

# syllabus

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Class Meeting:	MWF 1:55 – 4:55
Credits:	5
Instructor:	Kevin Thompson
eMail:	<a href="mailto:gday@ufl.edu">gday@ufl.edu</a>
Office Hours:	W 12:45 – 1:30 or by appointment

## Course Overview

This course reinforces the importance of an iterative approach to design and to the value of a committed design development stage in maximizing the human health and environmental sustainability benefits of built landscapes.

This semester we will be focused on trees and the strategies and methods of planting trees in urban environments. We will be investigating the impacts of urban canopy on climate change, urban heat island effect and pedestrian thermal comfort levels, energy reduction, flooding and stormwater management. While our placemaking concerns will largely focus on trees as form givers and space generators, our underground design studio will focus on what happens beneath Earth's surface as we consider root systems and root zones, soils, built environmental constraints and barriers.

The course provides immersive experiences that include activities in the studio, in the field, in the workshop and on the site.

## Course Goals

- Understand the importance of an iterative design solutions-based process and the value of design development and its impact on design implementation
- Understand the human health and wellness benefits of urban forests
- Understand the sustainable urban environment goals of an established urban forest
- Recognize the benefits and values of an established urban forest in carbon sequestration, air pollution mitigation, storm and flood water uptake and management and energy needs reduction
- Prioritize shade canopy in a site planning process including planning and designing for site circulation, drainage, stormwater and canopy management
- Recognize the potential underground challenges to the real subgrade needs of a healthy urban canopy
- Develop skills in communicating the benefits of the urban forest and in appropriately implementing planting design and approaches that achieves more than the current status quo
- Gain hands on experience establishing an urban canopy with best practice arboricultural approaches to planting trees in urban environments

## Prerequisite Knowledge and Skills

Students are required to have completed LAA3420 and 3421: Landscape Construction 1 & 2

## Teaching Philosophy

This course provides landscape architects an important “*deep-dive*” into the background, history, evolution and contemporary concerns of urban forestry in the age of climate change.

The course has been designed with its foundation in urban forestry but assumes that landscape architects need to be much more than simply advocates for trees in urban environments. Landscape architects must

understand the biological complexities of the giant living organisms that are trees. They need to understand what environments trees need to be planted in to reach their full potential and what typical maintenance is required to insure their health and vitality. As space designers, landscape architects must also understand how trees are used to define space and how their presence provides additional benefits including shade, air cleansing, stormwater uptake, cooling, wildlife habitat and human health and wellbeing. Landscape architects also need to understand what's happening underground. What are the real needs of roots in root zones such as soil composition and nutrients, matrix densities, aeration, hydration, volumes, barriers, impacts and other constraints.

While the simple act of planting trees has been identified as the most important thing human beings can do to help combat the effects of climate change, it turns out that the act of planting trees is really not that simple. This course recognizes the value of trees on life, health and happiness and takes an exhaustive approach in training landscape architects to regard themselves as:

- Advocates for beautiful and healthful human spaces and for trees: trees, tree canopy and forests in the urban environment
- Educators who can communicate the benefits, challenges, opportunities and constraints of planting trees everywhere and especially in urban environments
- Talented Placemakers who recognize the critical and important contributions that trees make to space and place creation
- Skilled Landscape Designers who can plan for trees in difficult and challenging urban spaces and built landscapes who are able to develop design solutions to ensure the health and vitality of trees in urban environments

As such, this course has been designed to operate within the structure of the professional curriculum in landscape architecture, drawing from the expertise of landscape architects and urban designers in practice, scholars in urban forestry, leaders in commercial arboriculture and public agents and urban foresters in local government agencies. Guests joining us this semester are committed to these values and this cause and to helping you become urban forest advocates and tree leaders in the future. Their effort is voluntary, their time and contributions come without compensation nor reward. Their involvement stems from years of building relationships with your course instructor who has also spent countless hours planning and organizing for these guests to join us. Please be sure to recognize the contributions this individuals are making to your training and education.

