

GEOG 407/507 American Landscape Field Course
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Pre-Session 2015 ~ May 18-June 6

“Landscape is neither something seen, nor a way of seeing, but rather the materialities and sensibilities with which we see.” – John Wylie

“I thought of making an island with the help of boats and barges, but in the end I would let the site determine what I would build.” – Robert Smithson

“So say we the artists, ‘Travelers, let us begin the serious business of re-enchanting the planet.’” – Helen and Newton Harrison

Course Description

In the spirit of experiential learning, and the geographic tradition of field learning, this course will explore both physical and cultural landscape through a field course that visits selected Western eco-art and land art sites, as well as other iconic sites in the Western landscape. The course will meet for three days on campus, then will hit the road for a 10-day field trip throughout the desert West, with four class meetings to wrap the course up upon return to Tucson. Throughout the course, we’ll explore questions of landscape, culture, and environment.

This course will meet on campus on the days of May 18-May 19, from 9:00 am – 11:50 am. On May 20, we will meet from 9:00 am – 11:50 am and also from 2 pm to 5 pm to pack for our trip. From May 21 through May 31, we will be on the road. This will be an immersive field experience and we will be traveling, camping, eating, and exploring sites together. We’ll be a community of learners. We will travel close to 2700 miles on a loop through Arizona-Utah-Nevada-California-Arizona. Be ready for an adventure! After returning to Tucson, we will have a day off before meeting June 2 through 5 from 9am to 11:50am.

Course Materials

The primary course materials for this course will be the sites that we visit on our road trip. We will also have a number of readings from a variety of sources (including scholarly and popular books, journals, websites, and other literature) to ground us in the landscape concept. These will be available on d2l. In addition, I will have a ‘traveling library’ with some key reference texts along with us on our trip. Students will also be expected to conduct research related to the sites they are assigned as ‘interpreters.’ Readings will be drawn from some of the following texts as well as from literature specific to the sites we visit. (You *do not* need to purchase any of these texts.)

Beardsley, J., & Grubb, N. (1989). *Earthworks and beyond: contemporary art in the landscape*. Abbeville Press.

Cresswell, T. (2015). *Place: an introduction*. Wiley-Blackwell.

Harrison Studio. *The Force Majeure Works: From 2007 to The Present and Beyond*

(studio pamphlet including “Manifesto for the 21st Century”)

Kwon, M. (2004). *One place after another: Site-specific art and locational identity*. MIT press.

Smithson, R. (1996). *Robert Smithson, the collected writings*. Univ of California Press.

Wylie, J. (2007). *Landscape (key ideas in geography series)*. Routledge.

Wyckoff, W. (2014). *How to Read the American West: A Field Guide*. University of Washington Press.

Course Objectives

Students will develop a sophisticated understanding of the landscape concept within geography and understand the diversity of methods that geographers, writers, artists, and others have used to study both the concept and actual physical landscapes. Through the immersive field course, students will gain first hand experience of some iconic sites in the Western landscape, and in particular those that blend art and environment. Students will trace the complex connections between these sites, landscape-shaping processes, and their own lives, and demonstrate this knowledge through a project that reflects their own interests.

Course Assignments

1. Site Interpretation

On the first class meeting, you will be assigned one or two of the sites we plan to visit and you will be the site’s “interpreter.” Your assignment will be to research the site’s history, resonance, and background. As we approach the site in the field course, you will lead discussion of the site to orient the class to what we will see and how it fits into our ongoing discussion of landscape, helping to provide context during and after our visit. You are also encouraged to provide questions or prompts to the group for the field journal.

2. Field Journal

You will be required to keep a field journal during the course. I (and your colleagues in the course) will provide prompts at various sites, but you will also be encouraged to use the journals to document your own experiences of the trip and how the sites interact with your own interests.

3. Final Project

Upon return from the field course, you will complete a course project. The form of that project is open to your interests and will be decided upon in consultation with the instructor: for example, it could be a traditional paper on one of the sites, a piece of creative writing or art, or a photography project. Students will present their final projects when we return to Tucson. Along with your final project, you will also be asked to turn in a one-page self evaluation and reflection on your experience in the field course.

Think about the course as a group study—we will be a community of learners exploring landscape, environment, and its representation. The nature of the field course makes

participation inherent and necessary. Accordingly, participation will count 35%, your field journal will count 30%, and your final project will count 35% for your grade.

Attendance Policy: As this is a pre-session course, each of the class meetings on campus is equivalent to a week of classes in a regular semester. Attendance is crucial, as we will be discussing landscape as well as the important logistics for the trip. More than one unexcused absence is grounds for failure of the course. If a student misses the first two classes, they will not be able to participate in the field course and will need to drop or receive a failing grade. For UA attendance policy, see [here](#).

Course Expenses

Thanks to a grant from the UA Green Fund and the \$100 fee paid through your enrollment in the 1 credit 397D, the expense of the van for the road trip and most of the lodging/camping will be covered. However, there will be additional travel expenses, primarily food and entry fees, estimated at \$300-600 per student (partly depending upon how economical you are with food choices). We'll do everything we can to keep this as affordable as possible.

