

WELCOME!

“Drawing is perhaps all and everything that landscape architects do...
They draw in order to construe and construct visions and arguments
about dwelling and landscape.”

– James Corner

INSTRUCTOR
Amanda V. Szot
avsot@umich.edu

OFFICE HOURS
Th 6pm-7pm (zoom)
or by appointment
(subject to change)

Landscape architecture is a complex endeavor! Landscape architects engage in a variety of activities from ecological restoration to urbanism and across a wide range of scales from the single-family yard to multi-state/multi-national regions. Landscape architects deal with complicated sets of information...so, they must acquire the skills to critically examine, organize, and represent information so they can communicate effectively. **In other words, you become a visual storyteller.**

Course Description. This class is an introduction to the basic techniques and terminology relating to the visual communication component of landscape architecture. The objectives of this course are to understand the various 2-dimensional communication techniques used to represent 3-dimensional designs and abstract concepts. You should also begin to effectively and thoughtfully prepare professional presentations. We will be focused on hand graphics, though I will introduce Photoshop, Illustrator and InDesign as appropriate as you explore a range of presentation formats.

Observe. Experiment. Communicate.

Use this class and time in the program to begin to develop your creative practice. This may look different for everyone because not everyone solves design problems the same way. Discover what YOUR process is. Landscape architecture is often defined as a PRACTICE because we continue to hone our skills and abilities on a daily basis. You continue to learn and evolve throughout your career (both as a student and as a professional), but good habits and practices start now.

There are three components that comprise the work: sketchbooks + projects + outside exploration

You will have an ongoing sketchbook commitment! The intent here is to develop good habits in the daily use of a sketchbook and how it supports the development of your personal practice so it can benefit your design projects. Use the sketchbook to record ideas, resources, research, questions, decision-making, techniques, notes – and of course, to draw! It's the testing ground for your primary project work. Explore ideas, try different techniques, develop color palettes, create storyboards, etc. Whatever is going to help you execute your project – this is where you'll be working out your approach...basically, the more you practice drawing, the easier it becomes!

You'll have several design projects throughout the semester. Your project work will be where you focus on overall storytelling using visual communication. You will create many iterations, explore solutions, develop discipline and endurance with project content, and focus on craft.

Pay attention to the world around you. Individual investigation and ambition are important aspects of this course (and, frankly, of any creative endeavor). There's just too much out there for us to cover it all in class. It is assumed that you will be an active and inquisitive participant in this class, and that you will conduct research and reading outside of class. This may happen in various ways from traditional research in the library, to viewing exhibitions, listening to podcasts, etc – many new resources are available online which allow you to access things you may not have had an opportunity to view or attend under normal circumstances. Keep your eyes open for unique opportunities to learn new things!

EAS 586 VISUALIZING THE ENVIRONMENT Fall 2021

Communication. I will always do my very best to reply to email messages in a reasonable amount of time. Email is the best way to reach me since I do not have an office in the Dana Building and am only on campus on class days. I welcome questions! My office hours are by appointment, and I can meet with folks after class or other days via Zoom, with advance notice. And in return, I hope that you are a clear communicator with me!

Attendance & Participation. Attendance is required. If situations come up that make it impossible for you to attend class, please talk to me. I also recognize that we're still in unusual circumstances. Let's all be patient with the process and each other, and we'll work through any challenges that come up. It is your responsibility to access any assignments or materials that are distributed. All materials will always be on Canvas, and if anything is discussed or shared during class, I'll always add links/etc to Canvas too. Students are also expected to attend all pin-ups and reviews.

Desk critiques are a big part of the course. While they may be informal, it doesn't mean that they're any less important! Part of desk critiques is being prepared with work to show and/or questions to ask. I welcome questions outside of class and will do my best to work with you individually over zoom if needed.

Evaluation. Projects will be evaluated by a combination of work ethic, participation, ability to think critically, and attention to craft. Each project is 100 points and will be calculated using the following percentage value:

Craft (35%). Craft means that you have paid attention to detail, used your materials skillfully, followed instructions for the submittal of your deliverables, as well as the overall cleanliness of presentation (no sloppy trimming, accidental marks, stains, bends, creases, folds, etc.). In other words: take care, pay attention to details, and be neat! Since work is most often done by hand and submitted digitally, I will also take into account how well you've documented your work digitally.

Thoughtfulness and Creativity (35%). This area addresses the amount of effort or degree of difficulty exhibited in finished projects, evidence of extra research and planning. I will be looking for thoughtful solutions to the assigned projects, with appropriate problem solving, aesthetic considerations and creativity.