Learning represents a committed effort on behalf of the student as they develop their knowledge, skills and understanding through reading, research and discussion, design, design exploration and development, design communication, public speaking and presentation and hands-on learning: feet firmly planted on Earth, shovel in hand, fingers intertwining with roots. Rise to the occasion, drop to the ground, get your hands dirty and be a part of something great. Plant a tree.

### **Instructional Methods**

Course instruction will be a combination of lectures, readings, site visits, and individual and group investigations, explorations and critical reviews. Methods by which students are evaluated and graded include a major design project and active participation in all activities associated with the course.

## **COURSE POLICIES**

### **Class Attendance and Participation**

- **Active participation in class is critical.** Attendance is mandatory and students are expected to arrive on time. Unexcused absences are counted as a 5% cumulative penalty. Students must notify instructor of any and all intended absences in advance of the scheduled class meeting or activity.

Please email the instructor if you think you may be absent for any of the following reasons:

- Illness
  - Serious family emergency
  - Special curricular requirements (e.g., judging trips, field trips, professional conferences)
  - Military obligation
  - Severe weather conditions
  - Religious holidays
  - Participation in official university activities such as music performances, athletic competition or debate.
  - Court-imposed legal obligations (e.g., jury duty or subpoena)
- A doctor's note (e.g., doctor's verification of visit form or excuse note) must be provided for an illness to be considered excused. You must schedule a meeting with the instructor to discuss any other excused absence before it will be considered excused. The instructor will not be responsible for coordinating the meeting; it is the student's responsibility.
  - If necessary, students shall be permitted a reasonable amount of time to make up material or activities covered in their absence; however, absences do not affect project deadline dates unless prior arrangements have been made.
  - Studio work time and desk critiques are essential to the learning experience; therefore, attendance is expected for the entire class time. During the studio (desk instruction) portion of the course, it is expected that all students will be in attendance for the entire class and working on LAA4450 assignments. Attendance may be taken more than once during class (e.g., at the beginning and at the end of class). Arriving late to class, leaving during class for extended durations, leaving early from class, or working on assignments from other courses may be considered being absent. The same attendance policies stated above will apply.
  - The instructor will not provide the student notifications regarding absences and tardiness. You may email the instructor should you have any questions regarding your attendance.
  - Work must be done in the studio and computers must be brought to class; instruction will not be given outside the studio during class times (e.g., in the computer lab).
  - 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>.

#### **Class Demeanor**

- Please schedule an office hours chat for any discussions regarding attendance, tardiness, and late assignments. Do not discuss these issues with the instructor during the class meeting time.
- Please try to reduce distractions (online or otherwise) during class meetings
- Please be respectful, to both the other students in our class and to your instructor
- Your attendance is expected during our scheduled class meeting times. There will be regular occasions when we will break-out for individual or group work or discussions but we hope to find you when we return.
- Please be mindful of due dates and times

#### **Submission of Student Work**

All student work may be retained and used by the Department of Landscape Architecture. Digital copies of student work for this course must be turned in at the completion of each assignment. Unless otherwise stated, all work for this course is to be submitted as a professional-quality powerpoint (.ppt) file uploaded to the dedicated assignment portal on our Canvas course site. All graphic submissions are expected to be reproduced at the highest quality. Numerous online resources exist for reproducing hardcopy work and hand graphics to ensure high quality resolution, color reproduction, lighting and sheet composition. Please discuss any concerns you might have regarding submission quality with me. I'm always happy to try and find the best workarounds and solutions for committed students and professionals in training!

All files must adhere to the following file naming protocol:

(Course#Name)(Project+Description)(Student-Lastname).( pdf)

Example:

4450DesignImGradPlanSmith.pdf

4ch 8ch 8ch 6ch (ch = letter characters)

- Use CAPS for Separation
- Save images in PDF format at a maximum 200 resolution
- \*No spaces, hyphens, or underscoring\*

### **Texts, Software and Other Resources**

There may be required readings; however, there is no required textbook.

