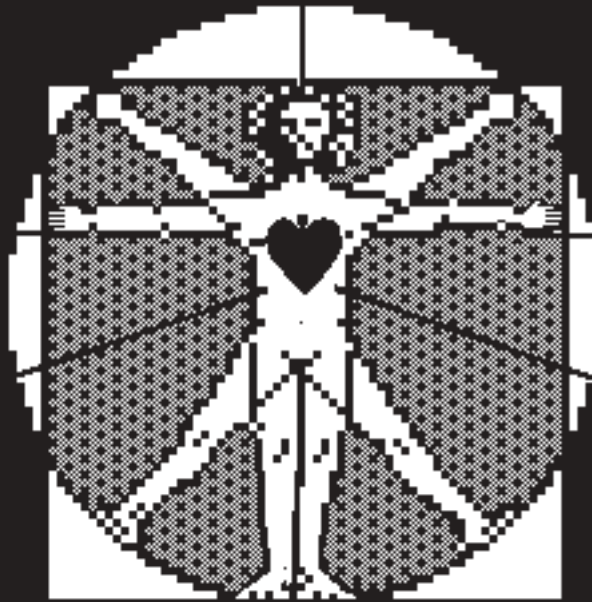


# Ways of Thinking About Design



## COMPREHENSIVE PROJECT SYLLABUS

LA 490 & LA 499 Fall 2004-05 • Department of Landscape Architecture • Jerome Diethelm

**C**omprehensive Project is an important part of the fifth year planning and design studio experience. Students who have finished their fourth year studio requirements choose an independent project over the summer prior to their fifth year and return to fall term ready to explore their projects through **LA 490 Preparation for Comprehensive Project**, a class intended to help them begin thinking about their project and more consciously about the complex human process of designing.

The object of the Prep. class is to get each student organized and designing so they are well-underway in the fall term and well-positioned to do advanced design developmental work in **LA499 Comprehensive Project Studio**.

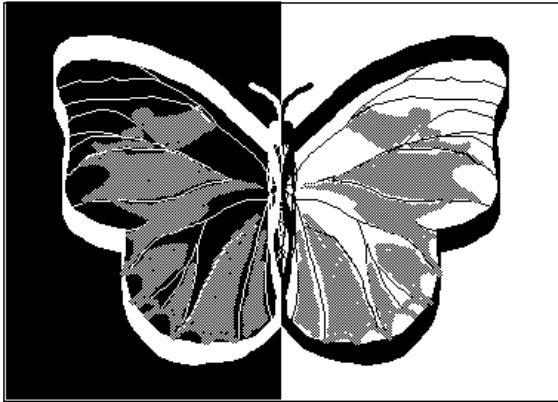
The successful completion of LA 490 is required for entry into these advanced studios.

### 5th Year Program Requirements

For 5th year students the planning and design program requirement is two studios + Comp. Prep. Typically a 5th year student will take LA 4/594, the “planning” studio in the fall term while taking Comp. Prep. and then Comp. Studio in the winter or spring. Registration for the fall term presently shows 17 Comp. Prep. students, so only one Comp. Studio has been scheduled. This year it seems, unless numbers swell, everyone will automatically get their first choice of studio - winter term. Rob Ribe will be the Comp. Studio instructor.

### Two Classes Make A Whole

It’s important to understand at the beginning that **LA 490 + LA 499 = Comprehensive Project**.



The two classes are conceived together as a continuum - as a whole and interconnected design experience. The intent is to move beyond the conception of programming as a activity somehow separate from designing, something done at the beginning of a project and then set aside as finished, and to reintegrate the experience of thinking about designing and project programming with more traditional formative exploration and expression.

LA 490 emphasizes the early stages of designing, a creative process which includes: a widening and deepening of awareness, expansion of relevant experience, environmental design problem formation and articulation, evaluating environmental situations and places, imagining and probing possibilities, establishing promising directions and projecting early planning and design resolutions which set an **“intending toward...-forming out of...”** design developmental cycling process into full motion.

LA 499 emphasizes the continued formative development of design thinking, i.e., design ideas, feelings, qualities, relationships, needs, wants, aspirations, the “aboutness of places”... and the creative ways that these are reintegrated into planning and design proposals for the physical transformation of places.