Productivity (30%). This will be assessed by evidence that you tested various approaches and that revisions and corrections were made along the way based on feedback from me and others. This means having projects ready and turned in on time, showing up for class prepared and ready to work, being prepared for pin-up reviews and paying attention during tutorials and discussions. It also includes the effective use of your sketchbook in the development of your project work.

The sketchbook has a total of 60 points possible (5 points per week).

Late Items

Late projects with no prior notice will receive a full grade deduction. (Thirty minutes doesn't really count as prior notice under most circumstances). If you're having trouble with the work, or need help, or are ill – just have clear communication. I will be as flexible as I can under our current circumstances, but as graduate students I believe in your ability to recognize when you might be running into challenges.

Grading Scale

Grades will be calculated by dividing points earned by total possible points. This will give a percentage, which I use with the scale >>>>>

GRADE	POINTS	Description
A+	100 - 97	Outstanding
A	96.9 - 94	Good
A-	93.9 - 90	
B+	89.9 - 86	Proficient
B	85.9 - 83	
B-	82.9 - 80	
C+	79.9 - 76	Partially proficient
C	75.9 - 73	
C-	72.9 - 70	
D+	69.9 - 66	All final grades below C- are indicative of failure at the graduate level and cannot be counted toward degree requirements.
D	65.9 - 63	
D-	62.9 - 60	
F	59.9 - 0	

Important Policies from Rackham Graduate School concerning Grades (for COVID-related updates, please visit <https://rackham.umich.edu/covid-19/>)

- *To maintain satisfactory academic standing, graduate students must make satisfactory progress toward their degrees and have a minimum Rackham cumulative grade point average (GPA) of B (3.00 on a 4.00 point scale)*
- *Students who fall below the GPA requirement of their program or Rackham are placed on academic probation*
- *Coursework is graded with a letter system (A, B, C, D, or E)*
- *Courses in which grades of D or E are earned cannot be used to fulfill degree requirements*
- *An instructor may add "+" or "-" to grades*

>> PROJECTS (SUBJECT TO MODIFICATION)

00

Sketchbook (60 pts)

Semester-long effort to develop a robust sketchbook habit. 10 points per submittal.

01

Design Elements & Principles (100 pts)

Getting familiar with terminology and observing, plus efficiency in communication

02

Plan & Section Graphics (100 pts)

LA Basics! Hand rendering and dimensioning for a small-scale site design of a garden

03

Vignette Sketching & Technique (100pts)

Applying principles of perspective sketching using different types of drawing media

04

Mapping & Storytelling (100pts)

Designing a communication and interpretive illustration combining data and art.

05

Capstone Project (100pts)

Synthesizing elements from the semester in one piece of graphic storytelling communication.

>> DETAILED SCHEDULE (SUBJECT TO MODIFICATION!)

WEEK	DATES	M O N D A Y	W E D N E S D A Y
1	8/30, 9/1	Studio introductions & Overview; Sketchbook project; Introduction to materials & media	Presentation: Design Principles & Elements; Introduce Project 01 Design Principles & Elements ; InDesign demo
2	9/6, 8	Labor Day, No class	Project 01 Due ; Presentation: Landscape Architecture Graphics; Introduce Project 02 (Plan & Section Graphics) ; Q&A;
3	9/13, 15	Workday & Individual check-ins	Workday & desk critiques
4	9/20, 22	Presentation: Section Graphics; workday & desk critiques	Workday & desk critiques
5	9/27, 29	Project 02 Due; Introduce Project 03 Presentation: Perspective Sketching & Creating Vignettes;	Workday & desk critiques (prelim sketch review)
6	10/4, 6	Workday & desk critiques (tonal value work)	Workday & desk critiques (tonal value finished, begin color)
7	10/11, 13	Workday & desk critiques (color work)	Workday & desk critiques (final tweaks)
8	10/18, 20	FALL BREAK	Project 04 Due; Introduce Project 05: Mapping as Storytelling ; Presentation, Begin planning
9	10/25, 27	Workday & desk critiques	Workday & desk critiques
10	11/1, 3	Progress review	Workday & desk critiques
11	11/8, 10	Progress review	Workday & desk critiques
12	11/15, 17	Project 05 Due ; Presentations	Introduce Project 06 (using same site as studio course)
13	11/22, 24	Workday & desk critiques	THANKSGIVING BREAK, NO CLASS
14	11/29, 12/1	Workday & desk critiques	Informal reviews
15	12/6, 8	Workday & desk critiques (LAST CLASS MEETING)	FINAL PROJECT DUE

ART & DRAWING SUPPLIES

Art, drawing, and engineering supplies can get very expensive. It's most likely not necessary to purchase *all* of these supplies at once. The list below is typical for landscape architecture studios, but it is not an all-encompassing list.

