

LEARNING

TO

ACT



A SYLLABUS



"Utopia is on the horizon. When I walk two steps, it takes two steps back. I walk ten steps and it is ten steps further away. What is utopia for? **It is for this, for walking.**"

- *Eduardo Galeano*

"The academy is not paradise. **But learning is a place where paradise can be created.** The classroom, with all its limitations, remains a location of possibility. In that field of possibility we have the opportunity to labor for freedom, to demand of ourselves and our comrades, an openness of mind and heart that allows us to race reality even as we collectively imagine ways to move beyond boundaries, to transgress. **This is education as the practice of freedom.**"

- *bell hooks*

This proposal takes cues from The Syllabus Project, which imagines how a syllabus can function beyond an administrative necessity and instead as a creative tool that allows us to:

i. present what we feel is important for others to experience or consume;

ii. group items together in ways that shade and refine their meaning;

iii. apply a conceptual or idiosyncratic approach to the syllabus form;

iv. develop rogue pedagogies.

Right now, the prevailing pedagogy at the University of Texas School of Architecture (UTSOA) is one that has a **marked disconnection from land, climate, and our collective agency in designing a shared world**. Students come to the design field eager to address the compounding crises of climate apartheid¹—housing, displacement, pollution, habitat loss, species extinction, disaster response—the list goes on—yet are left wanting, facing instead a system that fails to provide students and professors with the frameworks necessary for empowered action as designers.

Transforming pedagogy to meet this demand is no small task, and there is no expectation for anyone to have all the answers, *any* answers—how can there be answers? We have never been here before.

We need to start walking together, and in doing so, finding answers. This is the responsibility and the work of all designers of the built environment in a world increasingly designed for death.²

This work will require a fierce commitment to collective action and an equally fierce unlearning of powerlessness. As such, this syllabus is intended to be a ***rogue pedagogy*** for learning how to act, to be used at the outset of students' educations across the disciplines within the School of Architecture.

¹ I use the term “climate apartheid” in place of “climate change” to describe a *designed* climate breakdown, one in which the wealthy are able to insulate themselves from the crisis, while the poor (in particular, Black, brown, and indigenous communities) are forced to bear the worst effects. For more: “Climate Apartheid” by Grace Blakely

² Again, our planet is not merely *becoming unlivable*, as is often said; rather, we live in a world *designed for death*. I'm not interested in passivity in language. I'm interested in condemnation. For more: *Necropolitics* by Achille Mbembe

***IT'S NOT YOUR
FAULT BUT IT IS
HAPPENING
RIGHT NOW
AND YOU'RE
ALIVE RIGHT
NOW AND
YOU'RE ALIVE
RIGHT NOW AND
YOU'RE ALIVE
RIGHT NOW***

In “Beyond Competency,” Peggy Deamer states that “the architectural academy is guilty of producing architects who might be competent, but are not effective in putting their training into socially relevant use” (p. 49).

She is not alone in grieving the perceived powerlessness and social irrelevance of the design professions. The causes of this dejection are, of course, multi-fold:

“politically, a neoliberal economy that makes architectural design only available to the rich and our dependence on the rich to commission our work; institutionally, a profession regulated by states that have little understanding of what ‘competency’ in architecture implies; educationally, schools that teach to an aesthetic imaginary; ideologically, a subjective image of cool heroicism. The multi-dimensional nature of the problem results in a sense of impotence, a belief that pushing for change in one area of this tragedy will run up against another and that taking those on is doomed to failure.” (p. 50)

In response, Deamer calls for a movement to build worker power and collective agency through unions and cooperatives in the design fields, as well as a discipline-wide commitment to climate justice as the basis of all architectural work. I have spent years organizing in the climate movement, and I, too, see this potential—or, rather, necessity.

This syllabus is seeks to marry some theories and practices of popular education, collective liberation, and land-based learning, in an initial attempt to rethink what it’s going to take to build a discipline that prepares students to take empowered action in the built environment. That is, how to act.

HOW TO ACT

How indeed?

Unit 1	BEGINNING	p. 1
Unit 2	LANDING	p. 3
Unit 3	FEELING	p. 5
Unit 4	LEARNING	p. 7
Unit 5	POWER MAPPING	p. 9
Unit 6	COLLECTIVIZING	p. 11

These units are not time-bound; take as long as you need. They are all present participle verbs.

Each unit is broken into 4 actions—absorb, move, collective reflect, and self-reflect—which can be completed in any order within the unit.

