



<http://i.huffpost.com/gen/821528/images/o-NATURAL-HISTORY-DIORAMAS-facebook.jpg>

# CDNS 4000

## Capstone Seminar

### Advanced Research in Canadian Studies

## Theme for 2016: *WRITING IN SECTION*

Instructor: Jerzy (Jurek) Elżanowski

Location: 1216 Dunton Tower Time: Thursdays, 11:35-14:25

Office hours: by appointment (1203 Dunton Tower)

Email: [jerzy.elzanowski@carleton.ca](mailto:jerzy.elzanowski@carleton.ca)

Web: <http://carleton.ca/canadianstudies/people/jerzy-jurek-elzanowski/>

## Course Objective

Your objective in this course will be twofold: a) to explore the public dimensions of academic practice, and b) to learn how to prepare, submit and review an advanced academic paper. To this end, we will work both in groups and individually (both in the field and in the classroom) to develop academic writing, visual, and oral skills. In order to successfully complete this course, you will need to attend class and devote a minimum of 6 hours per week outside of class to finish assignments and prepare for discussions and workshops. Imagine the course as a way to pull together and refine all the skills you've learned throughout your tenure as an undergraduate student. This year, the Capstone Seminar will have a distinct theme: We will explore the idea of *section* as a research and presentation methodology, and pair it with the concept of *landscape* as a way of viewing and interacting with the world. We will be working closely with the 4<sup>th</sup> year Architecture design studio students, so flexibility in your schedule and willingness to collaborate outside of class will be much appreciated.

## Course Argument: *Landscape in Section*

To term something a *landscape* is to position it within a complex history of *looking*. To study a landscape is thus to inquire after relationships between the viewer and the object being viewed. The urban cultural Landscape, like culture itself, is a construct through which Euro-Atlantic societies attempt to reconcile different and divergent points of view. The trouble is that reconciliation can only be achieved at the expense of individual stories or histories. By eliminating, simplifying and directing views, landscapes become places where violence emerges. Instead of assuming that culture and violence are binary concepts, in this course, we will explore dissonance, conflict, and violence as integral and formative of culture.

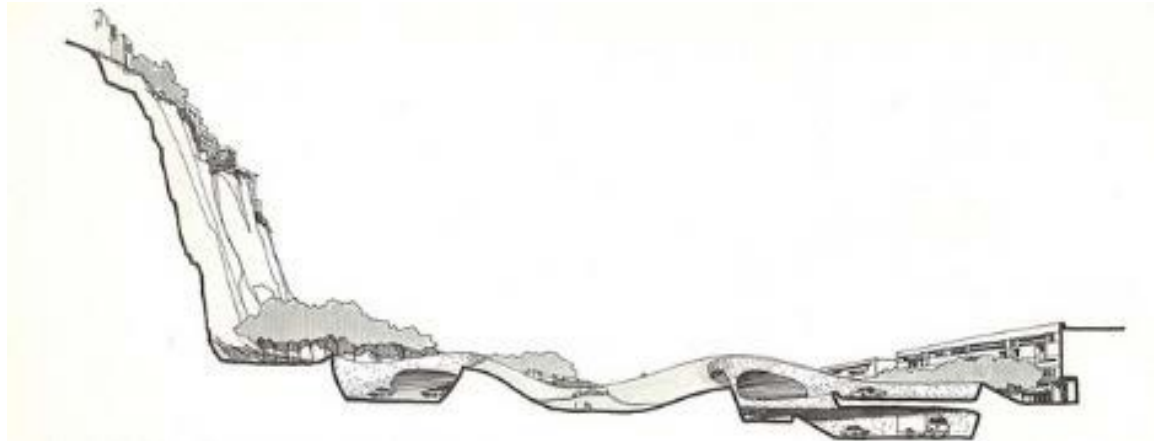
I organize classes around four themes: perspective, the picturesque, the diorama, and the aerial view. These themes represent different histories and technologies of both viewing and violating landscapes. The emergence of what historians accept as modern perspectival drawing in Renaissance Italy codified and standardized representations of three-dimensional space. The picturesque movement in 17th and 18th century Europe both theorized and blurred the relationships between landscapes and pictures. Early twentieth century wildlife dioramas in North America mixed models and paintings to create the experience of space in the confines of the museum. Finally, the aerial photograph, developed as a reconnaissance tool in World War One, precipitated a major shift in how urban and rural landscapes were viewed, mapped and planned. What all

of these concepts have in common is that they use the geometry of the (extractive) Euro-centric human gaze to formulate the fundamentally violent relationships between landscape and human habitation. Critiquing the relationships between gaze, land, habitation, extraction and appropriation is central to Canadian and critical settler studies.

