

THE MACHINE IN THE GARDEN

HUM 2900-002
Villanova University
Spring 2009

Tuesdays and Thursdays, 2:30-3:45 pm, Vasey 201A

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Office Hours: Mondays 1:00-2:00 pm and Wednesdays 9:30-11:30 am

COURSE INTRODUCTION

In his 1964 book *The Machine in the Garden: Technology and the Pastoral Ideal in America*, author Leo Marx traces the persistent ideal—and some say myth—of the pastoral and wild in the American landscape and how such an idea clashes with our modern life, one often ruled by technology and the machine. In this seminar course, we will explore how the desire to live out a simple life, idealized in the pastoral and wilderness landscape, is held in tension with the complex life we actually carry out. We will take Marx's idea of "the machine in the garden" and examine it through an interdisciplinary lens. Considering literature, history, and art as well as architectural and landscape perspectives, we will come to understand how the machine and industrialization writ large have shaped the American landscape and how we perceive it.

COURSE STRUCTURE

This course is at heart a seminar course. Each class meeting we will focus on one or two writings connected with the idea of the "machine in the garden." We will structure our time in class around discussions of the readings to draw out their salient themes and connections. Additionally, each of you will be responsible for leading one of our discussions and taking an imaginative approach to the day's ideas. Developing your understanding of the "machine in the garden" through writing—in daily blog entries, opinion papers, and a final project—is another central component of our course.

WHY THIS COURSE?

In going about our daily lives, we often do not take time to reflect how the structure of our world shapes the kind of life we ultimately lead. My hope is that this course will introduce a way of thinking of the "machine in the garden" that will give you a lifelong awareness that the kind of life you lead is largely shaped by your relationship to the environment. My goals for you this semester are to:

1. Become familiar with the idea of the “machine in the garden” and its implications for how we understand our lives.
2. Introduce you to issues of architecture, landscape architecture, and planning that order our environment.
3. Strengthen your ability to discern key arguments and evidence from readings and synthesize these ideas.
4. Build on Leo Marx’s idea of the “machine in the garden” in an original project.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Participation & Attendance	20%
Daily Blog	15%
Opinion Papers (3)	25%
Final Paper	30%
<u>Final Presentation</u>	<u>10%</u>
Total	100%

Note: To earn a grade in the A range for this course will require excellence in the areas above. I reserve grades in the A range for outstanding work that demonstrates true intellectual engagement.

Participation & Attendance (20%). Because this is a seminar class, your participation is vital. Successfully participating in class means that you come prepared for class, having read and thought about our readings; share your thoughts; respond to your classmates’ ideas; and are respectful in your comments. Simply showing up for class does not fulfill your participation requirement. You must *participate*.

You will also be responsible for leading our discussion for one of our class meetings. You are encouraged to take a creative approach to leading this discussion and introducing the ideas of the day. We will talk about what makes a good discussion a bit later in the semester, and you will meet with me beforehand to go over your class leading.

Daily Blog (15%). For each day that we have class, you will create an entry on our class’s blog. In this entry, you are to write a one to two paragraph response to the day’s readings. Take care to read and respond to your classmates’ thoughts. **You are to submit your entry by 10 a.m. the day of class.** Late entries will not be accepted.

Opinion Papers (25%). In order to help develop your understanding of the idea of the “machine in the garden,” you will write three three-page opinion papers over the course of the semester. These opinion papers are to take up our readings in greater depth and to help you synthesize their ideas.

Final Project (30%). The culmination of the course will be an *original* project on a topic exploring the idea of the “machine in the garden.” Your main charge is to make a clear

argument and to support that argument with evidence, both textual and visual. This paper will be 8 to 10 pages in length with associated images and appropriate footnotes following the Chicago Manual of Style. You are encouraged and welcome to discuss with me your ideas and progress on the paper, and if you wish to pursue an alternative format please talk to me. Plagiarism will not be tolerated and will be reported (see below).

Final Presentation (10%). You will make a 15-minute presentation of your final paper in the last weeks of the class.

ATTENDANCE

I will take attendance in this course. **If you miss more than 6 unexcused classes over the course of the semester, you will FAIL this course.** More than two unexcused absences will lead to the lowering of your participation and attendance grade. If you have to miss a class for a valid reason, please email me ahead of time.

A NOTE ABOUT DEADLINES AND MAKE-UP WORK

You are expected to meet the deadlines outlined in this syllabus. Papers will be penalized **one full grade** for each day that they are late and will not be accepted at all three days past the due date. The final exam will not be offered early. No extra credit will be offered.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

You are expected to uphold academic integrity as outlined by the university. In the spirit of St. Augustine, students at Villanova are expected to engage in and contribute to a culture of cooperation and trust. This means avoiding cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, multiple submissions of work, and assisting in or contributing to dishonesty. For the first offense, students who plagiarize or cheat on any assignment will receive either an F for the assignment or an F for the course (depending on the severity of the offense), and a letter will be filed with the student's dean and with the Vice President for Academic Affairs. A second offense either in this course or any other course at Villanova will result in dismissal from the university with a permanent indication of the reason for dismissal on the student's transcript.

LEARNING NEEDS

It is the policy of Villanova to make reasonable academic accommodations for qualified individuals with disabilities. If you are a person with a disability please contact me after class or during office hours and make arrangements to register with the Learning Support Office by contacting 610-519-5636 or at nancy.mott@villanova.edu as soon as possible. Registration is needed in order to receive accommodations.

TEXTS

These books are available at the Villanova University Book Shop:

Marx, Leo. *The Machine in the Garden: Technology and the Pastoral Ideal in America*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1964, 2000. ISBN 9780195133516

Nash, Roderick. *Wilderness and the American Mind*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1973, 2001. ISBN 978-0300091229

Thoreau, Henry D. *Walden*. Jeffrey S. Cramer, ed. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006. ISBN 0-300-11008-1 (Look for this book in the ACS section)

Additional readings will be posted as PDF files on Blackboard/WebCT.