A more general way of saying this is that Comp. Prep. emphasizes **“attentional and intentional”** realms of designing, which naturally includes early **“formative”** expression that ranges from

problem and program construction through first attempts at schematic design.

Comp. Studio emphasizes **advanced formative development: i.e., progressively more specific, integrative, planning and design proposals for policy and physical transformations; planning and design rehearsals and expressions; design communications, evaluations and presentations.**

At the same time, there is a continuing expected growth through the studio term of people/problem/place awareness and the inevitable expansion, reconfiguration and shifts of emphasis in the project’s programmatic agenda. Programs grow as understanding deepens through designing!

## **Class Objectives:**

### **Fullfilling personal needs:**

Comprehensive Project is an important opportunity to take more personal responsibility for a whole design experience. For some, it is a perfect time to concentrate on a personal aspect of the planning and design process that still needs work. For others, it is a unique opportunity to work on that favorite place or type of project that captivates your imagination, engages your passions and so obviously needs your skillful attention. What better chance to apply your new, hard won insight and rapidly improving planning and design abilities?

Putting together an exemplary set of planning and design documents: well-written materials and a beautiful set of drawings that show (mom & dad, some prospective employer, your significant other, yourself...) what you can do has always been a common objective. But of course, the number of personal objectives are at least as great as the number of people who take the class, and these are understood as an educationally important part of the experience which deserves support

and respect. Comprehensive Project is by intention and tradition about the following:

**• INDEPENDENCE • PROJECT MANAGEMENT • RESPONSIBILITY**

...a project that you choose and develop yourself, with lots of conversation and advice of course, but essentially it is a project in which you take the lead and bear the major portion of project management responsibility.

**• COMPREHENSIVENESS • EXPRESSIVE FORM • COMMUNICATION**

...a more complete multi-scaled and multi-valued project than the usual one term studio allows, with better developed and expressed ideas and products and an effective rehearsal of the ways that people will experience the changes being proposed.

**• DESIGN THEORY, PROCESS AND METHODS**

...an opportunity to develop your working methods as a planner/designer by paying more conscious attention to designing as a process of environmental valuing - of interests and their expressions - which covers many scales of landscape time, place and interest.

**• DESIGN DEVELOPMENT • CONSTRUCTION PROCESSES AND MATERIALS • CONSTRUCTION COMMUNICATION**

...an opportunity to explore the nature of materials and the construction processes that fundamentally affect the realization of your design ideas.

**• BEAUTY • ELEGANCE • APTNESS • ELOQUENCE • PROFUNDITY • POETRY • ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE**

...an occasion for your most wonderful and mature work in the planning and design program.

**• PROJECT PRESENTATION • EFFECTIVE GROUP COMMUNICATION**

...that project that you proudly present to your many friends and colleagues in the department and your invited guests.

