

## **Global Seminar Proposal May 2009**

**Mary H. Meyer, Horticultural Science**

### **Hort 3000 English Garden History/Gardens & Castles of England**

#### **General Course Description**

##### **1. Academic content and how it relates to the chosen country:**

Gardens are beautiful sources of inspiration, restoration, and healing that man has endeavored to perfect over the centuries. These "remarkable indicators of civilization" (Bisgrove, 1992) teach us what was and is meaningful to the culture at the time they were made. Through the study of garden history we can learn what people valued in the past, how they lived, and how they viewed plants and nature. Garden history can help us learn about ourselves, our relationship with nature, and how this relationship has changed through the centuries.

The older a society, the more developed and advanced their garden design. Although gardens are the product of a leisure class, their contribution to culture should not be underestimated. Originally developed by aristocracy or a small elite group of society, most large historic gardens today are open to the public, providing a place for peaceful contemplation. Although America's contribution to garden design has been limited, studying styles from the past and other cultures is important to understanding who we are, what we perceive as beautiful, and how we value nature and gardens. Studying garden history can also enable and encourage new styles of garden design. In studying gardens, "we create our own idealized order of nature and culture. Gardens connect us to our collective and primeval pasts" (Frances and Hester, 1995).

Garden history can help us to understand historical changes, reflect on why they happened, and then analyze what elements survived. Acceptance of and desire for change in landscapes, along with the political and social factors that caused these changes, further tell us about our relationship and interaction with nature.

This course will be an examination of the garden in England from Medieval times through the Tudor, formal, English landscape, Victorian, Arts and Crafts, and modern movements. English garden style will be compared and discussed from an historical perspective and in relation to garden development in the United States. The development of the landscape or naturalistic style of garden design that evolved in the 1700's has been recognized as England's most outstanding contribution to the arts. We will focus on the influence of poets, writers, statesmen, and artists in this period and compare this landscape style in England and in America. The expansion of the scale of the garden and the concept of "improving" nature into a stylized idyllic landscape was influenced by British writers Alexander Pope, and Horace Walpole. These English ideas and designs will be studied and compared to early American designers such as Thomas

Jefferson. Moving into the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century, students will compare the Arts & Crafts and naturalistic gardening styles developed by English artists Gertrude Jekyll, Edwin Luytens, and William Robinson with American designers Beatrix Ferrand, Frederick Law Olmsted, and Jens Jensen. The social, political and literary influences that shaped garden styles in England and in the US will be discussed.

This class will also consider the current differences in American and English thinking about gardens and nature. Why do Americans often have so little sophistication in gardening while the English think of it as a national past time and an inherent part of their culture? Does being surrounded by the so many living examples of English garden design and history enable them to value gardens more than we do in the US? Why do Americans have 'yards' while the English have 'gardens' ? Students will develop answers to these questions.

Man's need for gardens and close contact with the landscape or nature and how our idea of nature and the garden has changed throughout history will be discussed. Although a large component of the class is the historical perspective, students will study and discuss the relevance of garden style to today's world including restoration, society's needs, the use of resources, and the role of America in the 21<sup>st</sup> century of garden design.

Literature Cited:

Bisgrove, R. 1992. The English garden. Penguin.

Frances, M. and R. Hester, eds. 1995. The meaning of gardens: Idea, place and action. MIT Press.

## **2. Preliminary list of all possible program excursions and cultural visits**

Chelsea Physics Garden  
Battersea Park  
Queen Eleanor's garden, Winchester  
London City Tour  
Garden History Museum  
Victoria and Albert Museum  
St. James's Park  
Hatfield House  
Hampton Court  
Stourhead  
Stonehenge  
College Gardens, Oxford, England  
Oxford Botanic Garden  
Rousham  
Blenheim Palace  
Stowe Landscape Garden  
Hidcote

**Preliminary list of all possible program excursions and cultural visits, continued:**

Kiftsgate  
Sezincote  
Brooks Cottage  
Waterperry Gardens  
British Museum  
Hever Castle  
Sissinghurst  
Kew Gardens  
Painshill Landscape Park  
RHS Garden at Wisley  
Chelsea Flower Show  
Hyde Park  
Regent's Park  
Victoria Embankment Gardens  
Eden Project

**3. Preliminary syllabus for the first week that reflects a combination of academic content and excursions**

**English Garden History/Gardens & Castles of England  
Itinerary Week One:**

**Day 1:** Arrival from the US, check into housing, brief orientation, walking tour to Chelsea Physics Garden and if time, Battersea Park.

**Day 2:** 2 hr. Morning Lecture: Early Roman and Moorish gardens, medieval, castle and medicinal gardens. Discussion and comparison of medieval and monastery gardens especially Queen Eleanor's garden, Winchester; cloister gardens, Chelsea Physics garden. Descriptive writing and discussion of a 14<sup>th</sup> century garden. Discussion of garden, nature and culture definitions. Afternoon: London City Tour, ending at Garden History Museum.

**Day 3:** 2 hr Morning Lecture: Climate and Vegetative Zones in Great Britain and the United States. Tudor and Elizabethan/Stuart Gardens; Dutch, Italian and French influences. Afternoon: Victoria and Albert Museum; St. James's Park.