These actions are meant to call attention to the fact that modalities of instruction are a pedagogical tool just as much as curriculum itself is. In order to learn how to act, we must engage the wholeness of our bodies, minds, and spirits in relationship with each other and land.

Some units reference supplemental activities. Guidelines for these activities can be found at the end of the syllabus.

HOW TO ACT

Absorb **(read, watch, listen)**

*We're used to this in the academy.
Good stuff!*

Collective Reflect **(chat, question, cry)**

*We're used to this too, kinda. "Discussion."
But jeez, it doesn't have to be so stilted.*

Move **(go, make, do)**

*Get out from behind the desks!
Use your hands, feet, bodies!
Up and at 'em!*

Self-Reflect **(draw, write, sing in the mirror)**

*Go deeper than you think you ought to.
This all matters to our lives, quite a lot.*

UNIT 1 - BEGINNING

Learning begins with an acknowledgement of beginning. Beginning is beautiful! There is a true richness to the assemblage of people at UTSOA from different backgrounds—cultural, geographic, academic, experiential—even for students with a design background, it's a new space, a new time, a new program. We're all here to begin again.

How can beginning act as a re-examination of what we value, how we want to design, how we want to act? How can we relish that beginning means unlearning as much as learning—a key foundation to unlearning powerlessness? How can we use beginning to form shared identity and stake at UTSOA?

“things are not getting worse, they are getting uncovered. we must hold each other tight and continue to pull back the veil.”

- adrienne marie brown

“In the beginning is the scream. We scream. When we write or when we read, it is easy to forget that the beginning is not the word, but the scream.”

- John Holloway, *The Scream*” (p. 1)

“The freedom realized through flight and refusal is the freedom to imagine and create an elsewhere in the here; a present future beyond the imaginative and territorial bounds of colonialism. It is a performance of other worlds, an embodied practice of flight”

- Martineau and Ritskes, “Fugitive Indigeneity” (p. IV)

UNIT 1 - BEGINNING

Absorb
(read, watch, listen)

Collective Reflect
(chat, question, cry)

Move
(go, make, do)

Self-Reflect
(draw, write, sing in the mirror)

UNIT 2 - LANDING

We turn to land-based learning, “a term used to describe pedagogic models where curricular material is derived from particular landscapes and informed by the learners’ lived experiences,” to engage with land, climate, and shared world more meaningfully, compassionately, and intellectually rigorously. We must discard violent colonial notions of land as property or resource if we have any hope to design responsibility.

“...in essence, the context is the curriculum, and land, Aki, is the context.”

- Leanne Betasamosake Simpson, *As We Always Have Done* (p. 155)

“I suggest that when land informs reflective practice, pedagogy and storying, everything starts with and returns to the land, self is not/ cannot be set apart from the interconnected and interdependent relationships embodied in land. Storying is a discovery and creation of self in relationship; it is a process embedded in an examination of past experiences in relation to present and future actions. If in fact we teach what we know in relation to who we are, then it follows that we must know our stories. In order to know our stories we must highlight the role of ongoing and reflexive inquiry into self and context in relation to land.”

- Sandra D. Styres, “Land as First Teacher” (p. 718-719)

“To what extent are you numb to the pain of the Land, of the planet? To what extent can you feel it?

If your body is also Land, and the Land is suffering, how does the suffering of the Land manifest in your body?

What is your relationship with pain? In Western societies, pain is seen as something we are terrified of and should run away from... How can we change our relationship with pain so that we can experience pain as an important teacher?

Acknowledging complicity in harm can be painful. How can this acknowledgement be mobilized away from guilt and shame, as the basis of visceral responsibility?”

- Cash Ahenakew

UNIT 2 - LANDING

Absorb **(read, watch, listen)**

- **Article: "Land as First Teacher"**
Sandra D. Styres
- **Podcast: "Living WITH Earth Rather Than ON Earth with Tiokasin Ghosthorse"**
Earth Charter Podcast

Collective Reflect **(chat, question, cry)**

- **I Am the Center activity (p. 15)**
- *How is "land" defined in land-based learning?*
- *What is a land acknowledgement?*

Move **(go, make, do)**

- **One Question Scroll (p. 16)**

Self-Reflect **(draw, write, sing in the mirror)**

- **Beyond the Statement: Personal Land Acknowledgement (p. 17)**

UNIT 3 - FEELING

Curiosity is an emotional experience, learning is an emotional experience, teaching is an emotional experience. Design is an emotional experience. The near ubiquity of design student anxiety, overwhelm, and fear is obviously an emotional experience—and indication of a dysfunctional pedagogy.

