

# METHODOLOGY IN LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE AND URBAN DESIGN (5 ECTS)

Course: AR3LA020/AR9230, Spring semester 2016

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## Focus

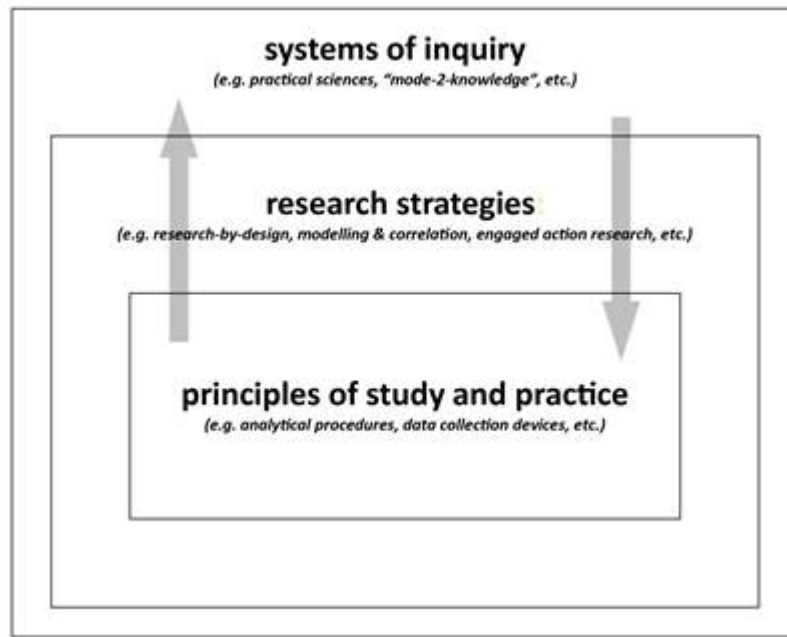
The course provides students with academic knowledge and skills in order to conduct and understand science based research and design in landscape architecture and urban design. The course explores basic research issues and concepts, as well as specific strategies for research and design in the urban landscape and focuses on research methodology and criteria. The course aims at building a research framework for the graduation studio/thesis.

## Overview and structure of the course

The course consists of a *seminar design-related research methodology*, a *workshop methods and techniques* and *writing a methodology paper*. It aims to provide the students with (1) theoretical and practical clues for developing a critical academic attitude towards research and design in landscape architecture and urban design, and (2) in-depth understanding of important theories, methods and techniques in the field, with the focus on design-related research. The course consists of different assignments that deliver material that can be discussed in the group and helps to develop an individual, and knowledge-based design attitude. On one hand it provides some specific methods and techniques for urban design and landscape architecture, and on the other, it provides backgrounds on general academic research tools and criteria. In this respect the course contributes to the development of a research framework for the graduation thesis/project.

During the *seminar* different texts in contemporary theory and practice of landscape architecture and urban design are examined and discussed. These texts are organized and selected around three interrelated topics. It starts by elaborating *Landscape architecture and urban design as practical science* addressing different academic perspectives, critical thinking and criteria for research quality. In *Design thinking in landscape architecture and urban design*, design is put forward as important research strategy elaborating aspects of the design process, creative thinking and the role of drawing. *Approaches in landscape architecture and urban design* addresses fundamental principles of study and practice for design-related research. It considers landscape as a living system (process), as a scale continuum (context), as a 3D-environment (space) and as a palimpsest (history).

Three hands-on *workshops* provide the students with some practical design-related research methods and techniques. The exercises promote the dialogue between academic research and the design practice in landscape architecture. Practitioners and researchers from the field will introduce and guide the students via an assignment through different design-oriented approaches such as the *construction of spatial scenario's*, *strategy of 2 networks* and *research-by-design*.



Nijhuis & Stolk 2012, partial adapted from Groot & Wang 2002

### **Active learning methods and assignments**

Description of active learning methods and assignments that will be used in the course:

*Seminar:* As scheduled there are thematic sessions of three verbal presentations. Three groups of two students prepare and deliver a verbal presentation of 10-15 minutes addressing the assigned text. During the presentation the text will be summarized, analysed, discussed and illustrated with examples. Two other students are asked to prepare questions and give a critical reflection.

*Workshop:* As scheduled there are thematic workshops with an introductory lecture followed by a short assignment focussing on the application of a particular method or technique. The hands-on assignment are elaborated in groups of 2 students and guided by an expert in the field. The outcome serves as tool to evaluate and reflect on the applicability of the method.

*Methodology paper:* Finally, every student writes an methodology paper of at least 3000 words. The student selects, contextualises, analyses/applies and discusses an appropriate design-related research methodology which was discussed during the course or come up with another suitable alternative. The paper reflects in-depth understanding, critical reflection and academic attitude towards design-related research methodology in landscape architecture. This critical reflection will lead to a sharper understanding of their own abilities and knowledge, makes the individual way of working more transparent, and helps to develop on individual attitude in research and design and take position.

## Learning objectives

- 1) Identify landscape architecture and urban design as academic design discipline with its own theories, methods and techniques;
- 2) Discover the use of selected design-related research methods and techniques by employing them in studio relevant exercises;
- 3) Compare and discuss different landscape architecture and urban design-related research strategies and principles of study and practice;
- 4) Select and use suitable design-related research strategies and techniques in a particular context (e.g., graduation project);
- 5) Write a methodology paper exposing in-depth understanding and a reflective attitude towards design-related research strategies and principles of practice.

