PROLOGUE: FLOATING

A fragment from the Florida Writers Project’s Guide to the Southernmost State describes a place not far from campus. It was composed more than eight decades ago but it might be written tomorrow:

Left from Orange Lake on a paved road to a boat landing, 0.6 m., where boats and guides are obtainable for a visit to BIRD ISLAND, a natural rookery and bird sanctuary owned and maintained by the American Audubon Society. The naturally formed ‘floating islands’ in this group vary in diameter from a few feet to several hundred, and in depth from 3 to 10 feet. They are formed from small clumps of roots, or matted grass, which have sunk to the bed of the lake, and during high water or hot weather have been forced to the surface by the formation of gas. Grass, aquatic plants, and weeds have grown on the islands; there are many elder, myrtle, and maple trees 25 feet high. This vegetation acts as sails, causing the islands to move when a breeze springs up. The birds of this region never lose track of their nests, although their home island may float to a different part of the lake at any time. Among the birds are American snowy egrets, heron, ibis, anhinga or American snakebird, and gallinules. Native Americans believed that souls of the dead buried on these islands reached the ‘Land of the Sure’ when the islands sank.

When I first read these two hundred words, it struck me that here is an entire history of Florida. Now it reminds me of futures. And I wonder if it doesn’t also hold every story. How we track home, how nature holds memory, how the rise and fall of these islands is a cycle of life, and how we often live and build on land that is not ours. Those islands that sink will rise, more will be buried, winds will breeze up and send the islands skimming this way and that, and they will sink again. I also wonder about lost stories. I’d like to know more about that last sentence from the Florida Guide. I want to hear more of that story, more stories like it. But how? In that one sentence are insights to what we have either lost and also what we might very soon lose.

OVERVIEW

This seminar explores liminal spaces and places through the environmental lens of Florida—its architecture, landscapes, and stories.

PREMISE

Landscape—or seascape—that lacks vocabulary cannot be seen, cannot be accurately, usefully visited. (John Stilgoe)

Premise 01: To understand a place, we have to know how to talk about it—which language to use, and what the words mean, and where they come from.

But one’s travels should begin at home. (Wendell Berry)
The world is on your doorstep. (Paul Strand)

Premise 02: Florida as bellwether: Florida is a liminal place. The language of its natural and built environment is not well documented, but it is central to how we, particularly as architects, might understand the changing land, structures, and stories of the Anthropocene.
Is estuary English the gentle echo of older speech or the raw edge of a new tongue? Now that aircraft fly the oceans, the edge of the land receives little attention. (Stilgoe)

Premise 03: Florida as in-between: Florida is an environment of edges and betweenness, a place that is constantly reckoning with land and water, inside and outside, nature and human intervention. This betweenness is the context for practice in the Anthropocene.

OBJECTIVE / OUTCOME

This seminar seeks to discover and to understand placial and spatial interfaces between nature and the built environment. The resulting documentation and critical commentary will serve as a resource for 21st century practices of place-making, with a particular focus on Florida. Central to this objective and its outcomes is a Glossary of terms (language and structures)—a vocabulary of place, which records the enchantments and the responsibilities of occupying the peninsula in particular and the world’s changing environment more broadly.

METHODS

Methods will include archival and field research, site visits, case study research, glossary construction (outlined by Lopez and Macfarlane), collaging, drawing, and writing.

RESOURCES

In addition to the places themselves, this seminar will access the following resources: maps, field guides, archives, literature (narrative nonfiction, poetry, and novels), scientific documents, journals, conservation guidelines, environmental impact statements and reports, engineering documents, travelogues and tourist and travel guides, Florida promotional literature (past and present), resource management documents.

THEMES

Problem statement: Are we as architects equipped with the language and precedents to work with nature now and in the future? I have long wondered what a Shallow Water Dictionary for Florida would look like. Unavoidably, such work engages Anthropocene exchanges between land and structure, between environment and building, between climate and change. I’d like to delve deeply into the natural substrate of this place to understand how we learn in, with, and from it as architects.