How can we engage our bodies, spirits, and emotions in academic settings in a way that feels joyful and purposeful? How can this engagement enrich design?

UNIT 3 - FEELING

Absorb **(read, watch, listen)**

- **Chapter: "A Pedagogy of Discomfort"**
in *Feeling Power: Emotions and Education* by Megan Boler
- **Poem: "Tired"**
Langston Hughes

Collective Reflect **(chat, question, cry)**

- *Boler describes the way that emotions define how one chooses to see or not see. How have you experienced this in your life?*
- *Have you experienced the binary split between rationality and emotions? How so?*
- **Collective stretching**

Move **(go, make, do)**

- Make something discomfoting but necessary, pin it up in the hallway, stand next to it, scream

Self-Reflect **(draw, write, sing in the mirror)**

- *When was a time you felt intense emotions in an academic setting?*
 - *What happened in your body?*
 - *How did you respond?*
 - *Did you feel supported? Alienated? Embarrassed?*
- *What is your relationship with you emotions?*
 - *Do you cry a lot? Avoid crying?*
 - *Do you get angry easily? Avoid anger?*
- *How do you share your emotions with others?*

UNIT 4 - LEARNING

Too often still does design education reify hierarchical structures—the master teacher pours into the empty vessel of the student.

In organizing pedagogy, the word “container” is used to describe when groups of learners come together. It is helpful to think of each new instance of students and teachers actively forming a distinct, flexible *container*—bounded not by course requirements or even rooms, but by collective contract with each other, time, and land. Within these containers, the lived experiences of both students and teachers are valued, and new norms, visions, dialogues, and paths of action can be shared.

“Despite the urgent emphasis on climate change in our society, design education continues to evolve ways of teaching and learning that are universalizing, offering dated and obsolete outcomes that fail to interrogate what change means. This authority unconsciously suggests that the classroom belongs more to the professor than the students and more to the past than the future. This tendency only reinforces cycles of exclusion that unwittingly seem to entrench competitiveness into our practices. If our suspicion is correct, what needs to change first is the coercive power that privileges hierarchical relationships in the classroom, marginalizing some forms of knowledge over others, such as technical expertise over lived experience. Our simplest tools for sharing knowledge are commodified beyond recognition.”

-Rosetta Elkin & Phoebe Lickwar, “Everything Change: Instructions for Land-Based Learning”

“Ring the bells that still can ring
Forget your perfect offering
There is a crack, a crack in everything
That's how the light gets in”

- Leonard Coen, “Anthem”

“...learning is a place where paradise can be created.”

- bell hooks, *Teaching to Transgress* (p. 12)

UNIT 4 - LEARNING

Absorb **(read, watch, listen)**

- **Book: Teaching to Transgress,**
pg. 1-45
bell hooks

Collective Reflect **(chat, question, cry)**

- What does hooks mean when she talks about “engaged pedagogy?”
- How do you take responsibility for your learning experience?
- Do you feel responsible for your classmates’ experiences? Your teachers’?

Move **(go, make, do)**

- Selected activities from “Everything Change: Instructions for Land-Based Learning” (p. 19)

Self-Reflect **(draw, write, sing in the mirror)**

- Reflect on your best academic experiences
 - How did they make you feel?
 - What did you learn?
 - What didn’t you learn?
- Do the same for your worst experiences

UNIT 5 - POWER MAPPING

As designers of the built environment, we need to have a keen awareness of power. Power is understood by different people in different, sometimes contradictory, ways, but it is agreed that power lies at the heart of human relationships and the organizations of societies. When we act to create change, we are actually trying to change power equations.

“There’s really no such thing as the ‘voiceless’. There’s only the deliberately silenced, or the preferably unheard.”

- Arundhati Roy

“If we reject binary ideas about ‘people with power’ and ‘people without’, and instead look at the dynamic ways that power flows through and between us all, this creates a possibility. Power isn’t something to be parceled out or shared, it is exercised. So, every interaction or action in our daily lives is an opportunity to resist or transform power – even if only in a small way.”

