



Graduate Program in Landscape Studies University of Wisconsin-Madison

--a Welcome and Guide Book--

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Hello Landscape Studies Student

Welcome to the Department of Landscape Architecture at the University of Wisconsin-Madison! You are enrolling in one of the best known and most highly regarded landscape research programs in North America. We are certain you have made a wise choice in deciding to pursue a graduate degree in our Department.

This document is intended to provide you with useful background information about the Department of Landscape Architecture. It should be regarded as a roadmap or guide for the time you spend as a graduate student. For general information about the UW-Madison Graduate School, as well as housing and community resources please refer to the *Guide to Graduate Student Life*, written for grad students, by grad students, and published by the Graduate Student Council. The Guide to Graduate Student Life is available online at: <http://info.gradsch.wisc.edu/admin/gsc/gradguide/>.

Program Overview

The Department of Landscape Architecture offers two graduate research degrees: a Master of Science in Landscape Architecture (MSLA); and a Master of Arts in Landscape Architecture (MALA). In addition, students may opt to conduct a graduate *project* grounded in research, through the MALA degree. The project-based degree option still draws on the Department's strength in research, but offers flexibility for students interested in a specific design or case study application of their research. *The Department does not offer an accredited first professional MLA degree.*

Students who follow the MSLA track generally pursue course work and a thesis that features landscape research in either the biological sciences or social sciences. MALA students, on the other hand, usually focus on landscape research that emphasizes history, the humanities, or the arts. Some students may choose to undertake research that combines work in both the sciences and the humanities.

Areas of Concentration

Based on faculty interests and expertise, the Department offers concentrations in four areas of study:

- Bioregional and Urban Ecosystem Studies
- Community Design
- Landscape History and Cultural Resource Preservation
- Design, Restoration, and Management of Native Plant Communities

Now that you have been accepted

❖ *Meet your advisor*

You probably received by email a note of acceptance from the Department. Usually that note mentions the faculty member who will serve as your initial advisor. It may be someone who you expressed interest in working with, or the faculty member we feel best matches your interests and is able to take additional advisees. In all cases, the person noted will have agreed to be your initial advisor.

We encourage you to talk with your advisor soon after you hear from us, or as soon as you arrive on campus. If you will be away from campus until just before the term starts, you should correspond with your advisor by phone or email. At this entry stage your advisor can be very helpful with aspects such as orientation events and selecting courses for your first semester!

❖ *Registering for your first set of courses on campus*

a. How?

Once your admission is processed through the Graduate School to the Registrar you will have access to the *MyUW* Portal (my.wisc.edu). Through this portal you can view the timetable of classes, register for classes, check enrollment, check fees, access online classes, and find many other academic links.

b. What classes?

For most graduate students entering landscape studies, we recommend that you begin with a suite of our core, required courses from those that are offered during your initial semester. For example, if you start during the fall semester you would likely enroll in:

- LA710 – Theories of Landscape Change (2 credits)
- LA940 – Graduate Colloquium (1 credit)
- LA720 – Critical Inquiry in Landscape Architecture (2 credits, alt years)
- OR LA920 – Regional Design Workshop (3 cr, alternate years)
- One additional course in area of specialty

You can also look at course descriptions posted at:

www.la.wisc.edu/courses/gcourses.htm. Your advisor can best help you find supporting courses, and help you arrange the timing of your core courses around those offerings. The maximum load for graduate students in landscape studies is 12 credits per semester. Most full-time students take 8-9 credits.

❖ *Do you have funding?*

a. Possible funding venues

You may qualify for one or more of the following assistantships sometime during your graduate student career: Teaching Assistants (TA), Project Assistants (PA), Research Assistants (RA), and Fellowships. Each of these is described in more detail at: www.la.wisc.edu/graduate/funding.htm. All continuing and prospective graduate students in the Landscape Studies program will be considered for the Wisconsin Distinguished Graduate Fellowship and teaching assistantships offered through the Department. No special application is needed for incoming students, but we do ask that continuing students apply for specific TA opportunities. Please talk with your advisor if you would like to find a research or project assistantship.

Any appointment that is one-third time or greater includes tuition remission, a stipend, and access to health benefits. Students who receive an assistantship may also receive a tuition waiver from the University.

The minimum credit load for research assistants and fellows is 8 credits per semester. For teaching and project assistants the minimum is 2 credits per semester.

