

CLA 1530: Gardens to Read and Visit

Quest 1: Nature and Culture

I. General Information

Class Meetings

- Spring 2025
- Course Format: primarily classroom; Enrollment Capacity: 35 residential students.
This is a course with one section. It is offered only to residential students and all required meetings are at the same time for all registered students. The class meets 100% in person, and there are no graduate teaching assistants.
- Tuesdays period 7 (1:55-2:45 PM) Little Hall 121
- Thursdays periods 7 and 8 (1:55-3:50 PM) Little Hall 201

Instructor

- Victoria Pagán, PhD
- 115C Dauer Hall, enter at 125 Dauer
- Office Hours: Mon-Thurs period 6 (12:55-1:40) and by appointment
- 352-273-3696
- Email using the Canvas email function only

Course Description

Why do we create gardens? Such a question invites investigation from a variety of disciplines: landscape architecture; art history; history; literature; philosophy. Gardens are cultural artifacts that are embedded in the natural world; they exist between nature and culture. While gardens may seem permanent, and even eternal (think of Eden or Paradise), they are in fact ephemeral spaces that change with every passing moment. As places where life blooms and decays, gardens remind us of the essential fact of our mortality even as they promise eternity. In this course we will discover that gardens are beautiful and emotional, but also political and ideological. Above all, gardens are enclosures, and so they continually invite transgression and beg the questions, who is allowed in the garden, who are gardens for? Drawing on Homer's *Odyssey*, Vergil's *Georgics*, select writings by African American women and others, the many gardens on the University of Florida campus, and objects at the Harn Museum of Art, we will explore the essential question: why do we create gardens?

Quest and General Education Credit

- Quest 1
- Humanities

This course accomplishes the [Quest](#) and [General Education](#) objectives of the subject areas listed above. A minimum grade of C is required for Quest and General Education credit. Courses intended to satisfy Quest and General Education requirements cannot be taken S-U.

Required Readings and Works

1. Fallon, Peter, translator. 2006. *Virgil: Georgics*. Oxford World's Classics. Oxford.
2. Emily Wilson, translator. 2017. *The Odyssey by Homer*. W. W. Norton.

All other readings provided in Canvas. Materials and Supplies Fees: n/a

II. Graded Work

Description of Graded Work

Assignment	Description	Requirements	Points
Mediasite quizzes	To supplement our class, five mediasite videos provide in depth discussion of unique gardens. You answer questions based on the videos.	5 @ 20 points each	100
Wilmot Gardens	Based on our class visit to Wilmot Garden compose a Spark Story in three parts. (1) Explain the history of the gardens; (2) describe the activities that take place in the gardens; (3) connect the gardens to one of our readings.	3 page Spark Story	150
Harn Visual Analysis	Based on our class visit to the Harn Museum, find a work in the museum that is a visual representation of a garden. Using what you've learned in class, write a 500-word analysis of the representation and connect it to one of our readings.	500 words	150
<i>Georgics</i> Analytical Essay	What does Vergil's <i>Georgics</i> have to do with gardens? What themes in the poem contribute to our understanding of the gardens? Drawing on our theoretical readings, be sure to back up your thesis with evidence from the text.	1000 words	300
<i>Odyssey</i> debate	Compose a three page "Spark Story" in which you debate the usefulness of reading the <i>Odyssey</i> in a course on gardens in literature. (1) State your position; (2) back it up with three arguments. (3) Provide one counter argument. Illustrate the pages with pictures of gardens from the UF campus that you took yourself.	3 page Spark Story	150
Final Reflection	Write a personal statement for admission to graduate or professional school, or a cover letter, in which you describe how this class has prepared you for your future career. What practical applications, writing skills, social applications, critical thinking or other abilities have you developed this semester that contribute to your professional development?	250 words	50
Attendance	Attendance will be taken using "Roll Call" in Canvas. The UF policy on absences will be followed.		100
TOTAL			1000

Grading Scale

For information on how UF assigns grade points, visit: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/grades-grading-policies/>

A	94 – 100%		C	74 – 76%
A-	90 – 93%		C-	70 – 73%
B+	87 – 89%		D+	67 – 69%
B	84 – 86%		D	64 – 66%
B-	80 – 83%		D-	60 – 63%
C+	77 – 79%		E	<60

In this class, students read two foundational texts of the Western canon: Vergil’s *Georgics* and Homer’s *Odyssey*. Both texts are read in English translation in their entirety. Students complete assignments based on these texts.