Salvage Operation: We might also understand this seminar as a kind of “salvage operation,” to excavate, recover, and renew the language of land and words and structures that help us understand nature and navigate the Anthropocene. Our abilities to write about these places—and by extension our skills of design—are as fragile as the ecosystems themselves, as delicate a balance as the spaces we make between nature and architecture, between outside and inside. One objective will be to compile the language necessary not only to describe but to appreciate and engage with these tenuous, liminal places. As John Stilgoe writes: “The dictionary, a sort of salvage operation of words drifting from dictionary language, may serve to moor the terminology of estuary English. It is, however, mostly a cruise through an archipelago of half-sunken dictionaries, reference works touched with the drop-line of summer inquiry by a scholar intrigued with the death of topographical curiosity among the young, the young so absent from the marshes.” (8-9)

Instruments: Stilgoe’s vehicle was a small boat, and we will find additional vessels for navigating these linguistic waters and saturated lands of Florida.

Zones: Stilgoe’s account focuses on the estuary. We will work there and in other ecosystems across the state of Florida, between the Atlantic and the Gulf. We will identify the environmental problems facing each zone: sea level rise along the coast, saltwater intrusion in the marsh, water loss in the interior, etc. How do these changes frame the urgency of language? Its necessary precision? Its newly minted terminology? And how do all of these questions necessarily connect with architectural work and, again, urgently confronted with projects, particularly in the way we might rethink “between” spaces, along edges where architecture meets nature. Within each zone, we will also seek out implicit and explicit architectures, whether designed, engineered, or conceived without architects or engineers, as responses to nature and to environmental change.

Overall Organization:

Part 1: Land
Part 2: Structure
Part 3: Story
Preliminary Glossaries"

Preliminary Glossaries

Land: wrack, ghost trap, rampike, haulover, skinny water, ditch, hammock/hummock, littoral, salubrious, spoil, tombolos, trailing spit, key, karst, gin clear, hyacinth drift, dead river, green desert, diaphanous, sink, brackish, welaka (ylacco), Stick Marsh, south moon under, kettle

[Note: we’re using ‘land’ not as distinct from ‘water’ or ‘sea’ but broadly as ‘the surface of the earth and all its natural resources,’ and in its verb form, as in a boat landing to ‘go ashore,’ catching and ‘landing’ a fish, and, more broadly, ‘to alight on a surface’ whether land, water, or something in between. Further back, to its origins, we’re talking about ‘breaking ground’.

Structure: bird rack, boat ramp, breakwater, icehouse, gutter, refuge house, skiff, porch, cut, jetty, sea-wall, midden, gypstack, pier, Fish Bowl, boom sidewalk, pine plantation, pontoon, glass bottom boat, floating dock, launch, landing, shipwreck, cabana, fulgurite

[Note: structures include all aspects of the built environment, whether engineered, designed, purpose-built. Structures can be as simple as a post planted in the saturated ground of an estuary or as complex as a floating nuclear power plant, like the one proposed on Blount Island in Jacksonville and modeled here at UF in the 1970s.]

WEEKLY SCHEDULE

01: August 24: Introduction to seminar: Wading into skinny water and gathering maps

02: August 31: Language and place
  Reading(s): John Stilgoe, *Shallow Water Dictionary*

03: September 7: Florida, Nature and the Anthropocene: Radical Reflection and Fugitive environmentalism
  Readings: Daegan Miller, Reading in the Anthropocene; Kathryn Schulz essay in *The New Yorker* (5 July 2021); Wendell Berry, “Nature as Measure”; Bill McKibben, excerpt from *The End of Nature*; Barbara Kingsolver, *Introduction to Sand County Almanac*

04: September 14: Land: Glossaries and place
  Readings: Selections from Casey; Macfarlane, “Guide to Glossaries” (381-2); Lopez, “Bibliographic Note” (499-503)

05: September 21: Land: Field work: From Broad to Specific: From Dictionaries to Florida context
  Readings: selected readings from landscape dictionaries and encyclopedias; continued map research

06: September 28: Land: Field work
  Reading(s): tbd
  Work: Glossary (draft)

07: October 5: Structure: Architectures of the in-between
  Cedar Key field trip

08: October 12: Structure: Field work

09: October 19: Structure: Field work
  Work: Index of structures

10: October 26: Story: Narratives of Land and Structure
11: November 9: Story: Field work
   Atlantic Center for the Arts field trip

12: November 9: Story: Field work
   Work: Narratives

13: November 16: Florida Transect and discussion

14: November 23: NO CLASS (Thanksgiving)

15: November 30: Final presentations of work

16: December 7: NO CLASS (Final Reviews)

December 15: Final project due: Combines Glossary, Index, and Narratives with a 2,500-word commentary and bibliography.