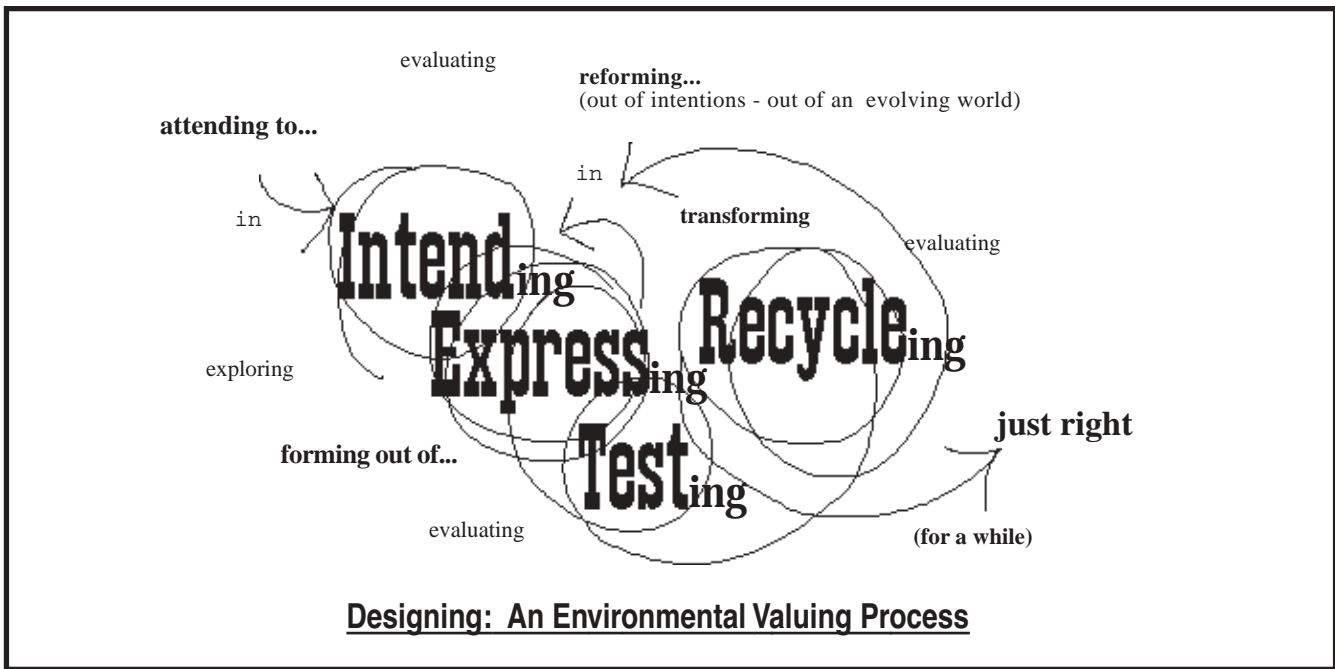
## **Comprehensive Project Requirements:**

**LA 490:** Class attendance, participation, the successful and timely completion of all assignments, and the completion of a satisfactory and useful **bound Project Proposal by the end of fall term.**

**LA 499:** Completion and presentation of Comp. Project work to the students, faculty and guests of the Department of Landscape Architecture at the end of the term in which the studio portion of the work is accomplished. **A digital record of the work (as per current department standards) must be turned in** after the presentation in order to receive credit for the class and to be cleared for graduation. The department requests that your CD also include a copy of your presentation script with your other materials and any slides (digital presentation etc.) of presentation models or other materials that will help to keep an adequate and expressive record of your work for future generations. Past comp projects are stored in tubes on the AAA Kibrary mezzanine

**CHOICE OF PROJECT:** The choice of project is left up to the student and requires no formal approval, although the instructor of LA 490 will provide project guidance and advice in order to help you scale and scope the work to the time available.

Since experience with **some focused design development** is a major educational objective for this class, all projects **must include some central element of the work which is resolvable in the 1/8" - 1/4" scale range or larger.** Students should also expect to propose specific processes and materials and include at least some strategic design development detail in their work. Since increased **comprehensiveness** is also a central objective, projects are expected to propose resolutions to environmental problems **at all relevant scales** and, in general, **to be multi-valued, multi-scaled, multi-timed and well-placed in their comprehensiveness.**



### **Fall '03 Comp. Prep. Meets:**

**U-H from 12:00-01:50 PM**

- U & H in Millrace 113 or larger review room as needed for discussion and feedback. Class usually meets one hour U.& H. on lecture days and for two hours, typically, for reviews and discussion. Our pin-up and review room is 231La.

- Most scheduled lectures are in the Millrace Computer Lab from 12:00-12:50, exploring class content through class software, presentations and digital notes. Reviews are from 12:00-1:50.
- Thursdays from 02:00-04:00 p.m. are reserved for individual project consultations in my office by appointment. Sign up on the sheet outside my office - 178 Onyx Bridge.

**The Millrace Computer Lab** has many electronic resources available, including word processing; page layout; image processing; graphic design and printing; CAD; and GIS. There are special Mac programs written for the class, including Designer PiE2K+3: Ways of Thinking About Design, which are available to students without cost. Class lectures, examples and special resources are all located in the LA 490 area of the Millrace Lab server.

### **Avuncular Comp. Advice:**

Regularly relate your growing understanding of your project, the people and the place, to what you propose to do and the renewed framework for human experience that your proposals bring into the world. Try to imagine what it will be like and worry in a positive sense about its environmental equity and sustainability.

