



USC

ARCH 531: THE NATURAL LANDSCAPE

Units: 3

FALL 2019 | Wednesdays | 10:00 A.M.– 12:50 P.M.

Location: HAR 102

Instructor: KAT SUPERFISKY

Office: TBD

Office Hours: Wednesdays 1:00 P.M.–2:00 P.M.

Contact Info: superfis@usc.edu | 248.890.6409 (mobile phone)

Course Description

With over 80 percent of the U.S. population living in urban areas, “cities” have become human’s new natural habitat. Landscape architects can play a key role in the creation of more “symbiotic cities” --places where people, plants, and other animals coexist. This shift necessitates a substantive understanding of the interwoven ecological, social-political and economic systems at play in urban areas. This course aims to expose students to a deeper understanding of the major concepts, principles and applications of ecology that are most relevant to urban areas.

Learning Objectives and Outcomes

- Understand commonalities and differences between “urban ecosystems” and “natural ecosystems”.
- Understand key ecological concepts related to urban areas.
- Identify and analyze ecological patterns and processes at multiple scales.
- Identify natural communities within southern California and apply their characteristics and composition to urban landscapes.
- Understand the role of patches and corridors play in species dispersal across urban landscapes.
- Describe the attributes of landscape patches and edges that influence species diversity and distribution.
- Identify resources that can be used as references for urban ecology that can be applied to planning and design projects.
- Identify and present synthesized information related to current urban ecology events, activities, and trends occurring in Los Angeles and around the world.
- Effectively express information and ideas visually, verbally, and in writing.

Prerequisite(s): None.

Co-Requisite(s): None.

Concurrent Enrollment: None.

Recommended Preparation: Go outside and observe the things around you, using all of your senses.

Course Notes

The course will be primarily classroom-based, but students enrolled in the course should be willing and able to accommodate off-campus field trips throughout the semester, as well as shifts to the normal schedule that will accommodate such excursions. Students with smartphone devices will be required to download the iNaturalist application for use throughout the semester and beyond.

Technological Proficiency and Hardware/Software Required

There is no required technological proficiency for this course.

Required Readings and Supplementary Materials

There is no required text for this course. Readings and podcasts will be assigned throughout the semester by the instructor.

Description and Assessment of Assignments

- **Attendance and Participation**
Students are expected to take an active and productive role in the course. Respectful and informed discussion, especially based on assigned readings and topics, are critical components of the course.
- **Keeping it Real: Current Events**
Each student will be assigned two (2) class sessions throughout the semester to prepare and present on a current event related to urban ecology. Additional information on this assignment will be provided. Individual.
- **Urban Ecology Primer**
Each student will create a primer/reference manual that catalogs all information and ideas conveyed throughout the course. The manual must be laid out as an 8.5"x11" booklet in InDesign, and exported as a PDF for final submission. All course notes must be recorded in this document, including notes on other student's current events. Weekly contributions/entries are required, some of which will be guided by the instructor, others will be determined by the student. Entries and overall booklet will be assessed on the basis of creativity, design, and scholarly content. Some entries and exercises will require freehand illustration and creative design based on course materials, others will require digital representation of concepts, etc. The ideas conveyed by these designs, as well as the incorporation of course material, will contribute to grades. Individual.
- **Ecological Application**
Additional information on this final assignment will be provided.

Grading Breakdown

Assignment	% of Grade
Attendance & Participation	10
Current Events (10% each)	20
Urban Ecology Primer	50
Ecological Application	20
TOTAL	100

Grading Scale

Course final grades will be determined using the following scale:

A	95-100
A-	90-94
B+	87-89
B	83-86
B-	80-82
C+	77-79
C	73-76
C-	70-72
D+	67-69
D	63-66
D-	60-62
F	59 and below

Assignment Rubrics

Evaluation criteria will be conveyed to students per assignment. Student evaluations will be used for all group work, and will be provided by the instructor. Generally, evaluation of assignments will consider the following criteria:

- Timeliness of assignment completion.
- Completeness and professionalism.
- Understanding and application of concepts/content.
- Clarity and accuracy.
- Individual progress and growth.

Assignment Submission Policy

Assignments are to be submitted at the beginning of class on the day the assignment is due.

Grading Timeline

Students can expect assignments to be graded and returned within two weeks of the due date, unless otherwise indicated by the instructor.

Additional Policies

The School of Architecture's general attendance policy is to allow a student to miss the equivalent of one week of class sessions (three classes if the course meets three times/week, etc.) without directly affecting the student's grade and ability to complete the course. If additional absences are required for a personal illness/family emergency, pre-approved academic reason/religious observance, the situation should be discussed and evaluated with the faculty member and appropriate Chair on a case-by-case basis. Excused absences are allowed for serious cases only and must be accompanied by appropriate documentation (e.g. doctor's note); social engagements and work do not qualify as "serious". For each unexcused absence over three, the student's letter grade will be lowered 1/3 of a letter grade (e.g., A to A-).

Any student not in class within the first 10 minutes is considered tardy, and any student absent (in any form including sleep, technological distraction, or by leaving mid class for a long break) for more than 1/3 of the class time can be considered fully absent. If arriving late, a student must be respectful of a class in session and do everything possible to minimize the disruption caused by a late arrival. It is always the student's responsibility to seek means (if possible) to make up work missed due to absences, not the instructor's, although such recourse is not always an option due to the nature of the material covered.