Other assistantships are listed at www.jobcenter.wisc.edu.

b. Getting financial assistance in place

In some cases, students are admitted to our graduate program with an offer for funding, usually in the form of an assistantship. In that case, you will have received a letter of offer stating the terms of your assistantship. It is very important that you confirm your acceptance of the offer. Then once you arrive on campus, please stop by the Department office to complete financial paperwork and get on the payroll. **All funded students are expected to be on campus at least one week before classes start to prepare for their assistantship responsibilities.**

❖ *Access to the department's resources*

Members of the landscape architecture graduate program enjoy the convenience of personal office space that is either directly connected or extremely close to studio space.

- **Graduate student offices:** In most cases, two grad students will share a grad office. Offices are located in Agricultural Hall Mezzanine and in Hiram Smith Hall. Priority is given to TAs when assigning office space, with the remaining offices being assigned to funded graduate students. Any remaining space is distributed to grad students by request. Office assignments and keys are distributed at the beginning of the semester. See Vicki Haynes in Room 1 of Ag. Hall with any questions regarding office assignments.
- **Computer labs:** There are computers in both Ag Hall and Hiram Smith Hall. Landscape Architecture computers can be accessed only with a department-assigned login ID. See Jason in Room 15 of Ag Hall with any computer access questions.

- **Printing and plotting:** Black and white and color printers are located in the Ag Hall studio; there is also a large format plotter in Room 15 of Ag Hall. Printing fees are posted in the studio. Deposits to printing accounts can be made in Room 1 of Ag Hall.
- **Scanning:** Scanners are available in the Ag Hall studio and in Room 15. The scanner in the studio has an A3 size glass and is free to use. The scanner in Room 15 is for oversized paper and can be used for a fee. Fees are listed in the studio. For technological questions, please see Jason in Room 15.
- **Cable/wireless internet service:** Cable and wireless connections are available in the graduate student offices. Please see Jason in Room 15 to get connected.
- **Telephones:** Two telephones are available to LA grad students for outgoing and incoming calls. One is in Room 1 on the front desk, and the other is in M25Q. Both use the same number (608) 262-7300. While there is no charge for local calls, long distance calls must be charged to a grant. Incoming callers will be able to leave a message at the above number. There is also a phone in the center studio near the East exit.
- **Travel awards:** Limited funds (approx \$100) are available for research travel twice per year. The deadline for fall applications is October 15 for travel Jul-Dec, while the spring deadline is March 15 for Jan-Jun travel. To increase your chances of receiving travel funds take note of all announcements from your graduate student representative, or meet with a member of the Graduate Committee to get details about the application process.

❖ *Connecting with other graduate students in the program*

- Graduate Student Representative: You will likely meet the graduate student rep for landscape studies the new student orientation, For the 2005-06 academic year it is Sarah King, (sellenking@yahoo.com). You may even hear from her before you arrive! She can help you to find the resources in the department. Ask your grad student rep any question regarding the program or living in Madison.
- Intense study and research away from home can be very draining. Therefore, graduate students are encouraged to share research and living experiences. Activities such as picnics, potlucks, hockey matches, baseball games, study groups, and so forth are held throughout every semester. Talk to your student representative and watch your email for information about future events. If you have an idea for a gathering, don't hesitate to introduce it to your student representative. That person will be able to steer you in the direction of a couple seasoned members of the program who will be able to help you organize a successful event.

Degree Requirements

❖ *Courses and Credits*

All graduate students are required to take the following courses: LA 710, LA 720*, LA 920* and LA 940 (twice); a methods course (most likely LA 740*); and two courses within a concentration area selected by the student and approved by his/her thesis advisory committee.

A minimum of 36 total credits is required, 30 of which must be for course work, including independent study credits. A maximum of 6 thesis research credits may be applied toward the total credit requirement for the degree.

***Please note:** LA 720, LA740 and LA 920 are not offered every year, so students should register for these courses whenever they are available.

Many opt to incorporate geographic information systems (GIS) into their studies here. Great! There are many opportunities to learn and practice GIS on campus. Depending on your previous background in GIS, we generally recommend that students take a sequence like:

Geography 377 – Introduction to Geographic Information Systems (if no prior GIS study), possibly followed by an applications course such as:

LA/IES/Soils 695 – Applications of GIS in Natural Resources, OR

URPL/LA/CEE 655 – Computerized Land Information Systems

❖ *Thesis*

Each student is required to form a *thesis advisory committee* as soon as possible during the second semester and no later than the third semester. This committee includes three members. The Major Professor and at least one other member must be from the Department of Landscape Architecture. All three members may be from the Department.