- Smith et. al, *It’s All About Power*

“Power mapping is a visual organizing tool for making sense of power networks and structures, revealing hidden and opaque decision-making processes, measuring the distributions of influence and authority, within a specific context or organization. It is a tool that is used by organizing groups to identify strategies for impact. Mapping power collaboratively enhances organizing discussions, minimizes blind spots, and supports collective decision-making... In architecture education, it may be used as a pedagogical device—for students to visualize where power lies in the project scenarios around which they are designing, for faculty to plan curricular changes, or for students and faculty to understand decision-making hierarchies in the university.”

- Day et. al, *The Organizer’s Guide to Architecture Education* (p. 13)

“You have to make your own map.”

- Joy Harjo

UNIT 5 - POWER MAPPING

Absorb *(read, watch, listen)*

- **Poem: A Map to the Next World**
Joy Harjo
- **Guide: It's All About Power, pg. 26-40**
Smith et. al
- **Chapters: "Introduction" and "How-To: Power Mapping" in The Organizer's Guide to Architecture Education**
Day et. al

Collective Reflect *(chat, question, cry)*

- **Chair Power: Three Types of Power activity (p. 20)**
- How do Smith, Day, and Harjo define power?
- How has your understanding of power shifted?

Move *(go, make, do)*

- Power map UTSOA following the "How-To" guide in The Organizer's Guide to Architecture Education
- Create a three-dimensional artistic representation of power, however you see fit

Self-Reflect *(draw, write, sing in the mirror)*

- Think about a time you felt powerless, whether that was a positive or negative experience.
 - Describe the experience in as much detail as you can.
 - What happened? Where were you? Who were you with? How did you feel – before, during and after?
 - What does this experience teach you about power?

UNIT 6 - COLLECTIVIZING

Nearly everything in American life, including design pedagogy, teaches us individualism. Our cultural attachment to individualism blinds us to the reality of interdependence with each other, land, and all living things on the planet.

What helps us to develop, collectively, the courage to see things differently?

“Pedagogical strategies must push beyond the usual Western conceptions of the liberal individual. Instead, the process of “becoming” may be understood as an undertaking that is both

(1) collective: ‘who we feel ourselves to be; how we see ourselves and want to see ourselves, is inextricably intertwined with others...

(2) flexible: leading to a willingness to reconsider and undergo possible transformation of our self-identity in relation to others and to history.”

- Megan Boler, *Feeling Power: Emotions and Education*, (p. 178-9)

“We need to shape better practices of responsibly and memory for our placement in relation to the past, our implication in the present, and our potential creation of different futures... To say we live in compromised times is to say that although most people aim to not cause suffering, destruction, and death, simply by living...we implicate ourselves in terrible effects on ecosystems both near and far from us. We are inescapably entwined and entangled with others, even when we cannot track or directly perceive this entanglement.”

- Alexis Shotwell, *Against Purity* (p. 8)

“And we will have to give up our defenses, our time-worn defenses of dissociation and numbness, as well as those of rage and revenge. We have to be able to care, even when it seems impossible because caring would destroy us. We have to believe that we will survive each other, because there is something waiting for us when the ice melts.”

- Kai Cheng Thom, *I Hope We Choose Love*

UNIT 6 - COLLECTIVIZING

Absorb **(read, watch, listen)**

- **Poem: "Wild Geese"**
Mary Oliver
- **The Architecture Lobby Manifesto**
- **Podcast: A Just Transition For The Building Sector w/ Architecture Lobby**
- **Article: "Beyond Competency"**
Peggy Deamer

Collective Reflect **(chat, question, cry)**

- In what ways do you feel like the student and faculty body at UTSOA is a collective? In what ways is it not? What would you like it to be?
- In teams of 2, write a collective values statement. Merge into a team of 4, and write another statement. Repeat at 8, 16.

