline from multiple perspectives (Critical Thinking).
- Communicate knowledge, thoughts and reasoning clearly and effectively (Communication).

International Description

International courses promote the development of students' global and intercultural awareness. Students examine the cultural, economic, geographic, historical, political, and/or social experiences and processes that characterize the contemporary world, and thereby comprehend the trends, challenges, and opportunities that affect communities around the world. Students analyze and reflect on the ways in which cultural, economic, political, and/or social systems and beliefs mediate their own and other people's understanding of an increasingly connected world.

International SLOs

- Identify, describe, and explain the historical, cultural, economic, political, and/or social experiences and processes that characterize the contemporary world (Content).

- Analyze and reflect on the ways in which cultural, economic, political, and/or social systems and beliefs mediate understandings of an increasingly contemporary world (Critical Thinking).

Writing Description

The Writing Requirement (WR) ensures students both maintain their fluency in writing and use writing as a tool to facilitate learning. The writing course grade assigned by the instructor has two components: the writing component and a course grade. To receive writing credit a student must satisfactorily complete all the assigned written work and earn a minimum grade of C (2.0) for the course. It is possible to not meet the writing requirement and still earn a minimum grade of C in a class, so students should review their degree audit after receiving their grade to verify receipt of credit for the writing component.

Writing Evaluation

- This course carries 2000 words that count towards the UF Writing Requirement. You must turn in all written work counting towards the 2000 words in order to receive credit for those words.
- The instructor will evaluate and provide feedback on the student's written work with respect to content, organization and coherence, argument and support (when appropriate), style, clarity, grammar, punctuation, and other mechanics, using a published writing rubric (see attached).
- More specific rubrics and guidelines for individual assignments may be provided during the course of the semester.