

**Postcards from America**  
**Course Introduction**  
**Part 2 - Landscapes**

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**LANDSCAPE**

➤ **An underlying theme of the course is landscape development and analysis.**

- What is "landscape"?
- How is it defined in geography?
- How is it created?
- How does viewing a landscape impart or convey anything to a person?

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**Landscape Categories Defined**

**TO MANICURE**  
A product of interactions

**A LOOK**  
An area of the world

**What is your definition of the word "landscape"?**

**THE SCENERY**  
Something viewed

**ART GENRE**  
A style of pictorial painting

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**Formal English Dictionary Definitions**

**ORIG.:** *An English word (landschape; landscaef) dating from the Middle Ages denoting a "place shaped by people."*  
 Also from the Dutch (landschap): the painting of a bucolic or rural or natural setting.

<p><b>(N.) Scenery</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ terrain</li> <li>▪ countryside</li> <li>▪ representation of land (rural scene)</li> <li>▪ panorama</li> <li>▪ setting</li> <li>▪ general situation or quality (as a political or economic landscape)</li> </ul>	<p><b>(V.) Redesign</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• make land look better</li> <li>• plan out</li> <li>• reshape</li> </ul>
<p>(Adj.) 1. <b>Art Form:</b> type of drawing, painting, or photography (scenery)</p> <p>2. <b>Alignment:</b> horizontal orientation (long side down)</p>	

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**LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS 101**

➤ *"Geography is a science of observation."* Carl Sauer  
 ➤ *"It is a matter of learning to see."* J.B. Jackson  
 ➤ *"Landscape is an historical document that tells a story."* Pierce Lewis

**You need to develop and cultivate the habit of using your eyes and asking fundamental, non-judgmental questions about what is around you.**

<p><b>What is that?</b> Why is it there? Why does it look that way?</p>	<p><b>Who or what created it?</b> How does it work?</p>
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*But no snap aesthetic judgments.*

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**LANDSCAPE in GEOGRAPHY**

❖ The academic discussion as to the role of geography and its place in academic study was hotly debated in the mid-1800s between those who **studied the earth's surface** (geology-trained) and those who integrated the **study of people** into the mix (anthropogeographers).

➤ The use of the term **LANDSCAPE** in academic study originated in Germany in the 1880s and took hold in the early 1900s as it was realized that the influence of people on the land could not be denied: then called "landscape science" (**LANDSCHAFTSKUNDE**).

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## LANDSCAPE in GEOGRAPHY

➤ German geographers came to differentiate between "URLANDSCHAFT" and "KULTURLANDSCHAFT" with the first designating the natural, primeval (pre-human) landscape and the latter the landscape created by humans.

➤ But the German word **Landschaft** has two meanings: a **territory or area** with more or less uniform aspects (used by geographers and was the basis of regional studies) and **scenery**, especially a style of painting (used by those in the arts).

➤ Alexander von Humboldt used **Landschaft** in his writings to refer to **visual impression and beauty in scenery**.

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## LANDSCAPE in GEOGRAPHY

- ❖ **Natural (physical) landscape: the visible area of the earth's surface formed by natural processes:** geologic, atmospheric, and hydrologic.
- ❖ **Cultural (human) Landscape: the visible area of the earth's surface created by people: ALL BUILT FORMS (man-made) that cultural groups create in inhabiting the earth that can be as unique in appearance as that cultural group.**
  - Every inhabited area has a cultural landscape that has been fashioned from the natural landscape.
  - Each reflects the local culture group's perception of what the physical landscape has to offer.
  - Therefore observing and studying landscape can be an insight to the inhabitants of an area, both past and present.

After Domosh, et al., The Human Mosaic: A Cultural Approach to Human Geography

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## LANDSCAPE: A summary

- ✓ **A unit of visual space: the look!**
- ✓ **Landscapes are not simple, static features but a complex random arrangement of components.**
- ✓ **Landscapes are the product (result) of location, place and time** - created by natural processes and/or the works of people over a period of time.
- ✓ **Landscapes are dynamic** - formed by a series of events, both natural and human, and **changing** over time naturally and/or by human impact.
- ✓ **Landscape assessment is a cultural phenomena.** People "**see**" and "**interpret**" based on parameters that vary with memory, experience and heritage.

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## Historical Ecology

- ✓ **Ecosystems: cyclical and static**
- ✓ **Landscapes: dynamic and historical**
- ❖ While the **ecosystem concept** views the environment as always trying to return to a state of equilibrium, the **landscape concept** considers "landscape transformation" to be a process of **evolution**.

