What the Folk?
Transforming Environmental Design Education Through Feminist Pedagogy and Applied Folklore

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## ABSTRACT

This research explores practical changes to Western environmental design education informed by discourses and practices within critical pedagogy, feminist theory, and applied folklore. I employ a new framework responding to the critiques of Western conventional environmental design pedagogy for recirculating and reinforcing technocratic approaches and exclusive policies, plans, and designs, as well as student demands to substantively reform course curricula to value BIPOC perspectives and contributions to the field to re-envision an undergraduate capstone sustainable design course at the University of California, Davis. The results demonstrate how educators can value personal experience, a sense of belonging, and a commitment of care to empower students and pluralize narratives, epistemologies, and materialities in an environmental design classroom. Qualitatively analyzing student projects and self-reflections from the classroom case study, this framework evaluates how these pedagogical changes encourage students to counter the dominant canon and imagine and experience alternative processes for producing more socially, racially, and ecologically just designed and built environments.

## FOREWORD

*Where I am From* by Alexi Wordell
adapted from George Ella Lyon[1]

I am from crockpots
From Dinty Moore and Hospice Gift and Thrift
I am from a shared bedroom, hand-me-down mattress, and nighttime whispers with my little sister
I am from a man-made lake, cloudy water, and a cul-de-sac
I'm from short tempers and crossed boundaries
From Kipp Charlton and Jennifer Darlene
I'm from scrapbooking and 80's music
From 'Zing! Zing! Zingers!' and 'Rise and shine and give God your glory, glory!'
I'm from a lake baptism and summer camp
I'm from the Gold Rush foothills and cornfields of Nebraska,
Spaghetti and Chinese chicken salads
From domestic violence, infidelity, and tales of Native ancestry,
The teenage pregnancy of my mom – the first they let graduate from her high school
Murphy beds, celebratory meals at Chef Chu's, and my grandparents' apricot tree
I am from contradictions –
experiences of pain and belonging –
a home of trauma and a home of safety

[1] Students enrolled in LDA 142 were asked to complete their own version of Lyon's poem. Several read their poems aloud to their peers. I'm sharing my version, as so many students bravely shared theirs.

# INTRODUCTION

## Countering the Canon, Making Change

This research is personal, experimental, and exploratory. It unearths knowledge, narratives, memories, values, and creative expressions possessed, performed, and shared by a cohort of undergraduate students studying Sustainable Environmental Design at the University of California, Davis (UC Davis). These students, the emerging group of future practitioners of environmental planners and designers, completed their capstone course, LDA 142: Applying Sustainable Solutions, during the 2022 spring quarter. This was the first time the transformed course curriculum—focused on feminist pedagogy and folkloristic approaches to planning and design—was offered.

The redesigned course was created in response to student demands, which called for the program to diversify its curricula to be inclusive of non-Western and masculine perspectives, and for faculty and staff to provide students with learning experiences that emphasized accessibility, cultural studies, community development and climate studies in design strategies in order to better prepare students as informed and dynamic practitioners. In addition, the curriculum changes were based on recent research findings that conventional environmental design is not adequately equipped to solve worsening social, economic, and ecological crises prevalent within our built environments (Bell et al., 2020; Jacobs, 2018). In this research, environmental design is defined as the Western, often technocratic and ahistorical, practice of planning and designing the built environment, physically and socio-economically, through the professional

organization of land, resources, and networks. It entails formal training at the higher-education level and professional practice in the fields of urban and regional planning, urban design, and landscape architecture.

My thesis contributes to conversations and practices aimed at disarming the status quo, which tend to serve the interest of capitalist growth at the expense of marginalized communities. Foundational to this exploration is the sharing of another story, one where lived experience, emotion, memory, and connection to place, people, and creative expression, counter the dominant ideology and professional practice of environmental design. By pluralizing values through the co-generation of alternative discourses, a tenant of this research is to equip students, educators, and practitioners with a more robust tool kit for planning and designing more equitable built environments that promote "internal cultural healing, the revitalization of traditions and the creation of new ones, [and] the realization that a civilization based on the love of life is a far better option that one based on its destruction" (Escobar, 2018, p. 14). The works and wisdom formed and transmitted by LDA 142 students demonstrate the potential of this radical approach to environmental design—one that redefines planning and design as a praxis of care, collective healing, community empowerment, and belonging.

The specifics of this research are stitched together as we move through this thesis. The goal is to transition you from a place of familiarity to a place more unknown, though as expected, you'll arrive with your own understanding, history, and identity. We start here; journey through the critique of 'normative' environmental design pedagogy and practice; wind through an overview of emerging trends of narrative-based practices in environmental design; take a detour

through the critical pedagogy, feminism, and folklore; make a pitstop at a UC Davis classroom, LDA 142, the case study of this research, to explore these theories in practice in an undergraduate-level environmental design course; and finally, arrive at our final destination, a shifting landscape in environmental design education, discussing the implications of this study in education and practice. My goal in taking this metaphorical road trip through critical environmental design pedagogy, where folklife is valued, is to uncover how the field can expand—from a linear thread of impartial, controlled inquiry and practice—to include a greater array of narratives, epistemologies, and materialities rooted in everyday expression and cultural meaning-making.

A broadening of environmental design narratives to include overlooked and underrepresented designers, communities, stories, and cultures will improve the education and practice of the field, resulting in a more equitable and culturally relevant built environment that increases diversity and difference in our communities and within the field of planning and environmental design. Scholars like Tarrido-Picart (2015) have called for a "serious rethinking" of environmental design education, one that places Black history and experience at the center of coursework and acknowledges and honors Black creativity, intellect, and talent rather than canonical perspectives. Such an approach would, "stop approaching diversity primarily through the lens of social problems and would further enrich our view of design traditions" (n.p.) The author further offers that this "would address the lack of racial diversity in the fields of design in a more nuanced and dynamic manner."

Along a similar vein, Agyeman and Erickson (2012) recount the ethical responsibility that professional planners have in advancing social, racial, and economic justice. Therefore, it is essential, they argue, that this principle be translated into pedagogical and curricular spaces such that students learn to become more aware of cultural dynamics, their own assumptions, beliefs, and knowledge and refine their ability to listen and understand other cultures (Agyeman and Erickson, 2012). Integrating cultural competency into education and practice would prepare planners, the authors suggest, to be "more effective at addressing *all* forms of inequality", not just those based on differences of race and class (Agyeman and Erickson, 2012, p. 359).

If changes to diversify environmental design fail to take root, Ng (2019) posits the professional practice will become, if it not already is, obsolete, further losing impact and influence due to the field's inability to "keep pace with societal advancements" (p. 142). Alternatively, should the field embrace a multicultural approach that responds to social and cultural circumstances and place, our built environments will contain less standardized and restrictive forms and uses and more "complicated, representative spaces that are particular to a place, its situation, and history" (Hood, 2003, p. 34).

To begin to uncover these threads of thinking, the questions framing my research are: *How can critical feminist pedagogy and a folkloristic framework be employed in post-secondary environmental design education to create a more just, caring, and healing-centered practice? When students and educators engage in and employ narratives of everyday lived expression and experience in environmental design curricula, what is produced and shared in the classroom?*

And, *what are the larger implications for professional environmental design practice?* This work is expected to shift how students think and work within the educational setting, asking them to draw on their beliefs, knowledge, and expertise outside the classroom to generate radical alternatives, shared ideas, assumptions, and approaches to learning and intervening in the built environment.

**Feminist Pedagogy, Transformative Work**

Feminist pedagogy provides a framework for broadening and pluralizing the norms and standards regarding gender, as well as power dynamics associated with race and class, within learning environments and beyond. At its core, feminist pedagogy is fundamentally concerned with social change, critiquing and challenging normative assumptions regarding knowledge and ways of knowing (Manicom, 1992). Understood as a pedagogy of liberation (Manicom, 1992), feminist pedagogy "necessitates not only the development of new knowledge, but also new forms of relationships between people" (Schniedewind, 1983, p. 262) in order to transform power relationships within the classroom and beyond.

In a classroom setting where feminist pedagogy is practiced, one intention is to challenge teachers' own intentions as well as transform students by empowering them to translate their ideas into actions (hooks, 2003). This is employed in an 'engaged' classroom, which Shrewsbury (1993) defines as a teaching/learning process where teachers and students (1) practice continual self-reflectivity; (2) actively engage in the material being studied; (3) engage with others in the struggle to end oppression along the axes of race, class, and gender; (4) and work with communities and organizations to enact social change (Shrewsbury, 1993). Within

environmental design, feminist pedagogy engages students in making space for all, rather than following either/or logic through the employment of qualitative methodologies that aim to reflect multiple interests and needs (Shilon and Eizenberg, 2020)

**Folklore: Knowledge and Knowing Through Cultural Transmission**

I have learned that most people, including my own family and friends, do not know what folklore is, let alone what a folklorist does. When I mention that I study folklore, people often ask questions like, *so what's your favorite fairy tale?* Or, *do you believe in the Loch Ness Monster?* The few that are somewhat familiar with the field might ask about ethnography or fieldwork, prevalent methodological tools within the practice. While these questions and comments are not *wrong*, per se, they are just a sliver of what folklore entails. While folklore includes the study of folk tales, children's stories, myths, and legends, more broadly, it is a discipline, profession, and way of life (Levy, 2003) that seeks to uncover and understand the granular aspects of everyday life, or the texts—whether material, performative, ritualistic, or oral—that individuals within small groups create and transmit between each other (Sims and Stephens, 2011). These texts can range from quilts to weekly dinners, jokes and riddles, traditional clothing to hip-hop dances, religious ceremonies to vernacular architecture, and beyond.

First situating folklore in urban settings, notable folklorist Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett (1983) wrote in the seminal piece, *The Future of Folklore Studies in America: The Urban Frontier*, "The study of folklore is at its core an investigation of how people in their everyday lives shape deeply felt values in

meaningful form. In the urban setting… folklorists are especially attuned to control, autonomy, and efficacy at a local level" (p. 183). In the remainder of this article, Kirshenblatt-Gimblett turns to the streets, nooks, and stoops of New York City as case studies, examining the variety of social, cultural, architectural, performative, artistic, religious, and ritualistic activities that define urbanism and the expressive behaviors that people themselves assert and control in an urban environment. Some urban sociologists and anthropologists, like Whyte (1980), Zukin (2012), and Low (2010), have come to similar conclusions.

Prior to Kirshenblatt-Gimblett's piece, literature on urban folklore was sparse. It had been overlooked and underestimated in comparison to rural folklore, which was deemed more "authentic". By illuminating the ways in which people shape their expressive lives in cities, she opened a vast terrain for folklorists and cultural scholars in urban settings, paving the way for the study of urban folklore. Yet the question remains, how can folk process inform the professional planning and design of built environments? Unlike most other works, where the focus is using folk theories to understand, explain, describe socio-cultural formations of places, this research takes a more applied approach to exploring how folk processes can change planning and design to include experiences of everyday life and the possibility that people other than professionals are responsible for making built environments.

Folklorists try to understand a community on its own terms through patterns of everyday life by working within groups of social networks. They engage with community in informal ways, meeting them where they are—at school or work, events and gatherings, and even at home. Placing themselves in the everyday life of communities, folklorists engage in daily rituals and transmittance of folklife through

ethnography, observation, and conversation, as well as through archival research. Similar, yet distinguishable from anthropology, folklorists have a “unique knowledge base and a methodological skill set” due to their “intimate understanding of genre, transmission, and tradition” (Mills et al., 2021, p. 63). More broadly, anthropologists have been metaphorically described as “cosmologists of culture” who map out the terrains of social life, whereas folklorists are “the particle physicists of culture” who study the small building blocks of social reality (Fivecoat, 2020, n.p.).

In summary, the practice of folklore is about engaging in the study of everyday settings, conversations, traditions, and performances to better understand how community groups transmit their values through texts. It is crucial to note that folklorists do not critique communities for their “truthfulness” but instead examine how and why their stories and materialities are transmitted and preserved within a community, and what they can tell about a group of people and place. Key to folkloristic studies is the researcher’s positionality, or their social, racial, economic, cultural, political background, and how these identities affect their assumptions and interpretations.

Beyond participatory planning and design strategies, folklore is not just about community participation, as defined and practiced within environmental design, but immersive engagement in creative expression and meaning making produced by the community themselves. As this paper will uncover, environmental design education largely lacks this approach and framework. While environmental design has included participatory methods, it has done so in the least intrusive way possible to minimize the perceived negative effects of having to interact with communities,

therefore lacking robust practices in understanding community meanings and concerns.

**Critical Intersections**

So, where do critical feminism and folklore fit into environmental design pedagogy? Or, in other words, how can feminism and folklore be conceptually applied to environmental design? Simply put, the products of environmental design affect nearly every aspect of society and the power constructions that land and materialize in place and community. How we navigate and engage in the built environment, with one another, and with the more-than-human world; the ways we make sense of our environment and the services and resources we have access to; our material, social, economic, and spiritual lives can be derived from processes, practices, and outcomes of environmental design, which set the stage of our everyday lives. If we are to radically change our built environment and how resources are distributed to be more equitable and oriented around care and healing, then folklore must be understood and applied because it deals directly with communities' everyday lives, as well as how they find meaning and identity through expression infused with cultural meaning.

In 1971, prominent folklorists Henry and Betty-Jo Glassie wrote on applied folklore in planning and architecture. In the piece, the authors posit that folklore can aid in a pluralistic and diverse society by broadening our cultural and material environment through the preservation of "folk architecture", or buildings "[proven] to be most genuinely representative" (p. 32). The find that:

> An assertion of folkloristic philosophy and findings could bring about a drastic change in teaching about history and art, in the plans for preservation, in the

> legal dimensions of planning, and in the environments which result from the plans and ultimately from the teaching (p. 31)

Moreover, writing on the architectural preservation of "some mansions and a log cabin" in Philadelphia, Glassie (1971) writes:

> But those buildings do not tell the story of this area; its story is told in immigration and industry, in the barges on the rivers, the J and L stacks in the sky, and hundreds of workers' homes where poor people from the south, from eastern and southern Europe, labored through life. You will not find the story of their heartbreak and success, integrity and compromise, reflected in Adam doorways or hewn logs, but rather in the sad facades of compact rows of little houses which nobody is preserving for the future. (p. 32)

They continue:

> If we are to create a record of history in architecture, the humble as well as the grand, the common as well as the strange, need to be included. This thought is no novelty in folklore, a discipline that has been committed since its beginning to the study of people that historians neglect and the arts that art historians neglect. (p. 33)

These quotes speak to the power of a folkloristic approach within environmental design that honors the stories of everyday lived experience and created by common folk, not the fanciest nor most unique, but the story of what occurs in daily life.

It is worth noting that within environmental design, the vernacular architecture movement was spurred by Bernard Rudofsky's 1964 Museum of Modern Art exhibit and book, *Architecture without Architects*, which displayed "communal architecture" from around the world that exemplified the functionality and modernity of non-professional design and architecture. Later, in 1984, John Brinckerhoff Jackson wrote, *Discovering the Vernacular Landscape,* a pioneering piece into cultural landscape, or how landscapes reflect important cultural changes.

Through the implementation of folklore in environmental design, the field can be pluralized to better center the lived experience of communities, recognizing their knowledge as expertise by uplifting the stories, objects, rituals, and practices created

and shared by communities.  In order to study specific folk phenomena or items or the ways in which groups communicate and learn that text, tradition is vital to the cultural understandings or processes of that text (Sims and Stephens, 2011). To folklorists, tradition entails both *lore* and *practices* that help to "create and confirm a sense of identity" within a community (Sims and Stephens, 2012, p. 71)

Regarding community traditions as valuable, planners, policymakers, designers, and architects can learn to engage in and unfold community stories, revealing their values, norms, and how they make meaning of the world. Scholars have written on the power of narrative and storytelling as a transformational methodology within environmental design, possessing the ability to solve complex socio-ecological problems and strengthen climate adaptation planning (Cronon, 1991; Relva & Jung, 2021; Ison, 2014).

In particular, the application of folklore, including the traditions, arts, and stories made and defined by communities, are unearthed through observation, "identifying important traditions and rituals, and deep listening to diverse narratives" which can "create opportunities for students to think critically, gather and analyze evidence, learn key social-emotional skills, and express their ideas and interpretations through personal creativity" (Local Learning, n.d.).

In combination with folklore, this research applies a critical feminist pedagogical approach to environmental design education. Whereas folklore serves as the practical approach to exploring how folk processes of creative expression and transmission within social groups can change planning and design, critical feminism frames the conversation around historical relationships between power and privilege with the aim of generating narratives, epistemologies, and materialities

that honor alternatives to Western patriarchal standards and norms as related to the built environment.

In the pages that follow, I tell a story that is situated within the intersection of feminism, folklore and environmental design to offer alternative pedagogical tools to the dominant canon. This is done by introducing a feminist folkloristic pivot and approach to planning and design pedagogy and practice, applied to an undergraduate capstone course at UC Davis. Analysis of this case study reveals that this approach is needed to address the blind spots in current ways of teaching and doing planning and design in order to address issues of inequality and lack of diversity and representation within the profession.