## Readings

Lists of required texts will be posted on cuLearn. Please see the attached **Suggested Readings** list for an overview. You will be able to download most readings on ARES. *Fugitive Pieces* by Anne Michaels (1998 Vintage Edition), Michael Ondaatje's *In the Skin of a Lion*, *Invisible Cities* by Italo Calvino, and Eva Mackey's *The House of Difference* are required texts. I have not ordered them through the bookstore; I find students prefer to order their own copies online. Please order all books immediately so that we can start working from them within 10 days. Except for *The House of Difference*, all books are widely available used. You are welcome to buy Kindle, Kobo or other electronic editions if you prefer.

## Assignments



[https://c2.staticflickr.com/6/5450/6920051486\\_8479abc729\\_z.jpg](https://c2.staticflickr.com/6/5450/6920051486_8479abc729_z.jpg)

**Preliminary Assignment Brief:** One of the most discerning examples of a violent gaze is the geological or the architectural section. In architectural language, a section is a representation of a slice through a building, an object or a landscape. In geological terms, it is the sequence of rock strata in a given place. To create a section, one must conceptually cut the surfaces of the earth and represent the performed surgery as a drawing or a text.

Atypically for a research paper, you will be asked to situate your topic in relation to a place found along two lines drawn across the city of Ottawa. The lines meet at the Museum of Nature – a nexus for a cultural understanding of landscape. I will provide a map as well as a detailed explanation of your task in a separate handout.

Imagine that, as the line passes through buildings, parks, roads and rivers, it creates a vertical plane. As in the landscape section pictured on the previous page, the surfaces that come in contact with the sectional plane are drawn as dark lines; the surrounding environments appear as thinner lines, suggesting distance. Instead of drawing a traditional architectural or geological section, your task will be to attempt to write in section.

Some questions that you might consider include: How does it feel to travel along the sectional line, to pass through walls, layers of rock or the waters of a cold lake? What public and private urban spaces does your sectional line connect, and which crucial relationships are omitted or altered in your particular view of the city? What implications does this imagined passage have on the way you view the cultural landscape of the urban neighbourhood?

Your writing will take on unexpected forms as you negotiate moments when you metaphorically pierce the ground, travel, and then resurface to articulate the condition of a particular place. Words by Anne Michaels, Italo Calvino, and Michael Ondaatje will guide you in writing the poetry of space. The academic articles we read for class will serve as the bases for theoretical reflections on landscape, violence and culture.

Throughout this course you will complete two main assignments:

**Assignment 1 (warm-up):** You will consult with students in the School of Architecture to come up with a conceptual design for a framing or viewing device that tells the viewer something new about a location chosen along one of the prescribed lines. Your duo may, for example, choose a wildlife diorama at the Canadian Museum of Nature. Your task then could be to identify a philosophical, conceptual, or interpretive gap in one of the exhibits (you could argue, for example, that wildlife dioramas, which represent habitats in Canada's 'North', do not explicitly or adequately address colonialism), and then bring attention to that gap by strategically placing your 'viewer' in one of the Museum halls. One of the ways to 'expose' the artificiality of the diorama is to consider how it works in section, and how that section violently collapses perspective.

**Assignment 2 (core):** Benefitting from a rigorous peer review process, you will write an academic article of publishable quality for an exhibition catalogue to be published in the Canadian Studies Capstone Seminar Series journal. Your article will explore a theme identified in Assignment 1 and act as a rigorous critique both of your viewing device and of the separate design project proposed by your partner in Architecture. You will be required to write several drafts of the article throughout the semester and revise your work on a regular basis. Your article will go through a multi-stage peer review process organized by the editorial board. Only those articles that are accepted by the editors will be published. You will be required to give a short public lecture on your writing at the end of the semester.

Words by Anne Michaels, Italo Calvino, Michael Ondaatje, and Eva Mackey will guide you in writing the poetry of space. The academic articles we read for class will serve as the bases for theoretical reflections on landscape, violence, extraction, and culture. You will be expected to place references to these articles strategically in your narratives. By writing 'in section' you will also inevitably perform a conceptual violence on the landscape you describe. Writing through that violence will be a powerful tool to confront and change stereotypical or reconciliatory narratives of place in Canada.