**Day 4:** 2 hr Morning Discussion and Student Readings: Poets and Essays on Garden Design, 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century. Discussion and comparison of formal landscapes and the evolution of the English landscape garden. Garden styles in the US and the influence of England, 16 and 17<sup>th</sup> century. Afternoon tour to Hatfield House.

**Day 5:** All day visit to Hampton Court.

**English Garden History/Gardens & Castles of England  
Assigned Reading List for Week 1:**

**Medieval and Medicinal Gardens:**

1. *Hortulus*. W. Strabo. Hunt Bot. Lib 1966
2. Monastery and Castle Gardens, p. 91-107, in *The Garden*. 1966. J. Berrall.
3. Chapter 1. The Monastic Garden, in *Medieval Gardens*. T. McLane 1981. Medieval English Gardens.

**Tudor/Stuart and Formal Gardens**

1. Wosley and His Garden, p. 29-37; Henry VIII, p. 41-62. in *The Gardens of Hampton Court*. 1950. M. Sands. Evans Bros. Ltd.
2. Chapter 4. Stuart Gardens. p. 51-74, in *The National Trust book of the English Garden*. R. Bisgrove.
3. The Renaissance Vision. p. 119-167, in *The Story of Gardening*. 2002. Penelope Hobhouse.

**4. Instructor's academic qualifications related to this course topic, international experience, language skills relevant to the chosen site, and group leadership experience**

I taught the proposed class as a Global Seminar May 2007. I am applying to teach this same class again in 2009. Although we only had 8 students in 2007, it was a great class and student evaluations were very good. I took a semester leave in 2006 to study garden history at the University of Reading and to develop this Global Seminar. I love studying garden history and am thrilled to have the opportunity to teach it as a Global Seminar.

I also was the main instructor to develop Hort 4000, International Experiences in Horticulture, a Spring semester class which ends with a custom travel trip. Hort 4000 was first taught in Spring 2005; teaching responsibilities rotate with faculty in Horticultural Science. In 2005, the class ended with a 10 day trip to England where Professor Dr. Brian Horgan and I compared the differences between garden and sports turf design and history in England, Scotland and the US. Class enrollment was 20 students. HORT 4000 was approved for the International Perspectives designation within the U of M's liberal education requirements.

I am currently teaching Hort 4000. This year's title is Grown in China and I will be taking 9 students to Shanghai, Hangzhou and Suzhou from May 18-30, 2008 along with Dr. Chengyan Yue, a new professor in our department to study Chinese gardens, horticultural businesses and cultural differences between

China and the US. It is my intent to teach one international class each year, alternating Hort 4000 with Hort 3000, if possible.

I was a 2004-05 participant in Internationalizing the Curriculum, taught by the Center for Teaching and Learning Services. I have also led garden tours (Holland and Brussels) sponsored by the University of Minnesota Landscape Arboretum.

I am a tenured full professor, with a 12 month appointment. My work assignment is 20% teaching; 20% research and 60% Extension /outreach.

## **5. Assessment of student performance in the class (e.g. journaling, readings, group projects, presentations, papers)**

### **Student Evaluation**

Assignments	30%
Participation while on trip	35%
Class attendance and participation	10%
Final Journal/paper/report; Comprehensive Exam	25%

### **Assignments**

50 pts x 6 = 300 pts or 30%

Completion of 6 worksheets and garden analysis from site visits. Graded on complete and thoroughness of answers to questions- 25 pts; site analysis- 15pts; neatness and timely completion of assignment- 10 pts.

### **Participation while on the Trip**

21 days x 17 pts/day = 350 or 35%

Being on time, attending site visits, being courteous of others, following directions and U of M code of conduct.

### **Class Participation**

100 or 10%

Participation: up to 100 points for contributions to each class discussion. NOTE: points can be lost by class distraction or providing a negative contribution to the discussion.

### **Final Journal/Paper/Report OR Comprehensive Written Exam**

250 pts 25%

A 5-10 page report will be due 1 week after returning from the trip. The report should be in a format ready for online posting and cover a topic approved by the instructor and should be a further analysis of an appropriate topic related to the class. Topics must be selected by the final week of class and cannot be duplicated by other class members. Photos must be web-ready and appropriate for posting online without additional instructor's/administrative work. Papers received after June xx, 200x will be reduced in grade notch (e.g., B- to C+) for each day late. The weekend counts as one day. Grading will be based on coverage of topic (75pts);

critical analysis of the problem or issue discussed (50 pts); neatness (15pts); strength of citations (50 pts); visual communication with images or drawings (35pts); and use of proper grammar and sentence structure (25pts).

**Comprehensive Written Exam**

250 pts 25%

Students can choose to do a final paper or a written exam. The exam will be open book and will consist of written essay answers to 5-10 questions covering the topics of the three week seminar. Questions will be distributed with 1 week to compile the answers and are due one week after returning from the trip.

NOTE: In 2007 when I taught Hort 3000, all students chose the comprehensive written exam instead of a paper for their final evaluation. I think many of them had already researched and read about topics of special interest and the idea of writing about their learning and summarizing it was actually attractive and helped to reinforce what they had learned. I was fortunate to have an excellent class of academically gifted students and they were a joy to teach.