

LAA 6905: Advanced Design Communication

UF Department of Landscape Architecture
Fall 2025

SYLLABUS

I. General Information

CLASS MEETINGS: 100% In-Person, Wednesdays and Fridays, pd. 3 & 4 (9:35-11:30AM)
LOCATION: Antevy Hall 116
CREDITS: 3 Credits

INSTRUCTOR: Aishwarya Shankar
436 Antevy Hall
Office Hours: Thursdays, Period 4 | 10:40 to 11:30 AM or by appointment
shankaraishwarya@ufl.edu
352-294-1446

TA: Christopher Bonura (c.bonura@ufl.edu)
Mojtaba Tahmasebi (mojtabatahmasebi@ufl.edu)

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This design communication course focuses on advanced-level digital tools and techniques used in landscape architecture. Students start with intermediate GIS, advancing to master Rhino and Grasshopper for 3D modeling by week 4. Weeks 5-7 introduce advanced AI workflows for intricate designs, followed by an exploration of Photogrammetry in week 8 for accurate physical data capture. The course progresses to advanced video editing and motion graphics tailored for landscape documentation, and later integrates practical skills in laser-cutting and 3D printing from weeks 11 to 15. The final week culminates in hybrid presentation workflows, blending digital and analog methods. With hands-on assignments throughout, students will be equipped to communicate complex landscape architecture concepts using state-of-the-art technology. This course expands the idea of visual thinking to blend analog and digital and is the fourth in the series for other design communication course sequences.

PREREQUISITE KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS

LAA 2379c Design Communication 2

REQUIRED READINGS AND WORKS

All required readings and works can be found online, course reserves, or in the UF Library (see annotated schedule).

Computer Lab: The computer labs are equipped with all the required software. If a student wishes to purchase their own hardware and software, that is preferred. All materials and files are to be stored on a cloud that is freely available to UF students. It is advisable to also use flash drives to store data to be used in class demos. The laser cutting and 3D printing lab facilities are available in Antevy Hall, students are expected to bring their own materials to use in these facilities.

II. STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES (SLOs) & COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES (CLOs)

Each student in the LA program is expected to understand and apply the design process to studio projects in increasing levels of sophistication over the curriculum arc. In the DS1 studio, students should demonstrate beginning levels of design thinking through:

- A range of approaches (creative, cultural, and/or historical) to create spatial and temporal landscape compositions.
- Development of multiple design alternatives before synthesizing ideas into a defensible plan.
- The ability to thoughtfully and respectfully provide, receive, and respond to feedback and critique as part of iterative design decision-making.

Students taking design studios are also expected to demonstrate diligence, independence, and curiosity as part of an ongoing practice of learning and transformation.

The **course learning objectives** (CLOs) below align with the Landscape Architectural Accreditation Board (LAAB) standards, and UF's MLA Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) are used to guide the assessment of student learning throughout their engagement in the program.

At the end of this course, students will be expected to have achieved an appropriate developmental level of the following **CLOs** numbered in the chart below (each with an individual name):

CRITICAL THINKING
SLO 4 – Combine and analyze information from multiple sources to support design decision-making.
1. Design Impact: Define and measure the impact of a design in response to specific challenges, needs, and aspirations based on measurable outcomes.
COMMUNICATION
SLO 5 – Produce professional visual, oral, and written communications.
2. Workflow: Display an effective design development/visualization workflow, including progression between analog and digital platforms, and drawing and modeling techniques.

III. Graded Work

Grading policies in the course are consistent with [University grades and grading policies](#). Deadlines for assignments are listed in the Annotated Weekly Schedule and on Canvas. Students should submit work on the dates indicated except where university policy provides an exemption.

DESCRIPTION OF GRADED WORK

Project 1 –Cartography (10% of total grade)

Students will be required to produce cartography using advanced GIS and mapping representation techniques.

Project 2 – Advanced 3D Modelling (10% of total grade)

Students will be required to experiment with advanced 3D modelling tools including but not limited to Rhino, Sketch Up and Grasshopper.

Project 3 – Analog & Digital Fabrication (10% of total grade)

Students will start this module by experimenting with analog models. The analog work will be digitized using photogrammetry. Students will then learn basics of laser cutting and 3D printing. Finally, students will engage in a critical comparative analysis of analog and digital fabrication and representation techniques.

Project 4 – Landscape in Film (10% of total grade)

In this module, students are expected to undertake a film-making and documentation exercise during their field trip. The project will explore advanced video editing, animation and motion graphics.

Project 5 – Parametric Design & Artificial Intelligence (10% of total grade)

Students will engage in parametric design software- Land Kit and Artificial Intelligence. Experiments with these tools will be critically evaluated to understand the future of digital representation in LA.

Project 6 – Portfolio Publication (25% of total grade)

This module will comprise of an intensive portfolio workshop where students will learn about narrative setting, composition and portfolio compilation. At the end of the semester, students will be required to submit their work in self-published formats like a portfolio, a website or physical artefacts like zines.

Participation (10% of total grade)

This includes attendance, timely submissions and overall sincerity in effort for the course. This includes attendance, timely submissions and overall sincerity in effort for the course. Students are allowed to miss 2 classes, after which they will lose 2% of their grade for each class missed.