## BACKGROUND

### Justifying a New Approach to Environmental Design

This research presents and responds primarily to one condition, the perpetual re-telling and application of the Western-dominating canon in environmental design that prioritizes the white male experience and perspective, as well as discourses and symbols. In conversation with the Western canon, and peripheral implications, this research also considers the lasting effects of traumatic urbanism caused in part by exclusionary planning, design, and policy and the unequal socioeconomic outcomes of urban growth tactics understood through an urban political economy lens. These conditions are important to consider because they have direct impacts on the field and its outcomes. For example, a 2021 survey conducted by the American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA) found the demographics within the field of landscape architecture are not representative of

the U.S. population; of the 159 respondents, 3.1% identified as Black or African American (Teymouri, 2021), whereas nationally, 14.2% of the population identified as Black or African American (U.S. Census Bureau, 2021). This affects the representation and outcomes of the field, including the language, examples, and practices commonly employed. As a result, the practice is not reflective of the nation's cultural and ethnic diversity and fails to adequately address the needs and desires of diverse communities. It is urgent, therefore, that the field be pluralized to include these voices and experiences in order to better respond to worsening ecological and socio-economic conditions found within our built environments.

***Dominant Western Canon***

To date, the disciplines of environmental design have been unsuccessful at rectifying the significant list of concerns related to social and racial inequalities that disproportionately place environmental burdens onto BIPOC communities (Kiers et al., 2020). Conventional strategies aimed at addressing climate change, and its interrelated socio-economic challenges, have tended to rely on engineered solutions, technological advancements, or policymaking (Kiers et al., 2020). This is reflected in the most widely studied and employed definition of 'sustainability' that comes from the 1987 World Commission on Environment and Development's "Our common future", commonly referred to as the "Brundtland Report". The Brundtland Report looks toward a new era of economic growth that sustains our environmental resources through 'sustainable' urban development that is 'green', 'responsive' or 'environmental'. Despite the construction of 'green', energy-efficient buildings and the use of renewable resources, cities have not successfully decreased their carbon

dioxide emissions (Friedrich and Damassa, 2014); technological advancements alone will not solve our climate crisis (Huesemann and Huesemann, 2011). Urban development through this limited lens of 'sustainability' has not ensured the well-being of the environment nor social life in cities, yet it remains the dominant account as to what 'good' planning and design education and practice is and ought to be.

Another example foundational to the dominant canon of Western environmental design taught U.S. universities and institutions, yet its implications on communities of color and other vulnerable communities is less frequently acknowledged. For instance, Frederick Law Olmsted, commonly referred to as the "father of landscape architecture", is often taught within environmental design education as transforming New York City to with his design of Central Park in the nineteenth century, providing sanitation, green space, and social reform to increasingly industrialized and diverse city (Eisenman, 2013). However, often left from this story is the demolition of Seneca Village and the resulting displacement of its African American and Irish residents who were cleared for the construction of Central Park. In the name of progress and order, a community was removed from the landscape.

Despite evidence documenting the shortcomings of conventional environmental design, the practice continues to repeat these development patterns while being unable to adequately address worsening climate conditions and social, racial, and economic conditions. The trajectory begins with the official narrative of environmental design taught to emerging planners, designers, architects, and policymakers at universities. The people, places, projects, and practices taught in

environmental design education follow a storyline of Western exceptionalism in urbanization and industrialization. It is a tale of progress and modernization that celebrates the beautification, cleansing, and systematic organization of American and European cities (Sandercock 1998) through efficient scientific and technological advancement. But this narrative is not only incomplete, it is uncritical and biased. It ignores informal (non-professional) development and planning, indigenous practices, and non-Western ideologies and approaches, or, if it includes non-western perspectives, it encloses them neatly within parenthetical textbook chapters.

**Political Urban Economy**

Western environmental design, or the processes of planning, designing, and policymaking of and within the built environment, has tended to marginalize and disempower diverse community values through the employment of technocratic, modernist and rational approaches that reinforce the global circulation of capitalistic values, ideas, and processes (McCann and Ward, 2012; Low and Smith, 2013). The enclosure of capital embraced by the planning and design profession has subsequently homogenized and standardized urban form, land use, and demographics—examples include the proliferation of 'cookie cutter' suburban development following WWII and revitalization efforts of urban centers since the 1960s—resulting in increasingly exclusive cities that cater to technology, professional employees, and economically-privileged consumers (Harvey, 2006; Wilson, 1987; Zukin, 1987; Zukin, 1998) and disproportionately harm vulnerable communities, including women and children, elderly populations, and communities of color by materially and symbolically excluding them from meaningful participation in the

social and economic dynamics of the environment, often segregating these communities to fragmented areas lacking adequate infrastructure, services, and opportunities (Rothstein 2017; Sandercock 1998; Low, 2001).

**Post-Traumatic Urbanism**

It is well documented that technocratic, apolitical environmental design practices, such as those mentioned above, have tended to result in lasting effects and disproportionately maldistributed impacts on vulnerable and marginalized communities. Research has shown that people of color and low-income people are at higher risk of experiencing natural and human-caused disasters (Bullard, 1999; Masozera et al., 2007). Planning and design strategies that accommodate these frontline communities and their unique socioeconomic, political, environmental, and cultural characteristics are necessary to increase community resilience and equity (Till, 2012). Some scholars have termed the condition when conflict or catastrophe have led to lasting, disruptive impacts, physical as well as cultural and social, which become the everyday norm of urban life, as *post-traumatic urbanism* (Lahoud, et al., 2010 and Schwake, 2018). Whereas traditionally, planning has largely been concerned with systematic organization of the built environment for the benefit of economic development, a post-traumatic urbanist approach is about “repair[ing] the trauma planners have historically borne on these communities” (Bender et al., 2020). As a result, it is necessary to mobilize planners, designers, architects, and scholars with the ability to creatively and critically problem-solve for these enduring problems and lead to more supportive, healing, and caring cities.

A recent example of post-traumatic urbanism is reflected in the communities of color where residents are disproportionately killed by police. This may seem like a leap, but it is well-documented how sanctioned violence on Black and Brown communities follows the land use patterns of violence and exclusion as enforced through redlining (Rothstein, 2017). This deepening divide between marginalized and affluent communities was heightened by the murder of George Floyd and the protests that followed in 2020 (Curtis, 2022), as well as the social, economic, and environmental inequalities experienced by BIPOC and other vulnerable communities during the COVID-19 pandemic (Berkowitz et al., 2021; Cole et al., 2021).

Since its inception as a professional practice, planning and design have been used as tools for entrenching socioeconomic and racial exclusion, as seen by the practices of redlining, restrictive covenants, urban renewal, and land use patterns, decisions, and regulations that disproportionately harm our most vulnerable populations (Rothstein 2017). Recent events, such as the Covid-19 pandemic and the Black Lives Matter movement, demonstrate that planning and design decisions disproportionately perpetuate and exacerbate poor health outcomes in BIPOC communities, as found in parks and open spaces (Hoover & Lim, 2021). The disproportionate negative impacts on communities of color are due, largely in part, to our planning and land use decisions built upon racist policies and practices, leaving a patchworked landscape that leaves underrepresented communities most vulnerable to environmental hazards and violence imposed by institutional forces.

***Students Demand Justice, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion in Courses***

After the murders of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor at the hands of police, and the growing racial and social justice movement that followed, UC Davis undergraduate students from JEDI (Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion) committee sent a letter (see Appendix A) to the LA+ED program faculty and staff expressing their concerns and demanding changes to the program, classroom support and accessibility, and curriculum. The students cited the program's "failure to create an inviting environment for students and faculty from underrepresented communities", noting the lack of inclusion and diversity in the curricula where "many perspectives and lessons are overwhelmingly white and Eurocentric". In response to these concerns, they demanded: greater diversity in faculty, access to affordable studio material, financial support for materials and site visits, greater faculty support and mentorship, more manageable class sizes, career and professional development training, and major program changes that apply design strategies, emphasize affordable and accessible design, and integrate ethnic studies, community development, environmental planning, and climate sciences into curriculum that reflect the diversity of the LA+ED student body.

In response to the JEDI letter, Professor Claire Napawan, along with other faculty, such as David de la Peña who worked with students and a community partner in LDA 141: Community Participation and Design to create DEI landscape architecture materials, took concrete steps to address the students' demands and enact meaningful change. Claire spent the following year assessing syllabi, surveying students and faculty, compiling DEI commitments, reviewing traditional texts and alternatives, and exploring new pedagogy within course instruction. The case study

for this research, the newly designed course LDA 142, is a result of the students' demands and the faculty's response.

**Winding Through the Terrain of Critical Pedagogy in Environmental Design**

Shifting societal demands have not been lost on environmental design educators. As society changes, educational changes follow. Broadly, environmental design has expanded over the past fifty years, pluralizing narratives, methods, and values. Namely, critiques of traditional planning methodologies, discussions of social justice and environmental justice have become prevalent, but only in the past twenty years have educators integrated issues of diversity and social justice into environmental design curriculum (Sen et al., 2017).

The educational field is expanding beyond Western, white, male narratives, teaching students to be critical of stories that marginalize communities (Sen et al., 2017). As have counter-narratives, which share how racism and other forms of social exclusion are perpetuated within the environmental design practice (Sandercock, 2000; Rothstein, 2017). Resulting, anti-racist and abolitionist planning approaches have entered the educational space, as seen by the University of California, Los Angeles' *Abolitionist Planning for Resistance* pamphlet, written by planning students, supervised by Professor Ananya Roy. Higher education students in western environmental design courses are also exposed to the larger social-economic processes that inform urban form and its impacts on urban life (Sen et al., 2017) through a critique of the privatization, fortification, and homogenization of public spaces.

There have been leaps and bounds within environmental design education, but there remains a significant gap in connecting students to the study of diversity in everyday life and expression (Fan et al., 2022). Particularly, storytelling, community engagement, and arts-based design in planning and design appear in course curricula (Van Hulst, 2012), but what is lacking is an analysis of how to educate students in documenting and analyzing these processes within the setting of everyday life. In short, there is a gap in the literature on linking critical pedagogy with folkloristic processes and approaches in environmental design.

Van Hulst (2012) calls for ethnographic fieldwork to further develop ideas on storytelling in planning practice, stating there is a need to observe in the field how stories are produced in 'everyday action'. He writes, "[I]f we want to build a stronger theory of storytelling in planning, we should develop our theory in the context of the actual activities that make up planning as a practice and observe storytelling in situ. To see the work of producing stories and not just the products of storytelling (the stories themselves), we should not isolate stories but study storytelling as an aspect of the messy, everyday action" (Van Hulst, 2012 citing Forester, 1992, p. 314). What I take from this quote is that ethnography is one component of the study of everyday life within planning and design, however, beyond this practice, there is a need to fill the methodological gap by exploring how stories shape the practice, as well as communities.

## PART ONE: LITERATURE

The literature review identifies trends and knowledge gaps within the current literature available, illuminating spaces for further research and knowledge production. The identified openings will look to the main theoretical frameworks of

critical feminist pedagogy and applications of folklore in education in order to shed light on the function of critical pedagogy in environmental design curricula to transform the educational direction of the field to pluralize narratives, norms, knowledges and practices that value everyday creative expression to create more just and equitable built environments.

The current literature identifies several key areas of expanding critical feminist pedagogy within environmental design education, as well as diverse applications of feminist theory within professional planning and design praxis to increase women's 'right to the city' as well as their participation in the field. However, there is little research exploring critical feminist pedagogy in environmental design course curricula beyond service learning and participatory engagement strategies. The first section of this review explores literature in the realm of feminist environmental design and its applications within higher education. To take this a step further, the second leg of this literature review explores how applications of folklore within an educational context overlap with critical pedagogy, considering how employment of critical pedagogical approaches and practices can privilege everyday life experiences and cultural meaning.

**Teaching as Feminist Praxis**

In this research, I employ an understanding and application of feminist theory and pedagogy which considers how feminist teaching can identify and understand effects of history and describe its relationship between culture, including along the axes of race, gender, sexuality, coloniality, capitalism, and ability. This branch of feminism is concerned with living beyond capitalism, generating alternatives to

neoliberalism, and building an anti-systemic, transdisciplinary movement for justice. In *Feminism for the 99%: A Manifesto,* authors Arruzza, Bhattacharya, and Fraser (2019) call for an end to the mode of feminism concerned with perpetuating capitalist values that are supported by increased profits through professionalism of the female laborer. Instead, they argue that this limited view of feminism be expanded for and by the majority that "embraces class struggle and the fight against institutional racism" (p. 15) in order to reconfigure unequal power constructions within the field and how they are materialized in our built environments (2019).

More recently, this version of feminism has become more prevalent as previous waves of feminism are critiqued by scholars for their "mainstreamness", or lack of critical engagement in topics of race and acknowledgment of white women's complicity in dominating the field, retaining power and perpetuating unequal power dynamic along axes of race and class (Grande, 2003), as well as the shortcoming of feminist pedagogy in achieving "empowerment" in educational practices, where instead, and despite their intention, instructors can serve as "instruments of domination" (Gore, 1992 citing Sawicki, 1988).

Several scholars approach feminist pedagogy through a postmodernist lens (Brady & Dentith, 2001), meaning feminism framed by a "focal interest in signification, in power/knowledge relationships, in the harm done by master-narratives, and in the way institutional structures are controlled" (Luke & Gore, 2014, p. ix). Brady and Dentith (2001) find that critical postmodern feminism as an organizing principle encourages women and men to "acknowledge their diverse backgrounds and to gather strength from their experiences of oppression and

shared commonalities, and to provide opportunities to rally their abilities for collective action" (p. 167).

The overarching theoretical framework of this research is critical pedagogy, or "pedagogy of liberation and conception of cultural action" (Morrow & Tores, 2002 p. x on referring to Paulo Freire), which involves teaching strategies that engage in topics along and intersecting the axes of race, gender, ethnicity, class and so forth. More specifically, I engage in feminist pedagogy in this research topic. Broadly, feminist pedagogy challenges objectivity and efficiency within education by offering alternative views based on feminist principles, which are identified as: (1) transformation of the teacher-student relationship; (2) empowerment via democracy and shared power; (3) construction of community; (4) honoring individual voice; (5) respect for diversity of personal experience; and (6) challenging traditional views (Webb et al., 2002). More recently, feminist principles have been expanded to include pluralizing opportunities for student engagement (McCusker, 2017), demystifying traditional canons (Luke & Gore, 2014), and centering a commitment to justice (McCusker 2017; Stephens, 2022; Brady & Dentith, 2001).

**Critical Feminist Theory in Environmental Design**

The literature on the feminist pedagogy within environmental design is sparse. That which does exist, tends to emphasize the basis of defending women as a legal category seeking greater representation in the profession and built environment, rather than feminist approaches to construct resistance against inequalities along axes of race, class, gender, and other identities within the field (Jon, 2020). Rather than focusing on feminist thought within environmental design

pedagogy explicitly, this section explores how feminist theory has informed the outcomes of the practice, highlighting how a feminist pedagogical approach to environmental design might better equip students with a pluralized understanding of perspectives, expertise, and knowledges.

***Beyond Western, Male Perspectives***

Scholars have shown how a feminist intervention to environmental design can diversify and pluralize the narrative and experience beyond the dominant Western perspective. In 1961, Jane Jacobs first offered a perspective of modern city building in her seminal book, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*. Jacobs considers gender through the lens of standardized urbanization, unpacking how Fordist planning negatively impacts the daily lives of women and families by not considering the social and economic lives of women. Along a similar vein, Dolores Hayden (1980) contends that women are confined to private domestic spaces and labor, not only excluded from public spaces, but also the economy, and therefore limited in their ability to contribute to society more broadly. To overcome the division of public and private space that poorly serves the needs of women and families, Hayden argues that social, economic, and environmental changes that improve the condition of women's socio-economic lives are needed within American planning and design efforts.

More broadly, scholars have called for a critical history exploring women's contributions to environmental design beyond individual projects and successes. For instance, landscape architecture scholar Heath Massey Schenker (1994) writes that feminist interventions to environmental design should not be about uncovering

architectural masterpieces by females, but instead, about providing a revisionist history understood through the female experience. By simply including women into the narrative, Schenker argues, this would reassert a modernist approach that values individual contributions to a certain architectural style. Instead, she continues, a feminist approach to environmental design entails "asking new questions" that uncover the historical position of women and the complex social, economic, and psychological intersections of an era. Sandercock and Forsyth (1992) present a similar argument, discussing how feminist theory within planning can pluralize ways of knowing and expand how practitioners approach the field. By engaging in tactics that privilege narratives and stories alternative to professional or technical notions, such as engaging in conversation, oral tradition, and other expressive activities, planners can learn to better communicate and understand everyday life, especially the lives of often-excluded communities (Sandercock & Forsyth, 1992; Escobar, 2018).

***Redefining the Role of the 'Expert'***

Scholars have written on how feminist approaches to environmental design redefine expertise and broaden our understanding of who participates in the planning and designing processes and construction and maintenance of our environments. Franco (2022) points that formal landscape architecture has excluded laborers and maintenance workers from the historical record, devaluing their work and contribution to the profession and overall impact on the built environment. Through the professionalization and credentialism of the field, landscape architecture is predicated on maintaining social and racial divides between the

skilled designer and the laborer. This not only represents visual outcomes but material realizations “enabled through this process of erasure” (Franco, 2022, p. 102).

Despite women’s contributions to the maintenance of the urban sphere, they too have historically been neglected within environmental design. A recent study exploring the work of Ellen Swallow Richards, the first female instructor at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and performance art by San Francisco–based Jo Hansen and New York City–based Mierle Laderman Ukeles, the finds “vital linkages between women and sustainability” through domestic and “ municipal housekeeping”, or domestic rituals and creative processes that promote public awareness of environmental issues and make visible “women’s work” in support urban living (Napawan et al., 2017). “Domestic maintenance workers” have been unrecognized for their contributions to environmental design as women have historically been limited to participating in the domestic sphere (Napawan et al., 2017).

