

The Idea of the Holy

LArch 439
Professor Roxi Thoren

Winter 2013
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Overview

The studio will design a master plan and entry sequence, including courtyard, for the Episcopalian Church of the Resurrection on south Hilyard Street. The 2-acre site is a former oak savannah, with extensive topographic change from the building construction. The master plan (schematic design) will integrate a proposed building addition, as well as consider the relationship between several landscape rooms, including the oak grove / parking lot; entry courtyard; labyrinth; playground; and garden. The entry sequence (design development) will consider the movement from public to private, from profane to sacred, through the sequence of landscape and built rooms, from streetscape, to parking grove, to courtyard, to church.

Groups of students will develop several alternate master plans for the site that respond to the oak savannah location, landscape architectural conceptions of the sacred, the parish's programmatic needs, and integrate with (or improve upon) existing landscape elements.

Individuals or groups of students will design an entrance courtyard that transitions visitors from the profane world of the street to the sacred world of the church (both building and landscape.) The courtyard will be part of a new addition project, and will provide gathering space for normal entrance and exit reception as well as larger events from weddings to church picnics.

Key Issues

The studio will study several key topics related to landscape, spirituality and stewardship, including:

- Topophilia (Tuan) and notions of the sacred and the profane (Eliade)
- Landscape as orientation and meditation
- Landscapes of transcendence
- Social stewardship
- Ecological stewardship

Schedule: goals and requirements

Through research and design, students will design a master plan and courtyard design for the Church of the Resurrection in Eugene. Work will often be collaborative, in teams or as an entire studio.

Primary pedagogic goals include:

- Understanding the ethical and spiritual foundations of landscape architecture
- Understanding sacred landscapes within contemporary society

- Ability to synthesize program data in support of design
- Ability to use spiritual concepts and metaphors as generators of landscape architectural form
- Ability to collaborate and build consensus

As a studio and in teams, students will:

- Research and present precedents of religious landscape architecture
- Develop design principles based on assigned readings and precedents
- Design a master plan based on the preceding research, principles, and parish needs and desires;
- Design the entry sequence and courtyard, including material and topographic details.

Week 1-2 (1/7-1/18): The Idea of the Holy

Students will research precedents of sacred landscapes, and read primary texts on Christian liturgy and landscapes.

Students will visit the Church of the Resurrection, and conduct primary site analysis.

As a studio, we will prepare a booklet of the precedent and site analysis research, and design goals to guide our future work.

Reading Week 1: Selections from:

Mircea Eliade. *The Sacred and the Profane: The Nature of Religion*

Gaston Bachelard. *The Poetics of Space*

Yi Fu Tuan. *Topophilia: A Study of Environmental Perception, Attitudes, and Values*

Friday 1/11: Site visit to Church of the Resurrection

Monday 1/14: Fr. Brent Was talk on land, stewardship, and Christianity (tent.)

Monday 1/21: Meet with members of COR re: program needs

Reading Week 2:

Rudolf Otto, *The Idea of the Holy*, Chapt. 1-3, 9

Beldon Lane, "The Imagined Landscape: A Tension Between Place and Placelessness in Christian Spirituality"

Philip Sheldrake, "A Sense of Place" and "Place in Christian Tradition"

Friday 1/18: Precedent analysis due + Site analysis due

Precedents: churches / sacred landscapes within the Christian tradition

Week 3-5 (1/21-2/8): Site plan design

Teams of students will develop a site plan, including the garden, playground, labyrinth, parking, and entry sequence, based on the preceding precedent and context research, and program development.

Reading Week 3:

Selections from *This Sacred Earth, Part 1: The Moment of Seeing: Selections from Nature Writers Linking Nature and Spirit*

Monica Weis, "Learning to See: Becoming Awake"

Reading Week 4:

Beldon Lane, "Axioms for the Study of Sacred Place" and "Giving Voice to Place: Three Models for Understanding American Sacred Space"

Reading Week 5:

Monica Weis, "'Spots of Time': Moments of Awakening" and "Seeing Differently: Recognizing the

Holy in the Ordinary”

Mon. 2/11: **Midterm review: Site master plan**

Week 6-7 (2-11-2/22): Schematic courtyard design

Based on the previous weeks’ research and development, individual students or teams of students will develop a future vision for the courtyard. The designs will integrate a new addition to the church, including massing and circulation: door locations, overhangs / pergolas / colonnades, and corridor locations.