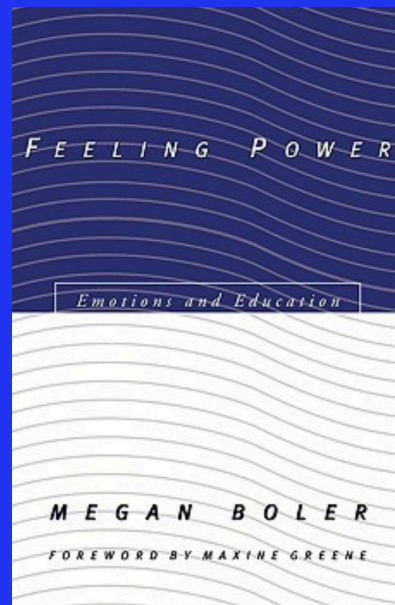
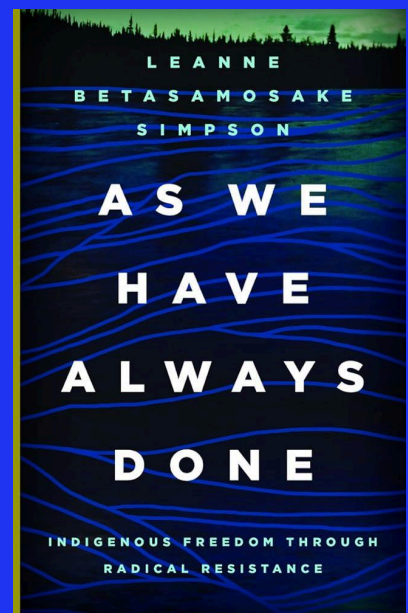
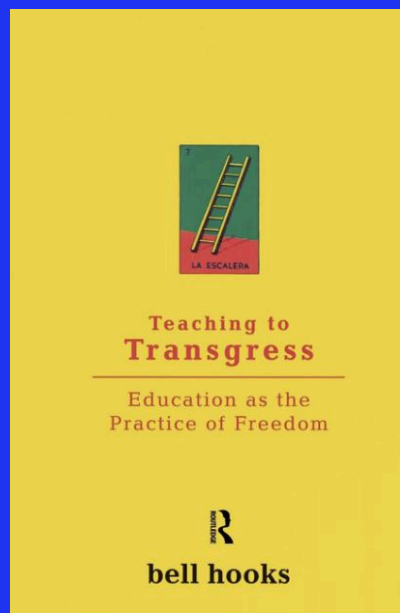
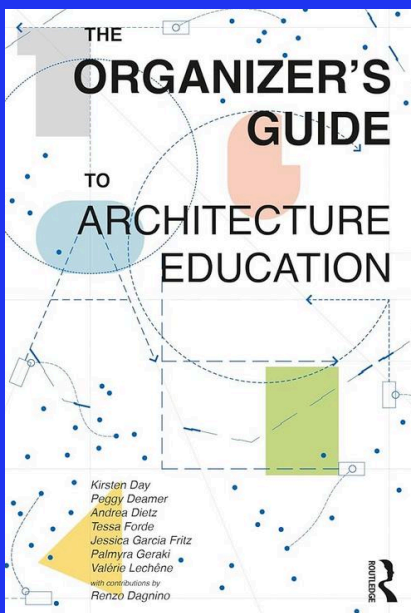
Move **(go, make, do)**

