

## **REGULATIONS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE (MLA)**

*(See also General Regulations and Regulations for Taught Postgraduate Curricula)*

*(These regulations are applicable to candidates who are admitted to the Master of Landscape Architecture curriculum in the 2025-26 academic year and thereafter.)*

Any publication based on work approved for a higher degree should contain a reference to the effect that the work was submitted to The University of Hong Kong for the award of the degree.

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### **Admission requirements**

**MLA1** To be eligible for admission to the degree of Master of Landscape Architecture, a candidate

- (a) shall comply with the General Regulations and the Regulations for Taught Postgraduate Curricula;
- (b) shall possess a degree of Bachelor of Arts in Landscape Studies or a degree of this University in an allied subject; or another equivalent qualification from another university or comparable institution accepted for this purpose;
- (c) who is seeking admission on the basis of a qualification from a university or comparable institution outside Hong Kong of which the language of teaching and/or examination is not English, shall satisfy the University English language requirement applicable to higher degrees as prescribed under General Regulation G2(b); and
- (d) shall satisfy the examiners in a qualifying examination if required.

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### **Qualifying examination**

**MLA2**

- (a) A qualifying examination may be set to test the candidates' formal academic abilities or their abilities to follow the prescribed courses. It may consist of one or more written papers or their equivalent and may include a project report.
- (b) Candidates who are required to satisfy the examiners in a qualifying examination shall not be permitted to register until they have satisfied the examiners in the examination.

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### **Period of study**

**MLA3**

The curriculum shall normally extend over two academic years, including a summer semester, of full-time study. Candidates shall not be permitted to extend their studies beyond the maximum period of registration of four academic years of full-time study unless otherwise permitted or required by the Board of the Faculty. Part-time study is not possible for the curriculum.

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## **Curriculum requirements**

### **MLA4**

To complete the curriculum, candidates

- (c) shall satisfy the requirements prescribed in TPG 6 of the Regulations for Taught Postgraduate Curricula;
  - (d) shall enrol for courses of not less than 120 credits in the manner specified in these regulations and the syllabuses;
  - (e) shall follow instruction in the courses prescribed, and complete satisfactorily all coursework set either as assessment tasks or practical work; and
  - (f) shall satisfy the examiners in all assessment tasks as may be required.
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## **Course exemption**

### **MLA5**

- (a) Candidates may be granted exemption from the courses prescribed in the syllabuses with the approval of the Board of the Faculty if they:
  - (i) are holding a Bachelor of Arts in Landscape Studies or Bachelor of Arts in Architectural Studies degree of this University, in which case exemption of up to three 6-credit courses, not including the design studio courses, may be granted; or
  - (ii) are holding a bachelor's degree in Landscape Architecture from an accredited overseas institution, in which case exemption of up to three 6-credit courses, not including the design studio courses, may be granted; or
  - (iii) are holding a Postgraduate Diploma in Landscape Architecture degree of this University, in which case exemption of up to two 6-credit courses, not including the design studio courses, may be granted.
- (b) Candidates who are so exempted must replace the number of exempted credits with elective courses of the same credit value.

## **Assessment**

### **MLA6**

A candidate must pass in all core courses, and sufficient elective courses to achieve the total credits required.

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## **Grading system**

### **MLA7**

Individual courses shall be graded according to letter grades, their standards and the grade points for assessment as follows:

| Grade | Standard     | Grade Point |
|-------|--------------|-------------|
| A+    | Excellent    | 4.3         |
| A     |              | 4.0         |
| A-    |              | 3.7         |
| B+    | Good         | 3.3         |
| B     |              | 3.0         |
| B-    |              | 2.7         |
| C+    | Satisfactory | 2.3         |
| C     |              | 2.0         |
| C-    |              | 1.7         |
| D+    | Pass         | 1.3         |
| D     |              | 1.0         |
| F     | Fail         | 0           |

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## Failure in assessment

### MLA8

The following clauses apply to candidates of all years:

- (a) Candidates who have passed the MLA design studio in any semester; but
  - (i) who fail at the first attempt in not more than one other core course in that semester may be permitted to present themselves for re-assessment in the same course within specific period determined by the Board of Examiners but no later than the end of the following semester. Those who fail at the second attempt shall be required to present themselves for re-assessment in the same course only once more within specific period determined by the Board of Examiners but not more than 12 months; and
  - (ii) who fail in more than one other core courses in any semester at the first attempt shall not be permitted to proceed to the subsequent semester and shall be required to repeat all or part of that year's curriculum and to present themselves for re-assessment in the following academic year. If they fail again at the second attempt, they may be permitted to present themselves for re-assessment only once more within specific period determined by the Board of Examiners but no later than the end of the following semester.
- (b) Candidates who have failed MLA design studio in any semester shall not be permitted to continue to the next semester, and must repeat the course in the following academic year.
- (c) Candidates who have failed in one or more electives in their first attempt may be required to enrol in the same or an alternative elective in the following year. Candidates failing in elective courses will not normally be offered an opportunity for re-assessment without re-enrolment in the same or an alternative elective during their studies.
- (d) Candidates who have failed in any core course at the third attempt or have exceeded the maximum period of registration shall be recommended for discontinuation of studies under the provisions of General Regulation G 12.

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## Assessment results

### MLA9

On successful completion of the curriculum, candidates who have shown exceptional merit may be awarded a mark of distinction, and this mark shall be recorded in the candidates' degree diploma.

**SYLLABUSES FOR THE DEGREE OF  
MASTER OF LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE  
(MLA)**

**(See also General Regulations and Regulations for Taught Postgraduate Curricula)**

*These syllabuses apply to candidates admitted in the 2025-26 academic year and thereafter.*

**MASTER OF LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE  
CURRICULUM BY YEAR OF STUDY**

First Year of Study

|                                            |              |
|--------------------------------------------|--------------|
| - LAND7131 MLA Design Studio I             | (12 credits) |
| - LAND7132 MLA Design Studio II            | (12 credits) |
| - LAND7152 Landscape Plants and Ecology I  | (6 credits)  |
| - LAND7151 Landscape Technology I          | (6 credits)  |
| - LAND7255 Landscape Plants and Ecology II | (6 credits)  |
| - LAND7141 Landscape History and Theory I  | (6 credits)  |
| - LAND7142 Landscape History and Theory II | (6 credits)  |
| - LAND7176 Landscape Media                 | (6 credits)  |
| Total                                      | (60 credits) |

Second Year of Study

|                                                          |              |
|----------------------------------------------------------|--------------|
| - LAND7233 MLA Design Studio III                         | (12 credits) |
| - LAND7291 Thesis Prep <b>(Capstone Experience)</b>      | (6 credits)  |
| - LAND7299 Landscape Thesis <b>(Capstone Experience)</b> | (12 credits) |
| - LAND7156 Landscape Technology II                       | (6 credits)  |
| - LAND7281 Landscape Architecture Practice               | (6 credits)  |
| - Electives                                              | (18 credits) |
| Total                                                    | (60 credits) |

## **MASTER OF LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE CURRICULUM COURSE DESCRIPTIONS**

For the purpose of these syllabuses, the teaching of each course will be conducted within one semester.

### **FIRST YEAR: CORE COURSES**

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#### **LAND7131     MLA Design Studio I (12 credits)**

The foundation studio course introduces candidates to the principles of design in Landscape Architecture. It grounds candidates in the language of the discipline and introduces them to the contemporary landscape theories and discourses. Teaching is conducted in the studio and includes exercises, design problems, and individual and group projects. Coursework is regularly presented and discussed in critical review sessions. Required field trips allow candidates to experience and analyse landscape design first hand. Studio exercises explore the conventions of landscape architectural representation. Candidates learn the use of measured analytical drawings, physical modelling, and diagrams as design tools in the creative process. Design problems investigate the spatial, material, experiential and temporal aspects of landscape and introduce candidates to techniques in the manipulation of space, landscape form and tectonics. They develop candidate's ability to conceive and express design propositions with reason, imagination and sensitivity, under time constraints. Projects focus on the exploration of landscape through its design, and are closely related to concurrent course work.

