



Study abroad.

SYLLABUS

THE ENGLISH LANDSCAPE: FORESTS, FARMS AND VILLAGES

Instructor: Thomas Harvey

Contact Hrs: 40

Language of Instruction: English

LONDON, ENGLAND (NCSA)

Course Content

What gives England its regional diversity and interest? This course examines the development of the English landscape from Roman times to the present – the forests, farms, and villages that have developed as a result of physical geography and social, economic, and political conditions. To provide a context for American students, connections are made to migration and the diffusion of vernacular architecture and elite landscape tastes to North America. While the focus is on landscape history, England's contemporary landscape is emphasized with field excursions and a look at the work of landscape preservation groups such as the Countryside Agency and Common Ground.

“Many parts of the English landscape remain just as our forefathers left them a long time ago. It is to these quiet solitudes, above all perhaps our old common lands, that we can gratefully turn for refreshment and sanctuary from noise and meaningless movement.”

W. G. Hoskins, *The Making of the English Landscape*

“Perhaps, in reconstructing the landscapes of the past, with their bounds, place-names, settlements and fieldscapes, we are piecing together new but authentic worlds of the imagination that we may wishfully inhabit?”

Richard Muir, *The New Reading the Landscape*

Course Objectives

By the end of the course, students should better understand:

- the general history of settlement in England
- the complexity and significance of regional landscapes and place identity
- how population growth (and decline) changed the English countryside
- how economic and political factors affect landscape development
- British migration to North America and the subsequent development of North America's vernacular landscapes
- the diffusion of elite English landscape tastes to North America
- the work of landscape preservation and place identity groups in England

Suggested Excursions

- Somerset Rural Life Museum, Glastonbury
- Severn River Valley: Ironbridge, Bliss Hill Open Air Museum, Coalbrookdale Museum of Iron, and Jackfield Tile Museum
- Stonehenge and Avebury
- Hidcote Manor (or equivalent rural estate)
- Chichester, Sussex: Weald and Downland Open Air Museum
- York: Yorkshire Museum and the National Railway Museum

Instructional Methodology

“The seminar and the field course best meet our needs for intellectual participation, for they are suited to the give and take of observations and alternative hypotheses, for the exchange of opinions to produce new and more valid ideas, pieces of which may have been floating around in individual minds.”

Carl O. Sauer, “The Seminar as Exploration,”
in *Journal of Geography*

The course is taught, in part, as a seminar. Lectures, comprising about 50% of the course, will expand upon topics covered in the assigned readings, will bring in material from supplementary sources, and will make connections to the landscapes of North America. In order to take full advantage of the study abroad location, we will also emphasize “looking around” in a recursive process of study, field excursions, and reflection. Students will undertake research projects on topics related to the course, perhaps with an emphasis on contemporary efforts to preserve landscapes and place identity. Projects will be based primarily on individual work; however, work is to be shared and discussed as part of the class. Students may do some work in small groups formed to reflect certain themes.

Evaluation/grading

- **Class attendance:** Enrolling in this course is a commitment to a group of fellow scholars. It is important to be at most (at least 90%) of the class meetings. Students are expected to attend class having read the assigned material and completed any assigned exercises.
- **Journals:** Your journals will be the primary reflection of your fieldwork, visits to museums, etc. (structured and unstructured; on your own or in groups). You should reflect on the readings and what you are seeing and how this connects to your own experience, interests, and academic program. Include sketches, maps, found objects, etc. Your journal is a resource. You will be asked to share reflections and discoveries during the course. You should use the journal as part of your research project work. Some specific assigned **exercises** will be incorporated into your journals.
- **Interpretive essay and presentation on a landscape topic:** A series of illustrated vignettes (a series of approximately ten photographs or other image, each with a 200-word caption, for the completed essay) in which you interpret an aspect of the English landscape. This could be about a place or region (such as the Cotswolds, a specific village, or a museum), a topic (such as the enclosure movement or traditional animal breeds), or some aspect of the work of Common Ground or the Countryside Agency. Your essay should include a field guide component. Research topics must be approved by the instructor. Students will make short presentations during the last week of class.
- **“Mid-term” exam:** There will be one exam (given week 7) consisting of essay questions on the topics and materials covered during the course.

- **Grading:** Journals/exercises 30%
 Essay/presentation 40%
 Exam 30%
 TOTAL 100%

You are expected to read assigned material before class, contribute to the course through research projects, participate in class discussions, and complete a self-assessment. Your grade is based primarily on your creative efforts in the class. Reading, attendance, class participation, and self-assessment are simply expected – deficiencies in those areas will result in a lowered final grade.

Course Readings

Primary sources

Landscape matters. The British novelist Penelope Lively has stated:

“I left with an undistinguished degree, spent a couple of years in the only salaried job I have ever had, married and had children young, and at the same time began to read history all over again, but with a difference. Now, it was a case of serendipitous discovery, of scouring the public library, of going into choice new areas of interest. And there were new kinds of history springing up. . . . My husband had a genius for throwing off a mention of some book he thought might appeal. It was he who sent me to W G Hoskins's *The Making of the English Landscape*, which first of all had me tramping Oxfordshire, where we were then living, and gave me an awareness of the presence of the past which would feed into almost every novel

I subsequently wrote; the physical world became a metaphor for other kinds of survival.”
 [Oxford Today, 16:1 (2003)]

Hoskins, W. G. 2005. *The Making of the English Landscape*. Hodder and Stoughton Ltd. (£12)
 First published in 1955, this remains the classic study of the development of the English landscape. Approach is primarily historical.