III. Annotated Weekly Schedule

Week/ Date	Activity	Subject: Question	Assigned Work Due
Week 1	Topic	Defining Gardens: What is a garden?	
1/14, 1/16	Summary	How does the meaning of gardens change in different landscapes? What can the analysis of a landscape contribute to the definition of gardens?	
	Readings	St-Denis, Bernard. 2007. "Just what is a garden?" <i>Studies in the History of Gardens and Designed Landscapes</i> 27.1: 61-76. Hunt, John, Dixon. 1991. "The Garden as Cultural Object." in <i>Denatured Visions</i>	
	Visit	Yardley Gardens	
Weeks 2-3	Topic	Political Gardens: What do gardens mean?	
1/21, 1/23 1/28, 1/30	Summary	What are "horticultural politics"? How are gardens places of struggle and activism? How are gardens uniquely capable of contributing to social justice?	
	Reading	McKay, George. 2011. <i>Radical Gardening: Politics, Idealism, and Rebellion in the Garden</i> . London.	
	Visit	University Gardens	
	Assignment	First Mediasite: Garden Shukkei-en	1/24
Week 4	Topic	Intersections: Gardens of African American Women	
2/4, 2/6	Summary	We explore what gardens mean to African American women.	
	Readings	Walker, Alice. 1972. "In Search of our Mother's Gardens," pages 401-409 Kincaid, Jamaica. 2001. "Sowers and Reapers." <i>The New Yorker</i> 76 (January 22, 2001) 41-46 Vaughn Sills, "Places for the Spirit, Photographs of Traditional African American Gardens," in <i>Women and the Collaborative Art of Gardens</i> .	
	Visit	Divine Nine Garden	
	Assignment	Second Mediasite: A Man Named Pearl	2/7
Week 5	Topic	Gardens as Therapy: How can gardens heal?	
2/11, 2/13	Summary	Why are gardens powerful sites of healing and such effective spaces for therapy?	
	Reading	Harrison, Robert Pogue. 2008. <i>Gardens: An Essay on the Human Condition</i> , pages 1-82. Leah Diehl, "Gardens that Heal," in <i>Ecotherapy</i> .	
	Visit	Wilmot Gardens	
	Assignment	Spark Story: Wilmot Garden	2/14

Week/ Date	Activity	Subject: Question	Assigned Work Due
Weeks 6-7	Topic	Representations of Gardens in Art	
2/18, 2/20 2/25, 2/27	Summary	How are gardens represented in the visual arts?	
	Visit	We will meet at the Harn Museum on Thursday for a guided tour.	
	Assignments	Third Mediasite: Little Sparta Harn Visual Analysis	2/21 2/28
Weeks 8-9	Topic	Vergil's <i>Georgics</i>	
3/4, 3/6 3/11, 3/13	Summary	What does this poem tell us about gardens?	
	Reading	Fallon, Peter, translator. 2006. <i>Virgil: Georgics</i> . Oxford World's Classics. Oxford.	
	Assignment	Fourth Mediasite: Prima Porta Analytical Essay	3/7 3/14
Weeks 10-12	Topic	Homer, <i>Odyssey</i>	
3/25, 3/27 4/1, 4/3 4/8, 4/10	Summary	What do gardens contribute to this poem?	
	Reading	Emily Wilson, translator. 2017. <i>The Odyssey by Homer</i> . W. W. Norton.	
	Assignment	Odyssey debate	4/11
Week 13	Topic	Gardens in Film	
4/15, 4/17	Summary	How are gardens captured in film?	
	Reading	Maureen Turim, "On the Diagonal, Through the Window," in <i>Women and the Collaborative Art of Gardens</i> .	
	Assignment	Fifth Mediasite: Gardens in Film	4/18
Week 14	Topic	Reflections	
4/22	Summary	How has this class changed your assumptions about what gardens are, what gardens mean, why we garden, who gardens are for, and what activities can take place in a garden?	
	Assignment	Final Reflection (see "Details of Self Reflection Component" below)	4/23

IV. Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs)

At the end of this course, students will be expected to have achieved the [Quest](#) and [General Education](#) learning outcomes as follows:

Content: *Students demonstrate competence in the terminology, concepts, theories and methodologies used within the discipline(s).*

- Students will be able to identify, describe, and explain the concept of a garden as a cultural artifact embedded in the natural world, and the different modes of visual and verbal representation used by artists and poets; identify and critique political and social contexts in which gardens are created; perceive, beyond the artist's aesthetic intentions, the hidden costs of gardens, the exploitations of gender, race, and class that gardens are built on.
- Student competencies will be assessed through discussion board posts and the First Spark Story.

Critical Thinking: *Students carefully and logically analyze information from multiple perspectives and develop reasoned solutions to problems within the discipline(s).*

- Students will be able to analyze and evaluate works of visual art and poetry in their social and political contexts; make connections between individual gardens and garden representations and the larger theoretical frameworks that guide the study of gardens; create for themselves frameworks for interpreting any and all gardens that they will experience for the rest of their lives.
- Student competencies will be assessed through the Harn Visual Analysis; the Analytical Essay; and the Reflection Essay.