The following software is required:

- AutoCAD (current release)
- Sketch-up and/or Rhinoceros (both can be run through UF Apps)
- MS Office (Word, Excel and Powerpoint)
- Adobe Products (Photoshop, Illustrator, In-Design, and Acrobat Reader)

All students are required to have a laptop computer that meets the Department's computer requirement. If a Mac is being used, AutoCAD should be run in a Windows environment such as Boot Camp or Parallels.

### **Course Materials Made Available to You Online and Communication**

The digital course materials provided on a cloud-based share folder (e.g., lectures, assignments, presentations, et cetera) are provided for personal study and are not intended for distribution by electronic or other means. Further distribution or posting on other websites is not permitted. This course uses Canvas as its homebase. In addition, I have established a project website that will serve as the public face of our work together this semester and to the extent possible and appropriate, course resources will be made available through the project website where it can also be shared in the public domain as appropriate. UF email is absolutely essential and each student is encouraged and expected to maintain email vigilance throughout the course.

Our class meetings may be recorded for your review. Students who participate in online activities associated with this course and with their camera and/or microphone on are agreeing to have their video or image or voice recorded. If you are unwilling to consent to have your profile or video image or voice recorded, be sure to keep your camera off and do not use a profile image. If you are not willing to consent to have your voice recorded during class, you will need to keep your mute button activated and communicate exclusively using the "chat" feature that allows students to type questions and comments live. The chat will not be recorded or shared. As in all courses, unauthorized recording and unauthorized sharing of recorded materials is prohibited.

Students may contact the instructor via email or in-person. Email is the primary communication method to contact the instructor outside of class time and office hours. Please use the email address listed at the top of this document. All communications must be directed through your ufl.edu account. Do not send emails from other accounts such as gmail. Again, please be vigilant in checking and responding to your emails.

## **UF POLICIES**

### **Student Accommodations**

Support services for students with disabilities are coordinated by the Disability Resource Center in the Dean of Students Office (352-392-8565, [www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/](http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/)). To obtain individual support services, each student must meet with a support coordinator in the Disability Resources Program who will work with the individual student and the instructor to determine appropriate support strategies. There is no requirement for a student to self-identify his/her disability; however, students with disabilities requesting accommodations should first register with the Dean of Students Office. Once registered, students will receive an accommodation letter which must be presented to the instructor when requesting accommodation. Appropriate documentation regarding the student's disability is necessary to obtain any reasonable accommodation or support service. Students with disabilities should follow

this procedure as early as possible in the semester. Accommodations will be provided once the accommodation letter is presented to the instructor; accommodations are not retroactive.

### **Academic Honesty**

The University requires all members of its community to be honest in all endeavors. When students enroll at UF they commit themselves to honesty and integrity. The faculty of Landscape Architecture fully expects you to adhere to the academic honesty guidelines you signed when you were admitted to UF. In completing the registration form at the University of Florida, every student has signed the following statement:

*"I understand the University of Florida expects its students to be honest in all their academic work. I agree to adhere to this commitment to academic honesty and understand that my failure to comply with this commitment may result in disciplinary action up to and including expulsion from the University."*

Furthermore, on work submitted for credit by all UF students, the following pledge is either required or implied:

*"On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment."*

It is to be assumed that all work will be completed independently unless the assignment is defined as a group project by the instructor. This does not mean that students cannot help one another in learning material, but all work that is turned in must be independent work of that individual.

Misrepresentation or plagiarism, such as claiming another's work to be one's own, refers to graphic, images, and design work as well as written work. Submitting work from one course to fulfill the requirements of another (unless expressly allowed by the instructor) is also misrepresentation.

The University Honor Code and the Department of Landscape Architecture Academic Honesty Policy are to be followed to the letter. Any students found to have cheated, plagiarized, or otherwise violated the Honor Code in any assignment will be punished according to the severity of the act and may be referred to the Honor Court. It is each student's responsibility to report any infraction, and it is expected that each faculty will report all infractions as well.