GRADING and ATTENDANCE

The following breakdown will be used for final assessment and grading:

| Contribution to class discussion | 20 |
| Weekly updates | 20 |
| Three short projects | 30 |
| Final project | 30 |

Attendance is required for all seminars. Each unexcused absence will result in a reduction of the final grade by one letter point.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Absalonsen and Dean. Atlas of Florida shoreline change since the 1800s (2010)
Arendt, Hannah. “Preface,” Between Past and Future
Bartram, William. Travels
Bassett, Shannon. Restitch Tampa (Pallasmaa’s essay on the “Sensuous City”)
Basso, Wisdom Sits in Places (particularly first and last part of last chapter)
Belleville, Bill. River of Lakes
Berry, Wendell. “Nature as Measure”
Bierce, Ambrose. The Cynic’s Word Book
Burton, Robert. Anatomy of Melancholy
Casey, Edward. The World on Edge
Dana, Richard Henry. The Seaman's Friend
Desimini and Waldheim. Cartographic Grounds: Projecting the Landscape Imaginary
Emerson, Ralph Waldo. Books (‘Neither is a dictionary...a bad book to read. There is no can't in it, no excess of explanation, and it is full of suggestion, the raw material of possible poems and histories.”)
Emerson, Ralph Waldo. Nature (“words are signs of natural facts”)
ETH Studio Basel, Territory: On the Development of Landscape and City, chapter on Florida: “On the Development of Landscape and City”
Faulkner, Glen L. Geohydrology of the Cross-Florida Barge Canal
Haraway, Donna. “Carrier Bags for Critical Zones”
Hufford, Mary. One Space, Many Places: Folklife and Land Use in New Jersey’s Pinelands National Reserve (1986)
Jamie, Kathleen. Sightlines
Kennedy, Stetson. Palmetto Country
Kimmerer, Robin Wall. Braiding Sweetgrass
Kingsolver, Barbara. Introduction to Sand County Almanac
Kohak, Erazim. The Embers and the Stars
Kroker, Arthur and Marilouise. *Panic Encyclopedia*
Lopez, Barry. *Home Ground*
Macfarlane, Robert. *Landmarks*
Maracle, Lee. *Memory Serves*
Mathur, Anuradha. *Soak: Mumbai in an Estuary*
McKibben, Bill. *The End of Nature*
McPhee, John. "Atlantic Generating Station"
McPhee, John. *Basin and Range*
Meinig, Donald. *The Shaping of America*
Nute, Kevin. *This Here Now*
Rawlings, Marjorie Kinnan. *Cross Creek*
Rawlings, Marjorie Kinnan. *South Moon Under*
Reed, Chris and Nina-Marie Lister. *Projective Ecologies: Ecology, Research, and Design in the Climate Age*
Russo, Linda. *Counter-Desecration: A Glossary for Writing Within the Anthropocene*
Schama, Simon. *Landscape and Memory*
Schulz, Kathryn. Essay in *The New Yorker* (5 July 2021)
Smailbegović, Ada. Poetic research texts https://news.brown.edu/new-faculty/humanities/ada-smailbegovic
Solnit, Rebecca, *Spirits of San Francisco*
Stewart, George. *Names on the Land* (1945)
Stilgoe, John. *Shallow Water Dictionary*
Tolbert, Margaret. *Aquiferious*
Tuan, Yi-Fu. *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience* (1977)
Watts, May. *Reading the Landscape of America* (1975)
Wilson, E. O. *Biophilia*

**DICTIONARIES**

A Word Geography of the Eastern United States (Hans Kurath)
American Democrat (James Fenimore Cooper)
American Dictionary of the English Language (Webster)
American Encyclopedic Dictionary
Century Dictionary: An Encyclopedic Lexicon of the English Language
Dictionary of Sea Terms (Richard Henry Dana)
Dictionary of the English Language (Johnson)
Dictionary of the English Language (Worcester)
Funk & Wagnalls New Standard Dictionary of the English Language
Key into the Language of American (Williams)
New English Dictionary (Kersey)
New Standard Dictionary
Noah Webster's American Dictionary of the English Language (Chauncey A Goodrich)
Origins of Sea Terms (John G. Rogers)
Random House Dictionary of the English Language
Seaman's Friend: A Dictionary of Sea Terms (Dana)
The Dictionary of American Regional English (1985)
Thomdike-Century Junior Dictionary
Webster's New International Dictionary of the English Language