Landscapes **do not** return to a state of equilibrium. **Results in a composite of successive disturbances over time.**

- ❖ Studies the links between nature and human culture over time, using the term "landscape" instead of "ecosystem." (Geographers, historians, ecologists and anthropologists follow this methodology.)
- Historical ecologists recognize that landscapes undergo **continuous alteration** (natural and human) and these modifications are part of its history.

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## Historical Ecology

- **Historical ecology challenges the notion of a pristine landscape**, especially with regard to native cultures.
  - It is a practical framework of concepts and methods for studying the past and future of the relationship between people and their environment.

- ✓ **Historical ecology uses the rich sources of data at the "landscape" scale**, where human activity and cognition interact with biophysical systems, and where archaeological, historical, ethnographic, environmental, and other records are plentiful.
- **San Francisco Estuary Institute (SFEI)** has pioneered the use of historical ecology to track linked biophysical and anthropogenic changes in wetland
- **National Park Service (NPS)** uses historical ecology to manage and interpret the national park system, which must respond to the contradictory needs of many users.

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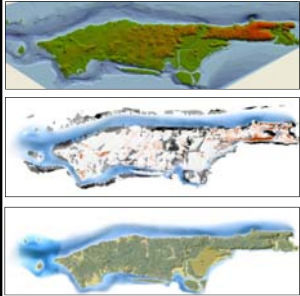
## Changing Landscapes: Napa, CA

1858
1942
2009
1858

"Future Landscapes Viewed from the Past." Science Times, The New York Times, 1/26/16  
From 2015 San Francisco Estuary Institute report first published in 2012.

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### Mannahatta Project Wildlife Conservation Society



The result of five years of historical map research, fieldwork, and GIS analysis, the Digital Elevation Model, or DEM, of 1609 was a vital step in the process of recreating Mannahatta. ©wcs

This image illustrates the differences in the island's elevation between 1609 and today. Grays and blacks indicate increases in elevation, mainly waterways that have been filled in, while browns indicate decreases in elevation, such as leveling hills for construction. ©wcs


Mannahatta had 55 different ecological communities, including terrestrial communities (like forests and grasslands), wetland, pond and stream communities, and estuarine communities in the surrounding waters. ©wcs

<https://weilika.org/science/recreating-mannahatta/>      <https://weilika.org/download/presentations/>

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### LANDSCAPE ASSOCIATIONS

Because landscapes convey messages about a place by what we see (or perceive) certain visualizations or symbols become associated with that place.



Hence the "POSTCARDS" title of the course!!

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### Studying Landscape in Geography:

*8 point methodology to get to the story behind the scenery*

1. **Visual Observation** (note what is there)
2. **Reading the Landscape** (get clues)
3. **People Factor** (look for decision-making influences)
4. **Human-Environment Interaction** (determine the affect on human perception and curiosity of the influences)
5. **Look for changes over time: observe, document, study** (scientific investigation of evolving settings)

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### Studying Landscape in Geography:

*8 point methodology to get to the story behind the scenery*

6. **Human Imprint** (deals with lasting changes and impact; role of technology and "modernization" on the land)
7. **Landscape Appreciation** (aesthetics and culture: scenery, travel, exploration, painting, descriptive literature, photography, tourism)
8. **Landscape Preservation** (maintaining variety; discouraging sameness; **ALSO** protecting habitat, open space and scenery; limiting human encroachment)

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### Overlapping Physical/Cultural Themes in Regional Landscape Development

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Natural Processes</b> (geologic/atmospheric)</li> <li>2. <b>Natural cycles</b> (seasonal/ecological)</li> <li>3. <b>Environmental Factors</b> (biome/ecosystem development)</li> <li>4. <b>Resources</b> (people factor: need/want/availability/use/dependence)</li> <li>5. <b>Environmental Impact</b> (change)</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Mobility</b> (spread)</li> <li>2. <b>Urbanization/Industrialization</b> (concentrations of people and their works)</li> <li>3. <b>High Income/High Consumption</b> (ability to facilitate change)</li> <li>4. <b>Cultural Diversity</b> (imprints of cultural heritage)</li> <li>5. <b>Wealth/Poverty</b> (appearances)</li> <li>6. <b>Political Complexity</b> (role of all levels of government)</li> </ol>
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### Conzen Book: *Making of the American Landscape*

1. It focuses on **cultural** geography of N. America.
2. Chapters look at the **influence** of cultural groups.
3. Also looks at the **uniqueness** of landscapes created by human activity.
4. There are chapters on **the effect** of civil society (monuments), private wealth (estates and country clubs), the automobile (road network) and consumer needs (malls, resorts, theme parks, etc.) on the visual landscape.
5. The last chapter deals with the concept of **ideal landscape**. An American Utopia? Where is all this leading? **Vanilla? Cookie-cutter? Generic?**

*Additional required books for graduate students focus on either landscape development or historical geography.*

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## GEOGRAPHIC AXIOM

*The quality of location changes with time.*

As we study the historical geography (and sequence of events) in the US and Canada, it will become evident how true this statement is.