Despite a broad lack of recognition, some scholars like Dolores Hayden (1980) have written on how intimate spaces such as the home function as critical sites of politics for women. In 1990, bell hooks wrote *Yearning: Race, Gender, and Cultural Politics,* in which she writes, “I want to speak about the importance of homeplace as a site of resistance and liberation struggle… Whatever the shape and direction of black liberation struggle, domestic space has been a crucial site for organizing, for forming political solidarity (p. 388). Following hooks, Iris Marion Young suggests that “the material values of home can nevertheless provide leverage for radical special critique… Home can have a political meaning as a site of dignity and resistance and should be democratized rather than rejected” (2005, p. 157). These feminist

perspectives suggest that home is a liberatory site where women can transform daily life through political expression (Wong, 2019).

Approaching urban space through a framework of feminist and ecological politics advances an ethic of care (Newalker & Wheeler, 2017). Newalker and Wheeler find that an ethic of care is helpful in understanding how women perceive and experience public spaces given the constraints of limited time, income, accessibility, mobility, and opportunity exclusive to femininity (2017). By publicizing care beyond the private sphere and into the planning and design of cities, public spaces can "integrate better community values of hospitality and a culture of love" (Newalker & Wheeler, 2017, p. 9). Research finds these urban outcomes can be implemented through a feminist, socio-ecological environmental design approach that embraces daily habits and domestic abilities through contemporary practice terms in the processes of (1) public engagement, (2) maintenance and monitoring, and (3) communications (Napawan et al., 2017).

### *New Types of Knowledge*

As climate change and disasters continue to increase in severity and frequency, the need to more critically understand and address the disasters becomes more apparent. Feminist approaches within environmental design have been recognized as producing new types of knowledge beyond the technocratic and scientific to solve complex challenges, such as our changing climate (Bell et al., 2020; Jacobs, 2018. Research shows that different forms of knowledge "including sacred and spiritual knowledge, need to be integrated" in order "[t]o move beyond climate isolationism toward climate justice, feminist, antiracist values" (Stephens,

2022 p. 182). The narrow and technocratic approach to climate justice are ineffective and isolated, and given the political, economic, socio-ecological and technological aspects of a feminist approach, feminist approaches to climate change and justice have been found to be “well-suited for navigating the tangled web of power, profit, and technological innovation” (Bell et at., 2020 p.1). Along a similar line, recent scholarship has found that feminist environmental design is able to better understand and resist multiple, intersecting power constructions and redistribute power (Stephens, 2022; Osborne, 2015; Jon, 2020).

In a recent study assessing the impacts of “natural” disasters and the interconnections along the axes of race, gender, and poverty, Jacobs found that the concept and literature on social vulnerability, a significant research area within planning and design, failed to center community knowledge, identify intersecting oppressions, and encourage community activism following the disaster. The author finds that Black feminist thought and radical planning, or the dismantling of the ‘liberal democratic state’ through the planning praxis, is more suited to understand and act against racist, sexist, and gendered outcomes in planning following a disaster and the ever-changing and -worsening climate disaster (Jacobs, 2018).

Building upon the assertion that community knowledge and activism involvement in planning can better prepare communities to adapt to climate disasters, such as earthquakes, flooding, tsunamis, and hurricanes, recent literature has drawn a connection between feminist theory, social networks, and community resilience. Following the 2011 earthquake and resulting tsunami that smashed coastal communities in Japan, Aldrich found that social networks – both vertically and horizontally – were the best line of defense against disasters (2017a). With this in

mind, preparing for disaster with an emphasis on physical infrastructural improvements, is an insufficient solution, whereas an investment in social infrastructure can better prepare communities for consequences of disasters (Aldrich, 2017b).

Drawing upon ethnographic research focused on creative practices and politics Till (2012) finds that postcolonial, feminist theory can help retheorize cities more broadly, and contribute to a deeper understanding of urban inequality in 'wounded' cities. More important than 'progressive' goals or tactics to 'green' the city, greater appreciation of the lived realities of inhabitants of a city would enable environmental designers and policymakers to think differently about how to sustainably transform cities by considering new possibilities (Till, 2012). Through 'memory work' and 'place-based ethics of care' expressed through creative practices, residents in communities harmed by disaster, economic and political neglect, and state perpetuated violence challenged city authorities' understanding of them by documenting their lived experiences and asserting their individual, collective, and temporal rights to their city (Till, 2012). Through the stewardship of social networks and creative and ethnographic practices, environmental designers, scholars, and global citizens can imagine more socially and environmentally just cities (Till, 2012). A deeper look into employing ethnographically informed practices within environmental design is explored in the next section, which introduces folklore as a conceptual approach to environmental design education and delves into how its application within the field can help educators, students, and practitioners better understand everyday experience, events, and community practices.

***Love and Care***

Feminist pedagogy demystifies objectivity as the white, male version of "truth" – one that is rooted in competition and the reinforcement of hierarchy and control (Haraway, 1988; hooks, 2013). Alternative to objectivity and rejection of emotion, feminist pedagogy entails relationships and partnerships, making connections, and engaging in acts of love rather than domination (hooks, 2013). In *All About Love: New Visions,* hooks (2000) defines love as encompassing care, commitment, knowledge, responsibility, respect, and trust. When these basic principles are present, knowledge becomes mutually produced between teachers and pupils and a shared embrace of reality is experienced (hooks, 2013). Furthermore, Umemoto (2012) challenges the notion that human emotion is "problematic", calling instead for a "loving attachment" to people, places, and research. Kondo (2012) finds that a commitment to an ethic of love within environmental design can help planners engage in more meaningful community-based work that undoes "fear of places and people that have been forgotten, misunderstood, or stigmatized" from (p. 604).

Lawson (2009) criticizes the marginalization of care within geography, calling for an expansion of radical geography that encompasses a feminist ethic of care, viewing "care [as] society's work in that [it] is absolutely central to our individual and collective survival" (Lawson, 2009, p. 210). The author argues that employing care ethics has the potential to transform uncaring relations between people and ecologies through grounded practice tied to specific sites and social relations (Lawson, 2009). Considering care within urban theory, Williams (2017) calls for an ethic of care to be considered alongside justice, proposing a framework which the

author terms *care-full justice*. Situating care in connection to the small and ordinary interactions of everyday life, Williams (2017) finds that an ethic of care can heal and repair urban spaces, as examined through a case study exploring a community-run homeless organization located in Sydney, Australia.

### Folklore and Environmental Design

Greed (2011) finds that "In order to bridge the gap between sustainability and inclusive design in planning, it is concluded that greater emphasis must be given to user needs and the constraints of everyday life" (p. 107). Drawing on this quote, I pivot to explore the intersections of folklore in environmental design, the second theoretical branch of this research, by exploring literature that looks at applications of folklore to understand daily life, cultural values, and knowledge produced through creative expression and tradition. As Greed finds, sustainable environmental design must understand and embrace the daily lives of urban inhabitants, which literature finds, can be implemented through a folkloristic-oriented approach.

#### *Iterative Knowledge Production*

There is no single agreed upon definition of folklore. Over the decades folklorists have re-examined definitions that guide folkloristic practice, questioning how to define and differentiate themselves between anthropologists and scholars of integrative studies such as cultural studies, gender studies, and performative studies (Bronner, 2016). In the textbook *Folk Groups and Folklore Genres*, author Elliott Oring concludes that "definition is not really necessary" to "approach inquiry" and instead cites concepts that characterize the aspects and cultural practices of folklore, including, *communal, common, informal, marginal, personal, traditional, aesthetic,*

and *ideological.* While understanding that folklore entails these characteristics, Bronner considers a practice-centered definition of folklore that focuses on the production of knowledge gained through repeated, performed communication in visual, oral, and written means (2016). In other words, folklore can be understood as "the process of creating, revising and sharing informal and formal knowledge within a community" (Starnes, 2021, p. 226) through a diverse range of artifacts, or genres, and phenomena tied to local practices of art, craft, tradition, foodways, music and literature, ritual and celebration. As such, folklore enables practitioners to understand complex relationships between the producers and the iterative actions they engage in to produce, transit, and pass down knowledge.

As a pedagogical tool, folklore has recently been explored as a critical and creative practice that interrogates the (re)production of knowledge (Starnes, 2021). In particular, the author finds that folklore is able to help educators and students to recognize the "silences and exclusion of mainstream" academics (Starnes, 20021 citing Parisi et al., 2013) and also learn *how* narratives and myths within academics are reproduced through pedagogical practice. In order to achieve truly emancipatory education, Starnes (2021) argues that pedagogy must equip students with the tools to identify oppression and define emancipation, continuing that, educators and students, "must address the co-constitution of knowledge by the community (re)producing knowledge" (p. 227). Starnes proposes knowledge "is an iterative storytelling practice of constant (re)creation, with the iterations connected via a community of story creators" (2021, p. 228). Anzaldúa (1990) finds that iterative engagement in creative practices is an "act of deliberate and desperate

determinations to subvert the status quo" (p. xxiv) that open opportunities to imagine and create new futures.

Scholars consider the practice of folklore in shifting harmful power constructions by centering the values and cultural expressions of local learning by local people (Morales, 2020). Feminist contributions within folklore have also "began to deconstruct previously unquestioned assumptions about authority, agency, and power hierarchies (Kousaleos, 1999, p. 25). Through this lens, folklore "is not a neutral [practice]" as it aims to achieve equity in the creation of knowledge through the documentation and interpretation of community experiences, events, and practices (N'Diaye, 2020, n.p.).

### *Everyday Life as a Basis for Transformation*

Basic to the study of folklore is the notion of 'everyday' life. In folklore, everyday life and places are juxtaposed to social, cultural, and political settings and geographics places intended for higher classes (Berger & Negro, 2004). Moreover, the notion of everyday life in folklore also considers celebrations, rituals, and ceremonies, as well as traditions, norms, and behaviors as tied to everyday life and daily practices (Berger & Negro, 2004). Given the all-encompassing, boundaryless aspect of everyday life, Rita Felksi (2000) offers that, "Everyday life is synonymous with the habitual, the ordinary, the mundane, yet it is also strangely elusive, that which resists our understanding and escapes our grasp" (p. 78).

Everyday life has also been viewed as an interpretive framework. For instance, Felski (2000) finds that "everydayness is not an intrinsic quality that magically adheres to particular actions of persons (women, the working class)" (p. 95), and

continues to argue that the concept of everydayness possesses strong ideological significance, especially as it relates to gender.

Yet others view everyday life for its central role in design, eventually transitioning us to a more just society (Kossof, 2015; Escobar, 2018). In this perspective, everyday life is viewed as the basis of a framework for solving and moving us toward a more sustainable world because it is “the context within which problems arise and solutions are to be developed is everyday life: it is the foundational level for all human experience, and we are unavoidably immersed in it” (Kossof, 2015, p. 10). Juxtaposed to scientific advancements and technological fixes as the solution to sustainable living, scholars argue that the “the key to sustainability is the practical truths that each of us discovers in our daily life and that contribute to the collective activities of our culture” (Escobar 2018 citing Ehrenfeld, 2009, p. 122). In other words, daily life entails our lived experiences and realities, and through daily iterative routines, embodied actions steadily become collective, in time transforming social consciousness and institutional structures (Escobar, 2018, p. 123). In visioning and planning for an alternative future, Kossof (2018) asserts that everyday life must be embedded in conceptual structures of transition, including political, technological, cultural, social, economic, and ecological facets (p. 2).

### *Folklore and Cultural Reclamation*

Given these facets of folklore, where then does environmental design fit into this discourse? What connections between folklore and environmental design can be made? A clear place to start is with Mary Hufford (1999) who suggests that the discipline of folklore studies work within “the cracks of hegemonic order”, or the

places of 'subaltern' culture, in order to better understand and preserve the commons (p. 159). Hufford asserts that "the end of the commons marks the beginning of folklore" (1999, p. 163). In other words, folklorists work with 'ordinary' people to better understand and advance local knowledge "to create a public space for what might otherwise be left out" (Hufford, 1999, p. 158). Situated in this unique position, folklorists have access to communities' lived realities – their art, crafts, narratives, events, and rituals – giving them an advantage in dealing with both culture and the environment (1999).

A recent article links citizen folklore with citizen science, exploring how academic researchers can advance the co-production of knowledge with local communities to help assess ecological impacts of climate change. Alvarez and Nabhan (2019) find that a folkloristic approach to science production can change authority and power dynamics between institutions and communities affected by these inquiries, placing community members' expertise, values, and needs at the forefront of any given project. The authors point to a 2017 training module series by the Brooklyn Arts Council called Citizen Folklife with the tagline "Reclaim culture in your neighborhood" where community advocates, youth, artists, grassroots organizations and journalists were trained on how to research and share observations of folk culture within their own communities. Folklorists have long theorized about the dynamics of engaged research deployed to advance social, cultural, and political self-determination of disadvantaged groups (Mills, 2020

***Critical Intersections: Feminism, Folklore, and Environmental Design***

A recent study on Manhattan's Chinatown exemplifies the critical intersections of feminism, folklore, and environmental design by examining how Chinese American women mobilize their community through every day, informal "shop talk" to respond to changing demographic changes and major land use shifts due to gentrification in their Asian diasporic communities. Drawing on ethnographic research, archival research, and oral history conversations, Wong (2019) reveals how ordinary community neighborhood spaces can serve as foundational sites to grassroots action and the mobilization of women. She points to the Chinatown Art Brigade's (CAB) "Here to Stay" Placekeeping Project[2] which resists gentrification through storytelling workshops, mapping exercises, place-based walks, and outdoor performances that tell stories of tenant resistance, which is "rooted in a long history of women-led resistance and activism" (Wong, 2019, p. 144). CAB's project highlights how marginalized groups, and in this case, a community at risk of losing their access to and enjoyment of specific spaces based on race and economic status, can build collective power through informal conversations and artmaking rooted in vernacular language and aesthetics that construct a shared meaning, as well as tactic, to fight the loss of territory.

In the following sections, I explore how case studies such as this can inform Western environmental design education, transforming it from a rational, objective, and technical practice to a praxis that equips future practitioners to engage with

[2]Project information available online at https://new.laundromatproject.org/project/chinatown-and-the-lower-eastside/

communities, artists, scholars and activist to resist hegemonic forces and center community experience and expertise in the planning and design of urban spaces.

## PART TWO: METHODOLOGY

### Research Design

This research asks, *when an environmental design course is transformed around feminist and folkloristic frameworks, how do students' learning outcomes and approaches to planning and design change?* To answer, my thesis considers a single case study, LDA 142: Applying Sustainable Strategies, a ten-week capstone course taught to forty (40) upper-division undergraduate students majoring in Sustainable Environmental Design (SED) at UC Davis during the 2022 spring quarter. My methodology utilized participatory and self-reflexive qualitative inquiries that involved collection and analysis of documents and audio-visual materials produced by students. Data analysis for this thesis was an iterative and emergent process that began alongside classroom instruction and activities.

I conducted this research in collaboration with and support by Professor Claire Napawan, Associate Professor and Program Director of the Landscape Architecture and Environmental Design (LA+ED) Program and Instructor of Record for the case study course, LDA 142. It was conducted in an established educational setting that involved normal educational practices that involved student participation and the collection and utilization of student assignments that posed little or no risk to students or others. Moreover, UC Davis students' participation in the classroom and course assignments do not fall under the jurisdiction of the Institutional Review Board (IRB); investigation into curriculum and student classwork do not qualify as

human-subject research and thus do not require IRB application, approval or oversight. Students signed waivers granting permission to share images and audio-visual recordings of their work in publications and other media related to the mission of UC Davis and the LA+ED program. To protect the privacy of the students, their names have been changed in this thesis.

Finally, this research is informed by bell hooks (1994), who writes, "The classroom remains the most radical space of possibility in the academy...Urging all of us to open our minds and hearts so that we can know beyond the boundaries of what is acceptable, so that we can think and rethink, so that we can create new visions..." (p. 12). This research is situated within the classroom on the basis that transformative change has the most potential within educational settings that attempt to "create conditions for empowerment and social justice" (Kincheloe et al., 2011, p. 237) through transformative relationships that counter principles of neutrality common within traditional classrooms.

**Reforming LDA 142: From Professionalism and Ahistorical Practice to Personal, Creative Experience**

As the capstone class for the SED major, LDA 142 requires a synthesis approach to applying the cumulative skills of our profession towards the design of sustainable, inclusive, and meaningful built environments. In its previous iterations, LDA 142 instruction was presented in a conventional format and structure customary in Western higher education. The curriculum and instruction style followed long-established guidelines and practices common within traditional environmental design courses taught at UC Davis and other Eurocentric institutions.

For example, the course included the utilization of academic textbooks as the primary resources, standardized coursework (E.g., stakeholder analyses, strategy proposals, site analyses, site designs, design critiques, design charrettes, and examinations), and a central focus on professionalism and workforce development.

The curriculum followed a conventional pedagogical approach where the instructor possessed the knowledge and students were recipients (Freire, 2017). Course content was presented in a linear, ahistorical fashion where established norms and procedures were observed and students responded by producing standardized projects in response; students did not have the agency to provide input on the parameters and review criteria of coursework assigned to them. As previously discussed in the introduction and literature review, this type of instruction, where students engage with material, processes, and examples dominant to the Western canon, reinforces inequitable outcomes in the classroom and beyond.