READING & ASSIGNMENT SCHEDULE

Note: The readings marked with (B) are available on Blackboard Vista/WebCT. Please also note that this is an approximate schedule and I reserve the right to change readings and assignments.

MACHINE IN THE GARDEN: CHICAGO AS A CASE STUDY

Week One

- 1.13 T Course Overview and Introduction
1.15 Th (B) William Cronon, "Prologue: Cloud Over Chicago" in *Nature's Metropolis: Chicago and the Great West* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1991), pp. 5-19.

Week Two

- 1.20 T (B) Thomas C. Hubka, "H.H. Richardson's Glessner House: A Garden in the Machine," *Winterthur Portfolio* 24.4 (Winter 1989): 209-229.
1.22 Th (B) Frederick Jackson Turner, "The Significance of the Frontier in American History" (1893) in *The Frontier in American History* (1921).

THE MACHINE IN THE GARDEN SYMBOL

Week Three

- 1.27 T (B) Nicolai Cikovsky, Jr., "George Inness and the Hudson River School: 'The Lackawanna Valley,'" *American Art Journal* 2.2 (Autumn 1970): 46-57.
1.29 Th (B) Barbara Novak, "Man's Traces: Axe, Train, Figure" in *Nature and Culture: American Landscape and Painting, 1825-1875* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), pp. 157-184.

Opinion Paper #1 due by Friday, 1.30 at 5 p.m.; conferences this week

Week Four

- 2.3 T Leo Marx, "Sleepy Hollow, 1844" in *The Machine in the Garden: Technology and the Pastoral Ideal in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964, 2000), pp. 3-33.
(B) Howard P. Segal, "Leo Marx's 'Middle Landscape': A Critique, a Revision, and an Appreciation," *Reviews in American History* 5.1 (March 1977): 137-140.
2.5 Th Henry D. Thoreau, "Where I Lived, and What I Lived For," "Sounds," and "The Bean Field" in *Walden* (1854), pp. 86-105, 119-138, 168-181.

Week Five

- 2.10 T Leo Marx, on Henry D. Thoreau's *Walden* in *The Machine in the Garden*, pp. 242-265.

- 2.12 Th Leo Marx, on Mark Twain's *Huckleberry Finn* in *The Machine in the Garden*, pp. 319-341.
Opinion Paper #2 due by Friday, 2.13 at 5 p.m.

THE GARDEN

Week Six

- 2.17 T Leo Marx, Section 3 of "The Garden" in *The Machine in the Garden*, pp. 116-144.
2.19 Th Roderick Nash, "Prologue: The Condition of Wilderness" and Ch. 4 "The American Wilderness" in *Wilderness and the American Mind* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967, 2001), pp. 1-7, 67-83.

Week Seven

- 2.24 T Roderick Nash, Ch. 2 "A Wilderness Condition" and Ch. 3 "The Romantic Wilderness" in *Wilderness and the American Mind*, pp. 23-66.
2.26 Th Roderick Nash, Ch. 9 "The Wilderness Cult" in *Wilderness and the American Mind*, pp. 141-160.
Opinion Paper #3 due in class

Week Eight

- 3.3 T NO CLASS—SPRING BREAK
3.5 Th NO CLASS—SPRING BREAK

THE MACHINE

Week Nine

- 3.10 T (B) Mark Wigley, "The Electric Lawn" in *The American Lawn*, Georges Teyssot ed. (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1999), pp. 154-177.
3.12 Th (B) Mark Wigley, "The Electric Lawn" in *The American Lawn*, Georges Teyssot ed. (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1999), pp. 177-195.

Week Ten

- 3.17 T Marx, "The Machine" in *The Machine in the Garden*, pp. 190-226.
Project Proposals due in class
3.19 Th (B) Richard Guy Wilson, "America and the Machine Age" in *The Machine Age in America 1918-1941* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1986, 2001), pp. 22-41.

Week Eleven

- 3.24 T (B) Richard Guy Wilson, "The Machine in the Landscape" in *The Machine Age in America 1918-1941* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1986, 2001), pp. 91-122.
(B) David Nye, *American Technological Sublime* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: M.I.T. Press, 1994), reading to be announced

THE MACHINE IN THE LANDSCAPE

- 3.26 Th (B) Frank Lloyd Wright, *The Living City* (New York: Horizon Press, 1958), 77-88, 219-222.
(B) J.B. Jackson, "The Imitation of Nature" in *Landscapes: Selected Writings of J.B. Jackson* (University of Massachusetts Press, 1970), pp. 76-91.

Week Twelve

- 3.31 T (B) Howard P. Segal, "Leo Marx's 'Middle Landscape': A Critique, a Revision, and an Appreciation," *Reviews in American History* 5.1 (March 1977): 137-150.
4.2 Th NO CLASS

Week Thirteen

- 4.7 T NO CLASS—Attend lecture, to be announced
4.9 Th NO CLASS—HAPPY EASTER BREAK!

Week Fourteen

- 4.14 T (B) Adam Rome, "Introduction" and "Open Space: The First Protests against the Bulldozed Landscape" in *The Bulldozer in the Countryside: Suburban Sprawl and the Rise of American Environmentalism* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001), pp. 1-7, 119-152.
4.16 Th Final Presentations

Week Fifteen

- 4.21 T Final Presentations
4.23 Th Final Presentations

Week Sixteen

- 4.28 T NO CLASS (DEEMED A FRIDAY SCHEDULE)
4.30 Th Conclusions
Final Project due in class