

UW//LA THESIS + GROUP PROJECT CAPSTONE PRESENTATIONS

TUESDAY 5.6.2025 | GOULD GALLERY

10:20-11:20 A.M.

GRACE BRENNAN [MLA] + JESSIKA GILL [MLA]

RIVERFRONT REVIVAL: INFORMAL SETTLEMENTS LEADING CHANGE THROUGH DESIGN IN KATHMANDU

GROUP PROJECT ADVISORS: BEN SPENCER, JULIE PARRETT

Informal settlements in the Kathmandu Valley face forced eviction, informality, and severe flooding from the Bagmati River. This project explores how community-driven design and nature-based solutions can counter displacement strategies targeting informal settlements. In collaboration with the Society for the Preservation of Shelters and Habitation Nepal, we aim to center informal settlement resident's voices using participatory design methods. Through community workshops, we have co-created design alternatives that align with the community's needs and appeal to governmental goals. Our final outputs include a booklet that illustrates community designs, documents a workshop process for training, analyzes ecological conditions of the Bagmati River, and provides methodologies for improving river health and reducing flooding. Documentation will be provided to the community, government, and a number of stakeholders.

11:15 AM – 12:15 PM

PEIYAO XIAO [MLA]

VISUALIZATION FOR COASTAL SCIENCE COMMUNICATION: A CASE STUDY OF GRAYLAND PLAINS SHORELINE

THESIS COMMITTEE: CELINA BALDERAS GUZMÁN (CHAIR), DANIEL ABRAMSON

In the context of the climate crisis, scientific data plays a critical role in informing decision-making and driving action from policymakers and the public. Effective visualization is essential for translating complex data into persuasive narratives that enhance environmental science communication. Landscape architecture, with its foundation in environmental science, aesthetic design, data interpretation, and community engagement, can act as an intermediary at the science-policy interface. Moreover, emerging technologies, such as interactive web design, offer new opportunities to visualize scientific data dynamically across temporal and spatial dimensions for more impactful communication. This thesis explores science communication from a landscape architecture perspective, utilizing web-based media to address the challenges of visualizing coastal science. It synthesizes visualization theories to guide the design process and applies them to a case study on coastal dynamics in the Grayland Plains, demonstrating how visualization strategies can enhance the communication of complex coastal processes.

1:00-1:45 PM

CAMILLE FOREST [MLA]

FROM LEVEES TO LIVING LANDSCAPES: HOW MAPPING INFLUENCES FLOODPLAIN ADAPTATION ON THE NOOKSACK RIVER

THESIS COMMITTEE: CELINA BALDERAS GUZMAN (CHAIR), KEN YOCOM, POLLY OLSEN

My thesis explores equitable floodplain management through community-engaged research with the Floodplain Integrated Planning (FLIP) team in Whatcom County, in collaboration with the Nooksack Indian Tribe. Focusing on the Nooksack River and its floodplain, I examine how integrating diverse ways of knowing - including Indigenous knowledge - into socio-ecological mapping can support emerging integrated governance structures. Through interviews, value planning charrettes, and long-term relationship building, I apply systems analysis to illuminate connections between people and the ecological systems they rely on. This mapping supports community dialogue around relationships with land, water, and one another - critical considerations for successful, long-term, and adaptive integrated floodplain management.

1:55-2:40 PM

CLELIE FIELDING [MLA/MUP]

**TEMPORARY TACTICS FOR RADICAL SHADE: CATALYZING RAPID INTERVENTIONS FOR
EXTREME URBAN HEAT IN SEATTLE**

THESIS CO-CHAIRS: LYNNE MANZO, DYLAN STEVENSON

Extreme urban heat is the deadliest extreme weather event, and one of the most glaring indicators of the human-driven climate crisis. Climate predictions point to increased extreme heat events, underlining the need for immediate action. This thesis explores how tactical urbanism, a method for testing ideas through inexpensive, nimble, and temporary installations, can provide short term relief and inform long term solutions for urban heat in the public realm. Drawing on precedents and case studies, this project focuses on areas in Seattle that experience the most severe urban heat, proposing tactical interventions to address inequities in shade and cooling resources.