Each student must prepare a written *thesis proposal* that includes the following elements:

1. A clear statement of the problem and sub-problems to be addressed in the research.
2. A justification of the importance of the problem vis-à-vis landscape design, planning or management.
3. Identification of the specific methodology by which the students intends to acquire answers to the research questions.

Each student must schedule a thesis proposal defense as part of *degree certification*, preferably toward the end of his/her second semester, but no later than the 12th week of the semester in which the student has registered for a total of 24 credits. Students should obtain a copy of the **Certification Memo** for associated forms and details – (available as a PDF through www.la.wisc.edu/graduate/ or from the Student Coordinator in Room 1).

Each student must schedule a *thesis defense* during the semester in which s/he intends to graduate. This step includes asking the Department to submit a **Warrant Request Form** to the Graduate School on behalf of the student. This request must be submitted a **minimum** of 3 weeks before the thesis defense or the degree deadlines for the semester in which the student intends to graduate.

Finally, each student must prepare and submit one *bound copy of the thesis* to the Department of Landscape Architecture. We do not require that your thesis be deposited in Memorial Library. Nevertheless, you may find it helpful to visit the Grad School site on preparing your Master's thesis:

<http://info.gradsch.wisc.edu/admin/academicservices/mguide.html>

❖ *Other degree requirements*

In addition to course work and thesis requirements, each student must give two *colloquium presentations* in LA 940. The first presentation is typically given during the second time the student enrolls in LA 940. The second presentation is given as close as possible to the time of the thesis defense. The student need not necessarily be enrolled in LA 940 at the time of the second presentation.

All graduate students are strongly encouraged to develop and submit the manuscript for a journal article based on his/her thesis research. The target journal must be identified as part of the degree certification process. This includes submitting a statement of the journal's editorial policy, including manuscript submission guidelines. Details are given on the last page of the Certification Memo.

An ideal (but hypothetical) 2.5 year schedule

Note: it is possible to complete a Masters degree in this program within 2 years, IF you register for 9 credits per semester, take all required courses when offered, and make steady progression on your thesis in consultation with your advisor and committee members.

First Year, Fall Semester (semester 1)

Coursework: (9 credits) LA710, LA940, LA720 OR LA920 (depending on which is offered that year), additional 1-2 courses in concentration.

Thesis: Begin thinking about thesis research projects in consultation with advisor, think about thesis advisory committee members.

General: Begin mapping out future course work, and explore research methods course options.

First Year, Spring Semester (semester 2)

Coursework: (9 credits) LA740 and/or other methods course, LA695 or other GIS course, if appropriate, and additional courses in concentration.

Thesis: Begin work on thesis proposal, consult examples of successful proposals, and begin literature review.

General: By the end of this semester schedule degree certification and thesis proposal defense (although many will do this in their third semester).

First Year, Summer Session

Coursework: as needed to maintain assistantship (may include research credits) or to take special classes to make up deficiencies or to remain on track for planned graduation.

Thesis: conduct fieldwork, collect data or do archival research.

General: Check in with advisor, revise thesis plans as needed after beginning data collection. Many take one of our summer field courses as well, such as LA677 – Field study in Native Plant Communities.

Second Year, Fall Semester (semester 3)

Coursework: (9 credits) LA 940 (including first presentation), LA 920 (when offered), plus additional courses in concentration (may include research credits)

Thesis: continue data collection, begin data analysis, and write up literature review and methods chapters.

General: You should schedule your thesis proposal defense (degree certification) as early as possible, but no later than the 12th week of the semester.

Second Year, Spring Semester (semester 4)

Coursework: (9 credits)

Thesis: You should schedule your thesis defense no later than three weeks prior to the spring degree deadline. Don't forget to ask the department to submit a "Warrant Request Form" at least three weeks before your defense.

General: Also, submit a bound copy of your thesis to the Department.

Fall Semester (semester 5) – if needed

Coursework: register for any needed courses remaining, such as LA920 (if not taken previously).

General: Be prepared to return to campus for your second colloquium presentation in LA 940.

Appendix (all available through www.la.wisc.edu/graduate/)

- ❖ Faculty bios
- ❖ Areas of concentration
- ❖ Courses / sequences
- ❖ Certification memo & form (pdf)