Remember, designing is a faster, more effective and more satisfying experience for all concerned when it is understood as a valuing process and practiced developmentally. Like every child, a project must crawl and walk before it can dance. The growth of understanding in a project is probably a direct function of how many bad proposals you are willing to make, especially in the beginning. Projects thrive on the feedback of tentative physical resolutions and their testing. They grow rapidly in the garden of trial and error. **How glorious are the flowers of better.** If you allow yourself the time to do your project over many times you will get it just right.

# Final Proposal Requirements:

1. **General:** a well-organized, well-presented, useful, working tool. It should be possible to excerpt portions of this report to give to your “client”, classmates and critics so that they are clear about your project, your intentions and the current state of your proposals. Think of it as an intentional illustrated and visually expressive narrative.

## 2. **Proposal Sections:**

- a. Project title and short synopsis.
- b. **Main program narrative: a thorough, (20 pages), well-written and appropriately illustrated & diagrammed description of your project telling what and where it is and what your intentions are.**  
Incorporate in your narrative,
  1. a set of evaluative image-map (cognitive maps) diagrams of (at least) three appropriate scales and related diagnoses and...
  2. slides, photographs, maps, air photos and other images which help to explain the place of the project.
  3. a well-developed discussion of project **issues, questions and your intentions;** diagrams and discussions of important project processes;
  4. your resources: background information, research, precedents and other materials needed for each key project part.
  5. a project methodology; bar chart: schedule of tasks, time and proposed products in as much detail as possible so you can plan your time and efforts.
  6. a well-drawn “BAD” (i.e., a first try) schematic design proposal to scale.

Note: Don't include the class exercises except the schematic in your final report as such. Incorporate them into the proposal to help create a more readable, well-illustrated project narrative and in general to develop and cover a wide range of project content.

## LA 490 Expected Outcomes:

At the end of the fall term, students will have completed a series of six class exercises designed to assist with project development and will have folded in any insights they have gained into a well-illustrated (i.e., maps, drawings, diagrams, images...) and well-written project narrative. The project narrative **will have grown** from the very brief introductory description of Assignment No. 1, **Project On A Page**, and **will have been re-written** at least two more times - for the **mid-term submission** and the final Proposal version at the end of the class. (All the more reason to develop it electronically.)

The narrative, synopsis, and other materials listed

above, including a useful preliminary design proposal in schematic form will have been professionally packaged and **turned in on time**. Students will have preferred for winter or spring Comp. Studio and Jerry will have worked out an equitable, meritorious and fair distribution.

### **Reflections On Comp. Preps Past** (Recherche du Comp perdue)

Past experience underscores the importance of regular progress throughout the term and successfully reaching a schematic proposal level of project development. The more stressful Comp. experiences of past years can all be traced to poor initial preparation in Prep., a too casual approach to the intentional report, and an unwillingness to try to make an early, imperfect proposal to recycle and expand.



# Project On a Page

The first assignment is to put together a paragraph or two about your proposed project, or the project you are thinking about. Summarize your project and include an image which helps to further convey something about the work or place and turn one well-composed page in at the beginning of class next Monday Oct.4. Note the two stars on the class schedule. These denote something is due.

Usual questions:

**What if I am considering more than one project at this time?**

Do a page for each of them. If you keep it to a page, I think you will find that it is possible to focus on the essential and not be burdened by more work than is necessary.

**Can I talk to you about the project?**

Of course, but do your Project On a Page first. It helps you to formulate your thoughts, and it will be much easier to discuss what you have in mind after you have done some preliminary work.

I'll ask each one of you for about a five minute report on what you think you'll be doing in class on Monday. If you keep your reports brief and to the point, we can hear from everyone and get a good idea of what people are planning to do this year.

Project On a Page is the first submission of a description of your project (1 page w/ illustration); mid-term is the second (10+ pages); and end of term the third (20+ pages).

Dec. 2004

# Final Project Review Criteria

STUDENT \_\_\_\_\_  
PROJECT \_\_\_\_\_  
TITLE: \_\_\_\_\_

## CLASS REQUIREMENTS:

**1. Project Abstract - "5¢ worth"?**

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**2. "20 Page" Project Narrative?**

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with appropriate maps?  
images?  
diagrams?  
Did you discuss: project situation & issues?  
goals & objectives?  
project strategy (methods)?  
intended products?

