Plants in the Landscape

EnvDes 335
Fall 2007

Instructor

Jack Ahern, Professor, Landscape Architecture and Regional Planning, Room 413 Hills North
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web site: http://people.umass.edu/jfa
Office Hours: Mon, Wed 10-11AM, or by appointment: email please
Lecture: M,W 8:00-8:50, Thompson 104
Labs: Meet in Hills Lobby - M 9:05-11:00, W 9:05-11:00 Tu 1:25-3:20, Th 1:25-3:20 Tu 3:35-5:30, Th 3:35-5:30

Course Description

Plants in the Landscape is an introduction to approximately 200 common native and ornamental plants used in landscape architecture, horticulture, urban forestry, and other uses. The course covers their identification, uses, and horticultural requirements. Weekly lab walk on campus to see live specimens. Workbook, Readings, Writing Journal, Lecture, Lab, Exams and SPARK component required (weekly online quizzes, audio files of plant pronunciation, image library).

Teaching Assistants

Sarah McMullen: semcmull@larp.umass.edu
Ann Weiland: aweiland@larp.umass.edu
Julie Meyer: jpmeyer@larp.umass.edu
Laura Shaffer: lshaffer@larp.umass.edu

Course Goal:

To learn to identify, care for, interpret and use a representative group of native and introduced woody ornamental plants in landscape design and management.

Course Learning Objectives:

1. To be able to identify woody plants through a deductive process.
2. To become familiar with the potential uses of trees, shrubs, vines, and ground covers as design elements in the creation and articulation of outdoor space.
3. To be able to "read" the landscape by understanding processes of plant community development and through observations of individual plant species and plant communities in various unmanaged and cultural contexts.
4. To become familiar with basic horticultural practices for the establishment and maintenance of woody plants (planting, pruning, fertilizing, pest management)

Course Components

The course has been organized to support the goal and learning objectives. **Please note: this is a 4 credit course** (most University courses are 3 credits) thus it has a appropriately higher amount (+33%) of class time and study requirements/assignments than a normal 3 credit course.

Lecture: The lecture period will discuss the weekly plants and themes. Plants will be presented in thematic groupings with supplementary lecture material and related assigned readings and weekly reading journal writings. The weekly plant themes provide the opportunity to explore related plant topics such as ecology, and design and horticultural practices as a complement to the specific material on plant identification. The lectures will show characteristics of selected plants throughout the year, in various designed and "natural" contexts, and examples of appropriate and inappropriate use and care.

SPARK A major resource/tool of the course, including course documents, images, quizzes, and reference materials (including an online image data base of all plants in the class) is available online, via SPARK. All of your course grades will be posted on SPARK : online quizzes, writing journal, workbook, exams). To gain access to the course web site you must have a valid UMass OIT account, user name/password, and you must be registered for the course to gain access. To access SPARK go to:

https://spark.oit.umass.edu/webct/entryPageIns.dowebct

There is also an F.A.Q. on the course home page and Help for students at the URL above.

Lab Periods The weekly laboratory periods show students live specimens of the weekly plants at on-campus locations. Teaching assistant-guided lab walks will be given each week. These walks are required and are important to learn the plant characteristics for field identification. At weekly lab sessions, students are required to hand in plant workbook pages for the previous week's plants and a writing journal assignment based on the previous week's readings. During each lab period, one extra field identification plant will be given each week as an extra credit quiz (maximum 2 points each week towards your midterm and final field lab exam grade).
NOTE: Academic problems for many students begin with poor lab attendance, remember 75% of success in life is "showing up". Attendance is not required, but will be noted through extra credit quizzes, and will be considered by the instructor in assigning final grades.

Optional Field Trips Three optional field trips will be offered during the semester. At these field trips you will see native plants in their local context, and significant managed landscapes/plant collections. Extra credit will be

given for attendance (2 points on your final grade per field trip, possible total 6 points). These field trips will be led by Prof. Ahern. Travel to the sites is not provided, and carpooling is encouraged. See Course Calendar on SPARK for schedule and locations.

Plant Study Room A plant study room will be maintained on the second floor of Hills North (Room 212), near the northwest stairway, next to the drinking water fountain. The room will contain fresh specimens of weekly plants for general study and sketching for your required workbook. Please be considerate of your fellow students and keep the fresh specimens in the water, and please keep the study room clean.

Course Requirements

Lecture Examinations A midterm exam will be given during the regular lecture period on Monsday October 29. The final exam will be given during the Official University final exam period. **Please do NOT make end-of-semester travel plans until after the University Exam schedule is released**, usually around October 15. When it becomes available, the full final exam schedule is published on the Registrar's Web site: http://www.umass.edu/registrar/gen_info/final_exams.htm

Each student's own final exam schedule is also available through SPIRE. To view it, log in to SPIRE and select "For Students," then "Academic Summary," then "Exam Schedule." The midterm and final examinations will cover material from the lectures, labs and from the readings. PLEASE NOTE: The multiple choice examinations require that you know the plants by their **botanical/latin AND common names**.

Lab Field Examinations 2 Lab field examinations will be given during the semester: the first, at midterm, and the second during the last week of classes (Not during the Final Exam period). The lab exams will be given during regular lab periods. The second exam only covers plants introduced after the midterm (see course calendar). Lab Field Exams will involve identification of 25 different plants, on-campus - in the field. You will be required to **write, and correctly spell the botanical/latin AND common names** for each plant. Partial credit is given for misspelled names.