Prior to the updated course taught in the spring of 2022, LDA 142 students received grades based on their ability to satisfy systematic criteria. Below is an example of the grading criteria employed in a UC Davis LDA 142 course taught in 2019:

- Analysis: Student's development of analytic themes, categories, and conclusions based on logic and evidence.
- Grammar and spelling: Includes grammar, spelling, word choice, and other writing mechanics.
- Professional Presentation: Well-organized, clear, appropriately titled and formatted, etc.

Based on these criteria, students were assessed on traditional parameters, or how well they could produce work that demonstrated conformity to an established set of guidelines founded on logic, evidence, and organization. While there are merits to

testing students on their ability to produce clear, consistent, and analytical projects, there are other qualifying parameters that are omitted from this approach, such as the ability to think creatively, critically, personally, collectively, and from a perspective of justice and care.  Rather than asking students to engage in critical fieldwork with community members, which has limitations given the short timeline of LDA 142, this course prepared students for self-reflection through inquiry into their own values, practices, identities, and experiences, which research has shown to better prepare students in interrogating their own biases ahead of entering the workforce (Hayford and Kattwinkel, 2018)

Given the clear set of concerns and demands presented to LA+ED faculty and staff (see letter in Appendix A) from SED students, it is evident students within the program did not feel their coursework "prepared [them] to pursue a career in any field", as they were being taught to "critique – not to create" with an education that taught aspects and applications of sustainability at a broad and surface level. Despite the emphasis on professional development and "real world" solutions, students felt that required course curricula did not adequately prepare them for employment within the environmental design field.

Moreover, given the directive critique from SED majors,  who maintained their education not only ill equipped them for entry into the workforce, but also failed to be representative of their diverse backgrounds and teach them about the impacts of historical planning and design decisions on vulnerable communities, some students insisted that environmental design curricula be reformed to embrace their diverse identities, provide equitable support to underrepresented student populations, and expanded beyond Eurocentric narratives, perspectives, and processes. We changed

the LDA 142 curriculum in response to these demands, which became foundational to the transformed course instruction and overall classroom experience.

***Pedagogical Objectives***

Broadly, the pedagogical objectives of the reformed LDA 142 course included: creating a more open and democratic classroom setting; systematically reorienting the course material and narratives to be more diverse and inclusive; acknowledging our biases and limitations as instructors and students given our identities and backgrounds; pluralizing opportunities for students to participate in course concepts, theories, and practices in new ways; acknowledging and conversing about the disproportionate harms traditional environmental planning and design land development has had on BIPOC, LGBTQIA+, and disabled communities; engaging students in course assignments and conversations reflective of their diverse identities, values, and interests; encouraging students to contribute to defining and setting the parameters of their course projects; and, furthering the conversation with students on social and equity-centered sustainability inclusive of cultural and communal values that embrace care, empowerment, and healing within the classroom and belong.

For the first time, the LDA 142 course curriculum was expanded to broaden Western conceptualizations of 'sustainability' by incorporating concepts of eco-feminism, environmental justice, and traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) to inform a radical approach to environmental design – one that redefines planning and design as a praxis of care, collective healing, community empowerment, and belonging through a capstone course. The highlighted changes to the course

curriculum are exemplified in the course syllabus, learning outcomes, assignments, and grading criteria in the following sections. In the sections that follow, I detail the course ethos, objectives, and goals, course projects and student works, and reflective evaluations prepared by the students and discuss themes that recurred during the course.

LDA 142, as a case study, explores how a critical feminist pedagogical approach, applied through a folkloristic conceptual lens, within a post-secondary environmental design course can effectively challenge and rebuke dominant narratives, pluralize perspectives, and achieve greater justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion in the classroom.

***Learning Outcomes***

The learning objectives of the reformed LDA 142 course, remained similar to the standard course objectives of the past, but were refined to the following:

1. Articulate main elements of the historical discourse around sustainability and main perspectives on this concept
2. Identify stakeholders and decision-makers related to a sustainability topic of personal interest and articulate their perspectives
3. Develop several alternative strategies for this topic of personal interest and articulate the pros and cons of each
4. Develop sustainable design proposals for a real-world site that take into account physical, social, economic, environmental, and institutional factors
5. Demonstrate professional-quality written, verbal and visual communications that convey sustainability and related design recommendations

It is important to note that the learning objectives themselves remained nearly identical. The goal being that students meet these learning objectives through a critical pedagogical approach in which the instruction, expectations, products, and classroom experiences are modified to value critical feminist and creative expression

perspectives beyond normative standards of professionalism. Critical race scholars argue that ethics of professionalism are not objective, but instead, tend to covert racism in which whiteness, Western ideology, and colonialism are embedded in seemingly neutral practices (Marom, 2019). The goal was that students would not only meet the learning objectives but learn non-normative approaches and practices in applying sustainable design beyond the concepts and practices learned in earlier courses.

***Course Resources***

A key intention was to introduce students to a variety of resources, texts, and outside examples beyond traditional texts, such as textbooks, academic journals, and newspaper articles in order to broaden Western conceptualizations of 'sustainable' design. Of the fifty-nine (59) required and recommend resources, there were: twelve (12) audio and audiovisual communications such as podcasts, music videos, spoken word, and oral histories; two (2) poems; nine (9) web-based sites including exhibits,  virtual storytelling projects (E.g., Anti-Eviction Mapping Project), interactive maps (E.g., Queering the Map, "Monarchs and Queens" by Rebecca Solnit), and planning and design work examples (E.g., Pueblo Planning, Department of Beloved Places, and the Center for Urban Pedagogy); and thirty-six (36) written texts like articles and book excerpts from Richard Rothstein, bell hooks, William Cronon, Anne Whiston Spirn and other academics and professionals in education, environmental design, and the humanities.

Beyond introducing a variety of text types, we aimed to counter the white, Western male-dominated perspective within the field by incorporating resources

created and authored by women and BIPOC scholars, activists, artists, community members, and intellectuals to better represent the diversity of the Sustainable Environmental Design (SED) students enrolled in LDA 142 and the lived experience of the majority. Of the fifty-nine (59) required and recommended resources, forty (40) were produced by women and people of color, and the two guest lectures, who identified as either female or non-binary, presented to the course.

### *Course Assignments*

Students were asked to bring a high degree of curiosity, critical thinking, personal reflection, and accessible communication practices to their work. To assess their engagement in these areas, students were assigned the following projects: Weekly Reflections (first half of the course); Project 1: Acknowledging Expertise and Defining Home; Project 2: Reading and Telling the Built Environment; Project 3: Designing for Belonging; and Cumulative Course Reflection and Evaluation. The written descriptions of the course assignments below are taken from the syllabus and course webpage that was shared with students.

*Weekly Reflections*

The weekly reflection assignments were intended to be low-stakes reflections on class content, exercises, readings, and other observations students throughout the quarter. In preparing this assignment, we recognized that some students do not feel comfortable speaking up during the class period or discover ideas long after class has ended; this exercise was meant to allow students to share their thoughts on the resources and subject matter outside of the class period.

As part of this assignment, we asked all students to submit an artifact that provides a meaningful reflection on the key ideas being explored in class during the week. Student artifacts could be a short piece of writing, hand drawing or sketch, digital representation, photograph, a piece of artwork, music, podcast, assemblage, or any other kind of media (authored by the student or someone else) that provides an interpretation of the concepts and ideas within our readings, lectures, and class discussions.

*Project 1: Acknowledging Expertise and Defining Home*

Project 1 was divided in two parts: Project 1A: Acknowledging Expertise and Project 1B: Defining Home, which was intended to build upon the first part of the project. In the first part, students were asked to prepare one artifact that represents 'Home' to them. This could be a graphic (E.g. drawing, photograph, map, etc.); an object (collected from a site or self-crafted); a text (written by them or others); a sound (music, audio recording, etc.); a movement (choreography, video, or interpretive dance); or a combination of the aforementioned (music video, illustrated text, etc.). This first portion was presented in small groups, where students each shared their personal artifact and its significance.

The point of this part of the assignment was for students to recognize themselves as possessing expertise by asking them to find an object of significance and to share the personal story associated with the artifact. In doing so, students were able to share aspects of their background with one another in a small group.

In the second part of the assignment, Project 1B: Defining Home, students were asked to utilize relevant elements from their artifact, coupled with imagery, found objects, photographs, and other mixed media. Students were then to

assemble a 2D or 3D collage, photo montage, or diorama that illustrates what ‘Home’ means to them. It did not have to be specific to one place; instead, it should represent the elements they value about a home, including physical, social, emotional, and/or spiritual criteria relevant to them. Moreover, students were to consider using materials and/or creative methods that relate to their ‘everyday' experience of home. We asked them: *What items, sounds, smells, etc. remind you of home, are used at/within your home? How can you employ these familiar senses into your project?* Like part one, students again shared their assemblages in small groups.

*Project 2: Reading and Telling the Built Environment*

The second project for this course was completed within small groups of 4-5 students in three phases. We asked the groups to become 'experts' in a particular site within the Northern California Sacramento Valley region that was recently designed and constructed with the goal of creating 'sustainable housing.' Five case study locations were selected that represent a range of densities, housing types, and geographical locations – all accessible to students with varying degrees of transportation needs. The case study sites included: The Cannery in Davis, Spring Lake in Woodland, The Bridge District in West Sacramento, The Ice Blocks in Sacramento, and Metro 510 in El Cerrito. Student groups self-selected their preferred site based on interest and accessibility.

For Part 2A, student teams reviewed an artifact that was produced by normative planning, design, and policy processes on their chosen site. Examples of such artifacts included Environmental Impact Reviews (EIR), California

Environmental Quality Assessment (CEQA), Land-use or Master planning documentation, and/or other municipally authored artifacts. Students were then to consider these texts and resources as an artifact, much like the ones uncovered in their definition of housing in Project 1. We asked them to consider: *What story is being told in this document? What values and goals are embodied in the artifact? How is 'housing' or 'sustainability' being defined?* Utilizing that artifact and the selection of prompting questions, student teams then extrapolated a narrative that communicated the goals and values embedded in the artifact and presented their findings to the larger class.

For Part 2B, students were asked to visit each of their respective sites during class to uncover an alternative artifact, meaning not an official planning or design document, during the regularly scheduled class time. This artifact, we clarified, should be place-based and could include a range of possibilities that are discovered on-site. Some examples presented to students included: artwork (sanctioned or unsanctioned), signage (sanctioned or unsanctioned), music, community interviews, litter or debris, film (recorded by students or others), dance or movement, found objects, and plant materials. Students were to consider the exercise as an on-site scavenger hunt, searching for other evidence and clues on site for an 'alternative' story of the site.

Artifacts were not limited to what is built or material, but could be symbolic, performative, and/or sensual (E.g., see, taste, smell, sound, and touch). Again, we asked students to consider a set of questions: *What objects and other sensations do you notice and experience that reveal another, possibly different, story about the case study site?* In examining these questions and using all their senses, we asked

them to question who and what the space is made for and used by, as well as who and what are excluded. Students then present their findings in small groups.

In the final leg of the assignment, Part 2C, students were to consolidate and reconcile both narratives, normative and alternative, uncovered of their site. Using this information, along with other research on their case study, housing, and sustainability, student teams then developed a tool for communicating their understanding of the site. Their communication tools were to be able to operate without their presence and be easily understandable to individuals without an explanation of the site of their narratives. To assist students examples of such tools were presented in class and included: site installed signage (including chalk, vinyl, stickers and other easily-accessible materials), art installation, print or digital guide, audio tour, self-guided tour, map, and beyond.

The expectation was to have students lead tours through their site demonstrating their uncovered narratives to our entire class over the course of two class sessions, with digital versions of their communication tool posted online. However, an unexpected spring storm prevented students from leading on-site tours. Students quickly adapted, improvising by utilizing Google Maps, recorded visuals, and other creative expressive means to share the story of their sites. Just one group of students was able to lead an on-site tour, in which they created an artifact scavenger hunt for their classmates to participate in.

*Project 3: Designing for Belonging*

In their final assignment, students were able to work individually or collaboratively in pairs or small groups of up to five students depending on their preference and availability. Given the time constraints of a short academic quarter,

this final assignment was intended to be less time-consuming and detailed as Project 2, so that students had greater flexibility and capacity to meet the demands of their other courses.

The last project-based assignment of the quarter, Project 3, required students to apply the cumulative skills of the class and previous coursework. Beyond those parameters, students were also asked to acknowledge their personal experiences outside of their educational experience to inform a new story for an existing built environment based on one of the case study sites from Project 2, regardless of whether they had previously selected that site or not for the prior assignment.

As with the previous assignments and course lectures, we continued to employ the metaphor and methods of storytelling as students explored new possibilities for the site. We communicated that the site was the setting; the community and stakeholders, their characters; and the plot and its morals would demonstrate their values.

The deliverables for the final project were to be determined by students, as opposed to us, the instructors, prescribing outcomes and products. We met as a class to collectively set parameters, guidelines, and a schedule for this final project. As a capstone project, however, we asked them to employ their own knowledge and expertise, interests, and creative pursuits to determine the appropriate tool for communicating their story of change. They could consider creating a policy brief, proposed legislation, revised planning documents, physical design documents, masterplan or design guideline documents, digital or analogue modeling, digital or analogue drawing, music, film, fashion, games, mixed media installations, spoken-word, poetry, dance, participatory techniques, new design methods, painting,

crafting, or any other blending of these techniques. In addition to the final deliverable, students were also asked to produce a short 2-to-5-minute video describing their final project.

*Cumulative Course Reflection and Evaluation*

On the last day of the course instruction, we met as a class where we partook in a shared celebratory meal and students engaged in three course reflection and evaluation exercises in-lieu of Weekly Reflections for weeks six through ten. We utilized the class time to complete this effort through the making of individual and collective artifacts. Students were asked to participate in at least two of the activities, complete them at their own pace, and complete them in any order of their choosing. Though the reflective activities were held in the classroom, it was an informal and flexible space, meant to be enjoyable and low stakes.

The individual reflection asked students to communicate who they were before, during, and after LDA 142 through a triptych storyboarding activity. Students were given a piece of paper with three blank boxes, each with a heading that read: *Who I was before LDA 142; Who I was during LDA 142;* and *Who I am after LDA 142*. The students were given pens, markers, and colored pencils and were asked to draw or write a response to each prompt however they would like but did not need to write their name on their sheet if they chose not to.

In pairs, students asked and responded to a set of questions, their responses recorded with audiovisual equipment in a quiet, private office space. Based around the practices of StoryCorps, a non-profit organization that records and preserves individuals' stories, I prepared a set of questions that covered key components of the course structure and content that were meant to engage conversation. Students

were then to select a card at random and ask it of their fellow classmate; they were free to choose how many cards they responded to. The set of questions included:

- What are the most challenging and/or fun moments you experienced in LDA 142?
- Looking back, who were you before LDA 142? During? How about after?
- Is there a specific reading, resource, project, discussion from LDA 142 that stood out to you?
- What skill or strength did you bring with you to LDA 142? How did you use it?
- What does a planning/design practice of care and belonging look like to you?
- What lessons or tools have you learned in LDA 142?
- If you could change one thing about LDA 142, what would it be?
- What brings you joy? How can you incorporate that into your planning/design work?
- How do you think you will apply the lessons and tools learned in LDA 142 in your future work?
- What advice would you give to an incoming SED student in LDA 142?
- Did you feel a sense of belonging in LDA 142?
- What project are you most proud of from LDA 142?

The third, and final reflective exercise, was created collectively. Inspired by the work titled "Identity Tapestry"[3] made by Mary Corey March, an artist who employs mixed media and regularly uses fiber and fiber techniques, I prepared a foam board pinned with statements about identity. Students selected a unique color of yarn to represent themselves and wrapped the yarn around each pinned statement that resonated with them. A participatory exercise, as each student wound their yarn, intersections and patterns would appear, portraying the group of students in that moment through overlapping, multi-colored fibers.

[3] March's work can be accessed via the web at the following link: http://www.marymarch.com/identity-tapestry-gallery.php

**Quilting an Understanding: Positionality**

During my undergraduate studies I learned of the quiltmakers of Gee's Bend, a community of Black women in rural Alabama, who for generations, have created intricate quilts from accessible, readily available textiles. The women of Gee's Bend have passed on the tradition of quilting for generations in their small community, where their history is reflected in the materiality and design of the quilts.

In preparing this research, these women and their quilts always rose to the forefront – their ingenuity in storytelling, artmaking, and tradition continue to inspire me. I wondered how I could situate my research methodology around the art of quilting – quilting as a process and way of organizing, performing, and enhancing identity, cultural values, and social connections.

I sought to bring a similar sense of care, intentionality, and connection to this research. While I am not a quilter, nor do I identify as a Person of Color, there is much to be learned from these women and their craft. They demonstrate how intimate, collective creativity can strengthen social and cultural bonds. It is through thoughtful and community-based creative expression that I believe change and social progress can be made. We have much more to learn from these women, among others, who engage in artistic expression in their everyday lives. These practices are worth honoring, sharing, and recognizing not just as artworks, but as ways of organizing and understanding our world. If we all embraced such care-full and thoughtful practices in our own lives and communities, we would begin to see the changes needed to bring justice, care, and kindness to our world.

Thus, my methodology for this research is inspired by these women and their process of creating together. In this work, I aim to share remnants of stories,

histories, and memories that reflect the identifies, values, and meanings of the makers. It is my hope that this methodology—one that stems from folklore studies and critical pedagogy—inspires others, especially within professional environmental design education and practice, to engage in work that is communal, collective, and rooted in care. I hope these scraps of insight shared in this research lend themselves to being something useful and beautiful to others who weave different knowledge, approaches, and understandings to enact change.