Creativity and Initiative (15% of total grade)

This includes student's ability to experiment and show initiative in learning beyond what was taught in the course. This goes hand in hand with participation, so students are expected to effectively communicate their thinking process and creative initiatives. This score also includes performance during desk crits.

The graded work assesses the course learning objectives as follows:

	LAA 3394 - Course Learning Objectives (CLOs)	
	SLO 4	SLO 5
Assessment	2	4
Drawing Products	X	X

Software Proficiency		X
Drawing Practice Exercises	X	X
Sketching and Recording	X	X
Publications	X	

GRADING SCALE

For information on how UF assigns grade points, visit: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/grades-grading-policies/>

A	93 – 100%		C	73 – 76%
A-	90 – 92%		C-	70 – 72%
B+	87 – 89%		D+	67 – 69%
B	83 – 86%		D	63 – 66%
B-	80 – 82%		D-	60 – 62%
C+	77 – 79%		E	<60

We have updated the language in the syllabus to include the following statement: The Department acknowledges that the student retains ownership of their documents; however, it is a necessity for the Department to retain the right to use the documents for professional accreditation purposes. Furthermore, other course specific work, such as service-learning opportunities may require the Department to ultimately provide work created by students to an outside organization. Digital copies of student work for this course must be turned in at the completion of each assignment. Please follow the instructor's directions on how they will be submitted (e.g., Canvas, CD, PDF, word file, etc.). If an assignment is required to be scanned, it must be scanned; photographs of assignments are not acceptable. If a multipage PDF is requested, do NOT submit each page as a separate PDF. It must be submitted as one file.

IV. Annotated Weekly Schedule

Week	Topics, Homework, and Assignments
Week 1	Course Introduction and syllabus overview; Intermediate GIS and Cartography
Week 2	Cartography Intensive [Project 1 due]
Week 3	Advanced Rhino and Grasshopper
Week 4	Advanced Rhino and Grasshopper [Project 2 due]
Week 5	Analog Models & Photogrammetry
Week 6	Laser-cutting
Week 7	3D printing [Project 3 due]
Week 8	LA Experience Field Trip (Assignment: Field Sketching, video documentation & Reading the Landscape)
Week 9	Advanced video editing and motion graphics (<i>landscape in film- advanced site documentation</i>) [Project 4 due]

	Homecoming Holiday on Friday, 17 th Nov
Week 10	Parametric Design (Land Kit) Intensive
Week 11	Artificial Intelligence Intensive [Project 5 due]
Week 12	Hybrid presentation workflows (<i>digital and analog</i>) [mid review – Project 1-5]
Week 13	Portfolio/Publication Intensive (narrative setting)
Week 14	Portfolio/Publication Intensive (pin up workshop)
Week 15	Thanksgiving Break
Week 16	Conclusions and desk crits for final products [Project 5 final review TBD]

VI. Required Policies - <https://go.ufl.edu/syllabuspolicies>

Please use this link (<https://go.ufl.edu/syllabuspolicies>) to UF's academic policies and campus resources, including information on:

- Class Attendance
- Make-up Exams
- Assignments
- Accommodations/Disability Resources Center
- Grading Policies
- Course Evaluations
- Guidance on how to Provide Constructive Feedback
- UF's Honesty Policy
- In-Class Recording

As well as **academic resources**, including:

- E-learning technical support
- Career Connections Center
- Library Support
- Academic Resources: ex. General study skills and tutoring.
- Writing Studio: ex. Help brainstorming, formatting, and writing papers.
- Academic Complaints: Office of the Ombuds

- Enrollment Management Complaints (Registrar, Financial Aid, Admissions)
- UF Student Success Initiative: for resources that support your success as a UF student, and

Campus Health and Wellness Resources:

- UF Whole Gator Resources: for resources that are designed to help you thrive physically, mentally, and emotionally at UF.

Studio Policies:

Critique:

Your work in the design studio will develop through presentations and group discussions about the work during each class session. From time to time, at the end of a project or at a critical moment of the work, more formal “critiques” are scheduled. These are public presentations of the work and provide a forum for its discussion. Usually, one or more external critics are invited to provide a fresh viewpoint and to stimulate discussion. These sessions are usually more formal than class sessions and should be taken seriously. Critics come in on their own time and expend a serious level of energy on trying to understand your endeavors and give you good feedback. You should think of your presentation not as a moment of judgment but as an opportunity to get input on possible directions for future development, whether through continued work on the project or through work on future projects.

Please recognize that the critiques of your peers and studio colleagues provide you with excellent learning opportunities and will be essential to your education as a designer. You are required to both attend and actively participate in the discussions of work by others.

Studio Culture:

We ask that you understand that the studio is a public space and conduct yourselves in an appropriate manner. The work atmosphere must accommodate a range of tastes in music, language, public conduct, and so forth. Be both courteous toward and tolerant of your colleagues. Remember, the studio is an academic workplace, not an extension of your private house or apartment. Treat it as a professional environment, and act as you would if working at an architectural firm. This includes curtailing loud music and conversations, no smoking (UF is a tobacco-free campus), e-cigarettes, or vaping.

When working in the studio outside of class, please respect the wishes of your fellow classmates by limiting loud, boisterous, and/or long mobile phone conversations, as these may be distracting to others. If requested, please take your conversation out of the studio.