In addition to drawing supplies, you will also need to subscribe to Adobe Creative Cloud and download Photoshop, Illustrator, InDesign, and Adobe Acrobat Pro. This software is free to U-M students and is a BIG savings

More here: <https://its.umich.edu/computing/computers-software/adobe-creative-cloud>

COLORED PENCILS

- You can start with a set, like Prismacolor, which you can further supplement as necessary (see the list of colors for markers). Avoid the "verithin" style of Prismacolors. They're not great for blending.

BLACK PENS AND MARKERS

- Felt Tip Markers.** Medium, Fine, and Extra Fine (there are multiple brands to choose from. Get a set that contains various widths). A typical brand is Micron, but many brands work just fine.
- Sharpie Pens
- Pentel Sign Pens
- You can also use fountain pens or other black pens. Ball point pens aren't great, but can work in a pinch.

COLORED MARKERS

RECOMMENDED/Common Marker Colors (AVOID BUYING MARKER SETS)

Marker preference is sometimes a very personal thing! There are a lot of options out there. I personally prefer Prismacolor, but you may have your own personal preference.

Note that the Chartpak markers do have a pretty powerful chemical smell due to the type of solvent used. The colors you need will probably vary based on your projects, and your personal color preferences. But, a good start to your palette could include the following (note, these are Prismacolor names; equivalents are available in Chartpak or other brands):

- a wide variety of greens** (such as dark, grass, celadon, sage, apple, spring, spruce, leaf, lime, forest, dark olive, jade)
- a wide variety of browns, yellows, & reds** (brick red, tuscan red, henna, dark brown, tan, sand, beige, cream, wheat, buff, sepia, poppy red, canary yellow, deco yellow, dark umber)
- a wide variety of blues and purples** (indigo, navy, ultramarine, true blue, cerulean, cloud blue, blue slate, Mediterranean blue, peacock blue, violet)
- a range of greys** (you can go with cool grey, warm grey, or french grey)
- black**
- clear blenders** (if prismacolor)

PAPER

- Trace Paper: 12" roll (white or buff)
- Trace Paper: 24" roll (white or buff)**
- Pad of vellum, preferably 11x17"** (note: not vellum surface, it's a particular type of paper that works well with markers); "marker paper" also works
- Sketchbook (8x10 or 9x12 preferable)**
- Other large drawing paper if desired

PENCILS AND ERASERS

- Drawing pencils.** Get a wide range of hardness (6B, 2B, HB, 2H, 4H); B = soft, H = hard; The higher the number, the more hard or soft the graphite is.
- Pencil sharpener
- Erasing shield
- Kneadable eraser
- Plastic eraser**, and/or click eraser (useful for small fixes)

DRAFTING SUPPLIES

- Engineer's Scale** (be sure to get the scale that is for use working with Feet, not Meters! You may also want to purchase an Architect's Scale, but you will not need one for SEAS 586)
- Rolling Ruler**
- Aluminum Ruler (with cork backing) 24"**
- Drafting tape or Drafting dots**
- Circle template (large and small radii)**
- X-acto blade, or other utility knife**
- Ames lettering guide**
- T-square with inking edge**
- 45° Triangle (w/ inking edge)**
- 30°-60° Triangle (w/ inking edge)**

PORTABILITY TOOLS

- "Tackle box" for drawing tools
- Drawing tube or portfolio to carry drawings

WHERE TO BUY ONLINE – look around for best pricing, and check any local shops to you!

Cheap Joe's Art Stuff

<http://www.cheapjoes.com/>

Dick Blick / Utrecht

<http://www.utrecht.com/>

Dick Blick

<http://www.dickblick.com>

Jerry's Artarama

<http://www.jerrysartarama.com>

Michael's

<http://www.michaels.com>
look for coupons!

Amazon

Amazon.com

WORKING IN THE DANA BUILDING STUDIO

Food & drink. Eating is not permitted in classrooms, but is permitted in common areas with appropriate distancing. Please wear masks at all times while not actively eating.

(If you are at home working—a cautionary remark: be careful with snacks and beverages around your work! It's such a bummer to spill on something you've put hours of work into!)

Masks. Masks are required at all times (including while teaching), regardless of vaccination status. Everyone is still required to successfully complete the ResponsiBLUE daily health screening each day before entering Dana, regardless of vaccination status.