Reading Week 6:

David Abram, “Philosophy on the Way to Ecology”

Friday 2/22 or Monday 2/25: Client meeting with members of the church and vestry to comment on schematic courtyard designs

Weeks 8 – 9: Design development

Refine courtyard design, including material selections and a detail design (fountain, bench, or other element).

Reading Week 8:

Karsten Harries, *The Ethical Function of Architecture*, chapt’s 10-12

Week of 3/11-3/16: **Final design review**

Students present courtyard designs to faculty and church reviewers

Grading

This course is graded on a pass/fail basis only. Students must complete all assignments on time and actively participate in all discussions and group critiques to receive a passing grade. Each student is required to meet individually for an exit interview with the instructor in week 10 to discuss his or her progress and receive a written evaluation.

Course Readings

All required readings will be available either via PDF, or on the course reserves in the library.

Books on reserve include:

Beldon Lane, *Landscapes of the Sacred: Geography and Narrative in American Spirituality*

Philip Sheldrake, *Spaces for the Sacred*

David Abram, *The Spell of the Sensuous*

Roger Gottlieb, *This Sacred Earth*

Monica Weis, *The Environmental Vision of Thomas Merton*

Studio Culture

Studio is modeled on professional practice in an office. I expect you to treat studio like a collegial and fun office, and to act in a professional manner, both in your work and in your comportment. The following are my specific expectations of you in studio:

- Studio meets MWF from 1:00-5:00; primary design and production work is expected to occur **during these hours** as much as possible. You each benefit from a collaborative work environment, seeing how other students interpret assignments, and receiving advice when you reach a stumbling block.
- Be on time and ready to work for each studio period. I often start studio with group announcements and an opportunity for questions and discussion. You will miss vital information if you are late.

- Participate actively in group discussions and projects. You will be each other's best critics over your time at the University. Learn to critique your own work and your peers' (when they ask for your advice.) Ask each other for advice.
- Be thorough in your design experiments and explorations. Execute drawings and models with professional craft. We think about design through the representations we make, and well-crafted explorations will progress a design considerably further than incomplete ones.
- Maintain a sketchbook for studio. Use it for recording both verbal and visual ideas – notes from readings, sketches, diagrams. Use it as well for cataloguing information that interests you this term – books, clipping – and for testing presentation methods.
- Explore alternatives based on feedback from me, your peers, and outside reviewers. Even if you discard an idea, you will be able to take some new lesson from it.
- Make mistakes. Do not be hesitant in putting ideas into drawings or models. The best designers are the ones who make the most mistakes, because they are able to learn from each iteration, and to correct an aspect of the design.
- Please remember that while studio is informal, it is a class. Cell phones and boisterous conversations are distracting to others who are working or receiving crits. Please turn off cell phones during studio.
- Use your computers during studio for research, drawings, and model-making. E-mail, web surfing or watching DVDs is best enjoyed later in the evening, i.e. after studio.

Academic Honesty Policy

All work submitted should be your own and originally produced for this course. The use of sources must be properly acknowledged and documented. In this studio, students are required to work together and assist one another on group projects, while on individual projects each student is expected to complete his or her own work independently.

For the consequences of academic dishonesty, refer to the Schedule of Courses published quarterly. Violations will be taken seriously, and are noted on disciplinary records. If you are in doubt as to the requirements or the nature of specific projects in this regard, please do not hesitate to contact me before you complete the project in question.

Academic Misconduct procedure and reporting form:

<http://studentlife.uoregon.edu/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=rMQlptpA3uo%3d&tabid=70>

Students with Disabilities Policy

The University of Oregon is working to create inclusive learning environments. If there are aspects of the instruction or design of this course, which result in barriers to your participation, please notify me as soon as possible. You are also welcome to contact Disability Services in 164 Oregon Hall at 346-1155 or disabsrv@uoregon.edu