Assessment: 100% continuous coursework assessment

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#### **LAND7132     MLA Design Studio II (12 credits)**

The second studio course continues the exploration of landscape design through a broad range of learning activities including studio exercises, design problems, and individual and group projects. The studio helps candidates improve their use of landscape design language, to develop design rationales, and broaden their understanding of the discipline and its discourses. Teaching is conducted in both group and individual formats, and coursework is regularly presented and critically reviewed. Regular field trips are required, including a ten day (self-funded) research-based overseas study tour.

Studio exercises explore more advanced forms of landscape architectural representation. They allow candidates to practice their use of analytical drawing, physical and computer modelling, and diagramming, and help to develop research and analytical skills. Design problems continue to develop candidate's landscape design skills through a variety of increasingly complex and challenging landscape architectural design assignments and develop candidate's ability to create and articulate landscape design solutions, increasingly under time constraints. Projects introduce a variety of inquiry methods at a scale that require candidates to consider the specificity of users, programme and context as the basis for design propositions. The scale of projects increases with a focus on site planning with the integration of multiple factors which shape our physical landscapes including society, urban context, and architectural parameters.

Assessment: 100% continuous coursework assessment

(Pre-requisite: LAND7131 MLA Design Studio I)

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**LAND7152     Landscape Plants and Ecology I (6 credits)**

One of the core skills of the Landscape Architect is an understanding of horticulture, and its influence on the design process. This course gives candidates a comprehensive understanding of plant species and plant communities commonly found in Hong Kong & Southern China, together with a knowledge of their characteristics for use in landscape planting and the underlying fundamentals of botany, plant physiology, and taxonomy.

The course also introduces the basic principles and vocabulary of planting design. It examines the influence on plant physiology and tolerances, plant form, succession and ecological habitat on plant selection. Candidates are introduced to basic spatial forms and arrangements of plants, and how these impact on environmental experience. Field study trips provide the opportunity to investigate real examples planting designs and analyse their success/shortcomings.

Assessment: 75-100% continuous coursework assessment and up to 25% examination

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**LAND7151     Landscape Technology I (6 credits)**

This course covers the basic theory and practice of site engineering for landscape architects including earthworks, grading, drainage, basic surveying and road alignment. Earth materials, soil mechanics, and site investigation are reviewed as a basis to site engineering operations. Coursework may include regular assignments, site visits, and site study reports.

Assessment: 100% continuous coursework assessment

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**LAND7255     Landscape Plants and Ecology II (6 credits)**

This course introduces candidates to the advanced ecological concepts and practices available for landscape architects and emphasizes issues such as environmental remediation, construction mitigation, habitat construction and other impacts of land use and development on natural processes. This knowledge gained in this course will help set a foundation for sustainable practice in the field of landscape architecture.

Assessment: 100% continuous coursework assessment

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**LAND7141     Landscape History and Theory I (6 credits)**

Illustrated lectures are given on the historical development of landscape design in its various cultural contexts. Basic theory of design as related to landscape architecture is dealt with as a basis for the studio course in landscape planning and design. Coursework may include studies on selected topics and a sketchbook assignment.

Assessment: 100% continuous coursework assessment

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**LAND7142     Landscape History and Theory II (6 credits)**

As a continuation of History and Theory of Landscape Architecture I, this course continues to examine

the historical development of landscape design in its various geographic and cultural contexts, including recent and contemporary designs. The theory and practice of contemporary landscape architecture are dealt with. Coursework may include studies on selected topics and a sketchbook assignment.

Assessment: 100% continuous coursework assessment

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**LAND7176    Landscape Media (6 credits)**

*Methods of Fabrication.* By manipulating and controlling information available in the public domain, a model will be constructed to form a landscape out of the pre-existing, mapped urban environment. Developing the information further, a three-dimensional computer model will be constructed to produce objects with a high degree of precision. By manufacturing the model from a series of computer controlled fabrication devices, including the CNC milling machine, the large-format laser cutter, and a three-dimensional resin printer, a highly precise physical model will be the final output.