## PART THREE: FINDINGS

Over the course of the ten-week academic quarter, students in LDA 142 engaged in conversations, lectures, assignments, projects, and activities with a particular focus on justice, healing, and accessibility through inclusive planning and design practice and communication. Topics covered in the course included: redefining concepts of home, housing, and sustainability to include social, cultural, and creative expressive criteria; reading the language and form of the environment to assess levels of inclusivity and exclusivity; analyzing environmental policies, laws, and guidelines; discussing race, ethnicity, class, and feminist and queer identities and how they are impacted and reflected by and within the built environment; exploring accessible means of communication through storytelling; sharing stories of change, hope, and healing within environmental design praxis. Analysis of the students' projects and self-reflective course evaluations revealed four central findings: (1) students pluralized materialities, narratives and epistemologies; (2) students challenged and countered the conventional canon; (3) students created

and experienced participatory process, and (4) students felt empowered and challenged, yet confusion persisted.

### Students Pluralized Materialities, Narratives, and Epistemologies

During the quarter, the students enrolled in LDA 142 pluralized narratives, epistemologies, and materialities through the diversity of project types they made. They reflected on their positionality—making connections between their personal understandings, values, passions, and skill sets. They presented new narratives about home, sustainability, and belonging and the connections with environmental design based on their lived experience, often referring to knowledge learned from family members and shared practices of care.

#### *Materialities*

Students were encouraged to create project types and forms that felt most meaningful and useful to them based on their interests, skills, and values. They prepared shared dishes and drinks, photography, audio-visual recordings, collages, dioramas and miniature models, poems, dances and movement, social media sites and webpages, interactive and DIY art installations, scavenger hunts, ecological site tours, participatory outreach and engagement workshops, magazines, master plans, site designs for affordable housing, green space, and other communal spaces, community kitchen schemes, request for proposals, and resilience and sustainability planning documents. This thesis does not include reference to and explanation of each type of assignment created, but rather, offers three student examples from Project 1: Defining Home, where students assembled artifacts and materials to illustrate their meaning of ‘home’ and its relationship to sustainability, demonstrate

this finding. This selection of projects speaks to the key patterns and themes that arose from the students' work.

The first example is Kali's assemblage of home depicted in Figure 1. Infusing her project with her passion for model-making, Kali transformed an Altoids tin into a representation of her home kitchen, replicating its form and materials down to the location of cookware and dishes. Accompanying the miniature kitchen are drawings and descriptions of two Honduran dishes, *sopa de cangrejo* and *baleadas.* For Kali, home conjured images of making and eating foods she's familiar with in her kitchen, demonstrating her connection to culture and food.

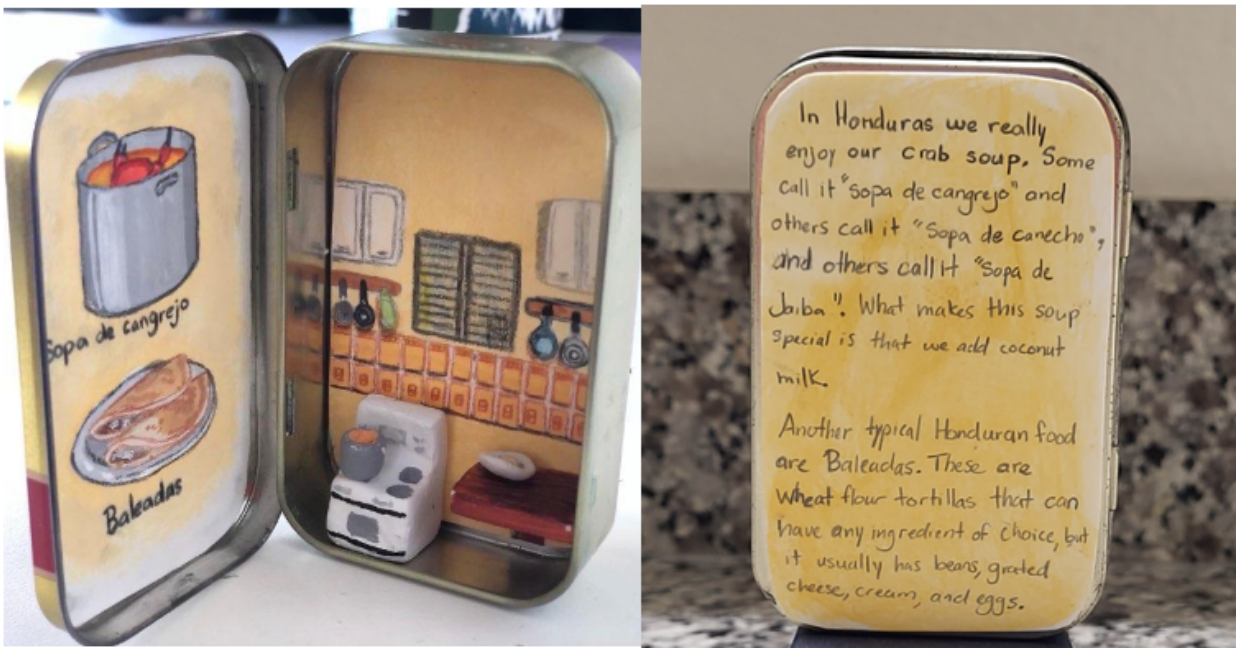


*Figure 1*

In the second example, Silvia's assemblage of home (see Figure 2) exemplifies a critical reflection ripe with personal and collective narratives of resistance and resilience, which I suggest is an effective tool in dismantling unequal and unjust practices within our field of environmental design. Not only did Silvia make a beautiful, dynamic, and intricately adorned assemblage, she purposefully selected

each individual medium to tell stories of El Salvador, her home country, and Los Angeles where she grew up. Juxtaposing El Salvador and Los Angeles through medium and form, Silvia shared to her peers and the instructors how each material was selected and arranged to reflect the natural environmental features and political and cultural characteristics of both places. Contrasting the imperialist and colonialist history imposed on El Salvador by Americans and Europeans, Silvia communicated a narrative of resourcefulness and connection with the natural environment by utilizing the Three Sisters, both as materials and cultural meaning, to counter Western conceptions of exceptionalism and sustainability defined by technological and scientific advancements. In the portion of her assemblage that represents Los Angeles, Silvia shared a similar story of resistance, but through the arrangement of cultural icons, imagery, and text, recalling how 'assemblages' originated in Los Angeles following the Watts protests as a means for "Black artists [to show the] struggle of their city" (quote by Silvia).

*Figure 2*

Silvia's design and artistry speaks to the transformative potential of feminist pedagogy within environmental design education for its ability to engage students in counteracting the "traditional, passive 'read, listen' and memorize' techniques" of conventional learning (Larson, 2005 citing Freire, p. 137) through explorations of personal and collective memory and knowledge.

Lastly, is Taylor's assemblage of home. Like Kali, home involved food, but Taylor, who shared her passion for cooking, prepared several dishes that she associates with specific people in her family. Along with the food, she brought recipes, shared photos, wrote a poem, and included a description of the dish's relevance to home and her relationship with family. Figure 3 shows just one of the recipes she prepared, Nani Cami's Snickerdoodles, though she made six other dishes that were happily shared by the students and instructors alike.

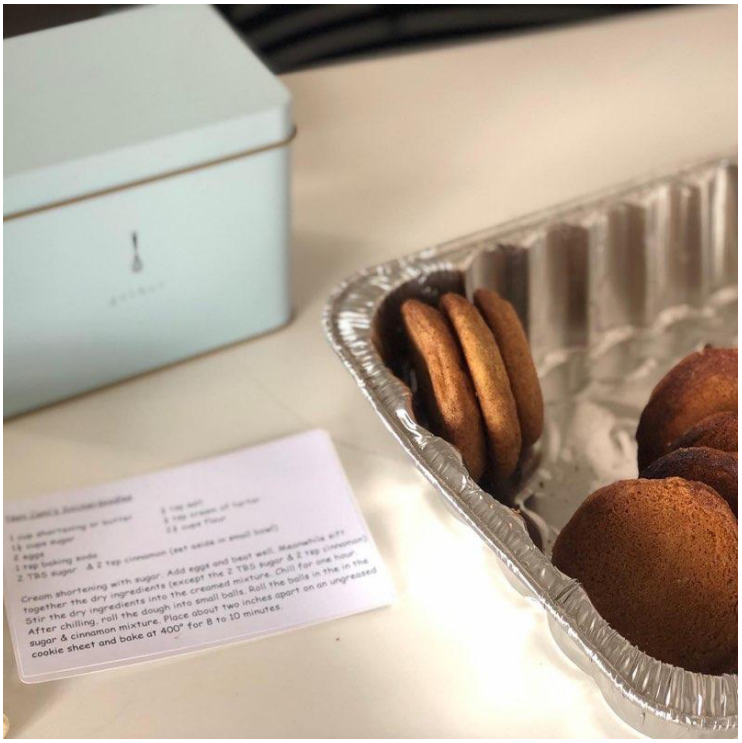


*Figure 3*

While every student prepared a unique assemblage, each of three project examples speak to the variety of types and forms students in LDA 142 created. Like Kali, Silvia, and Taylor's projects, several students presented works that reflected their hobbies, recollections of memories, and associations with emotions. The diversity of project types made by students reflects the literature on feminist pedagogy in relation to environmental design and power structures, such as hooks' (1990) analysis of homeplace as a site of resistance and liberation and Young's (2005) perspective on democratizing the home. When students are encouraged and supported to produce works that speak to them on different levels, the findings suggest they elect to craft forms that consider sites and associations often neglected in conventional environmental design education, such as home, struggle, and connection with family and loved ones.

***Narratives***

As discussed in the literature review, feminist pedagogy entails the expanding of narratives, perspectives, and approaches conventional to education and practices. Students in LDA 142 engaged in materials beyond what is commonly shared within environmental design coursework. The narratives they shared were more inclusive of race, class, gender and the vast differences of lived experiences within and between communities in their work.

As previously noted, a range of perspectives and tools were presented to students, encouraging and empowering them to produce materials that reflected diverse narratives. For example, students watched a short film on a group of African American quilters from Gee's Bend in rural Alabama. The film shares their stories of

place, familial and social bonds, and aspects of class, race, and gender through generational quilting as a process of artmaking and utility. In response, Jessie wrote, "[the] video is a great example of how storytelling and using environmental narrative can let a story unfold… Louisiana Bendolph's quilts seem to be their own narratives and have a story within each one. The power of testimony and imagery in this video told a vivid story in just about four minutes." Another student, Allie, reflecting on the course materials and discussion section on race and ethnicity in the built environment, wrote on how excerpts from Leonie Sandercock's *Making the Invisible Visible* and Eric Avila's *Folklore of the Freeway* reminded her of the 2020 toppling of the Junipero Serra statue by activists in San Francisco's Golden Gate Park. She writes, "After reading [Sandercock's piece], I understand that this statue does not comment on Indigenous planning, however it does exemplify the conquering of Indigenous people… After reading the [piece by Avila] it seems as if I can assume similar processes were taken in erecting the statue as they were in the creation of the interstate highway."

This selection of quotes reflects students' changing perspectives to texts and resources that offer narratives and perspectives beyond the conventional canon. In their analysis, the students discuss perspectives alternative to the White male experience and consider power structures and histories of exclusion in their understanding of environmental design processes and outcomes.

### *Epistemologies*

Feminist epistemology and the study of folklore recognize lived experiences as legitimate sources of knowledge (Campbell & Wasco, 2000; Starnes, 2021.

Applying feminist methodologies inspired by the study of folklore to LDA 142, personal experience and identity were prioritized in the class content and structure. Students reflected in their projects and course evaluations that they brought their experiences and backgrounds to their work and shared how that informed their understanding of environmental design. In other words, students considered their personal experiences as valid knowledge and methodology, or in other words, as epistemology.

In their course evaluations, several students pointed out that their lived experiences had not been recognized as valid knowledge in their previous courses. For example, a student described how before LDA 142, "the personal aspect of design did not feel present in the [other SED] classes", continuing on to write that during LDA 142, "[I was] creating a synthesis of the personal narratives that I bring with me to design spaces" (anonymous). In another anonymous course evaluation, a student wrote, "Before LDA 142 I separated my home/personal experiences from my work in classes... During LDA 142 I was able to explore more [of] my own experiences and how I can use them to think about places." Another student provided a similar commentary, saying, "LDA 142 was the first moment in a classroom setting that you could bring an ethos to personal identity into the classroom, and I really appreciated that. Sort of like the value in personal history, and personal storytelling, and how those narratives are really critical if we actually want to shift the design field as a whole." Sharing how her background has affected her coursework, another student said, "I think I brought my historical adversity. I kind of faced a lot... a lot of what I have faced is also influenced in built environments I have lived in, so I wanted to express that narrative into my work" (Silvia).

Students often retold stories, memories, and shared personal photographs and artifacts that involved home, childhood, family, and friends to assert their knowledge. Several students connected a reading, video, song, or other course resource to a specific place and how they understand that place. In a weekly reflection, Kali wrote about a podcast episode called “Calle 24 - The Official Latino Cultural District of San Francisco” explaining how, “it talks about the Latino cultural district in San Francisco. Listening to this podcast from 2014 is very nostalgic...I can still remember going to them when I was younger.”

In addition to associating course content to specific memories of home and family, students drew connections between course concepts and family traditions and occupations and household items to demonstrate their knowledge and draw connections to course content. For a weekly reflection assignment, Lali shared an image of her uncle riding horseback, and wrote, “It just reminded me that my family’s upbringing is very connected to the bond between nature and people. In their “rancho” they were sustainable and resourceful all while respecting the circle of giving and receiving.” Also reflecting on her understanding of sustainability, Kima wrote about her early childhood fascination with *pilas*, or Mexican *lavaderos*, and how “they represent resourceful, a source of life, nutrients”, a useful and “innovative” tool for resource conservation. Drawing comforting associations between quilting with her grandmother as a young child and how quilts can reflect a certain built environment, Stella wrote:

> Even when [the families of gee’s Bend] were losing their homes and the space that lived in the quilts was a reminder of their past and came with them. The quilts are art and beautifully illustrate what goes on in the quilter's lives in the built environment. [T]hey are a form of expression that changes with surroundings.

> Quilting is also a task that is performed sitting together and forming relationships, which reminded me of quilting with my grandmother when I was young. [We] would pick out fabric and a pattern and I would sit on her lap and guide the fabric as she pressed the pedal. These artifacts demonstrate the love and relationships in the built environment and create a sense of home and place.

These examples speak to the ways students drew on specific memories to express their knowledge, redefining knowledge as encompassing self-knowing through experience and emotional connection.

**Students Challenged and Countered the Conventional Canon**

The second finding reveals that the students challenged and countered the canon through their projects. They read and told the built environment in ways that demonstrated not only the shortcomings of conventional environmental design, but also how they perceived the spaces they visited based on their identities as People of Color, women, immigrants, and low-income college students. Three project examples from Project 2: Reading and Telling a Built Environment illuminate this finding. For Project 2, the students explored a case study site first through the reading of conventional artifacts, then through the reading of alternative artifacts found at the site. They were then asked to reconcile these narratives to tell a new and accessible story about the site.

For Project 2, a group of four Latina students assigned to a recent development in the Sacramento, created an interactive scavenger hunt of the site in the style of *Lotería* playing cards (see Figures 4 and 5. Their goal was to uncover different aspects of historical preservation, which the students found to be a dominant theme in the official planning documents of development, mentioned forty-six times in the ninety-page plan.  Introducing the class to the site-based

scavenger hunt, one of the group members said, “All the artifacts that we see [at the development] are telling a very particular history and it starts at a very particular point, not with white settlers but with American settlers, so it completely strips even Spanish settlers from this space and then the history of Indigenous peoples before that and the ecological history of the site, too… We have no recollection of that history [at the site].”

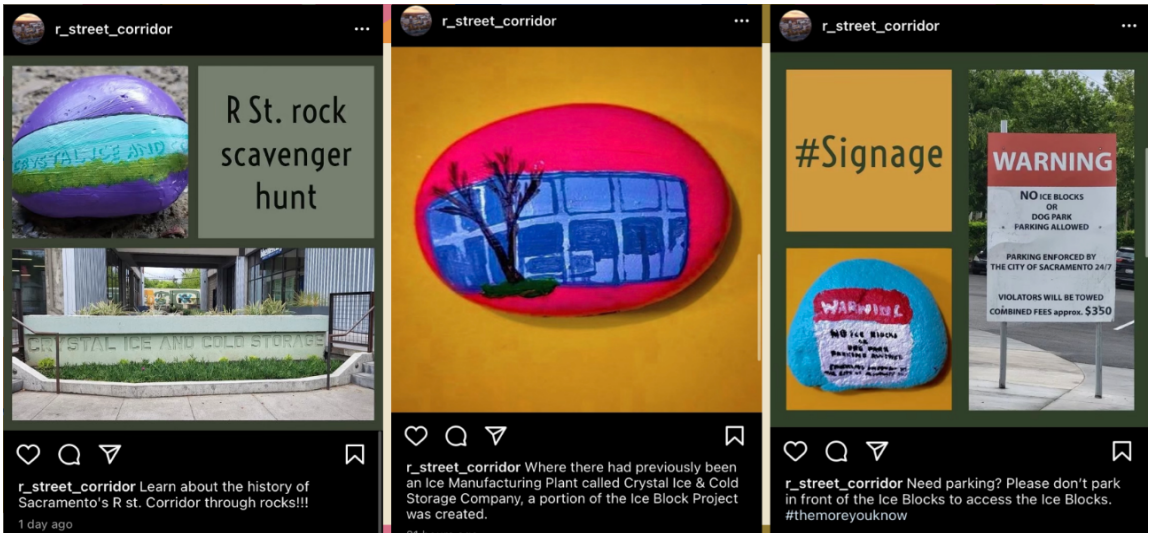


*Figure 4*


*Figure 5*

To help in uncovering these narratives of the site, the group of students painted smooth rocks with images to interpret their understanding of the site and to return to an "ecological history via *rocas de rio* (river rocks)." Their peers were then asked to find the painted rocks hidden around the site and asked to reflect on how they felt being within the space given the built environment and its material and symbolic markers. The group of students who made the scavenger hunt noted how as Latina college students they did not feel welcomed in the space, sensing that it was not meant for them.