2:50-3:35 PM

KATHERINE MAGEE [MLA/MUP]

**THE FUTURE IN RUINS: LEVERAGING PRINCIPLES OF PRESERVATION TO RECLAIM VACANT BUILDINGS
AS PUBLIC SPACE IN DOWNTOWN SEATTLE**

THESIS CO-CHAIRS: DANIEL WINTERBOTTOM, DYLAN STEVENSON

Vacant buildings, deteriorating infrastructure, and shrinking public realms are symptoms of ongoing pandemic-era challenges and underfunded downtowns, contributing to broader crises of human disconnection and declining ecological networks. This thesis explores how an expanded approach to preservation – which moves beyond architectural integrity, integrating strategic deconstruction and material reuse – offers an opportunity to transform Seattle's unreinforced masonry "ruins" into community-rooted public greenspaces. By reconceiving preservation as a dynamic, community-driven practice rather than static artifact-guarding, the project imagines new typologies of built-natural infrastructure that balance heritage, sustainability, and human use – addressing the need for meaningful public space, strengthening community connections, and prioritizing climate resilience, toward a more adaptable, sustainable future.

3:45-4:30 PM

CONSTANTINE CHRISAFIS [MUP/MLA]

**CAFES AND KIEZBLOCKS: PATTERNS OF AND POLICIES FOR OUTDOOR DINING IN BERLIN AND
SEATTLE**

THESIS CO-CHAIRS: JAN WHITTINGTON, JULIE JOHNSON

Berlin's Kiezblocks and Seattle's "café streets" share a common ambition of reclaiming streets for people, but operate through distinct governance models and policy frameworks. Berlin's Kiezblocks are resident-driven initiatives to calm traffic and repurpose streets for business and public use, whereas Seattle's café streets emerged from Business Improvement Area (BIA) efforts and city programs to expand outdoor dining during COVID-19. This thesis examines how each negotiates outdoor dining as civic space, how they blend public-private funding (hybrid infrastructure) for street infrastructure, and what regulatory mechanisms enable or constrain them.

4:40-5:40 PM

CHRIS COPELAND [MLA] + SARAH CHU [MLA]

4TH PLAY: A TOOLKIT FOR DESIGNING PLAY LANDSCAPES

GROUP PROJECT ADVISOR: VINCENT JAVET

Cities are largely delineated and designed for adults, relegating public places for children—like playgrounds and schools—to the margins. The design of cities has therefore historically limited children's agency and equity in the public realm. In a time of climate change, divisive social issues, and uncertainty, the 4th Play Toolkit provides a design framework which expands on the limited benefits which play spaces provide. Play landscapes can demarginalize space, benefit community, and provide play opportunity for all ages. Through research, mapping, and landscape interventions, we want to reframe the design of play in landscape architecture.

UW//LA THESIS + GROUP PROJECT CAPSTONE PRESENTATIONS

WEDNESDAY 5.28.2025 | GOULD 102

10:00 – 11:00 AM

ELLIE ANDERSON [MLA]

IDENTIFYING AND CHARACTERIZING NATURALLY OCCURRING RETIREMENT COMMUNITIES IN KING COUNTY, WASHINGTON

APPLIED RESEARCH CONSORTIUM ADVISORS: JULIE JOHNSON (LA), ANA PINTO DA SILVA (ARC)

The burden of housing and care costs leaves 85% of adults age 75+ who live alone in the Seattle-Tacoma-Bellevue area unable to afford an assisted living facility (Joint Center for Housing Studies, 2024). Leveraging NORCs, communities with 50%+ residents age 55+, offers an opportunity to support aging in community, which emphasizes connections to the social networks and services needed for a person to continue living in their community. Through mapping, site walks, surveys, and interviews, this research identifies and characterizes NORCs in King County, Washington.