For more information, see <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/> and the Department of Landscape Architecture Academic Honesty Policy.

### **Netiquette: Communication Courtesy**

All members of the class are expected to follow rules of common courtesy in all email messages, threaded discussions and chats. For a description of what is expected and what will occur as a result of improper behavior see the University's [Netiquette Guide for Online Courses](#).

### **Religious Holidays**

The university calendar does not include observance of any religious holidays. The Florida Board of Governors and state law govern university policy regarding observance of religious holidays. Students shall be excused from class or other scheduled academic activity to observe a religious holy day of their faith with prior notification to the instructor. Students shall be permitted a reasonable amount of time to make up the material or activities covered in their absence. Students shall not be penalized due to absence from class or other scheduled academic activity because of religious observances.

### **University's Syllabus Policy**

The University's complete Syllabus Policy can be found at:  
<http://syllabus.ufl.edu/media/aaufledu/policies/Syllabus-Policy.pdf>

### **GETTING HELP**

For issues with technical difficulties for E-learning in Canvas, please contact the UF Help Desk at:

- [Learning-support@ufl.edu](mailto:Learning-support@ufl.edu)
- (352) 392-HELP - select option 2
- <https://lss.at.ufl.edu/help.shtml>

Any requests for make-ups 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.

### Counseling Resources

Your well-being is important to the University of Florida. The U Matter, We Care initiative is committed to creating a culture of care on our campus by encouraging members of our community to look out for one another and to reach out for help if a member of our community is in need. If you or a friend is in distress, please contact [umatter@ufl.edu](mailto:umatter@ufl.edu) so that the U Matter, We Care Team can reach out to the student in distress. A nighttime and weekend crisis counselor is available by phone at 352-392-1575. The U Matter, We Care Team can help connect students to the many other helping resources available including, but not limited to, Victim Advocates, Housing staff, and the Counseling and Wellness Center. Please remember that asking for help is a sign of strength. In case of emergency, call 9-1-1.

### GRADING POLICIES

Course grades will be based on problem solving skills as they relate to the accomplishment of the objectives. Grading will adhere to the University of Florida Grade Policy:

Letter Grade	A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D+	D	D-	E
Numeric Grade	100-93	92-90	89-87	86-83	82-80	79-77	76-73	72-70	69-67	66-63	62-60	59-0
Quality Points	4.0	3.67	3.33	3.0	2.67	2.33	2.0	1.67	1.33	1.0	0.67	0.0

For greater detail, see the Registrar's Grade Policy regulations at <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>.

As per department policy, Landscape Architecture Majors must receive a C or better to move forward. Any grade lower than a C will require that the course be taken over again.

Unless specifically stated otherwise, all assignments (including presentations) given as part of this class will be graded, assigned a point value, and included in the determination of the student's final grade. Course grades will be based on the following approximate points and weighting (subject to change):

Description	Percentage of Total Grade
Mid Term Presentation	40
Final Presentation	40
Implementation Project	20
<b>Total Points</b>	<b>100</b>

Assignments are expected to be submitted by the specified due date. If no prior arrangement is made with the instructor for a late submittal, the maximum points that the student can earn for the assignment will be reduced by 5% for every day it is late. A due date and time will be provided for every assignment and an assignment is considered a day late if it is submitted after the specified date and time.

The deadline is absolute; no exceptions will be made for scanning, computer related issues, upload speeds, etc.

Assignment submissions may be updated and re-uploaded to the course canvas site prior to a submittal deadline. Once the deadline has passed for an assignment and a submission has been made, submittals may not be accepted. If the updated, late submittal is accepted, the entire submittal will be considered late and points will be deducted based on the date of the late submission. In addition, it is the student's responsibility to ensure that a submission is complete; missing items will not be given credit.

### **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/>