In 2019, the development won the *Infill Project of the Year* from the Urban Land Institute, Sacramento and received an architectural award for its "modern interpretation of construction techniques" (Ice Blocks, 2019) Despite these accolades, the students' analysis of the site offers another story, one where aspects of their

history, culture, and identity have been removed and excluded from the physical and symbolic environment.

In another Project 2 example, a group of students looking at the Bridge District in West Sacramento found the development to be inaccessible in terms of economics, mobility, and cultural representation. They also found its commitment to ecological integrity weak. Despite these findings, the students, in presenting their project to the class, lamented their inability to afford living there as-soon-to-be graduates. They also noted the unlikeliness that they would visit the pricey shops and restaurants nearby.

To challenge the development's marketing tagline, "Urban Living // Future Thinking", the students developed a DIY chalk paint stencil that asked, "Is this Modern Living?" (see Figure 6). Throughout the development boundaries, the students marked the stencil in areas where they felt the development posed an accessibility challenge. This included areas with new, market-rate housing, public art installations internationally imported, and private pedestrian pathways.


*Figure 6*

Lastly, a student group of Asian and Asian American students looking at the Cannery, located just outside of downtown Davis, California at a formerly agricultural site that was recently developed with low- to medium-density housing and some commercial space, assessed the development to be both “a place of cultural diversity and gathering” and a place “blended and separated” in terms of built form and cultural references.

Looking to references of Asian culture within the development, the students observed use patterns based on resident demographics. For instance, they noted the prevalence of ethnically Asian residents utilizing communal outdoor fitness equipment, which are common in public spaces in parts of Asia, but noticed few Asian residents utilizing the pool, which they characterized as “a main social hub” that is “influenced by Western ideology.” In their presentation of the site, the students uncovered that the development, while the cannery offers a plethora of amenities and open spaces, how they are used and by whom greatly differ based on ethnic and cultural backgrounds. This is something the students did not find to be mentioned or included in the development’s planning or advertisement materials.

**Students Created and Experienced Alternative Participatory Processes**

The third finding shows that students in LDA 142 created and experienced alternative participatory processes that communicated place-based stories alternative to conventional communication tools about the sites. Again, they drew upon aspects of daily life–music, food, art, nature–as well as own their interests to envision accessible ways to communicate ideas that could be utilized in participatory processes. I offer three examples of student work from Project 3:

Designing for Belonging, where students applied their cumulative skills and acknowledged their personal experiences outside of education to inform a new story for an existing built environment. They were free to determine the appropriate tool for communicating their story.

First is Jack's 1950s jazz-inspired zine publication titled West End Blues, see Figure 7. His zine tells an alternative story of Sacramento's West End through Black jazz culture expressed through the cultural, material, and economic aspects of the area. Jack loves jazz—throughout the quarter talked about music and cultural relics associated with the scene. He also made a curated playlist that featured songs thematic to his project. His publication is a tool that is meant to engage non-professionals in the telling and reading of an environment.

Building on this interest in music, Jack's project, which he calls a "love letter to jazz", draws on his affinity for jazz music to share a historical story about the thriving African American and Japanese American communities who shaped the built, economic, cultural, and social characteristics of the West End, but whose neighborhoods were ultimately deemed "blighted" and demolished for new development.


*Figure 7*

In the telling of this story, Jack is challenging the 'official' narrative of the West End and offering an alternative future that embraces "culture as a driver of sustainable development" through the exploration of music, race, and place. By acknowledging and retelling a story that reconsiders the past, present, and future of Sacramento, Jack is reproducing and transmitting creative knowledge, and I argue, also asking his reader to engage in the learning process in order "to create a public space for what might otherwise be left out" (Hufford, 1999, p. 158).

Next is Kyle and Nadine's "dreambox" design charrette concept, see Figure 8. When they assessed the Bridge District, they were drawn to how people customized spaces and showed their character and personality through the placing of personal

items in windows, balconies, and stoops. They focused on smaller scale forms to explore the possibility of an open window as a way someone can share with other what matters to them. They built a dream box utilizing easy-to-find materials to convey aspects, items, and experiences of their everyday lives as college students. Again, creating a process of engagement based on their own identities and experiences.


*Figure 8*

The final example are paintings from Karmen's ecological story about the Bridge District, see Figure 9. She calls the development "a location that has been designed for humans only" more specifically, "for humans who fit the modern living lifestyle." She presents an alternative way to engage audiences by reimaging what native plants would have been found here when this area was a part of Mexico,

which she calls, “a place that was all inclusive”. Karmen combined her interest in nature, ecology, painting, and design to communicate a mode of engaging people on the history and ecology of an environment.

*Figure 9*

**Collective Course Reflections: Opportunities and Challenges**

Utilizing the three course reflection exercises (triptych storyboarding, interviewing, and identity board) students completed on the final day of the course, the data show students' thoughts of the effectiveness of the course varied. Whereas many students expressed a personal sense of growth and understanding, others felt confused or uneasy about the course objectives, assignment expectations, and application, or lack thereof, of “technical” skills. During her recorded course reflection interview, Mia summarized these points, saying:

> I think one of the things we struggled with is when we got a lot of creative freedom. I think the reason why we struggled with this is because us students have been so used to having a traditional pathway, traditional syllabus, traditional way of doing work and proceeding with work. And so, when we were allowed so much creative freedom on what to decide for projects and what we wanted to work on, it was a little difficult... That creative freedom should be implemented in other courses just as it is in this course.

Students also expressed being "grateful to have the opportunity to build my own project and have a say in the programs I work with" (anonymous) as well as engaging in "projects [that] facilitated thinking differently, taking action, and intentional discussion (anonymous). I felt really supported in this class, which encouraged me to work/create differently than I am used to" (Nora). Another student also expressed how this class allowed her to make projects that she had not done in previous classes, commenting on how she was provided the "creative space to think about what was important to me and make whatever kind of art I wanted" (Ava). On the other hand, some students expressed they wished to have "learned more technical planning skills" (Thea) and that the course "Didn't quite feel like a capstone" (anonymous). These sentiments, among others, are seen in the selection of triptych storyboards prepared by students below in Figure 10.

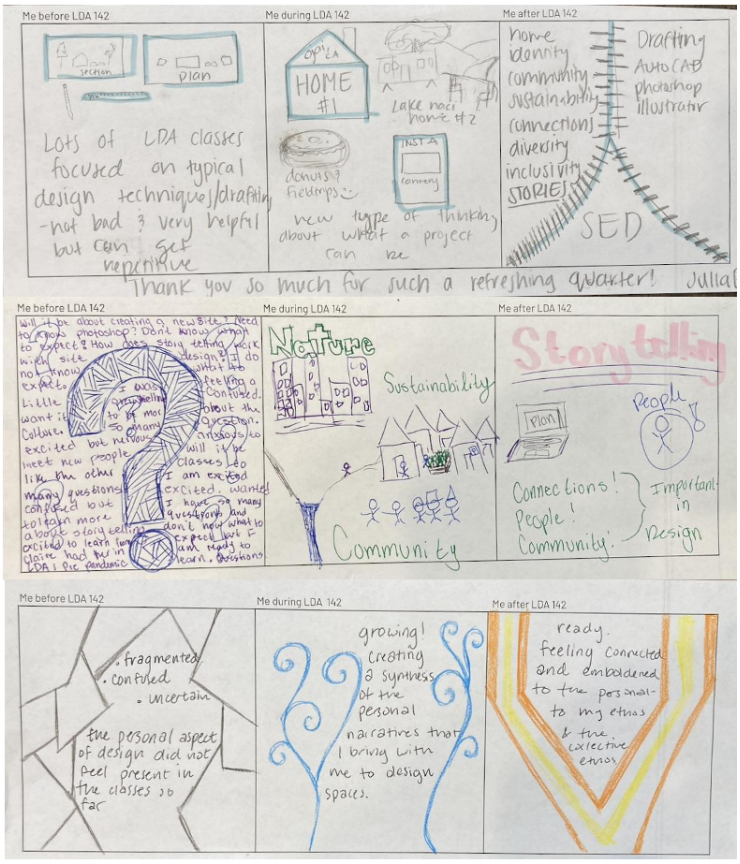


*Figure 10*

When assessing student responses to the Identity Board (see Figure 11) course reflection exercise detailed in Part Two, there is an overall positive correlation between the course outcomes and students' personal course assessment. As seen in Appendix C, thirty-three (33) students completed the exercise during our final class session where they wove yarn around each identity statement they agreed with. No statement received an agreement rating of less than 55%, with "*My lived experiences were recognized as expert knowledge in this course*", receiving the fewest responses. The highest ranked statement, "*I felt supported in this course*", received an agreement rate of 82%.

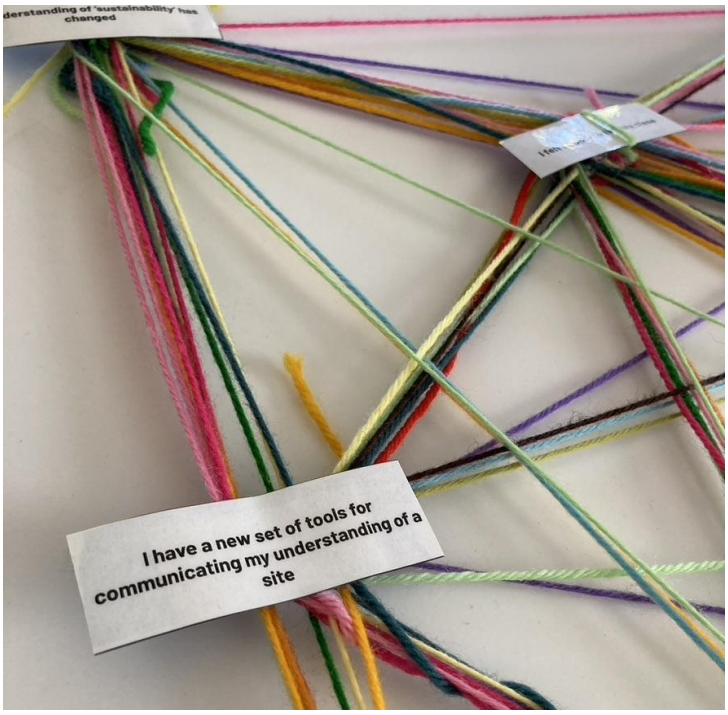


*Figure 11*

The research findings, paired with the literature, suggest that the exploration of personal history and values through ongoing self-reflection can increase students' confidence and ability to articulate their values and draw on them in their personal planning and design practice. In doing so, students learn to identify their positionality and value sets in relation to 'normative' planning and design theories and practices and incorporate them into their own work. For instance, when prompted to answer what lessons she will bring to her practice following LDA 142, one student said, "I'm gonna take the ideas that it's good to define what something means to you and what values are actually important, like we did in this class for [defining] 'home', to see how different they are from what we see in the design world. [I'm going to] actually design from a place of my values and what I think I should see" (Ava).

Another student explained that before LDA 142 she was “less angry” because she realized how much privilege there is in normative environmental design practice because “it truly does disadvantage you so much when you have to live the world through that way” (Silvia). More than communicating an emotion, Silvia recognized how different things could be if environmental design was practiced through a more personal experience approach that expressed and addressed “historical adversity.” She explains further by saying, “Taking this class and just learning more about how things could literally be different if we wanted to was just frustrating because, damn, why are things the way they are? So after, I hope to tear down those ideas and power constructions and make things the way I think they should be made and are more inclusive.” In this example, Silvia connects present issues within environmental design practice with ideas for change.

At its core, feminist pedagogy emphasizes empowering students’ voices and valuing experiential knowledge, especially in the face of growing inequities and ongoing struggles for liberation in the planning and design of our built environments. Feminist pedagogy is an essential tool in deconstructing and making meaning of inequalities in Western society, providing educators and students with the means to think critically, reflect, and lead to transformative learning and action (Larson, 2005).

While the class itself has ended, Silvia said she learned how things “literally could be different if we wanted to,” expressing her anger with the inaction in creating more just environments. Following the completion of the course and her undergraduate degree in environmental design, she hopes to “tear down those ideas around [unjust power] constructions and make things the way I think they

should be made that are more inclusive." Central here is the utilization and retelling of personal and collective experience that move not just the education but also the narrative and praxis of environmental design toward social, racial, and environmental justice.

Central to the pedagogical transformation of LDA 142 was introducing students to a radical approach of learning about and practicing environmental design—one that redefines teaching and learning, along with planning and design, as a praxis of care, collective healing, community empowerment and belonging—by encouraging and maintaining a classroom setting of support, emotional connection, and openness welcoming of difference and the imagining of alternatives. This type of learning community, one "that values wholeness over division" as well as emotional presence, "works to create closeness" (hooks, 2013, p. 49, 129). In an anonymous course evaluation, one student articulates this sentiment, writing, "Alexi is caring, understanding, knowledgeable and willing to go above and beyond to help students. Her guidance helped me through multiple projects for this class (and other classes). I will cherish the conversations we had about life, family and future endeavors. I will never forget the moments of empathy we shared. Thank you for the warmth and knowledge!" The student's words reflect the combination of care, commitment, knowledge, and trust instructors brought to the learning process in pursuit of mutual knowledge creation. hooks (2013) finds that when instructors extend care and respect in a classroom, students are more open to receiving affirmation and support, and teachers are better suited to respond to student's unique needs and perspectives.

This narrative of care and connection between students and instructors was also evident in the relationships formed between students enrolled in the course. Although most students already knew each other, having taken courses together in the past, there was a sense of solidarity and community in the learning process. One student said, “I did feel a sense of belonging in LDA 142”, continuing on to say, “I think that the community is obviously very close with our peers and I think that Claire and Alexi did a really great job of fostering a welcoming environment where we could just all be ourselves—goof off but still get our work done together” (Torrey). When a community continues to honor and meet the needs of every individual, a greater sense of trust and vulnerability is established (Somé, 1993).

The students enrolled in LDA 142 brought diverse perspectives, experiences, ways of knowing, and sharing knowledge to the course that challenged the racial, social, and ecological status quo and presented alternatives to thinking about the planned and built environment. Taken together, their diversity formed an experience of wholeness; Gideon (2015) finds that “the greater the diversity of *meaningfully related parts* that arise over time, the more fully the wholeness” (p. 6).

## PART FOUR: DISCUSSION

The findings from this study show that when an environmental design course is transformed around feminist and folkloristic frameworks, students employ personal and collective narratives and values to their planning and design projects, challenge power constructions, and produce accessible, communicative works that respond to the intersections of race, gender, class, ethnicity, and culture found within the built environment. These course outcomes reflect the literature on

feminist pedagogy and its intersections with folklore in environmental design, demonstrating the capabilities and potential of a radical pedagogical approach to environmental design in unearthing and incorporating 'other' narratives, diversify the types and forms of knowledge that is created and transmitted, embracing lived realities, and countering hegemonic forces in the planning and design of cities. This discussion is organized by student outcomes, implications for educators, and concludes with broader implications

**Student Outcomes**

Exposed to alternative thinkers, examples and processes, students felt empowered to bring their own experiences to environmental design to challenge to conventional canon. Thus, when asked to create diverse media, students were open to non-conventional forms of expression, communication, and value structures in environmental design. Since they were encouraged to bring their own stories and values to their analysis, students engaged with environmental design in a much deeper, personal, and caring way that is typical within a conventional classroom. Because they were emboldened in these ways—exposed to different people, processes, and first-hand knowledge through everyday life acts—they focused less on the planning and designing of sites and more on building inclusive and diverse participatory processes aimed at pluralizing voices and perspectives in environmental design practices.

### Implications for Educators

The findings demonstrate that educators must teach students differently in content, structure, and style to build trust and empower students. Educators who encourage participation in robust and personal ways that uplift and incorporate experiences and interests outside the classroom into teaching and learning, help students to see environmental design as a personal, democratic process as opposed to a top-down, expert approach. Moreover, allowing some level of control and decision-making in course structure and assignments fosters student engagement and emboldens them to employ their sense of agency in work beyond the classroom.

### Broader Implications

By expanding the boundaries of environmental design through these pedagogical changes, students learned to bring their lived experience, unique knowledge, and beliefs. As emerging practitioners, they now view their practice not as a technical one but as a participatory one. In doing so, they see themselves as builders and facilitators of processes rather than definers of space, contributing to a collective process that moves us toward a more just, sustainable world. This transformation shows that potential professional norms can be expanded to include cooperation, relationship building, and repair.

Overall, these outcomes align with the literature that finds critical and feminist pedagogy have the potential to transform students and make a move toward justice in and beyond the classroom. Folklore uplifts the stories, experiences, and

belongings of people, and when pedagogically applied, encourage students to recognize their own narratives and value those of others.