Assessment: 100% continuous coursework assessment

## SECOND YEAR: CORE COURSES

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### **LAND7233    MLA Design Studio III (12 credits)**

The third studio course further develops the candidate's ability to research, analyse, conceptualise and create meaningful landscape designs and to articulate rigorous, ordered and critical design positions. Teaching is conducted in both group and individual formats, and coursework is regularly presented and critically reviewed. Field trips or site visits may be required.

Candidates will practice the use of analytical and representational techniques, and will study contemporary research practices in landscape design and adjacent disciplines. Projects introduce a variety of design inquiry methods that require candidates to critically consider the specificity of users, programme and context as the basis for their propositions. The increasingly complex and challenging projects focus on the interrelationships of landscape systems and human development and call for integration of multiple factors which shape our physical landscapes including ecology, community, and social parameters.

Assessment: 100% continuous coursework assessment

(Pre-requisite: LAND7132 MLA Design Studio II)

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### **LAND7291    Thesis Prep (Capstone Experience) (6 credits)**

This course incorporates supervised studies on special approved topics in landscape architecture by individuals or small groups. Oral presentations and special study reports/paper are required.

Assessment: 100% continuous coursework assessment

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### **LAND7299    Landscape Thesis (Capstone Experience) (12 credits)**

The final studio concludes the landscape architecture curriculum as a capstone experience by means of a design thesis project on a topic related to the discipline of landscape architecture. Thesis studio course is self-directed, but candidates are required to work under the supervision of a faculty member. The thesis project is expected to develop the candidate's ability to research, analyse, generate and articulate mature landscape solutions to technically complex, multi-faceted design problems. The thesis project will operate at multiple scales from a regional perspective to a local intervention in order for candidates to acquire the ability to manage and relate designs at various scales. Projects call for the designed integration of the many factors which shape our physical landscapes including ecology, society, and urban parameters, with special attention to local and regional characteristics. Teaching is mostly individual and coursework is regularly presented and critically reviewed.

Assessment: 100% continuous coursework assessment

(Pre-requisite: LAND7233 MLA Design Studio III and LAND7291 Thesis Prep)

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### **LAND7156    Landscape Technology II (6 credits)**

This seminar course explores how modern technology changes the ways people interact, how they experience space, and ultimately their perception and understanding of the built and natural environment. These are very critical developments in contemporary societies that would affect the

practice of landscape architecture. Candidates enrolled in this course will engage in the critical analyses of such phenomena.

Assessment: 100% continuous coursework assessment

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**LAND7281     Landscape Architecture Practice (6 credits)**

Introduction to the basic principles and approaches to the practice of landscape architecture, including an understanding of professionalism, codes of professional conduct, the nature and scope of services, consultancy appointments, project team members and their roles, the forms and management of consulting practices, tender documents and types of contract for the implementation of landscape works. Additionally, the course covers the above in relationship to key areas of the Laws of Tort; Contract; Land; and Environment. The course investigates the role of the landscape architect on site, focusing on the procedures and activities required to manage the construction of a landscape contract and ensure successful realization of the designer's vision on site.

The course is conducted as a series of focused lectures on specific topics interspersed with panel discussions with leading landscape professionals to explore the application of landscape practice theory in the contexts of local private practice, public offices and working in China.

Assessment: 100% continuous coursework assessment

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## ELECTIVE COURSES

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There are five categories of elective courses offered. Within each of these there are a number of courses which may be available for selection by candidates in the curriculum. No more than three courses are to be chosen from any one of the Categories I to IV, and no more than one course from Category V.

- I: History and Theory
- II: Technology and Sustainability
- III: Digital Media and Fabrication
- IV: Landscape and Urban Research Methods
- V: Independent Studies

These courses should be taken in Second Year. Candidates will be guided in the selection of elective courses. Not all of the courses are offered every year and new courses may be offered from time to time.