**3. Project Schedule** (useful attempt to schedule tasks, time & products?)

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**4. Schematic Proposal?**

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**5. Adequate Resources** (references, precedent studies, reports...)?

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**6. Assignments 1-6 during the term, useful and on time?**

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**YOUR WORK IS:**

**COMPLETE** \_\_\_\_\_ **INCOMPLETE** \_\_\_\_\_

**YOU ARE ADMITTED TO WINTER** \_\_\_\_\_ **or SPRING** \_\_\_\_\_ **COMP STUDIO.**

LA 490 Grade \_\_\_\_\_ P/N \_\_\_\_\_

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# **Jerry's Final Review Criteria**

## *(or, so what are you really looking for?)*

**Student: Name** on project? (Don't laugh. Several of you didn't say who you were at mid-term. But I knew.) If not, can I figure it out by now? If I can't, you might take that as a clear indication of your semi-invisible presence in this process.

**Project Title:** Has there been an attempt to title the work usefully? Is the project name still the name of a big place without any evidence of focus or a point of view about it or is it starting to get to the heart of things, of the matter, of the place?

**Project Abstract:** Have you provided an abstract of your project that says what the work is, where it is, who it's for, what needs doing, what you intend to do about it and what you are going to produce in a paragraph or two? Have you expanded and developed this range of content in your narrative? It could - and often does - serve as an outline for your report.

**"20" Page Narrative:** Does this narrative now have a wholeness and an organization that makes sense, given the nature of the project? Does it tell the story of your project and your intentions? Has it become a useful tool for you to add to, a developing story of some complexity that will help you explain your work to yourself and others?

Have you discussed what you have constructed as "the problem," said what you think the issues are and helped articulate an understanding of the situation in which these issues arise? Have you, so to speak, dug a hole that your proposals can fill?

**Cognitive imagery at relevant scales?** Have you included the diagrammatic images and maps and other imagery in the narrative that explain what and where and the key relationships with some simultaneous immediacy and conceptual power, or are you still making me (or your client someday) search for the connections and wondering how to connect what your saying to the place? Have you adequately combined show with say? Have you reflected the range of scales in which your work takes place?

**Deep Parts?** If your project contains a number of sub-parts or systems, have you looked into each enough to be able to provide yourself adequate programmatic direction and support for your work, or are you still under the ill-fated illusion that you are going to use up a substantial portion of your studio time doing the kind of background research you should be doing this term?

**Intentional structure?** Does your narrative now reflect an intentional structure and do you know what this means? Does it cover central values in the work, convey important issues, goals and objectives, i.e. set out a direction, a course of action, identify some "ends in view," whether it calls them goals and objectives or not? Can I understand your overall strategy for the project, how you're going about it? Have you attempted to name the key products of your work? Are they appropriate and scaled to the time? Have you been able to use the class exercises in developing this part of the work in a useful way? Have you tried?

Have you responded to the feedback you got from me at mid-term, especially where there was definitely more that needed doing?

**Did you do assignments 1-6?** Did you pad your mid-term with the class assignments or rewrite the material as I had asked for inclusion in the developing project narrative? Have you rewritten important aspects of your earlier mid-term narrative (as any real designer would) in order to catch the growth of your thinking and allow it to reformulate, to settle out in a newer and richer way?

**Project Schedule:** Have you made a serious attempt to schedule your work over the next term or two? Have you broken the work down into useful sub-parts and tried to allocate time for its products so that you will be able to compare this projection with your actual experience in studio? Have you been able to present this scheduling in a visual bar-chart so that you can conceptually grasp the whole of the project and its parts.

**Schematic plan:** Were you able, given your preparation, to make a good, first schematic plan diagram of your work, i.e. has your intentional preparation this term put you in a position to make a formative conceptual proposal about a (the) principal place(s) of your work?

**Adequate resources:** Have you included evidence of adequate resource support for this project such as key books, reports, precedent studies, maps, air photos, key people etc.? Do you have the information that you need to do this work?

**Professional Presentation:** Have you been able to package all the above into an informative, engaging, good-looking and useful proposal that will strike confidence into the heart of your client and and your instructor and bend him/her/they to your will.

**Complete/Incomplete?** In my judgment, is this preparation adequate for you to make your final studio experience in the department a smashing success for you to build on in your next professional incarnation or efflorescence?