Folklore allows groups to freely and openly express themselves and engage in the planning and design of our built environments in ways not commonly accepted in the field. Traditionally, discourse in environmental design has been limited to those who possess technical and professional language, while those who do not are closed out of the conversation. In normative environmental design practices, local knowledge "falls conveniently beyond the pale of environmental review" (Hufford, 1999, p. 161). By embracing a more holistic and interdisciplinary approach to environmental design, one that uncovers narratives, challenges the status quo, and explores personal and collective experience, there is potential to tap into and learn from wells of diverse knowledge and expertise.

Feminist, folkloristic environmental design education pluralizes the field by asking students to acknowledge, appreciate, and incorporate the use and experience of music, food, art and craft, storytelling, performance, and ritual in the understanding and the planning and design of built environments in order to image an alternative future. This perspective is reflected in one student's testimony from an anonymous course evaluation, in which they wrote, "I will take the skills I learned in this class to continue challenging spaces, finding alternate stories and keeping a keen eye for artifacts." When students learn to think critically about knowledge production, they can begin to recognize more frequently the relationship between power, politics, and the planned and built environment.

**Recommendations For Future Courses**

Preliminary findings indicate two primary limitations. First, students who do not have prior experience or familiarity with this type of course may find the curriculum difficult to parse given the timeline of course instruction in their degree program (i.e., final quarter of their senior year). A suggested change is to employ feminist pedagogy and folkloristic concepts in curriculum earlier in students' degree program, preferably in introductory and foundational courses that set the conceptual and historical basis of the degree program. Possible courses to introduce these concepts, alongside 'normative' theories, histories, and practices, include LDA 1: Introduction to Environmental Design; LDA 2: Place, Culture, and Community; LDA 3: Sustainable Development: Theory and practice; and/or LDA 30: History of Environmental Design.

Second, balancing a flexible, and at times ambiguous, curriculum with concrete learning objectives and outcomes may result in confusion amongst students who expect a predetermined schedule and detailed description of course deliverables. In the future, instructors should increase opportunities in the classroom for student input on project types and outcomes earlier in their academic degree program. Encourage instructors and students to "embrace ambiguity and uncertainty" by not forcing them into accepting theories and concepts, but rather engaging them in the process of inquiry and knowing along the way (hooks, 2013, p. 47-48 cross referencing Judith Simmer-Brown).

**Recommendations For Future Research**

This case study course employed a focus on feminist pedagogy and folkloristic approaches to planning and design in response to critiques of conventional environmental design outcomes and student demands to diversify their curricula. While the findings suggest that students experienced new ways on learning by incorporating their lived experience in their work and changing how they engage in the practice as process builders, there are limitations to this research. To help address gaps in this research methodology, future research should consider the following:

1. Evaluate the limitations of personal experience as knowledge. When can it create hostile learning environments?
2. Examine this pedagogical framework in multiple course types and subject matters in different locations and cultural contexts to assess possible different outcomes, takeaways, and limitations of the pedagogical framework
3. Conduct follow-up conversations with LDA 142 students to assess effects of pedagogical interventions over time.
4. This research was conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic, resulting in unconventional course format (i.e., hybrid) and unexpected changes to course schedule and student expectations. Consider re-evaluating this pedagogical framework in a post-pandemic era.
5. Several class activities occurred in small group discussions where the instructors were not present. A more detailed notetaking or record-keeping process should be developed to capture greater specifics.

## CONCLUDING REMARKS

By working to incorporate feminist pedagogy and applied folklore within LDA 142, an undergraduate environmental design capstone course at UC Davis, this research aimed to pluralize the conventional canon and outcomes within environmental design education, and more broadly, the professional practice. Through an analysis of the students' diverse project types and forms, it is evident that this pedagogical approach to environmental design education is capable of transforming learning outcomes and anticipated changes to the field. Students are better prepared to address the critiques offered on conventional design by re-situating the practice to a participatory process that includes and honors multiple perspective and values systems of connection, belonging, and care. Compared to conventional approaches to environmental design, which tend to be rooted in western, male perspectives and ahistorical, technocratic inquiries that ignore other experiences and knowledges, critical feminism and folklore in the classroom move students, and educators, to counter the canon, embrace sidelined narratives, materialities, and epistemologies, honor emotion and experience, and value cultural communication created and transmitted in daily life.

This pedagogical approach has the potential to impact the practice of environmental design by preparing students, the group of emerging practitioners, to seek out practical tools that explore and incorporate their own narratives and values those of others in how they communicate, plan, design, and experience our built environments. Applied to the professional fields of environmental design, practitioners who engage in these processed can produce more socially, racially, and ecologically just built environments by situating care in connection to the small and

ordinary interactions of everyday life that shape how we experience and relate to our environments and on another.

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix A: JEDI Student Letter

*This is not the original letter but a transcribed copy.*


March 19, 2021

To all LA+ED faculty and staff,

The pervasive whiteness in the UC Davis LA+ED program is a threat to the education and futures of our fellow peers. We fear that the lack of representation in our curriculum and open discussion of inequities in design creates an internalized erasure of underrepresented voices in the future generation of environmental designers and changemakers. We demand Justice, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion.

We believe that within the LA+ED program, there has been a failure to create an inviting environment for students and faculty from underrepresented communities. Currently, students are not being adequately prepared to enter the real world. The lack of diversity and inclusion in the curriculum is discouraging to underrepresented student populations, and a lack of equitable support hinders the success of students.

If you look around any LA+ED classroom, it illustrates our diverse student population. However, taking that same look in a faculty meeting would result in much different findings. The lack of diversity within the department's faculty is reflected in their curricula, as we have found that many perspectives and lessons are overwhelmingly white and eurocentric, including the designers we discuss at length. This prevailing message that white is right along with insufficient representation can be extremely harmful to underrepresented students seeking a future in the LA+ED field.

This program strives to be inclusive, but fails to explicitly discuss injustices in the built environment that vulnerable communities are most impacted by. It is essential that professors account for the current socio-political climate that we are facing in order to prepare students for the world they will be designing for.

The LA+ED program has a weakness in equity, disregarding students' individual socioeconomic situations as they pertain to their academic success. Although materials necessary for classes can usually be found in the Class Support Office (CSO), they come at a high price in form of class fees, and aren't always available for every student who needs them. Programs like Adobe Suite–vital to our education and success in any future field–are costs that students are responsible for absorbing. We do not believe this is right.

Specific to SED students, we are not receiving instruction that enables us as both sustainable thinkers and designers in order to feel prepared to pursue a career in any field. We recognize the distinctions between the SED and LDA programs, but

the disparity in terms of preparedness to enter the workforce must be addressed. SED students are taught to critique–not to create. Our studies and discussions in sustainability are broad and surface-level, leaving us with little real-world expertise. As a result, our design knowledge and technical skills are lacking. We strongly believe that Sustainable Environmental Design inadequately advertises what students can expect out of our major.

In response to these concerns, we propose the following demands for change:

**Department-wide**

1. Create a more diverse faculty in order to increase representation
2. Consolidate advising emails into a weekly newsletter

Accessibility + Class Support

3. Amend grading criteria for assignments to consider equitable access to materials
4. Access to personal design programs, such as Adobe Suite licenses for individual student use (Not Virtual Lab)
5. Ensure that all students have access to all studio materials necessary for success in the program; potential options include
    a. Supplying the CSO with the proper amount of materials for each student
    b. (or) Supplying students with a kit that includes all studio materials necessary for success in the program
6. Grant fee waivers for field trips, lab fees, etc. to students in special financial circumstances
7. Adjust class sizes to respond to the growing majors

8. Provide adequate working space within Hunt Hall to accommodate all LA+ED students

9. Inform students of technology available to them, such as hotspots, virtual labs, technology rental, etc

10. Offer personal support to aspiring Landscape Architecture students in the form of portfolio reviews by faculty members

11. Promote mentorship opportunities for LA+ED students to work with instructors

**Major Requirements + Curriculum**

12. Emphasize potential SED major focuses to create expertise necessary for specific career paths

13. Reorganize curricula content to minimize repetition of material across department courses in order to make more space for important topics relevant to our “design” degree

14. Develop SED curriculum to teach the following skills:

    a. ADA design

    b. Application of Sustainable Design Strategies

    c. Affordable Design

    d. Professional Career Development

    e. Upper division visual representation studio

15. Update major requirements to integrate the following topics:

    a. Ethnic Studies

    b. Community & Regional Development

    c. Environmental Policy Analysis and Planning

d. Climate Science

16. Revise our curriculum to reflect the diversity of the LA+ED student body

Our demands are necessary to enact the changes promised by the department in response to the Black Lives Matter protests nine months ago:

> "...we need to conduct a thorough examination of all our courses to identify how they can better present diverse viewpoints and move away from outmoded and racist ideologies...
>
> In the next year, we commit to examining ways to reduce bias in our classrooms and our program culture, to engage our students in ways that are more inclusive, and to eliminate institutional barriers for Black, Indigenous, People of Color, and Immigrants."
>
> – LA+ED Department, June 9, 2020

We have accepted your invitation and have taken our seat at the table to join your effort. Now, we are holding you–our leaders–accountable to your promise to do better.

We demand Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion.

Signed,

**The founding JEDI Council**

Karleen Campbell, Rocio Chavez, Ariana Contreras, Gracie Globerman, Andrea Citlalli Gonzalez, Aleesa Palmer, Nikki Yang

**Appendix B: LDA 142 Course Syllabus**

**LDA 142: APPLYING SUSTAINABLE STRATEGIES**

Landscape Architecture + Environmental Design | UC Davis

Spring Quarter | 2022

*We produce the social and material geographies and patterns that shape who lives where, how and with what prospects for a full and prosperous life. These geographies & patterns are racialised.*

*From S. Zewolde, et. al.'s Race, Space, and the Built Environment*

*All my life I have searched for a place of belonging, a place that would become home... Home was a safe place, the place where one could count on not being hurt.*

*From bell hooks' Belonging, a Culture of Place*

**Class Details**

*Time & Location:* Tuesdays and Thursdays, 1:40pm to 4:30pm in Hunt 168

Occasional in-person site visits and outdoor class meetings (see class schedule)

*Instructor:* Claire Napawan (she/her/hers), Associate Professor and LA+ED Program Director

*Teaching Assistant:* Alexi Wordell (she/her/hers), Community Development Graduate Student

**Course Overview**

This course serves as the capstone for the Sustainable Environmental Design major, and as such, requires a synthesis approach to applying (and challenging) the

cumulative skills of our profession towards the design of sustainable, inclusive, and meaningful built environments. In this particular course we will be looking to broaden Western conceptualizations of 'sustainability' by incorporating concepts of eco-feminism, environmental justice, and traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) to inform a radical approach to environmental design – one that redefines planning and design as a praxis of care, collecitve healing, community empowerment, and belonging.

As a class, we will (1) interrogate the normative methods of planning and design of the built environment through the lens of housing in Northern California; (2) explore the concept of 'home' as more than the physical construction of dwellings or the 'residential' land-use zone; (3) explore ideas of belonging, inclusion, and collective well-being when we consider what a 'home' might look like; and, (4) understand that these require considerations of community wealth, health, and characteristics (E.g., geographic, cultural, social, economic, environmental and political). We will engage in these interrogations by surveying non-normative means of communicating by producing personal, accessible, and creative communications.

**Learning Outcomes**

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

1. Articulate main elements of the historical discourse around sustainability and main perspectives on this concept
2. Identify stakeholders and decision-makers related to a sustainability topic of personal interest and articulate their perspectives
3. Develop several alternative strategies for this topic of personal interest and articulate the pros and cons of each

4. Develop sustainable design proposals for a real-world site that take into account physical, social, economic, environmental, and institutional factors
5. Demonstrate professional-quality written, verbal and visual communications that convey sustainability and related design recommendations

**UC Davis Land Acknowledgement Statement**

*We should take a moment to acknowledge the land on which we are gathered. For thousands of years, this land has been the home of Patwin people. Today, there are three federally recognized Patwin tribes: Cachil DeHe Band of Wintun Indians of the Colusa Indian Community, Kletsel Dehe Wintun Nation, and Yocha Dehe Wintun Nation.*

*The Patwin people have remained committed to the stewardship of this land over many centuries. It has been cherished and protected, as elders have instructed the young through generations. We are honored and grateful to be here today on their traditional lands.*

**Required Materials**

Required readings & other resources (videos, podcasts, etc.) are located on Canvas. Additional readings & resources to support the completion of course assignments are also located on Canvas; however, further online and library research may be required to successfully complete assignments. No course text purchase is required.

**Class Requirements & Grading Policy**

Grades will be assigned based upon quality, completeness, depth, and originality. In any design course, a certain level of subjectivity is inevitable in evaluating work,

although instructors will compare your work with others in order to achieve a fair outcome.

*Extenuating circumstances:* Due dates for assignments are noted on the class schedule, but students with extenuating circumstances can reach out to the professor for potential extensions (for medical reasons, mental health issues, personal circumstances, and social climates); not submitting work for a pinup, presentation, or not appearing for a quiz or exam without prior notice could result in a grade of zero.

If assignments require materials and/or design softwares that are not provided by the school, assignments will be graded to account for potential inequitable access.

*Attendance Policy:* Regular attendance is required for this class. You may be marked absent for not being present and engaged in class work (for this course) for the entire class time. Please discuss with the instructor regarding any obstacles you may experience with regard to attending class. Refer to class schedule for the location and format for class (Zoom, in-person, etc). There are several required site visits as part of this course.

*Standard UC Davis Grading Scheme:* Grades will be determined on the following percentages

- 20% - *Weekly Reflections*
- 20% - *Project 1A & 1B: Defining Home*
- 40% - *Project 2: Reading & Telling the Built Environment*
- 20% - *Project 3: Designing for Belonging*

Grades will be assigned based upon quality, completeness, depth, and originality. In any design course, a certain level of subjectivity is inevitable in evaluating work, although instructors will compare your work with others in order to achieve a fair outcome.

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| A+ | 100% to 97% | C+ | < 80% to 77% | F | < 60% |
| A | < 97% to 93% | C | < 77% to 73% | | |
| A- | < 93% to 90% | C- | < 73% to 70% | | |
| B+ | < 90% to 87% | D+ | < 70% to 67% | | |
| B | < 87% to 83% | D | < 67% to 63% | | |
| B- | < 83% to 80% | D- | < 63% to 60% | | |

**Diversity, Inclusion, and Positionality Statements**

*Statement of Bias*: This course is taught from the lens of an environmental design educator who was trained in normative theory and practice in the United States, which represents predominantly Western, Eurocentric, and Hetero-normative narratives. The instructor's positionality as a woman of color, mother, child of Southeast Asian immigrants as impacts her experience of the built environment and teaching within the classroom. We acknowledge the great diversity represented by the students within this class, and embrace individual positionality as a tremendous resource. Do not hesitate to connect with us if the presence of a particular bias is impacting your ability to participate in the class.

*Statement of Inclusion:* Classroom learning is improved when students feel included in the conversation and free to express their opinions. We welcome your ideas, questions, and disputes in this class without a risk of penalty in your course

evaluation. You have the right to freedom of expression under the UC Davis Principles of Community (https://diversity.ucdavis.edu/principles-community).

*Accessibility + Accommodations:* This course is made stronger through the participation of people with a wide range of abilities, identities, skills and experiences. As instructors, we strive to make our learning environment as accessible as possible for students with diverse learning styles, abilities, disabilities and needs. Additionally, we ask that every student take an active responsibility to foster a climate of humility and respect for each other. If you have any suggestions or concerns about a learning space or situation, you may speak directly with your instructor(s). Additionally, you may speak with the undergraduate advisor or master advisor for your major. If you require specific accommodations due to a disability, please consult with the Student Disability Center (sdc.ucdavis.edu).

*Ethics and Academic Integrity:* Honesty, trust and integrity are absolutely essential in this and any course. As such, UC Davis treats any academic dishonesty with the utmost seriousness. All work that you present as your own must have been done by you, and all work that you attribute to others must be properly cited. This includes text as well as all images. Slightly rewriting or editing a source is usually not enough to count it as your own, so give ample credit to others. If you are unsure about how to cite something, please ask the instructor. For guidelines on avoiding plagiarism, see http://sja.ucdavis.edu/files/plagiarism.pdf.

Please refamiliarize yourself with UC Davis' strict policies on academic integrity and dishonesty (https://ossja.ucdavis.edu/academic-misconduct). As a department, we actively enforce these policies.

*Additional Student Support:* UC Davis provides students with a wide range of resources to foster academic and personal success. This includes counseling, health care, tutoring and writing assistance, childcare, job and internship placement, and basic needs like food. Please visit the following link for more information: https://ebeler.faculty.ucdavis.edu/resources/faq-student-resources/

**COURSE SCHEDULE****

PART ONE - DEFINING 'HOME'

T 03.29 **Course Introduction: *Belonging***

**Introduction to Project 1A: *Acknowledging Expertise:*** Prepare one artifact that represents 'Home' to you. This could be a graphic (e.g. drawing, photograph, map, etc.); an object (collected from a site or self-crafted); a text (written by you or others); a sound (music, audio recording, etc.); a movement (choreography, video, or interpretive dance); or a combination of the aforementioned (music video, illustrated text, etc).

**Required Resources:** 'Preface' and 'Habits of the Heart' from *Belonging* by bell hooks; 'Places that Get Better Over Time,' from *The Housing Design Handbook* by... ; 'Housing for the Common Good' from *Housing as Intervention* by K. Kubey

Recommended Resources: *Heat* from Climate Wisconsin; *Latinoamericana* by Calle 13; Casita Rincon Criollo from City Lore; (Alexi will also share home-themed songs)

Discussion questions (Alexi):

- What stands out to folks?
- How are 'home' and 'belonging' represented in these videos?
- What senses do people talk, sing, dance about? What words and terms are used?
- How do these stories differ from how we normally talk about 'home'?
- What role does 'home' have for you in sustainable design?