Muir, Richard. 2000. *The New Reading the Landscape: Fieldwork in Landscape History*. University of Exeter Press. (£19)
 A topical approach to the history of the English landscape. More recent than Hoskins' book.

Lowenthal, David and Hugh C. Prince. 1965. “English Landscape Tastes,” *Geographical Review*, 55:2, pp. 186-222.

Hugill, Peter J. 1986. “English Landscape Tastes in the United States,” *Geographical Review*, 76:4, pp. 408-423.

Muir, Richard. 2004. *The Villages of England*. Thames & Hudson. (£13) [orig. 1980]

Yorke, Trevor. 1990. *Tracing the History of Villages*. Countryside Books.

Clifford, Sue and Angela King. 2006. *England in Particular*. Hodder and Stoughton. (£30)
 Subtitled “a celebration of the commonplace, the local, the vernacular and the distinctive,” this is Common Ground's (see below) dictionary of England's everyday surroundings – “the landscapes, buildings, people and wildlife that give meaning to the places we know.”

Secondary sources (including English landscapes in North America)

Batey, Mavis. 1996. *Jane Austen and the English Landscape*. Chicago Review Press.

Fairbrother, Nan. 1970. *New Lives, New Landscapes: Planning for the 21st Century*. Random House.
A classic book on the modern English landscape. Fairbrother addressed new issues in the rural landscapes – intensive agriculture, new technology, and urban incursions – and argued that these could be accommodated with good design.

Fischer, David Hackett. 1991. *Albion's Seed: Four British Folkways in America*. Oxford University Press.

Glassie, Henry. 1969. *Pattern in the Material Folk Culture of the Eastern United States*. University of Pennsylvania Press.

Lewis, Peirce F. 1990. "The Northeast and the Making of American Geographical Habits," in *The Making of the American Landscape*, edited by Michael P. Conzen, pp. 80-103.

Mitchell, Robert D. 2001. "The Colonial Origins of Anglo-America," in *North America: The Historical Geography of a Changing Continent*, edited by Thomas F. McIlwraith and Edward K. Muller, pp. 89-117.

Rackham, Oliver. 2003. *An Illustrated History of the Countryside*. Weidenfeld Nicolson Illustrated.
A supplement to Hoskins and Muir; a bit more focused on vegetation and manipulations of natural landscapes.

Advance Readings (before departure)

<http://www.countryside.gov.uk/>

The Countryside Agency: The Countryside Agency was established by the Government in 1999 to conserve and enhance England's countryside, spread social and economic opportunity for the people who live there, and, help everyone, wherever they live and whatever their background to enjoy the countryside and share in this priceless asset.

<http://www.commonground.org.uk/>

Common Ground: Common Ground is internationally recognised for playing a unique role in the arts and environmental fields, distinguished by the linking of nature with culture, focussing upon the positive investment people can make in their own localities, championing popular democratic involvement, and by inspiring celebration as a starting point for action to improve the quality of our everyday places. We offer ideas, information and inspiration through publications and projects such as Field Days, Parish Maps, Flora Britannica, Apple Day, Community Orchards, Tree Dressing Day, Confluence and the Campaign for Local Distinctiveness.

<http://www.england-in-particular.info/>

England in Particular: Welcome to . . . the charity which encourages you to stand up for your place. Our localities need our constant attention, and our task here is to excite people - as locals or visitors - with ways of getting under the surface of places, offering a way of looking at the local, a kind of evolving celebration along with ideas for effecting change. This will develop, so please return often, but we have made a start, a few ways of navigating the great common wealth of nature, landscapes, buildings, settlements, histories, myths and stories, always on the move, which in their interweaving give us the rich and varied particularity of our surroundings.

Schedule

The course outline is based on the historical sequence of Hoskins and the topical sequence of Muir, with their title chapters serving as the main topics. These topics would be elaborated and supplemented with additional material from other readings and coordinated with excursion opportunities in Britain.

- Week 1:** TOPICS: Course introduction: overview of topics covered, assignments
Landscapes as a topic of study; geography as a way to view the world

READINGS: Lowenthal and Prince, "English Landscape Tastes"
Hugill, "English Landscape Tastes in the United States"
- Week 2:** TOPICS/READINGS:
Hoskins, "The Landscape before the English Settlement"
Muir, "Woodlands, Forests and Parks"
- Week 3:** TOPICS/READINGS:
Hoskins, "The English Settlement"
Muir, "Landscapes of Colonisation"
- Week 4:** TOPICS/READINGS: Domesday Geography: England in 1086
Hoskins, "The Colonization of Medieval England"
Muir, "Lines in the Landscape"
- Week 5:** TOPICS/READINGS:
Hoskins, "The Black Death and After"
Muir, "'Routeways"
- Week 6:** TOPICS/READINGS:
Hoskins, "Tudor to Georgian England"
Muir, "Status, Authority and the Landscape"
- Week 7:** TOPICS/READINGS:
Hoskins, "Parliamentary Enclosure and the Landscape"
Muir, "Landscapes of Belief"
- Week 8:** TOPICS/READINGS:
Hoskins, "The Industrial Revolution and the Landscape"
Muir, "Reading the Fieldscape"
- Week 9:** TOPICS/READINGS:
Hoskins, "Roads, Canals and Railways"
Muir, "Defence in the Landscape"
- Week 10:** TOPICS/READINGS:
Hoskins, "The Landscape of Towns"
Muir, "Villages, Hamlets and Farmsteads"
- Week 11:** TOPICS/READINGS:
Hoskins, "The Landscape Today"
Fairbrother, selections from *New Lives, New Landscapes*