Being absent on the day a project, quiz, paper or exam is due can lead to an "F" for that project, quiz, paper or exam or portfolio (unless the faculty concedes the reason is due to an excusable absence for personal illness/family emergency/religious observance). A mid term or final review is to be treated the same as a final exam as outlined and expected by the University.

See full attendance statement at: <http://arch.usc.edu/People/SchoolGovernanceDocuments>

Course Schedule

The schedule for the course is subject to change throughout the semester. Below is a general overview of what to expect. Schedule alterations, assignments and readings associated with each class session will be announced throughout the semester.

	Class Topic	Ecology Primer Concepts/Content
Week 1 (Aug. 28)	Course Overview	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nature Memory Map Instances of “ecology” in the urban landscape
Week 2 (Sept. 4)	Intro to “Ecology”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Types of ecology Importance of ecology
Week 3 (Sept. 11 all day)	“Natural” / Historical Ecology TRIP: CATALINA ISLAND <i>Guest lecturer: Katherine Pakradouni, Grown in LA</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Biomes Natural Communities Native Plants
Week 4 (Sept. 18)	“Natural” / Historical Ecology; Restoration and Conservation Ecology in Theory and Practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ecosystem restoration goals and strategies Application in urban environments
Week 5 (Sept. 25)	Restoration and Conservation Ecology in Theory and Practice TRIP: TBD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Application in urban environments
Week 6 (Oct. 2)	Landscape Ecology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Theory of Island Biogeography Patches, Edges, Corridors Landscape Patterns, Dynamics, Movement
Week 7 (Oct. 9)	Landscape Ecology TRIP: Connecting L.A.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Application in urban environments
Week 8 (Oct. 16 9am-3pm)	Urban Ecology TRIP: TRACING THE ARROYO SECO STREAMWAY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ecological system alterations due to urbanization (focus on waterways)
Week 9 (Oct. 23)	Urban Ecology TRIP: Taylor Yard	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Layers of Urban Ecology
Week 10 (Oct. 30)	Urban Ecology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Soils Hydrology
Week 11 (Nov. 6)	Urban Ecology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vegetation Animals Biodiversity
Week 12 (Nov. 13)	Urban Ecology TRIP: Exposition Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ecosystem structure and function Application in urban environments
Week 13 (Nov. 20)	Urban Ecology TRIP: Downtown Los Angeles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Application in urban environments
Week 14 (Nov. 27)	NO CLASS - THANKSGIVING	
Week 15 (Dec. 4)	ECOLOGICAL APPLICATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Application in urban environments

Statement on Academic Conduct and Support Systems

Academic Conduct:

Plagiarism – presenting someone else’s ideas as your own, either verbatim or recast in your own words – is a serious academic offense with serious consequences. Please familiarize yourself with the discussion of plagiarism in SCampus in Part B, Section 11, “Behavior Violating University Standards” policy.usc.edu/scampus-part-b. Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in SCampus and university policies on scientific misconduct, policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct.

Support Systems:

Student Health Counseling Services - (213) 740-7711 – 24/7 on call
engemannshc.usc.edu/counseling

Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention.

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline - 1 (800) 273-8255 – 24/7 on call
suicidepreventionlifeline.org

Free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Services (RSVP) - (213) 740-4900 – 24/7 on call
engemannshc.usc.edu/rsvp

Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender-based harm.

Office of Equity and Diversity (OED) | Title IX - (213) 740-5086
equity.usc.edu, titleix.usc.edu

Information about how to get help or help a survivor of harassment or discrimination, rights of protected classes, reporting options, and additional resources for students, faculty, staff, visitors, and applicants. The university prohibits discrimination or harassment based on the following protected characteristics: race, color, national origin, ancestry, religion, sex, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, age, physical disability, medical condition, mental disability, marital status, pregnancy, veteran status, genetic information, and any other characteristic which may be specified in applicable laws and governmental regulations.

Bias Assessment Response and Support - (213) 740-2421
studentaffairs.usc.edu/bias-assessment-response-support

Avenue to report incidents of bias, hate crimes, and microaggressions for appropriate investigation and response.

The Office of Disability Services and Programs - (213) 740-0776
dsp.usc.edu

Support and accommodations for students with disabilities. Services include assistance in providing readers/notetakers/interpreters, special accommodations for test taking needs, assistance with architectural barriers, assistive technology, and support for individual needs.

USC Support and Advocacy - (213) 821-4710
studentaffairs.usc.edu/ssa

Assists students and families in resolving complex personal, financial, and academic issues adversely affecting their success as a student.

Diversity at USC - (213) 740-2101

diversity.usc.edu

Information on events, programs and training, the Provost's Diversity and Inclusion Council, Diversity Liaisons for each academic school, chronology, participation, and various resources for students.

USC Emergency - UPC: (213) 740-4321, HSC: (323) 442-1000 – 24/7 on call

dps.usc.edu, emergency.usc.edu

Emergency assistance and avenue to report a crime. Latest updates regarding safety, including ways in which instruction will be continued if an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible.

USC Department of Public Safety - UPC: (213) 740-6000, HSC: (323) 442-120 – 24/7 on call

dps.usc.edu

Non-emergency assistance or information.