The introduction lecture addresses LO1, the workshops LO2, the seminars LO3 and the methodology paper LO4 and LO5.

## Criteria and grading

Grading is based on active participation in the seminars (LO3) and workshops (LO2) and delivering a methodology paper (LO4 & LO5). Presence is obligatory, but at least 2 workshops and 3 seminars should be attended in order to effectuate the grade.

The paper is subject to peer review and is criterion-referenced assessed and graded according to the provided evaluation form in appendix 1. The grades are related to the overall judgment of the paper based on the criteria listed in appendix 2.

## Literature

Nijhuis, S. (2014) Reader research methodology in landscape architecture. A selection of papers.  
Delft University of Technology

## Schedule (PM)

Every Friday morning 9:00-12:30

Week 3.2: *Introduction*

Week 3.3: Seminar *Landscape architecture and urban design as practical science*

Week 3.4: Workshop *Construction of spatial scenario's*

Week 3.6: Seminar *Design thinking in landscape architecture and urban design*

Week 3.7: Workshop *Strategy of Two Networks*

Week 3.9: Seminar *Approaches in landscape architecture and urban design I*

Week 4.1: Workshop *Research by design*

Week 4.2: Seminar *Approaches in landscape architecture and urban design II*

Week 4.4: Individual meetings (to be scheduled)

Week 4.5: Individual meetings (to be scheduled)

## APPENDIX 1: EVALUATION FORM

Name student:

Grade:

Title paper:

Date:

### General judgement:

#### [1] Unacceptable

The paper is full of errors and is hardly readable, or the information is fragmented and lacks an appropriate and coherent structure. The paper reflects lacking knowledge on the subject

#### [2] Needs improvement

Enough errors were made to distract the reader, but the reader is able to recognise the involved concepts or principles. The paper exposes knowledge of the subject by listing, describing and combining appropriate principles of design-related research methodology (knowledge telling). However, the paper should become more reflective in nature, relating it to practical issues by way of argument

#### [3] Good

No significant errors were made. The paper reflects a coherent and appropriate structure, while explaining, reviewing, arguing, applying relevant research strategies or principles of practice and exposes initial reflective writing. Your work is usable as a design-related methodology in the design studio and showcases proper knowledge and understanding of the subject

#### [4] Sophisticated

No factual errors were made. Your work will be very useful as design-related research strategy. The paper is reflective in nature and has a coherent and appropriate structure, as well as opens out new ways of looking. It showcases deep understanding by theorising, generalisation, reflection and opening perspectives.

### Specific judgement of important aspects:

	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]
<b>1. Informative and attractive title (5%)</b> The title clearly indicates the content of the paper	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>2. Clear introduction (20%)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- motivation/problem statement/research question</li> <li>- aim of paper</li> <li>- research approach</li> <li>- structure of paper</li> </ul>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>3. Adequacy of analysis / application (25%)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- summary/overview of relevant theory, methods and techniques</li> <li>- theories, methods and theories are chosen well-argued and properly discussed</li> <li>- concepts are sufficiently defined and related to practical issues</li> <li>- theories, methods and techniques are shown to be connected to the research question and are applied correctly</li> </ul>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>4. Use of (academic) references (15%)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- every reference in the text corresponds to an item in the bibliography and vice versa</li> <li>- a sufficient proportion of the literature used consists of scientific articles and books</li> <li>- sources are mentioned wherever necessary</li> <li>- paraphrases and literal quotes are used.</li> </ul>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>5. Clear conclusions (20%)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- follow logically from all the previous material</li> <li>- are clearly linked to the research question in the introduction</li> <li>- are formulated carefully, in accordance with the limitations of the study</li> <li>- are preferably followed by recommendations for further research</li> </ul>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>6. Clarity of presentation (15%)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- writing style</li> <li>- structure</li> <li>- figures and tables (all have a title and a number, all are referred to at least once in the text, if copied, they contain a reference)</li> </ul>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

### Comments:

## APPENDIX 2: GRADING

### Unacceptable

The paper is full of errors and is hardly readable, or the information is fragmented and lacks an appropriate and coherent structure. The paper reflects lacking knowledge on the subject

Grade < 5

### Needs improvement

Enough errors were made to distract the reader, but the reader is able to recognise the involved concepts or principles. The paper exposes knowledge of the subject by listing, describing and combining appropriate principles of design-related research methodology (knowledge telling). However, the paper should become more reflective in nature, relating it to practical issues by way of argument

Grade: 5.5 – 6

### Good

No significant errors were made. The paper reflects a coherent and appropriate structure, while explaining, reviewing, arguing, applying relevant research strategies or principles of practice and exposes initial reflective writing. Your work is usable as a design-related methodology in the design studio and showcases proper knowledge and understanding of the subject

Grade: 7 – 8

### Sophisticated

No factual errors were made. Your work will be very useful as design-related research strategy. The paper is reflective in nature and has a coherent and appropriate structure, as well as opens out new ways of looking. It showcases deep understanding by theorizing, generalization, reflection and opening perspectives

Grade: 8 – 9 (10)