SEAS Policies. For the FULL DESCRIPTION of SEAS COVID policies and relevant updates, please visit <https://seas.umich.edu/covid-19>

Your drawing & design tools. Label your stuff with your initials. Because so many people have the same exact tools, it's easy to accidentally take someone else's stuff. That way it's easy to keep track of your own tools too.

SETTING UP A HOME STUDIO

Here are some resources that you can use to help make a more comfortable studio working environment at home.

Portable Drafting tables

- Consider a portable drafting table or use large, stable surface free from bumps or uneven seams. You don't need a full drafting table if you don't have one. Portable surfaces work just fine and you can put them over another table so you can move your work out of the way when you're not actively drawing or designing. This can be a handy option for when you have limited space. I would recommend no smaller than 18x24, though 24x36" is ideal. Some have a connected rolling horizontal guide (called a Mayline)—those can be very helpful, though they're not required.

Here is a search result for these on Amazon. Take a look and see if something works for you:

<https://www.amazon.com/portable-drafting-table/?k=portable+drafting+table>

- Another option is to make your own table with a large board and some filing cabinets or other sturdy anchors, or even some inexpensive desk systems from Ikea! Even just a board like this: <https://www.ikea.com/us/en/p/linnmon-tabletop-white-00251135/> is great. There are multiple sizes to choose from.

Drawing Board Cover

- Using a board cover provides a really nice and smooth surface on which to draw. These covers are also considered "self healing" so you can do minor cutting with exacto blades. I highly recommend these, even if you don't use a portable drafting table. It will protect the table you're drawing on from errant marks or cuts.

<https://www.dickblick.com/products/alvin-vyco-drawing-board-covers/>

Lighting

- A task light or work lamp is going to be super useful for you. Standard overhead lighting isn't great for drawing, so consider some sort of lamp that you can use to light your work area. Try to get a bulb that has a nice broad spectrum light so it doesn't interfere with your color work.

BOOKS AND OTHER REFERENCES

There is no required textbook for this course, but here are a lot of suggestions for your home library. If you do not want to purchase books at this time, check out both the local library and the U-M libraries for reference material. There are also many free options online that may be helpful for you too.

One of the critical ways to learn is to **LOOK AND OBSERVE**. There are so many examples of beautiful and successful drawings, visual communication, diagrams, and maps. Dive in and look at the work of award-winning students and design firms around the world. Bookmark the stuff that you like! Follow those design firms on social media! Find fellow students at U-M in the design professions to see what they're doing, too. Or just follow some hashtags!

Free resources

- https://issuu.com/detail-magazine/docs/344_landscape_drawing_book2look (partial book only)

Books

- *Landscape Graphics* (Grant Reid)
- *Drawing for Landscape Architects* (Sabrina Wilk)
- *Landscape Architecture Documentation Standards: Principles, Guidelines, and Best Practices* (Design Workshop)
- *Color Drawing* (Michael E. Doyle)
- *Freehand Drawing & Discovery* (James Richards)
- *Digital Drawing for Landscape Architecture* (Cantrell/ Michaels)
- *Pen and Ink Drawing* (Alphonso Dunn)

U-M Library system

- lib.umich.edu
- Librarian–TCAUP: Rebecca Mary Price (rpw@umich.edu)
- Librarian–SEAS: Jacob Kenneth Glenn (jkg Glenn@umich.edu)
- Librarian – Art & Design: Jamie Vander Broek (jl ausch@umich.edu)

Ann Arbor District Library

- aadl.org
- apply for a library card: <https://aadl.org/node/569959>
- General questions: ask@aadl.org
- <https://aadl.org/contactus>
- Archives: archives@aadl.org

Professional Organizations

- American Society of Landscape Architects
- American Planning Association
- American Institute of Architects

Magazines

- Topos
- Landscape Architecture Magazine
- Planning Magazine

Web / Social

- Land8
- Urban Sketchers
- Act of Mapping (<https://www.instagram.com/act.of.mapping/>)
- Nina Johansson (https://www.instagram.com/nina_sketching/)
- Gabi Campanario (<https://www.instagram.com/gabicampanario/>)
- follow hashtags on instagram

Podcasts

- Design Observer
- Creative Pep Talk
- Art For Your Ear
- Windowsill Chats with Margo Tantau
- 99% Invisible
- The Lisa Congdon Sessions
- Design of Business | Business of Design
- Design Matters with Debbie Millman
- SO MANY MORE! Share your favorites!