The assessment of the course may take the form of a written, practical or oral test, or by continuous assessment or by any combination of these. If a candidate is required to repeat a course because of failure but that particular course is not offered in the following year, his/her choice of an alternative course must have the approval of the Head of Department and the relevant course teachers.

Selection of elective courses offered by other taught postgraduate curricula of the Faculty of Architecture is subject to prior approval by the Head of Department in consultation with the respective Programme Directors. Please check the courses offered by these curricula at the time of enrolment and refer to the respective syllabuses for the course descriptions.

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### CATEGORY I: HISTORY AND THEORY

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#### **LAND7349 Chinese Landscapes (6 credits)**

Beginning with a background survey of the varied landscapes of China - physical, functional, pictorial, cultural aspects - the course proceeds to focus on a unique landscape type: the Chinese Garden. Its tangible elements, both natural and man-made, together with its intentions, poetics and symbolisms will be analysed, leading to an appreciation of integrated compositions as exemplified by well-known gardens from that historical tradition. Theories on their aesthetics and design as well as their relationship with Chinese architecture, philosophy, literature and painting are also explored and discussed. Coursework includes studies of selected texts, assignments, field visits and written reports.

Assessment: 100% continuous coursework assessment

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#### **LAND7348 Case Studies in Contemporary Landscape Architecture (6 credits)**

Landscape architecture has transformed itself into an intriguing discipline over the past decades with the introduction of new theories and interpretations of land and environment, innovative methods in dealing with brown fields and contaminated sites, and many other new approaches that challenge the conventional perception of how public realm should be. This course will focus on the landscape projects undertaken in the past ten years worldwide, and use them as case studies to further examine these contemporary theories and see how these pioneering concepts are executed.

Assessment: 100% continuous coursework assessment

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**LAND7341     Advanced Topics in Landscape Architecture History (6 credits)**

This topical content-based seminar provides candidates the opportunity to explore specific issues and topics relating to the history and epistemology of landscape architecture through a variety research methodologies.

Assessment: 100% continuous coursework assessment

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**LAND7342     Advanced Topics in Landscape Architecture Theory (6 credits)**

This topical content-based seminar provides candidates the opportunity to explore specific issues and topics relating to the history and epistemology of landscape architecture through a variety research methodologies.

Assessment: 100% continuous coursework assessment

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**LAND7343     Advanced Topics in Urbanism (6 credits)**

This topical content-based seminar provides candidates the opportunity to explore specific issues and topics relating to the history and epistemology of landscape architecture through a variety research methodologies.

Assessment: 100% continuous coursework assessment

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**LAND7344     Research Seminar in Landscape Architectural History I (6 credits)**

This topical research seminar provides candidates the opportunity to explore specific issues and topics related to the production of academic research within the discipline of landscape architecture and urban design.

Assessment: 100% continuous coursework assessment

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**LAND7345     Research Seminar in Landscape Architectural History II (6 credits)**

This topical research seminar provides candidates the opportunity to explore specific issues and topics related to the production of academic research within the discipline of landscape architecture and urban design.

Assessment: 100% continuous coursework assessment

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**LAND7346     Reading Seminar in Landscape Architecture II (6 credits)**

This course utilizes a close reading of seminal or contemporary texts of landscape architecture such as: Design and Theory, Urbanism, Landscape Planning, Landscape Technology, Landscape Ecology. Course time involves group explorations of the ideas and arguments raised by the readings.

Assessment: 100% continuous coursework assessment

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**CATEGORY II: TECHNOLOGY AND SUSTAINABILITY**

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**LAND7359      Components of Sustainable Landscape Design (6 credits)**

The course starts with an exploration of the fundamental components of landscape, systematically examining the nature and characteristics of soils, water, air, and plants, together with the natural forces which influence them, and how they combine and interact to form our natural environment. Candidates see how the elements and forces can be used in practical application to create new landscapes, but also how they can be degraded through mis-use and contamination. They also see how they can provide the context and inspiration for landscape designs.