R 03.31 **Lab 1: Project 1A Due (**present in small groups)

*Where I'm From* exercise & working definitions of home/housing/belonging/inclusion

**Required Resources:** *Where I'm From* poem by George Ella Lyon

**Introduction to Project 1B: *Defining Home***

T 04.05 **Lecture 1: *Redefining Sustainability***

Similar exercise to first class - exploring what preconceptions we have for terms like 'sustainability,' 'biophilic,' 'regenerative'; often tied with 'innovative' and 'technology'

**Required Resources:** 'Touching the Earth,' from *Belonging* by bell hooks; 'Foreword' and 'Introduction' to *Lo-TEK: Design by Radical Indigenism* by J. Watson; 'Sustainable Structures in *The Housing Design Handbook*; and Articles 1-4, 27-30 from "Our Common Future" report from the Brundtland Commission

**Recommended Resource:** 'Introduction' from *Designs for the Pluriverse* by A. Escobar; Exploitation of Soil and Story from the podcast *For the Wild*

R 04.07 **Lab 2: *Student Working Session***

Students present on Project 1 progress (in small groups)

As a class, we will listen to Geechee World Order from the podcast *Resistance* while you work in groups

F 04.11 **Project 1B Due** (uploaded to Canvas)

PART TWO - THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT AS NARRATIVE

T 04.12 **Discussion of Project 1B**

**Introduction to Case Study Site**s: R Street Corridor (Sacramento); Bridge District (West Sacramento); the Cannery (Davis); Metro 510 (El Cerrito); and Spring Lake (Woodland)

**Project 2: *Reading & Telling the Built Environment:*** details forthcoming

**Required Resources:** "A Place for Stories" by W. Cronon; "The Language of Landscapes" by A. W. Spirn; excerpts from *A Pattern Language* by C. Alexander; Introduction to *Making the Invisible Visible* by L. Sandercock; Conversation Method by M. Kovach; Alameda Creek Atlas by N. C. Napawan, et. al.

**Recommended Resources:** According to Need from 99% Invisible; Mapping the Green Book (look through webpage; watch short video)

R 04.14 **Lab 3: *Artifact Hunting Exercise Part I***

*In groups of 4, review the local, state, and federal documents handed out in class. Look for key terms, themes and messages from the normative artifact from the site*

*(planning document master plan, published paper, etc) — create flash cards or other tools for sharing that story. For each group, they will create between 3-5 flashcards that summarize in images and text the key concepts they have uncovered.*

**Introduction to Planning Workshop:** *Alexi leads a workshop on the planning process, reading plan sets, and preparing staff reports, etc.*

**Introduce Project 2A**

**Required Resources**: see normative texts (artifacts) for each site on Canvas > Files > Case Study Sites; 2019 California Housing Law Update; CEQA General Concepts; NEPA Purpose and Policies; excerpts from the HUD 2022-26 Strategic Plan

**Recommended Resources:** Quilters of Gee's Bend; Pagodas & Dragon Gates from 99%

Invisible

T 04.19 **Lecture 2: *Artifacts of an Exclusive Built Environment, Pt. 1 - Race, Class, & Ethnicity***

**Discussion of Project 2A**

**Required Resources:** "If San Francisco, then Everywhere' in *Color of Law* by. R. Rothstein; "Racial Inequality and Empowerment" by J. M. Thomas and "Indigenous Planning," by T. S. Jojola, both from *Making the Invisible Visible; "*The Invisible Freeway Revolt" from *Folklore of the Freeway*

**Recommended Resources:** Anti-Eviction Mapping; The Green Book Redux from 99% Invisible; and Color(ed) Theory by Amanda Williams

R 04.21 **Lab 4: Artifact Hunting Exercise Part II**

*On-site scavenger hunt, searching for other evidence/clues on site for an 'alternative' story of the site. Artifacts could be built or material, symbolic, performative, and/or sensual (e.g. see, taste, smell, sound, and touch). Consider what objects and other sensations you notice and experience that reveal another, possibly different, story about the case study site. Consider using all of your senses to question who and what the space is made for and used by, and who/what are excluded.*

T 04.26 **Lecture 3: *Accessible Communications***

**Discussion of Project 2B**

**Required Resources:** *The Aesthetics of Equity* by C. Wilkins; Design to Divest; Making Policy Public (various projects) from the Center for Urban Pedagogy; Visualizing Black America by W. E. B. Du Bois; San Francisco Poster Syndicate

R 04.28 **Lab 5: *Progress pin-up of Project 2C***

**Guest Lecture**: Karen Kubey (she/her/hers)

**Required Resources:** Palaces for the People from 99% Invisible; KarenKubey.net

Exhibitions and Reset Exhibition

T 05.03 **Check-Ins:** *Claire and Alexi meet individually with each team to discuss project progress*

T 05.05 **Lecture 4: *Artifacts of an Exclusive Built Environment, Pt. 2 - Feminist & Queer Identities***

**Required Resources:** "Women's Work" by C. Napawan, et. al.; "A Place Where the Soul Can Rest" by bell hooks; "City Planning for Girls" by S. M. Wirka; "Prisons of Silence" by Janice Mirikitani in *Making Face, Making Soul: Haciendo Caras* edited by Gloria Anzaldúa

**Recommended Resources:** Monarchs and Queens by R. Solnit & M. Caron; Queering the Map;

M. 05.09 **Project 2 Due** (uploaded to Canvas)

T 05.10 **Project 2: Final Review / Site Visits (**see itinerary)

T 05.12 **Project 2: Final Review / Site Visits** (see itinerary)

PART THREE - DESIGNING FOR BELONGING

T 05.17 **Introduction to Project 3: *Designing for Belonging***

**Defining Project 3 Parameters:** student workshop

**Recommended Resources:** *Sustaining Beauty* by E. Meyers; *Albany Bulb Atlas* by S. Moffat; selected excerpts from *Site Planning* by K. Lynch & G. Hack; "Gray World, Green Heart," by R. Thayer

R 05.19 **Lab 6: *Project 3 Working Session***

T 05.24 **Guest Speaker:** Monique López, (she/he/they) founder of Pueblo Planning

**Required Resources:** Pueblo Planning website

Followed by student working session

R 05.26 **Check-Ins:** *Claire and Alexi meet individually with each team to discuss project progress*

T 05.31 **Discuss Project 3 Progress (**small groups with Alexi and Professor Wheeler)

**Guest Reviewer:** Steve Wheeler (he/him/his), UCD professor

R 06.02 **Lab 7: *Final Course Reflection***: individual and collective in-class artifact making led by

Alexi

M 06.06 **Project 3 Due** (uploaded to Canvas)

F 06.10 **Final Course Reflection Due** (uploaded to Canvas or completed previously in class)

**If the past 2+ years of the pandemic has taught us anything, it's the need to remain flexible! This schedule is subject to change in response to the many, many possibilities that may impact our lives in the next 10 weeks. Please check for announcements regularly for the most up-to-date scheduling information (including due dates, site visits, in-person, or virtual meetings).

**COURSE ASSIGNMENTS**

***Weekly Reflections*** **(**Weeks 1-5, due the following Monday of each week)

Part of this course requires students to reflect on class content, exercises, readings, and other observations you make throughout the quarter. We recognize that some students do not feel comfortable speaking up during the class period, or discover ideas long after class has ended; this exercise is meant to allow you to share your thoughts on the resources and subject matter outside of the class period. As part of this assignment, we are asking all students to submit an artifact that provides a meaningful reflection on the key ideas being explored in class during the week. We will model the concept of an 'artifact' in the very first week of class to help aid you this process.

Your artifact could be a short piece of writing, hand drawing or sketch, digital representation, photograph, a piece of artwork, music, podcast, assemblage, or any other kind of media (authored by you or someone else) that provides an interpretation of the concepts and ideas within our readings, lectures, and class discussions. We ask that you submit this artifact via Canvas by midnight on Mondays, so that instructors and other students can review, and we can potentially share your submitted resources at our next Lab meeting.

***Project 1: Defining Home*** (Project 1a due in-class on T 03.31 & Project 1B due M 04.11)

1. Project 1A: *Acknowledging Expertise:* Prepare one artifact that represents ‘Home’ to you. This could be a graphic (e.g. drawing, photograph, map, etc.); an object (collected from a site or self-crafted); a text (written by you or others); a sound (music, audio recording, etc.); a movement (choreography, video, or interpretive dance); or a combination of the aforementioned (music

video, illustrated text, etc). Examples will be provided in our first class session. This first portion will be presented in Lab 1.

2. Project 1B: *Defining Home:* Utilizing relevant elements from your artifact, coupled with imagery, found objects, photographs, etc. assemble a 2D or 3D collage, photo-montage, or diorama that illustrates what 'Home' means to you. It does not have to be specific to one place; instead, it should represent the elements you value about a home (including physical, social, emotional, and/or spiritual criteria that is relevant to you). Consider using materials and/or creative methods that relate to your 'everyday' experience of home. What items, sounds, smells, etc. remind you of home, are used at/within your home? How can you employ these familiar senses into your project? The cumulative assignment will be presented in class on T 04.12. Please also upload the assignment to Canvas by midnight the evening prior.

***Project 2: Reading & Telling a Built Environment*** (due M 05.09)

The second project for this course will be completed within groups. It will require teams of 4-5 students to become 'experts' in a particular site within the region that was recently designed and constructed with the goals of 'sustainable housing.' We ask all students to continue to challenge the terms 'sustainable' and 'housing' -- as practiced in Project 1 -- as you pursue this assignment. Five case study locations have been selected that represent a range of densities, housing types, and geographical locations -- all accessible to students with varying degrees of transportation needs. Sites will be selected/assigned on Tuesday, April 12 based on student interest and accessibility.

For Part 2A, student teams will review an artifact that was produced by normative planning, design, and policy processes. Examples of such artifacts include Environmental Impact Reviews (EIR), California Environmental Quality Assessment (CEQA), Land-use or Masterplanning documentation, and/or other municipally authored artifacts on your chosen site. Consider these texts and resources as an artifact, much like the ones uncovered in your definition of housing. What story is being told in this document? What values and goals are embodied in the artifact? How is 'housing' or 'sustainability' being defined? Utilizing that artifact, student teams will extrapolate a narrative that communicates the goals and values embedded in the artifact (this process will be demonstrated with a collective, in-class exercise on Thursday, April 14). Presentation of this normative narrative will occur on Tuesday, April 19.

Part 2B will be undertaken on Thursday, April 21st. Students will visit each of their respective sites during class to uncover an alternative artifact. This artifact should be place-based and could include a range of possibilities that are discovered on-site. Some examples include: artwork (sanctioned or unsanctioned), signage (sanctioned or unsanctioned), music, community interviews, litter or debris, film (recorded by students or others), dance or movement, found objects, plant materials, etc. Consider this exercise as an on-site scavenger hunt, searching for other evidence/clues on site for an ‘alternative’ story of the site. Artifacts could be built or material, symbolic, performative, and/or sensual (e.g. see, taste, smell, sound, and touch). What objects and other sensations do you notice and experience that reveal another, possibly different, story about the case study site? Consider using all of your senses to question who and what the space is made for and used by, and who/what

are excluded. This artifact should support an alternative reading of the site that may or may not contrast with the normative narrative presented prior. Presentation of the artifact and its narrative will occur on Tuesday, April 26.

Part 2C will be the consolidation/reconciliation of both narratives uncovered of your site. Using this information, along with other research on your case study, housing, and sustainability, student teams will develop a tool for communicating your understanding of the site. Your communication tools should be able to operate without your presence (ie: you shouldn't have to explain them for individuals to understand the site and your narratives). Examples of such tools will be presented in class on Tuesday, April 26 and include site installed signage (including chalk, vinyl stickers, etc), art installation, print or digital guide, audio tour, self-guided tour, map, etc -- this is not an exhaustive list. The expectation is to have students lead tours through your site to our entire class on either Tuesday, May 10 or Thursday, May 12. Digital versions of this communication tool will be due posted to Canvas by Monday, May 9, 5:00pm PDT to ensure an equitable amount of time regardless of presentation date.

***Project 3: Designing for Belonging*** (due M 06.06)

1. The final project will require applying the cumulative skills of this class and previous coursework, and acknowledging your personal experiences outside of education to inform a new story for an existing built environment. We will continue to employ the metaphor and methods of storytelling as we explore new possibilities for the site. The site is your setting; the community and stakeholders are your characters; and the plot and its moral will demonstrate your values. Students are free to choose a site from any of the case studies

from Project 2, even if it wasn't a site you investigated. Students are also welcome to work in groups understanding that the deliverables for an individual/group will be commensurate to the group size – and no group exceeding 5 members.

2. The deliverable for this final project will be determined by students. As a capstone project, we want you all to employ your own knowledge, interests, and creative pursuits to determine the appropriate tool for communicating your story of change. We are open to diverse media, including but not limited to: policy briefs, proposed legislation, revised planning documents, physical design documents, masterplan or design guideline documents, digital or analogue modeling, digital or analogue drawing, music, film, fashion, games, mixed media installations, spoken-word, poetry, dance, participatory techniques, new design methods, painting, crafting, or any other blending of these techniques.
3. Class on Tuesday, May 17 will help collectively set parameters, guidelines, and a schedule for this final project.
4. In addition to the final deliverable, we are asking groups or individuals to create a short 2-5 minute video describing your final project. Please reach out if you have questions about producing this video. Precedents are viewable here.

***Final Course Reflection*** (due R 06.02 or F 06.10 –see dates below)

In lieu of Week 6-10's weekly reflection, we are requesting students to develop a cumulative reflection on the course that includes elements from Week 1-5's reflections; Projects 1, 2, and 3; and any related resources, artifacts, or insights you've

developed throughout this course. We will utilize in-class time on Thursday, June 2 to complete this effort through the making of individual and collective artifacts.

If you are unable to participate in the activities scheduled for our last class period (Thursday, June 2), please prepare a written reflection (approximately 500 words) due Friday, June 10 that explores the insights you have gained in the course.

**RESOURCES**


1. Afatasi the Artist. BLACK SPACE. Mixed-media work.
2. Anderson, M. K. (2005). *Tending the Wild: Native American Knowledge and the Management of California's Natural Resources*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
3. Basso, K. (1996). "Wisdom sits in places: Landscape and language among the Western Apache," in *Democracy and urban landscapes*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press.
4. Berlinger, Gabrielle. (2017). Framing Sukkot: Tradition and Transformation in Jewish Vernacular Architecture. Indiana University Press: Bloomington.
5. Brand, A. L. and C. Miller. (2020). "Tomorrow I'll be at the Table: Black Geographies and Urban Planning," in the *Journal of Planning Literature*, 35(4): 460-474.
6. Cronon, William. (1991). "A Place for Stories: Nature, History, Narrative,"
7. hooks, bell. (1990) "Homeplace: A Site of Resistance", chapter in *Yearning: Race, Gender, and Cultural Politics*. Boston, MA: South End Press.
8. hooks, bell. (2010). *Teaching Critical Thinking*. Routledge: New York City.

9. Huttenhoff, Michelle (in collaboration with SPUR and Gehl). (2021). Coexistence in Public Space: Engagement Tools for Creating Shared Spaces in Places with Homelessness.
10. Jellicoe, Geoffrey and Susan. (1975). *The Landscape of Man: Shaping the Environment from Prehistory to Present*. New York City: Viking Press.
11. Mbembe, A. (2015). “Decolonizing Knowledge and the Question of the Archive,” *Aula magistral proferida*.
12. Rojas, James. (2014). Latino Vernacular: Latino Spatial and Cultural Values Transform the American Single-Family House and Street. APA, Northern California Section.
13. Rothstein, Richard. (2017). *The Color of Law*. New York: Liveright Publishing.
14. Sandercock, L. (1998). *Making the Invisible Visible: A Multicultural Planning History,* Berkeley: University of California Press.
15. Solnit, Rebecca. (2019). *Whose Story Is This? Old Conflicts, New Chapters*. Chicago: Haymarket Books.
16. Wordell, Alexi. (2021). The Power of Place: A Comparative Case Study of Placemaking and Urban Growth Tactics in Oakland, California. Presentation.

**Appendix C: Collective Course Evaluation Responses**

| Identity Statement | # of Students that Agreed with Statement (33 total responses) | Percentage of Students that Agrees with Statements (rounded to nearest hundredth) |
|---|---|---|
| *My understanding of 'sustainability' has changed* | 19 | 58% |
| *I have a new set of tools for communicating my understanding of a site* | 23 | 70% |
| *I employed all five of my senses in this course* | 20 | 61% |
| *I felt supported in this course* | 27 | 82% |
| *The projects I created in this class are reflective of my identity* | 24 | 73% |
| *In this course I learned that arts and creative expression can be integrated into environmental design* | 20 | 61% |
| *My lived experiences were recognized as expert knowledge in this course* | 18 | 55% |
| *I learned how to tell the built environment in new ways* | 22 | 67% |
| *I felt empowered in this course* | 25 | 76% |
| *The projects I created in this class are reflective of my values* | 21 | 64% |
| *I felt a sense of belonging in this class* | 19 | 58% |
| *I was encouraged to explore new narratives, methods, and practices in this course* | 20 | 61% |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| *I learned how to read the built environment in new ways* | 25 | 76% |
| *My understanding of 'housing' has changed* | 24 | 73% |