



<http://www.mobileandmaking.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/canadian-museum-of-nature-rabbit-diorama.jpg>

CDNS 4400

Cultural Landscapes and Cultural Identity in Canada

Themes for 2015: *LANDSCAPE IN SECTION*

Instructor: Jerzy (Jurek) Elżanowski

Location: 1216 Dunton Tower

Time: Tuesdays, 14:35-17:25

Office hours by appointment (1203 Dunton Tower)

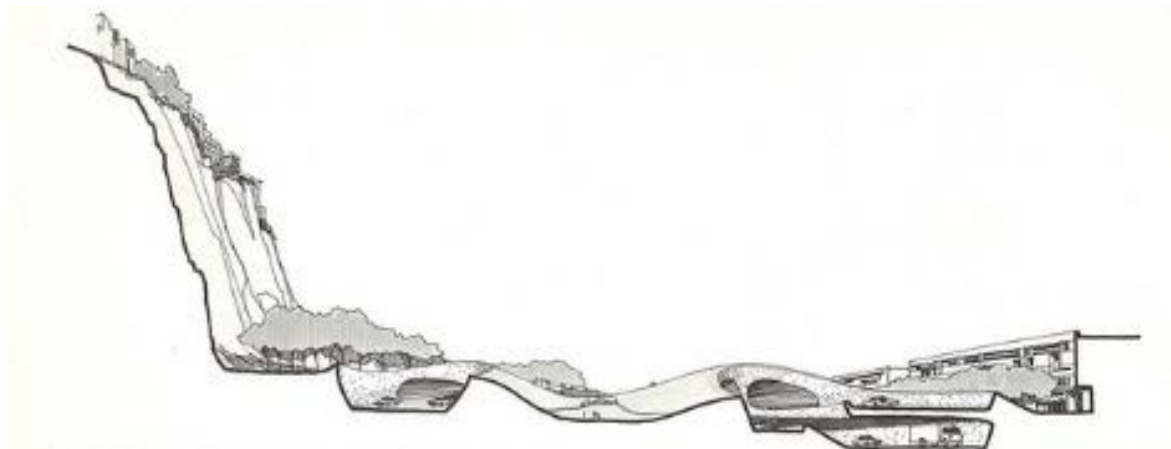
Email: jerzy.elzanowski@carleton.ca

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

Course Argument

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. 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, cultural 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 Canadian and international cultural landscapes. I organize classes around four notions: perspective, the picturesque, the diorama, and the aerial view. These concepts represent different histories and technologies of viewing. 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 Euro-centric human gaze to formulate the fundamentally violent relationships between landscape and human habitation. Throughout this course we will attempt to describe and critique these relationships.



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Assignments

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.

The assignment for this course consists of three essays organized around the gesture of cutting the landscape. You will choose an urban neighbourhood in Canada and draw a line through the chosen area in plan. 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*. Practically speaking, this means that you will describe what you imagine to see as you travel along the sectional plane. What interior and exterior spaces does your line bisect? How does it feel 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. 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: Your first essay will describe the elements and nodes of the city traversed by your sectional line. How and where do you cut the city? Why did you choose that particular line? What kinds of spatial and cultural relationships do you anticipate to encounter?

The second essay will consider moments of a conceptual passing through the crust of the earth at specific locations along your section. You will imagine that you appear in a church, on a plaza, or inside a metro station. You will describe, in detail, both the process of passing into the space, and the life you encounter there. Remember that time is a potentially important dimension in your work.

In your third essay you will summarize and then analyze your travel through distinct places in the sectioned city. It is here that you will develop a relationship to the literature on cultural landscapes and on viewing. The three essays will come together to form three parts of a larger work. The final stage of the assignment will be to edit the essays into one coherent submission.

Workshops and Class Presentations: We will take ample time to discuss and workshop the assigned essays. Essays will be due every three or four weeks according to the schedule below. 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.

Starting in the 7th week of the course, groups of 2-3 students will be asked to lead the classroom discussion on a selected reading. Groups 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. Please feel welcome to contact me at any time with questions.

Evaluation and Submission

Assignments are weighted in the following way:

- Class participation (including discussions and presentations): 20%
- Assignment 1 – Essay theme: Cutting the surface of the city: 20%
- Assignment 2 – Essay theme: Emerging on location: 20%
- Assignment 3 – Essay theme: Journey through the sectioned city: 20%
- Assignment 4 – Final edited submission: 20%

Submission deadlines:

Assignment 1 – 10/02/15

Assignment 2 – 03/03/15

Assignment 3 – 31/03/15

Assignment 4 – 07/04/15

In order to facilitate workshops, assignments are due at the beginning of class. Late assignments will not be accepted or marked. 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.

Excursions and guest lectures

An obligatory excursion to the Canadian Museum of Natural History 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. *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 Bufton 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 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/>

CLASS SCHEDULE

Please note that this is a draft schedule. Readings and discussion topics may change during the course of the semester as we determine the areas of our joint interests. All changes to the schedule will be announced in class. If you have missed a class, please contact the instructor or one of your colleagues to confirm the readings for the week. Please consult the ARES portal for readings. *Fugitive Pieces* by Anne Michaels is available at the University Bookstore.

Class 1: 06/01/15
Introductory class

Class 2: 13/01/15
Inhabiting the depth of land: the concept of the section

Required readings:

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

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). The book has no discernable chapters. Please read pages 5-86 in the 1998 Vintage edition or consult with me if you are using a different edition. The book will be available for sale at the University Bookstore.

Class 3: 20/01/15
In-class workshop: creative academic essay writing

Required readings:

Please read the chapter entitled "Palace of Purification" in any edition of Michael Ondaatje's *In the Skin of a Lion*.

Italo Calvino, *Invisible Cities* (New York and London: Harcourt Brace Janovich, 1974). Please read excerpts provided on ARES.

Class 4: 27/01/15

The diorama as a place of spatial and ethical reconciliation

Required readings:

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.

Class 5: 03/02/15 (3:00-5:00pm)

Visit to the Canadian Museum of Natural History

The visit will include a tour of the wildlife diorama exhibit and as well as a presentation by Museum staff about the recent restoration of the dioramas.

Required readings:

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

Class 6: 10/02/15

Assignment 1 presentations and peer review workshop

WINTER BREAK, NO CLASSES, 16/02/15 – 20/02/15

Class 7: 24/02/15

Circuitous causality: the politics of the picturesque

Required readings:

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.

Class 8: 03/03/15

Assignment 2 presentations and peer review workshops

Class 9: 10/03/15

Group meetings

Note: I will be away at the Montreal Roundtable for Heritage Conservation. You will meet in unsupervised groups of 4 or 5 to share your thoughts on the Anne Michaels reading. Please make sure to take notes so that you can relate your conservation at the next class.

Required Readings:

Anne Michaels, *Fugitive Pieces* (New York: Vintage, 1998). Please read pages 89-195 in the 1998 Vintage edition or consult with me if you are using a different edition.

Class 10: 17/03/15

Implicit causality: the military aerial view and the urban plan

Required Readings:

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).

Class 11: 24/03/15

Violence, culture, image and landscape

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.

Class 12: 31/03/15

Assignment 3 presentations and peer review workshops

Class 13: 07/04/15

Concluding class

Summary and final discussion. Please take a look at new ideas in indigenous commemoration at <http://strongerthanstone.org/>