**Breakdown of Tasks:** Assignment 2 will be broken down into smaller essays that will constitute the sections of your final paper. The first essay will answer two simple questions: What are you going to write about? Why is this pertinent? The second essay will be a concise literature review of the sub-field you intend to draw upon and contribute to. Your third essay will develop the theoretical and methodological interests identified in the literature review. Your final submission will be a substantially revised compilation of your mini essays.

**Workshops and Class Presentations:** We will take ample time to discuss and workshop the assigned essays. Essays will be due every two or three weeks according to a schedule that I will announce in class. On "workshop" days, you will read aloud and discuss fragments of your writing with your peers. You will be responsible for relating your work to the main arguments and claims made in the assigned readings. Each of you will need to prepare questions and actively generate discussions about the intersections between your writing and the assigned literature.

***On certain days there will be no class. You will be expected to spend that time researching in the library, peer reviewing, or meeting with me.***

### **Leading Discussions**

Starting in the 3rd week of the course, each student will be asked to lead the classroom discussion on a selected reading. You will be responsible for summarizing the main arguments and claims made in the literature and for preparing questions and generating discussions on the readings. You are welcome to share photos, artwork, film clips, or anything that helps you establish dialogue with your colleagues.

### **Evaluation and Submission**

Assignments are weighted in the following way:

Class participation (including discussions and presentations): 20%

Assignment 1 – Museum viewing device and presentation: 15%

Full essay Proposal: 10%

Assignment 2a – Essay theme: What and Why?: 5%

Assignment 2b – Essay theme: Literature review: 5%

Assignment 2c – Essay theme: Theory and Method: 5%

Full paper draft: 15%

Final paper for catalogue and public presentation: 25%

### **Submission deadlines TBA in class.**

**In order to facilitate workshops, assignments are due at the beginning of class. Late assignments will not be accepted or marked. There will be no exceptions.** Students who submit assignments late will receive a zero for that assignment and will not be able to make up the marks. If you need an extension for medical reasons, because of pregnancy, a religious obligation, or if you have any other concerns about the assignment deadlines, please speak to me as soon as possible and consult the Academic Accommodation section of this outline.

### **Excursions and guest lectures**

Obligatory excursions to the Canadian Museum of Nature will be organized during class time. There may be other opportunities to attend conferences, symposia or take tours of Ottawa. These will be optional and announced in class. Guest lecturers who are specialists in pertinent fields may come and speak as opportunities arise. We will also have the opportunity to collaborate with a 4<sup>th</sup> year architecture design studio on Assignment 1. Please watch your email for details about cross-faculty meetings. *Students with disabilities will be accommodated.*

**Research Assistance**

The Library website maintains a webpage related to Canadian Studies. The reference contact for Canadian Studies questions is Martha Attridge Buffon 613-520-2600 x2985.

**Academic Integrity**

*The following texts are part of Carleton's academic integrity and equity policies.*

**Plagiarism:** Plagiarism is a very serious academic offence. It occurs when someone tries to pass anyone else's work as their own. It occurs when a student either a) directly copies more than one of two sentences of another's written work without acknowledgement; or b) closely paraphrases the equivalent of a short paragraph or more without acknowledgement; and c) borrows, without acknowledgement, any ideas in a clear and recognized form, in such a way, as to present them as the student's own thoughts, where such ideas, if they were the student's own would contribute to the merit of his or her work.

Instructors who suspect plagiarism are required to submit the paper and supporting documentation to the Department Chair, who will refer the case to the Dean. Students are reminded that plagiarism can result in a range of penalties including failure in the course. It is in the student's best interests to keep all of their research papers intact after handing in papers.

**Resubmission of Work:** Prior approval of the instructor must be obtained if you intend to submit work that has previously or concurrently been submitted, in whole or in part, for credit in any other course.