Quizzes Quizzes for each weekly plant theme (total 12 quizzes) are taken online through SPARK. You are allowed to take the quiz as many times as you like, and ONLY the highest grade will be recorded and will count towards your final grade. You are expected and trusted to take your own quizzes. See academic honesty policy.

Note: Similar material to these quizzes will appear on the midterm and final examinations. If taken regularly and seriously, the online quizzes should be helpful to learn the plants and to prepare for lecture and lab exams.

Workbook You are required to submit completed plant workbook pages weekly, for all the plants of the previous week's plant theme. Completion of the workbook page involves sketching details of the plant form, twig, and leaf as well as completing the requested information about distinctive plant features and identification characteristics. Many sample pages are completed which illustrate multiple styles for drawing plant forms, leaf and twig. Please submit your plant workbook pages with your weekly journal writing to your TA during your lab the week after the plants and writing assignments are given. Weekly workbook submissions will be graded for completeness, neatness, and accuracy. Late assignments will not be accepted. In addition to your textbook :Michael Dirr "Manual of Woody Landscape Plants", references useful for workbook completion and general reference can be found in the UMass Library, as well as many online resources (Google Images). You will also find the live specimens observed during weekly TA-guided or self guided plant walks kept in the Plant Study Room (Hills North 212) will be useful for preparing your workbook.

Weekly plant workbook submissions will be graded as follows: check plus (10 points) check (8.5 points), check minus (7 points), or zero (0). Late submissions will not be accepted and will be graded as a zero (0). These submissions will be returned to you by your TA at the next lab.

Readings A selection of readings from books, journals and other sources is a required part of this course. The weekly readings are intended to complement and expand on lecture topics and to promote a greater understanding of issues related to the design, ecology, installation and maintenance of woody landscape plants. There will be specific questions on the midterm and final lecture exams about the readings. The weekly reading assignments are listed on the course website, and are available online from the UMass library E-Reserves at:

http://ereserves.library.umass.edu/courseindex.asp
under course - ED335, or Instructor - Jack Ahern.
The password is: Maple07.

Reading/Writing Journal You are required to write a brief, one page, response essay to each week's of readings. Please submit your weekly writing with your weekly plant workbook pages. Your writing should be typed, or very neatly handwritten. Illegible or sloppy work will not be accepted. Advice: If you do your reading carefully, take notes and include the main point(s) of the article(s), you should have an excellent study guide for the midterm and final exams – which will include questions on each week's readings. Useful References for Writing Journal are available at:
UMass Writing Help:
http://www.library.umass.edu/subject/writingres/index.html
Response Writing:
http://leo.stcloudstate.edu/acadwrite/reaction.html

Attendance Attendance at all lectures is expected and strongly encouraged – but is not recorded. I believe in treating students as adults. Your participation in the guided on and off campus plant walks is also required. From past experience, the many students who do not attend lectures and labs often have difficulty earning a satisfactory or passing grade in the class (Duh!).

Academic Honesty Any student found to be involved in academically dishonest conduct will be recommended to the instructor for appropriate disciplinary action. This may include suspension from the course, or receiving a failing grade for a specific course component. This policy applies to all course components, including: lecture exams, lab/field exams, plant workbook and writings. This policy is in accordance with the official University Policy on academic honesty available online at:

http://www.umass.edu/dean_students/code_conduct/acad_honest.htm

Make Up Policy Students are responsible for taking exams and quizzes at the scheduled times. Students are also responsible for making alternative arrangements in advance if they have a legitimate reason for not being able to take an exam, and to provide appropriate explanation and documentation if they miss an exam without such prior arrangement (Personal/family emergency, religious holidays, etc). As required, make up exams will be scheduled at the mutual convenience of the student and the instructor. Make-up exams WILL be different in content and style than the regular exams.

Textbooks

Required: *Manual of Woody Landscape Plants* , Michael Dirr, Stipes, Fifth Edition, available at UMass Textbook Annex, or Jeffrey Amherst Bookstore, N. Pleasant St, downtown Amherst. This is the standard reference for woody plants, includes all plants in the course plus many, many others. If you plan to work in the field, this WILL be an important future reference. Trust me on this.

Required: Plants in the Landscape Workbook: This is a 3 ring binder with reference material, weekly plant lists, maps and plant pages which you are required to complete and hand in weekly. Available at Copy Cat Print Shop, North Pleasant Street, Amherst (next to Bertucci's Pizza).

Recommended: *Dirr's Hardy Trees and Shrubs*, Michael Dirr, Timber Press, 1997, available at UMass Textbook Annex, or Jeffrey Amherst Bookstore, S. Pleasant St, downtown Amherst. This book includes most (not all) of the plants covered in the class, and has beautiful high quality photographs (the required Dirr text has no photographs, only drawings).

Recommended: *A good 10X -15X hand lens (for magnification) available at the University Bookstore in the Campus Center, Hastings Stationary, Amherst and other locations. This will help you to "see" small details on leaves and twigs that can be helpful in identification.*

Grading Policies

Your cumulative grade will be calculated as follows:

Lecture Exams	35%	(17.5% midterm, 17.5% final)
Lab Field Exams	35%	(17.5% midterm, 17.5% final)
Workbook	10%	
SPARK Quizzes	10%	
Reading/Writing Journal	10%	
Total	100%	

Note: Your final grade is based on the 7 main items above. Each item has enough points to represent a significant part of your grade (minimum 10 points). It should be obvious to you that completion/participation of all course components is important to obtain a satisfactory/passing grade.

Extra Credit: Three Optional Field Trips (2 points each – counts towards your final grade, up to 6 points, It can make a difference!)