Self-Reflect **(draw, write, sing in the mirror)**

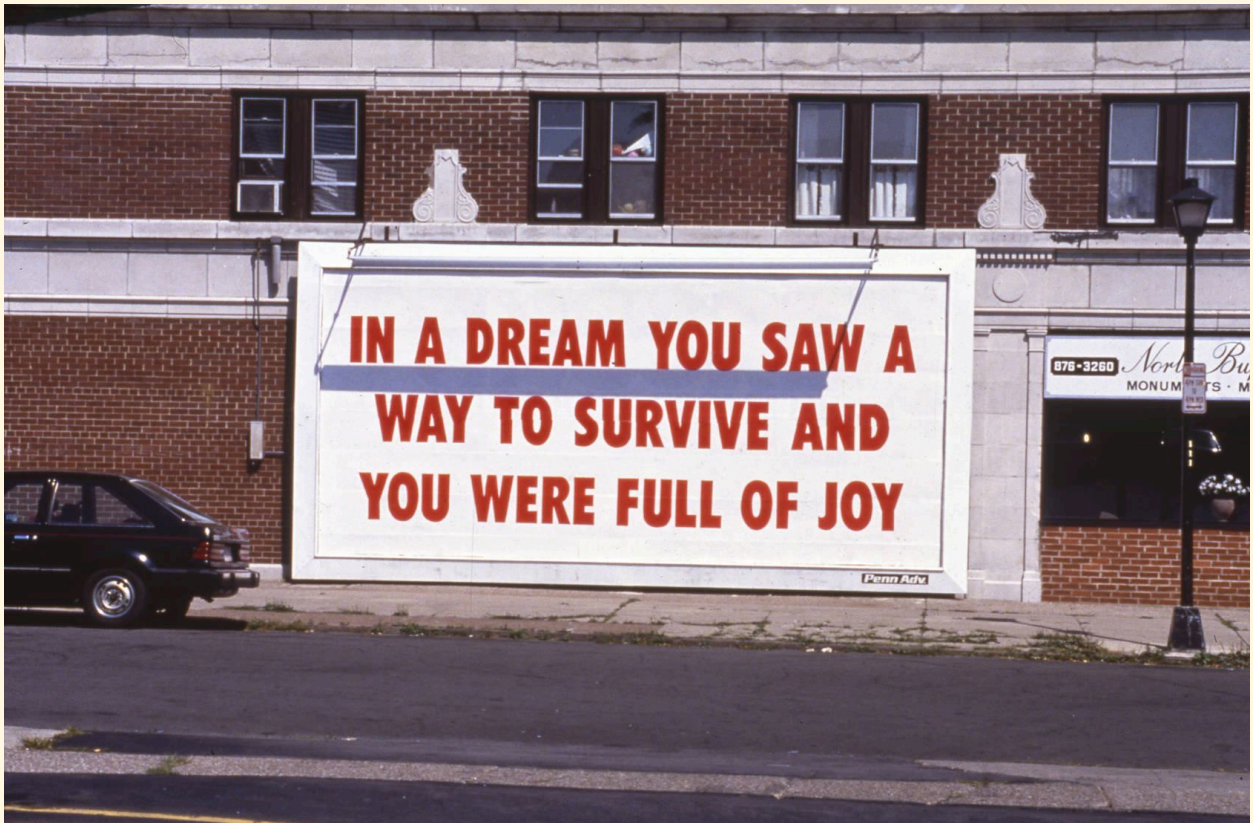
- Reflect on your relationship to the collective. What collectives have you been in before (sports teams, religious groups, theater performances, etc)?
- How do you feel in a collective? Do you feel supported and connected? Is it awkward or uncomfortable?
- Do you feel like you belong? Why or why not?

MORE MORE MORE!

I'VE PULLED A LOT FROM THESE BOOKS, BUT DO YOURSELF A FAVOR AND READ THEM ALL THE WAY THROUGH! GOOD NEWS: READING IS LOW-CARBON WORK!

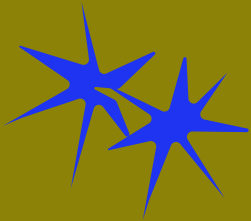


***THANKS!
GOODNIGHT!
GOOD MORNING!
I BELIEVE IN YOU!***



Mural by Jenny Holzer





SUPPLEMENTAL ACTIVITIES

I am the Center

The work: To get to know each other / To learn where each other are literally and figuratively “coming from”

1. Participants stand up and clear out any mess/chairs from the floor space. Physically place yourself in the center of the room and declare, “Where I am standing is...” and finish with the location of the training (Bangkok, Philadelphia, Accra, etc.). Explain that the ground in the room is something like a map of the world. You might have the group point out the directions (North/South/East/West).
2. Tell participants their task is to position themselves around the room on where they are from. Don't guide participants too much, since part of the challenge is for the group to develop their own mapping of space and begin to turn to each other as resources.
3. After participants have arranged themselves, go around the room and give everyone a chance to give their name and where they are coming from. As you walk around, help the group notice any large clumps or small clumps. This is a great time to acknowledge differences existing in the room.
4. No debrief is needed on this tool, although you might want to give people a chance to notice any feeling level expression. I've used this tool as a kind of diversity speak-out. For example, I used it where a percentage of the group was Indigenous peoples who have been forced all their lives to live under United States' labels (“South Dakota”, “Alaska”, etc.). They passionately spoke about their experiences -- it gave them a chance to be seen and more fully understood -- and a chance for other participants to become more conscious of the margins of society.

One Question Scroll

“One Question” is a 90 foot long, 6 inch high scroll with illustrated scenes of different towns, cities, and landscapes. Each scene depicts a real-world instance of environmental injustice that happened in the USA and Canada between 1992-2012: floods, gas leaks, health crisis, militarization, droughts—but also mass protest, civil disobedience, community education, rebuilding, regrowth.