Communication: *Students communicate knowledge, ideas and reasoning clearly and effectively in written and oral forms appropriate to the discipline(s).*

- Students will be able to develop and present clear and effective responses in oral, visual, and written form, to the theoretical readings, visual arts encountered at the museum; the physical spaces on the University of Florida campus; and the poetry of Vergil and Homer from the ancient Mediterranean world.
- Student competencies will be assessed through the Harn Visual Analysis; Analytical Essay; Discussion Board Posts; Spark Stories

Connection: *Students connect course content with meaningful critical reflection on their intellectual, personal, and professional development at UF and beyond.*

- Students will be able to connect course content with critical reflection on their intellectual, personal, and professional development at UF and beyond
- Student competencies will be assessed through the Reflection Essay.

V. Quest Learning Experiences

1. Details of Experiential Learning Component

Together as a class we will visit the Harn Museum of Art for two class periods to explore exhibits relating to gardens. One visit will be guided, the other will be open. We will attend a special presentation about the history and contributions of Wilmot Garden, by Leah Deihl, master gardener and curator of Wilmot Garden. We will take walking tours in central campus to visit Yardley Gardens, the Grebe Bird Garden, and the Plaza of the Americas.

- For students who need special accommodations for the walking tours, please register with the DRC (see "Required Policies" below) and accommodations will be made for virtual, on-line tours.

For students whose course schedules make travel to and from the Harn prohibitive, alternate times will be arranged for visits with the professor together with other classmates.

2. Details of Self-Reflection Component

Write a personal statement for admission to graduate study or professional school in which you describe how this class has prepared you for your future career. If you do not plan on applying to graduate or professional school, you can frame the essay as a personal reflection, or you can frame the essay as a letter, addressed to someone to whom you wish to explain what you learned in this class.

Some topics to consider:

- Practical Applications: What have you learned in this course specifically about time management; personal responsibility; working under pressure; maintaining momentum; work ethic; persevering on a topic that you are not actually interested in; keeping up with readings; managing this course with your course load and/or work schedule/other commitments?
- Social Applications: What have you learned in this course specifically about working with others; listening to other people's points of view; expressing your own point of view; cooperating in a group of diverse students with different skills, abilities, and interests; thinking about questions posed by Greek and Roman authors from a different time/place/society?
- Critical Thinking: What are the skills that you have learned in this course specifically that can be applied to your career goals? Examples include:
 - Attention to detail
 - Filling in the gaps
 - Challenging assumptions
 - Courage of conviction

I admit that the question assumes a fair degree of satisfaction on your part. You might rather play "devil's advocate," and reflect on how "useless" the course proved to be. If this is the case, then I ask you to include a procataleptic refutation based on this quote from Pliny the Elder: "No book is so bad as to not have something of use in some part of it" (Pliny, Epistles 3.5.10).

VI. Required Policies

Attendance Policy

Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university policies that can be found at:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>

Students Requiring Accommodation

Students with disabilities who experience learning barriers and would like to request academic accommodations should connect with the disability Resource Center by visiting <https://disability.ufl.edu/students/get-started/>. It is important for students to share their accommodation letter with their instructor and discuss their access needs, as early as possible in the semester.

UF Evaluations Process

Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/>. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens, and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via <https://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/>. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/>.

University Honesty Policy

UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states, “We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: “On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.” The Honor Code (<https://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/>) specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. Furthermore, you are obligated to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor or TAs in this class.

Counseling and Wellness Center

Contact information for the Counseling and Wellness Center: <http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/>, 392-1575; and the University Police Department: 392-1111 or 9-1-1 for emergencies.

The Writing Studio

The writing studio is committed to helping University of Florida students meet their academic and professional goals by becoming better writers. Visit the writing studio online at

<http://writing.ufl.edu/writing-studio/> or in 2215 Turlington Hall for one-on-one consultations and workshops.

In-Class Recordings

Students are allowed to record video or audio of class lectures. However, the purposes for which these recordings may be used are strictly controlled. The only allowable purposes are (1) for personal educational use, (2) in connection with a complaint to the university, or (3) as evidence in, or in preparation for, a criminal or civil proceeding. All other purposes are prohibited. Specifically, students may not publish recorded lectures without the written consent of the instructor.

A “class lecture” is an educational presentation intended to inform or teach enrolled students about a particular subject, including any instructor-led discussions that form part of the presentation, and delivered by any instructor hired or appointed by the University, or by a guest instructor, as part of a University of Florida course. A class lecture does not include lab sessions, student presentations, clinical presentations such as patient history, academic exercises involving solely student participation, assessments (quizzes, tests, exams), field trips, private conversations between students in the class or between a student and the faculty or lecturer during a class session.

Publication without permission of the instructor is prohibited. To “publish” means to share, transmit, circulate, distribute, or provide access to a recording, regardless of format or medium, to another person (or persons), including but not limited to another student within the same class section. Additionally, a recording, or transcript of a recording, is considered published if it is posted on or uploaded to, in whole or in part, any media platform, including but not limited to social media, book, magazine, newspaper, leaflet, or third party note/tutoring services. A student who publishes a recording without written consent may be subject to a civil cause of action instituted by a person injured by the publication and/or discipline under UF Regulation 4.040 Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code.