Assessment: 100% continuous coursework assessment

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**LAND7305      Horticulture and Design (6 credits)**

This course deals with horticultural principles and practices in relation to design. It covers the hierarchical nature of the plant kingdom, the physiological relationships between structure and function of plant organs, responses of plants to environmental factors, techniques for plant multiplication, selection of plants suitable for use particularly in urban areas, species interactions and management of landscaped sites in terms of nutritional requirements and control of pests and diseases. Field trips are required.

Assessment: 30-100% continuous coursework assessment and 0-70% examination

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**LAND7389      Landscape Practicum (6 credits)**

This course provides candidates an opportunity for practical experience in landscape architecture in Hong Kong through direct engagement in the design and physical construction of built landscape works under the guidance of a Registered Landscape Architect. Assessment is based on a detailed log-book / journal to be submitted at the end of the practicum.

Assessment: 100% continuous coursework assessment

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**LAND7306      Urban Arboriculture (6 credits)**

Arboriculture is a rapidly growing area of practice for landscape architects, and this course investigates the science of arboriculture and its practical application in relation to dense urban environments. It covers woody plant physiology, trees in urban environments, the production, planting and maintenance of street trees, management of the urban forestry, managing special trees, legal aspects of trees in Hong Kong, the work of arborists, and tree work practices and equipment.

Assessment: 100% continuous coursework assessment

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**LAND7351      Advanced Topics in Technology (6 credits)**

This topical content-based seminar provides candidates the opportunity to explore specific issues and topics in landscape architecture technology through a variety of assessment exercises. An overseas study trip may be required.

Assessment: 100% continuous coursework assessment

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**LAND7307     Advanced Topics in Sustainability (6 credits)**

This topical content-based seminar provides candidates the opportunity to explore specific issues and topics in sustainability in landscape architecture through a variety assessment exercises.. An overseas study trip may be required.

Assessment: 100% continuous coursework assessment

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**LAND7352     Research Seminar in Landscape Technology (6 credits)**

This topical research seminar provides candidates the opportunity to explore specific issues and topics in landscape architecture through a variety research methodologies. An overseas study trip may be required.

Assessment: 100% continuous coursework assessment

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**CATEGORY III: DIGITAL MEDIA AND FABRICATION**

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**LAND7308     Advanced Topics in Digital Media and Fabrication (6 credits)**

This topical content-based seminar provides candidates the opportunity to explore specific issues and topics in advanced media and fabrication relating to landscape architecture through a variety of methodologies including advanced fabrication and prototyping.

Assessment: 100% continuous coursework assessment

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**LAND7309     Research Seminar in Digital Media and Fabrication (6 credits)**

This topical research seminar provides candidates the opportunity to explore specific issues and topics in landscape architecture through a variety research methodologies. An overseas study trip may be required.

Assessment: 100% continuous coursework assessment

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**CATEGORY IV: LANDSCAPE AND URBAN RESEARCH METHODS**

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**LAND7381     Advanced Topics in Landscape and Urban Research Methods (6 credits)**

This topical research seminar provides candidates the opportunity to explore specific issues and topics related to the production of academic research within the discipline of landscape architecture and urban design.

Assessment: 100% continuous coursework assessment

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**LAND7386     Reading Topics in Landscape Architecture I (6 credits)**

This short-course utilizes a close reading and comparative analysis of works of landscape architectural research and urban studies. Course time involves group explorations of the ideas and methodologies utilized by the researchers.

Assessment: 100% continuous coursework assessment

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CATEGORY V: INDEPENDENT STUDIES

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**LAND7391    Independent Study I (6 credits)**

The objective of this course is to allow candidates to pursue independent studies to strengthen critical analytical skills and reflexive learning. With the permission of the supervisor, candidates may choose project outcomes and course bibliography that focus on the exploration, analysis and/or revelations on concepts or technologies in landscape architecture, landscape planning, and urbanism.

Assessment: 100% continuous coursework assessment

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