The scroll is passed around a circle of people as the song “One Question” is sung and hummed (lyrics below). Watch performances here: <https://www.rachelschragis.com/one-question-unity-scroll>

The work: Create a scroll

1. Everyone make or acquire a 5 ft x 6 in strip of paper or fabric
2. Paint/draw/stitch/collage scenes from your home(s), filling the full 5 feet
 - a. What did your house(s) look like? Feel like?
 - b. The built environment?
 - c. The landscape?
 - d. The sky?
 - e. The water?
 - f. The people?
 - g. What parts were beautiful? What parts were ugly?
 - h. What parts were hopeful? What parts were devastating?
3. Connect everyone’s segments together into one long scroll. Use tape, glue, thread, anything.
4. Stand in a circle and pass the scroll around. Hum and sing “One Question,” if comfortable.
5. When finished, hang it up! Stretch it out in the hallway, weave it between desks, weigh it down outside and line the sidewalk.



[Chorus]

There is one question with a thousand answers
Or perhaps only one answer to a thousand things to ask
But hey, don't you know, there's no need to feel dejected
Because all of our grievances are connected

There are some places I've been that you have not been to
There are some places I've been that you have been to, too
There are some places you've been that I have not been to
There are some places that we have not been to yet

[Chorus]

Everywhere I go, I see a different situation
But everywhere I go, I see the same thing
Everywhere we are, we're in a different situation
But everywhere we are, we know the same thing

[Chorus]

Beyond the Statement

Land acknowledgements do not exist in a past tense, or historical context: rather the words form an active engagement, and deserve to be designed, edited and altered as a process. The longstanding history that enables you to reside on the land is an inspiration to seek an understanding of your own place within history.

There is a Native American and Indigenous Studies Program at University of Texas, Austin. You can find a lot of references and readings there, but one such resource is their land acknowledgment:

We would like to acknowledge that we are meeting on the Indigenous lands of Turtle Island, the ancestral name for what now is called North America. Moreover, we would like to acknowledge the Alabama-Coushatta, Caddo, Carrizo/Comecrudo, Coahuiltecan, Comanche, Kickapoo, Lipan Apache, Tonkawa and Ysleta Del Sur Pueblo, and all the American Indian and Indigenous Peoples and communities who have been or have become a part of these lands and territories in Texas.

Any design of the built environment is land-based and place-based. Yet, design is caught up in the entanglements of a highly globalized trade system that relies on extractive forces. The industry of extraction takes raw materials, including oil, coal, gold, cobalt, tin, copper and other minerals from the earth. Such industries are the product of a centuries long, ongoing colonial process. As a derivative model of Imperialism, external powers pacified the indigenous lands of Turtle Island under the terms of 'settler colonialism', which refers to how nation, race, and class conflicts coverage in the transformation of land into property.

By the time of European invasion, Indigenous peoples had occupied and shaped every part of the Americas, established extensive trade networks & roads, and sustained their population by adapting specific natural environments. The Americas were not wild barrens, or unoccupied expanses—rather, thousands of tribes had adapted the landscape to suit human ends through fire regimes, agricultural customs, huge game parks, and selective forest clearing. The landscape seemed vast and unbroken to settlers only because borders were not drawn, resources were not tallied, administrative certificates were unwritten, and private limits were not constructed.

The pathway to learning begins when indicators of colonial conduct are called out. What this means is that because we are part of a settler society, it is very hard to see another other kind of lifestyle, or culture. The abstractions of technology make it even more difficult to appreciate these patterns. To help change the terms of engagement, this assignment seeks to enlighten, not accuse. It seeks to highlight how the territorial grabs of the past might be rectified in the future, without being forgotten. And it seeks to do so, one person, and one relation at a time.

Beyond the Statement

Now consider the following land acknowledgment by Kiowa author, N. Scott Momaday:

When we dance the earth trembles. When our steps fall on the earth we feel the shudder of life beneath us, and the earth feels the beating of our hearts, and we become one with the earth. We shall not sever ourselves from the earth. We must chant our being, and we must dance in time with the rhythms of the earth. We must keep the earth.

For architectural education to be pertinent and meaningful, it must continuously emphasize the importance of understanding our practices, how they relate to the earth. In this course, we can do so in such a way as to emphasize the ways in which we learn as a community. Can we change from conqueror of the environment to a member of the environment? We enrich and deepen our understanding of design by acknowledging and studying the lives of our relatives, near and distant, human and non-human.

The work: Craft a statement

1. Take note of the **land you are on** by asking yourself:

- What is the geologic composition of the land under my house, room or feet?
 - How specific can I be about my response?
 - When does it change? Does granite shift to clay, am I on a floodplain?
- Where do I get my water from? What watershed do I live in?
- What plants grow around my home?
- Who are the Indigenous people local to my area? What do I know and what can I learn about their cultures?