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## Landscape Visuals

Landscapes can be either physical (natural) or cultural (man-made). Sometimes memorial ones are a combo of both.



Sea Stacks along the Coast of Oregon



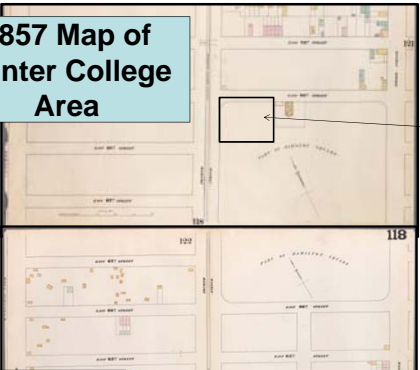
Mt. Hood looming over the Portland skyline.



Skyline of Portland  
Portland, OR

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## 1857 Map of Hunter College Area



NW Hamilton Square Park, the future site of New York Normal College created in 1870 by Thomas Hunter


<https://wellkia.org/m-map.php>

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## Landscapes can be changed by the civil works of people:

New York Normal College, now Hunter College-CUNY, on Park Avenue in New York City.


Visual perception of 1874 building vs. present-day building?



1874 Park Ave side



Current Park Ave side




Current Lexington Ave side


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## FARM LANDSCAPES


Landscapes convey messages about a place. People make decisions about the place's usefulness.



Vineyards in Finger Lake region of NYS



Farmland on the South Dakota prairie



Elk ranch in Utah

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## FARM LANDSCAPES

Grain farm on the plains of Saskatchewan.





Farm in the hills of Ohio.



Cotton farm in the Arizona desert supported by irrigation.

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### LANDSCAPES and PERCEPTION



**Civil Society Landscape:**  
Gateway Arch-Jefferson National Expansion Memorial along the Mississippi River at St. Louis, MO




### LANDSCAPES and PERCEPTION




But rivers can rise and threaten areas next to them.




### LANDSCAPES and PERCEPTION


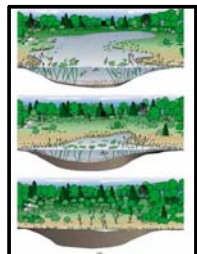




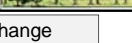


Seeing vacant buildings – a landscape of abandonment and possible danger – may lead us to create an opinion of the area that is not favorable.



Rivers can overflow their banks and flood areas. Economic activities can close or move, leaving vacate buildings because of the flood danger.


### ECOLOGICAL SUCCESSION

Ecological Succession	Crab-grass	Year 0-1		
	Tall grass-herbaceous plants	1-3		
	Pines come in	3-10		
	Pine forest	10-30		
	Hard-wood come in	30-70		
	Hard-wood forest climax	70+		

Landscapes can change naturally or by human action.




### Colorado Plateau and Colorado River

from Dead Horse Point State Park, Utah




### Glen Canyon Dam and Lake Powell

on the Colorado Plateau, Utah

Drop in lake's level due to drought.



### Old West Ghost Towns

### Parkland Landscape

Central Park in NYC. "Uptown Manhattan" was once farmland, then area of estates, now it has an artificial open space (a landscaped park) surrounded by dense urbanization

### Grand Teton National Park, Wyoming

This national park preserves the natural landscape of the mountains and valleys of Wyoming at Jackson Hole.

(c) Florida Stock - Schwabacher Landing, Grand Teton National Park

### Park City, Utah

Landscape of skiing activities was once a landscape of silver mines.

### Saguaro National Park, Arizona


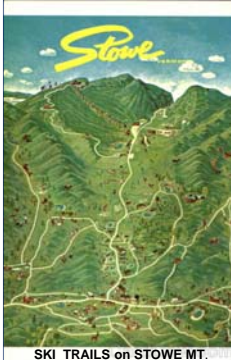
Natural desert landscape.

### Shenandoah National Park, VA

Preservation of old rounded mountains in the densely populated mid-Atlantic region.

**Stowe, VT**

What makes this a "typical" New England landscape?

SKI TRAILS on STOWE MT.

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**Baltimore: Urban Landscapes**



Camden Yards and Inner Harbor



Downtown redevelopment



Abandoned housing

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**Automobile Landscape**  
Los Angeles, CA






L.A. Smog

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**Landscapes of Recreation and Heavy Industry: Gary, Indiana**



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**Post-industrial Landscape, Detroit**




Revitalized downtown Detroit, an oasis in an area of shrinking population and abandoned neighborhoods and now urban farms.




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**NEXT CLASS**

**PHYSICAL GEOGRAPHY**

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