For more details see the Academic Integrity Policy  
<http://www1.carleton.ca/senate/ccms/wp-content/ccms-files/Academic-Integrity-Policy.pdf>

**Academic Accommodation**

You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term. For an accommodation request the processes are as

follows:

**Pregnancy obligation:** write to me with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details visit the Equity Services website: <http://www2.carleton.ca/equity/>

**Religious obligation:** write to me with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details visit the Equity Services website: <http://www2.carleton.ca/equity/>

**Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities:** The Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities (PMC) provides services to students with Learning Disabilities (LD), psychiatric/mental health disabilities, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD), chronic medical conditions, and impairments in mobility, hearing, and vision. If you have a disability requiring academic accommodations in this course, please contact PMC at 613-520-6608 or [pmc@carleton.ca](mailto:pmc@carleton.ca) for a formal evaluation. If you are already registered with the PMC, contact your PMC coordinator to send me your Letter of Accommodation at the beginning of the term, and no later than two weeks before the first in-class scheduled test or exam requiring accommodation (if applicable). After requesting accommodation from PMC, meet with me to ensure accommodation arrangements are made. Please consult the PMC website for the deadline to request accommodations for the formally-scheduled exam (if applicable) at <http://www2.carleton.ca/pmc/new-and-current-students/dates-and-deadlines/>. You can visit the Equity Services website to view the policies and to obtain more detailed information on academic accommodation at: <http://www2.carleton.ca/equity/>

## Suggested Readings

*This list is not in alphabetical order. It reflects the chronological progression of ideas in the course. Additional or substitute readings will be assigned in class. This is not an exhaustive list. Readings will be added and substituted. **Please follow cuLearn for detailed reading lists.***

Edward Casey, "Mapping the Earth in Works of Art," in *Rethinking Nature: Essays in Environmental Philosophy*, ed. Bruce Foltz and Robert Frodeman (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2004): 260-271.



Anne Michaels, *Fugitive Pieces* (New York: Vintage, 1998).

Michael Ondaatje, *In the Skin of a Lion*, any edition.

Italo Calvino, *Invisible Cities* (New York and London: Harcourt Brace Janovich, 1974).

Roland Barthes, "Semiology and the Urban," in *Rethinking Architecture: A Reader in Cultural Theory*, ed. Neil Leach (New York: Routledge, 1997), 166–71.

Bruce Braun, "Producing vertical territory: geology and governmentality in late Victorian Canada," *Ecumene*, 41, no. 4 (2000).

Vilém Flusser, "The Gesture of Photographing," trans. Nancy Ann Roth, *Journal of Visual Culture* 10, no. 3 (2011): 279–93.

Stephen Parcell, "The Metaphoric Architecture of the Diorama," in *Chora 2: Intervals in the Philosophy of Architecture*, ed. Alberto Pérez Gómez and Stephen Parcell (Montréal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1996), 179–216.

Stephen C. Quinn, "The Worlds Behind Glass," *Natural History*, 115, no. 3 (2006).

John Macarthur, "The Butcher's Shop: Disgust in Picturesque Aesthetics and Architecture," *Assemblage* 30 (1996): 32-43.

Introduction to *The Politics of the Picturesque: Literature, Landscape, and Aesthetics since 1770*, ed. Stephen Copely and Peter Garside (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

Don Mitchell "Cultural Landscapes: the dialectical landscape," *Progress in Human Geography* 26 (June 2002): 381-389.

Davide Deriu, "Picturing Ruinscapes: The Aerial Photography as Image of Historical Trauma," in *The Image and the Witness: Trauma, Memory and Visual Culture*, ed. Frances Guerin and Roger Hallas (London; New York: Wallflower Press, 2007).

Mark. Dorrian, *Seeing from Above the Aerial View in Visual Culture*. (London: I.B. Tauris, 2013). Please read the Introduction (pp. 1-10), Chapter

11: "The Figure from Above: On the Obliqueness of the Plan in Urbanism," (pp.188-209), and Chapter 13: "Vectors of Looking: Reflections of the Luftwaffe's Aerial Survey of Warsaw, 1944," (pp. 227-248).

Jennifer Adese, "Colluding with the Enemy? Nationalism and Depictions of 'Aboriginality' in Canadian Olympic Moments." *American Indian Quarterly* 36, no. 4 (2012): 479-502.

Eduardo Cadava, "'Lapsus Imaginis': The Image in Ruins," *October* 96 (Spring 2001): 35– 60; "Leseblitz: On the Threshold of Violence," *Assemblage*, no. 20 (1993): 22–23.

Peter Hodgins and Peter Thompson "Taking the Romance out of Extraction: Contemporary Canadian Artists and the Subversion of the Romantic/Extractive Gaze" in *Environmental Communication* 5:4, 2011.