2. Take note of the **land you were raised on** by asking yourself:

- How many cities, states or homes nurtured me?
- Where do I feel a sense of belonging?
- Can I identify a stream, desert, forest, tree of my past homes and name it?
- Where is my heritage? Is it traceable to place?

3. Create a **personal land-acknowledgment**, considering:

- The link between where you live now and the lands that supported your life.
- The long-term ecological health and human survival with which you identify.
- Your orientation towards design in relation to land
- You may write, draw, film --- anything that helps you understand your own place within land and history

Modified activity from the Spring 2025 session of Land-Based Learning: Theory and Practice, taught by Phoebe Lickwar and Rosetta Elkin

Everything Change: Land-Based Learning

The work: Learn from the land

The following activities are sourced from “Everything Change: Instructions in Land-Based Learning,” a booklet developed by Rosetta Elkin, Phoebe Lickwar, and students at Pratt Institute, Brooklyn—situated on Lenape land—and the University of Texas at Austin—situated on Coahuiltecanin land. The following is an abridged introductory statement.

“The prompt was simple: How can we strengthen studio-based learning, with land-based learning—and how might that change everything? Throughout the weeks together, we determined that care and compassion were largely absent in studio-based learning, but that it surfaced effortlessly when we were learning together out of doors.

...It turns out that teaching/learning no longer relies on a proficiency with physical materials and real places, but on ever-evolving technologies that trust in functional substitution, abstracting real-world dynamics with a miniaturization of reality. The result is a generation of students that are skilled in how to sell projects, not in how to make them, without the tools to care for what they imagine or create.

As a corrective to learning by proxy, we experimented with a series of land-based guidelines to help expand creativity outside of studio and classroom settings... The first time we met as an expanded class, we agreed to the following ethics that helped change the nature of the classroom:

Dedication to the land

Not sentimental affection, but concrete knowledge of a part of the earth, i.e.: knowing where the water comes from, what kinds of plants flourish there, and what threatens it.

Relate to the past

An expanded appreciation for how life changes, evolves, and adapts across more than human timescales, an understanding of our time on the planet.

Multigenerational sharing

Sharing knowledge across experiences allows ideas to move and shift, so that creativity cannot be owned. If knowledge is held on to, it becomes a commodity, and makes us consumers.

Ordinary kindness

Clarity and honesty with others without hesitation, protect the trust in relationships that land-based learning requires; including space for personal histories.”

08

Find a flowerhead.
Close your eyes and imagine a sudden gust.
Draw at least 5 stages of the flower,
losing its petals to the wind.

“Every politically engaged person should have a garden.”

Arber, Agnes. *The Natural Philosophy of Plant Form*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1950.

* Dungy, Camille T. “Reasons for Gardens.” *Ecotone* (Wilmington, N.C.), vol. 16, no. 1, 2020, pp. 154-58.

31

Take a piece of paper,
and tear a hole in the middle.
Go for a walk with your simple aperture.

Look for planted trees
that grow where we want them to.
Squint to notice details.

Look for spontaneous trees
that grow where they want to.
Squint to notice details.

How do they touch the ground, can you see
roots, where are the lowest branches, do they
grow with or without others?

Through focus,
Find contrast and,
take note.

“Our practices are set apart by how we acknowledge the spatial and temporal differences of other organisms, especially plants.”

* Elkin, Rosetta Sarah. *Plant Life : the Entangled Politics of Afforestation*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2022.

Stone, Christopher D., and Garrett Hardin. *Should Trees Have Standing? Toward Legal Rights for Natural Objects*. Los Altos, CA: W. Kaufmann, 1974.

18

Walk around a large tree with your eyes closed.
Put your hand on the tree,
as you go around, let your hand guide you.
as you go around, let your feet slow you.

As you feel the changes in the crevices, begin to
count your paces in time with the folded texture.

Stop periodically, compare the cadence of your
feet, and the distances of the bark texture.
Repeat.

Invent a numerical code to compare both measures.
Unfold the circular line, using marks, dashes,
and points to draw an interspecies elevation.



Halprin, Lawrence. *Notebooks*, 1959-1971. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1972.

Loupe, Laurence, et al. *Traces of Dance: Drawings and Notations of Choreographers*. Paris: Editions Dis Voir, 1994.

Long, Richard, *Walking in Circles*. New York: George Braziller ; with The South Bank Centre and Anthony d'Offay Gallery, 1991.