Terence Armstrong, *Illustrated Glossary of Snow and Ice* (1973)

**ILLUSTRATIONS** (page one, left to right) Margaret Ross Tolbert, *Entering the Springs*, Oil and mixed media on canvas, 90 x 90 inches, 2006; Cross section through Florida Barge Canal from Gulf of Mexico to Atlantic Ocean; Bird Rack in Gulf of Mexico, 1900; Wallace Stevens, *Nomad Exquisite*, 19. (page 4) "Pulling a Floating Island in McIntosh, Florida," ca. 1930, Florida Memory Collection.
UF POLICIES

University Policy on Accommodating Students with Disabilities

Students requesting accommodation for disabilities must first register with the Dean of Students Office (http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/). The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to the instructor when requesting accommodation. You must submit this documentation prior to submitting assignments or taking quizzes or exams. Accommodations are not retroactive, therefore, students should contact the office as soon as possible in the term for which they are seeking accommodations.

University Policy on Academic Misconduct

Academic honesty and integrity are fundamental values of the University community. Students should be sure that they understand the UF Student Honor Code at http://www.dso.ufl.edu/students.php.

Netiquette: Communication Courtesy

All members of the class are expected to follow rules of common courtesy in all email messages, threaded discussions, Zoom Conferences, Miro Boards Canvas discussions and online chats. Please refer to the UF Netiquette guide for additional information:

http://www.albion.com/netiquette/corerules.html

GETTING HELP

2. For issues with technical difficulties for E-learning in CANVAS, please contact the UF Help Desk:
   - Email: Learning-support@ufl.edu
   - (352) 392-HELP - select option 2
   - Online: https://lss.at.ufl.edu/help.shtml

Note: Any requests for make-ups or deadline extensions due to technical issues MUST be accompanied by the ticket number received from LSS when the problem was reported to them. The ticket number will document the time and date of the problem. You MUST e-mail your instructor within 24 hours of the technical difficulty if you wish to request a make-up or deadline extension.

Counseling + Emergency Contacts

- University Police Department (UPD): 352.392.1111
- Gainesville Police Department: 352.334.2400
- Alachua County Sheriff's Office: 352.955.2500
- UF Counseling and Wellness Center (3190 Radio Road): 352.392.1575 or http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc/
- Alachua County Victim Services and Rape Crisis Center (24hrs/day): 352.264.6760 or 866.252.5439
- Center for Sexual Assault / Abuse Recovery Education (CARE), Infirmary Room 245: 352.392.1161 x.4231
- Alachua County Crisis Center + Suicide Intervention Counseling (24 hrs/day): 352.264.6789
- Student Nighttime Auxiliary Patrol (SNAP) free transportation: 352.392.SNAP

Our Commitment to Diversity

The University of Florida is committed to creating a community that reflects the rich racial, cultural, and ethnic diversity of the state and nation. No challenge that exists in higher education has greater importance than the challenge of enrolling students and hiring faculty and staff who are members of our country's diverse groups. This pluralism enriches the university community, offers robust academic dialogues, and contributes to better teaching and research. The University benefits from the richness of a multicultural student body, faculty, and staff who can learn from and support one another. Diversity and inclusion empower and inspire respect and understanding among us. Importantly, the University does not tolerate the actions of anyone who violates the rights of another person. Through policy and practice, the university strives to embody a diverse and inclusive community, creating a university that truly reflects the greatness of our state and nation.
GRADING POLICIES

Grading Scale

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Letter Grade</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>A-</th>
<th>B+</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>B-</th>
<th>C+</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>C-</th>
<th>D+</th>
<th>D-</th>
<th>E</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Numeric Grade</td>
<td>100-93</td>
<td>92-90</td>
<td>89-87</td>
<td>86-83</td>
<td>82-80</td>
<td>79-77</td>
<td>76-73</td>
<td>72-70</td>
<td>69-67</td>
<td>66-63</td>
<td>62-60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality Points</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>3.67</td>
<td>3.33</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>2.67</td>
<td>2.33</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>1.67</td>
<td>1.33</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>0.67</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The current UF grading policies for assigning grade points can be found at


An incomplete grade may be assigned at the discretion of the instructor as an interim grade only in cases of extreme extenuating circumstances. Note that the incomplete grade must be resolved prior to enrolling in Architectural Design Six.