If you have any questions about pre-session tuition and fees for enrollment, you can calculate them at the bursar's office here: <http://bursar.arizona.edu/students/fees>.

Where Will We be Staying

We will camp most nights of the field course—in national parks, state parks, national forests, and at other sites. Some of the sites we visit will be remote. Some of the campgrounds will have showers, some won't. At Sagehen Creek Field Station, midway through our trip, we will stay in cabins. Temperatures will vary from very warm and hot to quite cool in higher elevations; be ready with layers. I've made reservations at the campgrounds at which we will be staying along the way; however, like with any good road trip, we may deviate from the schedule as situations occur. We will stop at restaurants and/or grocery stores for food along the way; sometimes we'll eat on the road, occasionally we'll cook in camp.

Equipment

Please see the attached packing checklist for a list of equipment you will need on the field course. If you do not have camping gear that you need, Outdoor Rec also rents gear. <http://rec.arizona.edu/outdoor-adventures/equipment>

Preliminary Schedule (Subject to Change)

| Date | Sites | Topics |
|------------------|--|--|
| 5/18, 5/19, 5/20 | -UA, Orientation and Introduction -Introducing the landscape concept -Visit to UA Museum of Art "Changing Views: Queering Landscape" exhibit | -Reading and Travel Preparation -Introducing the Landscape Concept in Geography -Art & Environment & Landscape |
| Thurs, 5/21 | -Grand Canyon | -Water, the Anthropocene, |

| | | |
|----------------------------------|--|--|
| | <i>camp South Rim Mather Campground, sites 313 & 315</i> | Geopoetics -Colorado River Compact -Iconic National Parks, Western Mythology, Recreation |
| Fri, 5/22 | -South Rim to Glen Canyon Dam -continue into Utah <i>camp Dixie National Forest (White Bridge Campsite sites 1 & 2)</i> | |
| Sat, 5/23- Sun, 5/24 | Great Salt Lake Area Sites Antelope Island State Park Golden Spike Iconic Land Art: -Spiral Jetty -Sun Tunnels -Wendover Center for Land Use Interpretation <i>Camp Antelope Island State Park 5/23 (White Rock Group site)</i> <i>Camp at CLUI Wendover</i> | -Iconic land art -Railroads, mythologies of the west -Military sites & CLUI -Embodiment, space & place, landscape methodologies |
| Mon, 5/25- Wed, 5/27 | -Wendover Center for Land Use Interpretation (Matt Coolidge 5/25 am) -Travel to Sagehen Creek Field Station and Reno, NV -Center for Art + Environment -Sagehen Creek Field Station (see here) <i>Stay at Sagehen Creek Field Station cabins (3 nights)</i> | -Art + environment archives and exhibits at C A+E -Art-science programs & installations at Sagehen -Force Majeur |
| Thurs, 5/28- Fri, 5/29 | East side of the Sierra & high country <i>Camp June Lake N.F.S. 5/28 (sites 6 & 7)</i> <i>Camp Serrano N.F.S. Big Bear Lake 5/29 (sites 114, 131)</i> | -Wilderness legacies and narratives -Water -Bioregional thought |
| Sat, 5/30- Sun, 5/31 | -High Desert Test Sites in the Mojave -multiple sites: see here <i>Camp HDTs Iron Age Road or Andy's Gamma Gulch Parcel (primitive)</i> | -New site interpretation and environmental site-based works -HDTs |
| Sun, 5/31 | Return to Tucson | |
| Tues, 6/2 through Fri, 6/5 | -UA Wrap-up Individual Meetings, Project presentations -Panel with local environmental artists | -Individual meetings -Presentations -Art & Environment in Tucson area |

Note: You can see a map of the route here:

From Tucson to Wendover [here](https://goo.gl/maps/a7AF8): <https://goo.gl/maps/a7AF8>

From Wendover to Tucson [here](https://goo.gl/maps/hSibC): <https://goo.gl/maps/hSibC>

(These maps note the main stops—but not all stops—along the way.)

Primary Equipment/Gear List

- ___ sleeping bag
- ___ sleeping pad
- ___ pillow
- ___ tent (or arrange to share)
- ___ small camp chair (optional)
- ___ headlamp (or flashlight, but hands-free preferred)
- ___ closed-toe shoes (light hikers, sneakers) suitable for various terrain
- ___ refillable water bottle or two
- ___ wide-brimmed hat for sun protection
- ___ hat and gloves for cool nights up high
- ___ backpack (small daypack) for field exploration
- ___ long pants, long shirt for sun protection
- ___ light raincoat
- ___ bug head net
- ___ cup/mug, plate/bowl, fork, spoon, knife
- ___ sunscreen & sunglasses
- ___ field notebook, pen, pencil
- ___ laptop/netbook/ipad and charging cords, batteries, etc. (optional)
- ___ camera (optional)
- ___ binoculars (optional)

Be sure to pack layers of clothing as we will be in various temperatures. While making sure you have everything, please also try not to over-pack, so that we will have plenty of room in the vehicle for all of our gear. UA outdoor adventures rents gear as well: <http://rec.arizona.edu/outdoor-adventures/equipment>. We will discuss and coordinate gear in class as well.