

The American garden

Course tutor: Barbara Simms

Learning outcomes

By the end of this option, students should be able to:

- Analyse, describe and interpret American designed landscapes closely and systematically.
- Begin to engage with the concepts, values and debates that inform the study of the history of American designed gardens and landscapes.
- Select relevant evidence from the wide range of sources used in the history of American gardens and landscapes.

Course content

Following a brief consideration of early American gardens and the development of an American style, as promoted by Thomas Jefferson at Monticello and George Washington at Mount Vernon in the later 1700s, these sessions will examine the design and planting of key gardens and landscapes throughout the United States of America from 1800 to the present day, an intoxicating mix of experimentation, imagination, horticultural knowledge and vision. Focal topics will include the concept of wilderness and designing with nature; interaction with modernist aesthetics and design; innovations in planning and planting; changes in the conceptualization of the garden as aesthetic and recreational space; and Anglo-American links, influences and relationships. Key designers studied will include public landscapers of the nineteenth century, such as Andrew Jackson Downing, Frederick Law Olmsted and Jens Jensen; early twentieth century innovators, including Beatrix Farrand, Frank Lloyd Wright, Thomas Church, Dan Kiley and Garrett Eckbo; and contemporary practitioners such as Martha Schwartz and Topher Delany.

Reading list

Aguar, Charles E., and Berdeanna Aguar, *Wrightscapes : Frank Lloyd Wright's landscape designs*, McGraw-Hill, 2002.

Church, Thomas, *Gardens are for People*, Reinhold Publishing Corporation, 1955. Reprinted 1983.

Cran, Marion, *Gardens in America*, Herbert Jenkins, 1931.

Grese, Robert E., *Jens Jensen. Maker of Natural Parks and Gardens*, John Hopkins Press, 1992.

Griswold, Mac, and Eleanor Weller, *The Golden Age of American Gardens: proud owners, private estates, 1890-1940*, Harry N. Abrams, 1991.

Hatch, Peter J., *'A Rich Spot of Earth': Thomas Jefferson's Revolutionary Garden at Monticello*, Yale University Press, 2012.

McHarg, Ian L., *Design with Nature*, John Wiley and Son, 1992. First published 1969.

Richardson, Tim, *The Vanguard Gardens and Landscapes of Martha Schwartz*, Thames and Hudson, 2004.

Richardson, Tim, *Great Gardens of America*, Frances Lincoln, 2009.

Tankard, Judith B., *Beatrix Farrand: private gardens, public landscapes*, Monacelli Press, 2009.

Treib, Marc (ed.), *Modern Landscape Architecture: A Critical Review*, MIT Press, 1998.

Treib, Marc (ed.), *Thomas Church, Landscape Architect: Designing a Modern Californian Landscape*, William K. Stout, 2004.



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Walker, Peter, and Melanie Simo, *Invisible Gardens: the Search for Modernism in the American landscape*, MIT Press, 1994.