LANDSCAPES OF THE AMERICAN SOUTH

DR. ERIN MAULDIN
FALL 2015
TR 1 PM, UCA 210

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OFFICE: DBH 209
OFFICE HOURS: MW 1-3 PM

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The real voyage of discovery consists not in seeking new landscapes, but in having new eyes.
– Marcel Proust

The physical characteristics of a landscape are material manifestations of history. They are records of change in climate, biota, geologic processes, and land use. Thus from the swamps and “water meadows” of the Carolina coast to the peaks of the southern Appalachians and the piney woods of east Texas, the southern landscape is the product of thousands of years of nature and culture converging and diverging, collaborating and conflicting. This course explores the variety of past, present, and future landscapes contained within “the South” using Alabama as a case study. Through a combination of class-based inquiry and immersive learning experiences in the field, we will tackle issues such as suburban development, the creation of “wilderness,” the rise of environmentalism, the effects of climate change on landscapes, the role of conflict in shaping land use, environmental racism, and sustainability (to name a few).

COURSE GOALS

❖ Study the landscapes of the South and the patterns of settlement, contestation, and transformation of those sites through field work

❖ Deepen students’ understanding of how humans alter the natural environment and how, in turn, the natural environment shapes human history

❖ Introduce students to the methodology of the environmental historian and the historical geographer—what sources to use, how to read landscapes, and ways to incorporate nature into academic inquiry

❖ Communicate and defend research, conclusions, and methods in written and oral formats

ASSIGNMENTS

❖ Food Journal and Essay (10%)
❖ “Place Paper” (20%)
❖ Public History Exhibit / Ecological Study / Mapping Project (30%)
❖ Final Presentation (10%)
❖ Class participation (10%) and Field Journal Entries and Responses (20%)
**Grading Scale**

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<th>Grade</th>
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<td>A</td>
<td>93-100</td>
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<td>A-</td>
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<td>B+</td>
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**Required Texts**

There are no books or textbooks required for this course. All course readings will be provided by the instructor either through Moodle, the Internet, or as an e-book through the Samford University Library. Quizzes are to be expected.

**Plagiarism**

All submissions must be original with sources clearly and correctly documented. Work previously submitted for other courses is not accepted. Any student who represents the work of another as his or her own is guilty of plagiarism and will be subject to the penalties outlined in *The Student Handbook*, including failure in the course and suspension from the University.

**Attendance Policy**

This class is a field-based, immersive learning course. Immersive learning only works when you're there to be immersed, so attendance is mandatory. Students who miss more than two weeks of class (4 absences) will receive an FA (failure due to absences) for the course. No exceptions. Students who must be absent due to University business should notify the teacher early in the course. **Students who come to class unprepared may be dismissed by the professor and such dismissal will be counted as an absence.**

**Students with Disabilities**

If you are registered with Disability Resources and have your accommodation letter, please make an appointment with me as soon as possible to discuss accommodations that may be necessary. If you have a disability but have not contacted Disability Resources, please call 726-2980/4078 or visit DR located within Career Development, Room 205 of the University Center.

Students who may need course accommodations are welcome to make an appointment to see me during office hours. Students with disabilities must be registered with Disability Resources, 726-2980/4078, and I must have received an accommodation letter before you begin receiving academic adjustments.
DISCLAIMER

The professor reserves the right to modify the content of the syllabus at any time during the semester. Students will be given plenty of notification if and when this occurs.

SCHEDULE OF CLASSES

WEEK 1: INTRODUCTION

August 18: Syllabus and logic of course

August 20: How do you read a landscape, and why would you want to?
   - D.W. Meinig, “The Beholding Eye: Ten Versions of the Same Scene” (Moodle)

WEEK 2: FRONTIER TO PLANTATION

August 25: Creating the “Old South”
   - Chapters 2 and 5, Ted Steinberg, Down to Earth: Nature’s Role in American History (Moodle)

August 27: The Slave Landscape
   - Excerpts from Cabin, Quarter, Plantation: Architecture and Landscapes of North American Slavery, edited by Clifton Ellis and Rebecca Ginsberg (Moodle)

WEEK 3: PLANTATION AND BEYOND

September 1: Shadow landscapes
   - “A Path to Freedom” from Megan Kate Nelson, Trembling Earth: A Cultural History of Okefenokee Swamp (Moodle)

September 3: Field Trip to Holmestead Plantation, Perry County

WEEK 4: FARMS BOTH LOCAL AND GLOBAL

September 8: The Southern Yeoman
   - Harry Watson, “The Common Rights of Mankind’: Subsistence, Shad, and Commerce in the Early Republican South”, from Environmental History and the American South: A Reader
   - Field Trip assignment due

September 10: Southern Products, Global Agriculture
   - Excerpts from Bart Elmore, Citizen Coke: The Making of Coca-Cola Capitalism (Moodle)
**WEEK 5: RIVERS**

September 15: Polluted Escape from Sharecropping
- “Strange Fruit,” in Melissa Checker, *Polluted Promises* (available through SU Library as e-book)

September 17: **Field Trip to Valley Creek with Freshwater Alliance**

**WEEK 6: COASTLINES**

September 22: Guest Speaker, Dr. Jennifer Speights-Binet

September 24: Film
- **Food Journal and Reflection due**

**WEEK 7: COASTLINES**

September 29: Climate change and coastlines

October 1: **Field Trip to the Archives and Linn Park (lessons in reading sources)**

**WEEK 8: CITIES**

October 6: Extracting the New South
- Excerpts from Bobby Wilson, *America’s Johannesburg: Industrialization and Racial Transformation in Birmingham* (Moodle)

October 8: Research and Writing Day

**WEEK 9: CITIES**

October 13: Fall Break

October 15: Public History and the Study of Place
- **PLACE PAPER DUE**

**WEEK 10: MEMORY**

October 20: Memorializing “Southern” Heritage
- Jonathan Lieb, “Separate Times, Shared Spaces: Arthur Ashe, Monument Avenue and the Politics of Richmond, Virginia’s Symbolic Landscape” (Moodle)

October 22: **Civil Rights Walking Tour**
WEEK 11: SUBURBS

October 27: Perpetuating Racial Isolation from Country to Town
   ❖ Chapters 1-3, Charles Connerly, “The Most Segregated City in America” (Moodle)
   ❖ Field Trip assignment due

October 29: Turn of the Century Suburbs versus Post-WWII Sprawl
   ❖ Chapters 3-5 of Andres Duany, et al., Suburban Nation: The Rise of Sprawl and the Decline of the American Dream (Moodle)

WEEK 12: SUBURBS

November 3: Greening the City
   ❖ Film, Frederick Law Olmsted: Designing America

November 5: Field Trip to Highland Park (mapping TNDs)

WEEK 13: MOUNTAINS

November 10: The idea of “wilderness”

November 12: Field Trip to Ruffner Mountain

WEEK 14: PARKS

November 17: Field trip to Red Mountain Park

November 19: Creating “wild” or “natural” spaces
   ❖ Chapter 4 from Margaret Lynn Brown, The Wild East: A Biography of the Great Smoky Mountains, available as an e-book through the Samford University Library

WEEK 15: LANDSCAPES FOR THE PUBLIC

December 1: Project Presentations

December 3: Project Presentations

Revised version of your Place Paper and Project materials due in my office on December 4 by 3 p.m.