New Seminar Fall 2015

ARHS 6814:
Constructing Nature: The History and Theory of Landscape (1450–1800)

Prof. Leslie A. Geddes
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Mondays 3:00–5:15 pm
Woldenberg Art Center, Room 209

The ways in which our society figures in its relation to the natural environment has never been so urgent. This seminar studies the history of that relation, through an examination of the significance and meaning of "landscape" in art, literature, architecture, and landscape design.

This course studies how conceptions of landscape, evident in both physical forms and poetic and artistic representations shaped the ideological and natural terrain of Europe from Antiquity to the 18th century, with particular emphasis on the period of 1450–1800.

Particular attention will be paid to the socio-cultural dimensions of the landscape, both natural and man-made, and the ways in which the shaping of the landscape and the natural environment has impacted humanity’s experience of the world. Class meetings will focus on a range of issues, including ownership, memory, political and economic power, the status of the landscape architect or painter, the dissemination of knowledge and technology, and symbolic meaning.

Class topics address architectural and landscape design projects as well as literary and artistic approaches. Readings will range from close examinations of specific sites (Versailles) and typologies (Italian Renaissance villas, English gardens) to landscape paintings and prints, to broader engagements with themes that cut across time.

Open to graduate students and advanced undergraduates